

**TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 1
GOD'S GREAT FAMILY OF SONS**

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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INTRODUCTION

The material contained in this book, GOD'S GREAT FAMILY OF SONS, has been in preparation over a period of some twenty years.

As we read the word of God, our minds begin to grasp what great importance our Lord has placed upon His intention to bring forth a vast family of sons of God. Paul, writing to the Romans, made this very significant statement: "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29**

Great importance is added to this incredible statement by reading the translation of Weymouth, which, if possible, gives an even more forceful understanding of Paul's inspired statement.

"Those whom He has foreknown He has also predestined to share the likeness of His Son, that He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers; and those whom He has predestined He has also called; and those whom He has called He has also acquitted; and those whom He has acquitted He has also glorified." **Rom. 8:29, 30** (Weymouth)

As we read the pages of this book, we will see the purpose of God unfolding - a pre-determined plan by which He will govern the universe in the aions to come.

**CHAPTER ONE
THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN**

So many truths come pouring into the soul that there seems to be a lack both of time and of ability to write them. We must indeed be rushing rapidly to the close of this age that we call the Dispensation of Grace. The same glorious sun which set in turn upon the successive dispensational days of Innocence, Human Government, Conscience, Promise, and Law is now extending its lengthening shadows across the harvest fields of the dispensation of Grace.

There was a time when the Pharisees came to Jesus seeking a sign from Him that would prove that He was the Son of God. It is a surprising fact that this same question was repeated at least twice in the Gospel of Matthew. (Matt. 12:38, 39 and 16:1-4) Both times they asked for a sign and on each occasion He told them that the only sign that would be given was the sign of Himself, that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale so also should He be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

It seems to me that for centuries our eyes have been kept holden to many of the great truths of the scripture. We have read and reread the Bible, usually taking for granted that we understood perfectly what was written, and frequently just reading over the passages and noticing little or nothing of their message. I do not think we should be overly concerned about this lack of understanding, but we should remember that God never reveals

anything to anybody until He is ready to reveal it, and He is never ready to reveal anything until the time has come to prepare for that great event which He is about to accomplish.

For centuries Israel had looked for the coming of the Messiah until their eyes were dim with watching, but who among them all had even a hazy idea of how that coming would be accomplished. They did not expect a virgin birth; they did not expect a lowly birth; they did not expect a despised and rejected man nor a man at variance with their established creeds. They did not expect a crucifixion, a resurrection, or an ascension to heaven. All these things were contrary to their expectations and their long established beliefs; consequently they rejected Him. I suppose that Mary was the first person in all Israel to have the wonder of the virgin birth explained to her and that less than a year before the great event was to transpire.

No, we need not worry about our ignorance of things. Our only concern should be that when God does send us light that we receive it, for, if we reject it, the light we have becomes darkness and we can understand nothing. My old instructor, Elmer Hoff, taught me a lesson I hope I shall never forget. He said, "The moment you say no, you close the door for the Spirit to teach you anything." What a lesson that is! How badly we all need to learn it! The moment the Spirit of God begins to shed light on a truth, it is time to begin to ask Him to instruct us in it. Do not submit God's revelation to the criticism of some dead church member or preacher, for they like the birds of the air will steal away the seed of the truth before it has a chance to sprout or take root within you.

We will never discover anything that God has hidden from us, but when by His grace He draws back the curtain and reveals the hidden treasure, it is time to grasp it, for if we tarry it will be covered again, and we will miss it. Do you remember that Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight?"

There can be no doubt we are living in an hour when the Lord is revealing many things that concern the coming age. I am certain, however, that even now we see them only darkly. We catch only faint and fleeting glimpses of these wonders of the golden age. We are looking for the unveiling of the sons of God. We are looking for the revelation of Jesus Christ. The revelation will reveal what is hidden. The unveiling will reveal what has been kept veiled. As the lightning flashes forth from inky clouds, so the manifestation will disclose that which has been hidden in darkness. "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering in to His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

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

So it was that God told King Ahaz, **"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and ye shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)."** (Isa. 7:14) It was not the virgin birth that was to be the sign. It was the Son that was born of the virgin that was the sign. Therefore when Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple after the birth of Jesus, he prophesied saying, **"Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against."** (Luke 2:34)

The Lord Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He was a Son in a way that no other man has ever been a son of God. He was begotten by God. He came from the bosom of the Father. He was a Son before

other men existed and when He partook of flesh and blood. He was born, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God. He was born through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and even as a human being He was begotten of God.

Now that which is born of God is begotten of God as James says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." (Jas. 1:18) We can therefore reverently say that the blessed Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, but that He was a first fruits and a sign that other men, thousands of other men, would through the miracle working power of the Holy Spirit become sons of God, begotten of God through the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit. These are they who are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (Jno. 1:13) Strange and glorious as this may seem, James in the verse quoted above shows that we who are being born of God are ourselves but firstfruits of all God's creatures. Jas. 1:18. We are a sign therefore that all creatures shall be eventually born of God.

I wish with all my heart that Christians would stop believing that they are born again the moment they believe. This doctrine, taught almost universally among evangelical people, has been an enormous hindrance in the progress of Christians, for they, thinking they have reached sonship, fail to press toward the mark of full sonship in Him. If men could only see that "that which is born of God cannot sin, for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God," (1 Jno. 3:9) then they would not be in such a hurry to declare that they are born again and thus full sons of God. There is a universe of difference between being justified by faith and being born again. Both the thief on the cross and the Philippian jailor believed on Christ and were justified from their sins, but I think we would be very wrong to imagine that they had done any more than "receive Him" and, because they had received Him, power was given to them to become sons of God.

We shall yet see walking on this earth a great company of begotten sons who have been born of God even as Christ was born of God. These sons will be completely incapable of sin in any aspect or in any sense of the word. I am sorry to say that, though I have been a believer for many years, yet I am still capable of sin in thought, word, and deed. But I think I can truthfully testify that I am far less capable of sin now than I was when I first believed, and I see such a growing hatred within of all that pertains to sin's realm that sin is rendered well nigh impossible. Those who thus walk are in the process of becoming sons of God and, when that birth is complete, they will have this testimony, "They cannot sin because they are born of God." "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." (1 Jno. 3:2, 3)

We speak too lightly about the deep and sacred things of God. We speak flippantly about such divine eternal wonders as the new birth, sonship, the fullness of the Spirit, transfiguration, and the manifestation of the sons of God. The light and frivolous way in which these truths are handled proves beyond a doubt that those who handle them understand them less than Belshazzar understood the sacredness of the vessels of the Lord from which he drank wine with his lords and ladies. If we are going to approach God at all, we are going to have to come in an attitude of wide-eyed awe. We shall have to approach with reverence and godly fear lest we blaspheme and take the name of the Lord in vain. I hate to hear any man use light, frivolous, and familiar terms when speaking of the things of God. Surely if Michael the archangel durst not bring a railing accusation against the devil because we are forbidden to speak evil of dignities, then I must approach all the sacred truths cleansed by the blood and having my mind renewed and hallowed by the Holy Spirit.

With this exhortation fresh upon our minds let us think briefly of what it will mean to be begotten of God. I could be wrong, but it seems perfectly clear to me that only three people were ever born sons of God. By this I mean that only three people ever came into this world who were sons of God at birth, body, soul, and spirit. The first son so born was Adam, who having no human parents was formed by the Spirit of God from the dust of the earth. He was a son of God. (Luke 3:38). He was clothed upon with the life and glory of the Lord. To him was given the power to live forever, but to him no power had been given to discern between good and evil. The second son of God born of the Holy Spirit was Eve. When the Lord had caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, he opened his bosom and from a rib of this son He formed a woman, a son of God in all the glory of Adam, made by the Spirit, begotten by the Spirit, and clothed upon by the life of God Himself. She was a true son of God even as Adam, for neither male nor female is known in that realm. No corrupt and dying blood

flowed in the veins of these inhabitants of Paradise. No death-dealing carnal mind corrupted them to bring their members under the power of death and sin. They lived in a realm long since closed to the human race. They were clothed upon not with garments of wool and cotton or even seamless robes, but, because of their heavenly brightness and their blessed communion with God, they lived in a realm of transfiguration and were no more in need of earthly garments than an angel. All creatures of that perfumed, effulgent paradise were under their wise and loving control. No timid creature raced in terror from snarling ravenous beasts. The pitiful cry of a dying thing was never heard. Peace reigned supreme and love without alloy. Had this blessed son in his unfallen state walked the earth centuries later, he, too, would have stilled the waves, raised the dead, and healed diseases as did Christ, the last Adam. But this was not God's plan.

The third person to be born of the Spirit of God was Jesus Christ. Christ had existed before the world was. Christ, who proceeded from the bosom of the Father, the One by whom and for whom all things were created, was born into this world by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who had made Adam from the dust of the earth and who had formed Eve from the bone and flesh of Adam, now by the power of the Most High overshadowed a virgin and brought forth a Son from her womb. These and these alone were born sons of God, but God has given power to all members of the human family who receive Christ to become sons of God, for as many as received Him to them gave He power to become sons of God. Male and female will not be recognized in Christ. Both alike are sons.

My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs, for this earth in God's good grace is yet to see a whole race of sons of God, begotten by the Holy Spirit in the extremity of the age. They are not to rise from the dust of the earth as Adam, but by the power of the Holy Spirit they will arise from the dust and ashes of their crucified selves. "I am crucified with Christ," said Paul, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is sonship, for in some miraculous way the "I" that was crucified and the "I" that lives are not the same, but from the ashes of our crucified selves God has brought forth a son of God.

There was a very great difference between the unfallen Adam clothed in glory and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who for our sin laid aside His glory. For He, though equal with God, did not grasp at equality, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men (fallen men), and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This He did because man was fallen, and to lift him back to sonship He had to come into the condition in which man was that through the shedding of His everlasting incorruptible blood in which flowed eternal life He might give back to all men that eternal life which they lost through disobedience. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. **"For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one, much more! much more) much more! they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many (i.e. all) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many (i.e. all) be made righteous."** (Rom. 5:17-19) But when this glorious work of redemption had been completed by the shedding of His precious eternal blood. He rose from the dead because death had no power over Him and was highly exalted and given a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and earth and under the earth. In my heart I hear Him pray, **"And now, O Father, glorify Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world began."** (Jno. 17:5)

We might well fill the whole book with this glorious truth of sonship, but that is not our purpose now. Our purpose now is to show that this glorious Son of God, begotten of the Father by the Holy Ghost, was a sign son. He was a sign of a vast family of sons who would also be begotten and born of God through the centuries intervening between Bethlehem and the end of this age. This is the truth that inspired Paul's heart as he exultantly wrote, "Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He (Jesus Christ) might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers."

There was a time when certain Greeks came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." When Philip and Andrew told Jesus of the request, Christ made this strange statement of truth. **"The hour is come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."** (Jno. 12:20-24) I am sure you must understand what He was telling them, for a spiritual mind

could scarcely miss this truth. They wanted to see Jesus, but they did not know that if they wanted to see the complete Christ, the first and the last, they would have to wait until the harvest time at the end of this age when that single corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died would be a whole ear of wheat full of kernels, each one in the exact image of the one who fell into the ground and died, but rose again. This is the fullness of Christ. This is Christ with that vast family of sons in His own image.

I do not think we should build our faith on visions that men have seen, but I was once deeply impressed by one who told me he had seen a vision of Christ. In the vision Christ appeared as a huge man who seemed to fill all things. But closer observation showed that the huge form of Christ - head, body, hands, and feet - was composed of numberless thousands of little men, each in the exact image of each other and all in the image of Christ Himself. This is what Jesus wanted to teach us when in answer to the question, "We would see Jesus," He pointed to a single kernel that fell into the ground and became a harvest of identical kernels at the end of the age. Oh, Lord, I shall certainly be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness.

There are three things in this vast world, and only three: - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. I do not think you will be able to avoid the conclusion that all the inventions, creations, and contrivances of man are in existence to cater to these three things. It was with these three things that Eve was tempted. She saw the tree was good for food (the lust of the eyes), a tree to be desired (the lust of the flesh), a tree to make one wise (the pride of life), and though the temptation was not from within but from without, she yielded to it and partook. The temptation of Christ was on the same basis exactly. The first appeal was made to the flesh through appetite. "Command that these stones be made bread." The second was made to the eyes to awaken covetous-ness and greed. "All this will I give you if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." The third was to the pride of life. "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence."

I shall not attempt to develop the thought given above, for that is not the purpose in mind, but the truth that we must see here is that Jesus Christ overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil and all that is involved in them, and that He overcame so thoroughly and delivered such a crushing defeat to the wily tactics of Satan that it is actually recorded by the Holy Ghost that the devil left Him and angels came and ministered unto Him. **(Matt. 4:11)** Truly Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in Me." No wonder he left Him. I think we would be right to conclude that never again did Satan come to tempt the Lord, but his next efforts were to destroy Him.

In His great victory over the power of Satan He was a sign that pointed unerringly to another company of overcoming sons. In all the churches of Revelation there were two classes of people - those who were overcomers and those who were not. It is to the overcomers that the glorious promises are given, for they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, have partaken of His mind and of His will, and thus are equipped to reign in His kingdom.

Thus to them it is said: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." **(Rev. 2:7)** "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." **(Rev. 2:11)** "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." **(Rev. 2:17)** "He that overcometh and keepeth My works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of the potter shall they be broken to shivers even as I received of My Father, and I will give him the morning star." **(Rev. 2:26-28)** "He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God which cometh down out of heaven from my God and I will write upon him my new name." **(Rev. 3:12, 13)** "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne." **(Rev. 3:21)** "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

When any man becomes a lover of the will of God, then he becomes a hater of the world and an overcomer of the world. Christ's greatest secret was that He did always the things that pleased the Father. When any man lives in this manner, the world is overcome as a matter of course. No man will ever be an overcomer until the Christ within him is greater than he that is in the world. **(1 Jno. 4:4)** "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the

world." In the lives of most Christians the world is greater than Christ. They do not know it, perhaps, but it is certainly so and at times it is glaringly evident.

Every Christian should seek that God would open his eyes to show him that the world and all the things therein are but vanity and vexation of spirit. Everything that belongs to the world is of a passing nature. It fades as the green leaf. It is like the grass that today is green in the field and tomorrow is burned as if in an oven. It is like the mist that appeareth for a little time and is gone, or like a vision of the night that vanishes with the awakening. It is a bubble that bursts, a whiff of perfume that came from nowhere and disappeared into nothingness. "I said of laughter, it is mad, and of joy, what doeth it?" I love Phillips' translation of **(1 Jno. 2:15-17)** "A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on man's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions, and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world with all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die." Who is he that overcometh but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ? This glorious overcoming first Son of God is a sign and a herald of a vast company of completely overcoming sons who will stand in His likeness at the end of the age.

Whenever God requires anything of man, there is always a reason for it. The reason so many people fail to attain the great heights of the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are in Him. We have been far too taken up with theories about heaven and childish notions about mansions in the skies to be able to see the true purpose of God. I have positively no hesitation whatever in telling you that according to the scriptures God's plan for man from the very foundation of the world was to make man the true lord of the universe and to bring all things into subjection to him. This is certainly Paul's theme when in Heb. 2 he says, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come - but one in a certain place testified saying, What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him (man) a little lower than the angels. Thou crownest him (man) with glory and honor and didst set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." **(Heb. 2:5-8)** This is a very definite and glorious statement and shows in few words the true purpose God had in creating man. It shows the reason for the fall and all the intricate infinite preparations of man through the fall, through suffering, through tribulation, sickness, death, and a thousand other trials that man might eventually be fit and equipped for the rulership which God ordained for him in the very beginning. All this truth is found in the very first words God ever spoke about man. "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness and let us give him dominion..." **(Gen. 1:26)** If men and women could see this by the Spirit instead of the fairy tales we have been taught through the centuries about harps and mansions in the sky, they would have some incentive to partake of the glorious sonship God is looking for in His people.

Now, would it not seem to be divine sense, human sense, and common sense that, if the almighty God is preparing man to reign over His creation, if He is preparing him to rule the earth, if He is planning to put all things in subjection under his feet, then that man must be prepared for this lordly rulership? Could the wisdom of God set a man to be lord and ruler of the world if the world can overcome him? He who is to rule the world must be an overcomer of the world. Does not the scripture say, "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels"? Could we imagine God's setting one to judge Satan who is continually overcome by Satan? Or can he be a judge of sin who is overcome by sin? Will he not have to be a complete overcomer before he can judge the world or angels? He who is overcome by thieving can scarcely be called upon to judge the sin of theft. Abraham said of God, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" What greater argument then can be presented than that he who is to rule all things must first of all have overcome all things? Even in the world as it is now no one can rule that which he has not overcome. Let all those therefore who hope to reign with Christ set their hearts and affections on overcoming the world and all things in it. It is our understanding of these precious truths that is the ground and foundation of our faith, and "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." **(Jno. 5:4)**

Let us turn away from our subject long enough for a word of exhortation. I do not see how a Christian is ever going to be an overcomer and enter into sonship by following the ordinary course of church activity. There is something about the continual vain repetitions of the church that keeps Christians in a state of spiritual infancy.

When the Jewish offerings and sacrifices got to be nothing but a ritual which they performed every week, God turned His face away in disgust and said it was a weariness to Him and a stench in His nostrils. What more is there to the wearisome repetitions into which the churches have entered? Do they not go through the same ceremony every week as they sing their hymns, say their prayers, give their offerings, and wait for the preacher to pronounce the benediction? This is not the path that leads to sonship. Regardless of what your traditions may be, this is the path to spiritual stalemate and infancy.

Every man must come to know God personally, individually, and independently of all theories and traditions. He must through private communion with his Lord enter into such friendship, unity, and fellowship with Him that should earthly and spiritual dependencies vanish he would be completely undisturbed and unmoved, or should every Christian be removed from the earth and he left alone that he would feel no lonesomeness or lack in anything. David, the king of Israel, had entered this blessed abiding place when he took up his harp to sing, "God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea." (Psa. 46:1,2) And again the same knowledge must have filled his soul when he said, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psa. 91:1) There is a secret place for us in God where crowds can never come. There are gardens to which Jesus often resorts with His disciples. (Jno. 18:2) There are mountains of transfiguration where He leaves the clamoring crowds below while He takes a few up higher with Himself. The shout and song of revival meeting has been a method of God during the dispensation of grace, but to sit with Him in His throne will be the order of the kingdom. I have no hesitation in saying that the last sands of this imperfect age of grace are running through the hour-glass of time and the perfect kingdom morning is at hand.

When Jesus Christ, the sign son, was baptized with the Holy Ghost, He knew the fullness of God in a way that no other man has yet known it. God gave the Holy Spirit to Him without measure. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (Jno. 3:34) However much other men have experienced the fullness of the Spirit or however glorious was their baptism in the Holy Ghost, I feel they are all terribly lacking when compared to Him. His life was under the complete dominion of the Holy Spirit. The words He spake, the deeds He did, the prayers He prayed, the miracles He performed, the places He went were all the result of that limitless fullness which God gave unto Him. His birth, His life, His works, His death. His resurrection, His ascension were all by the Holy Spirit. He made no mistakes in any word He spoke for He spake by the Holy Spirit. He made no errors in judgments for judgment was not His but God's. He was never overcome by the arguments of clever men but silenced them all with a word of wisdom from God. When Aaron the priest was anointed with the holy oil, Moses poured it on his head until it ran down over his face and beard, over his body and down to the very skirts of his garments. This is typical of that measureless fullness of the Holy Spirit which Christ enjoyed - not just a drop of oil on the forehead applied by the finger, but oil in abundance for the whole man. Psa. 133:2.

All who read these lines must be able to give proof after proof and evidence upon evidence that Jesus Christ possessed the glorious fullness of the Holy Spirit, so we will refrain from going further to make proof of that. But let us consider that great company of sons who are to come in His image and in the same fullness that He, the sign Son, had.

Self-satisfaction is an enormous, blinding, deceiving evil. A man who thinks he is righteous never bothers to seek righteousness, but a man who knows he is unrighteous will seek the righteousness of Christ. While scribes and Pharisees prided themselves that they were the children of Abraham, they knew not that they were the children of the devil, and they hated Christ for telling them so. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:3) The same principle holds true regarding the fullness of the Spirit. It is a great indictment against us all that we have claimed the fullness of the Holy Spirit when indeed our lives showed little or no sign of the Holy Spirit at all, let alone His fullness. It is a pitiful misconception prevalent in the entire professing church that each division in it should imagine that the Holy Spirit is imparted by obedience to the form of baptism laid down in their particular creed.

I do not want to belittle or depreciate anything that God has done for any man. We should be extremely thankful for any experience we have had in Him, but let us abolish all opinions that would lead us to believe that our little thimbleful of water is God's ocean, or that our little Pentecost was the Spirit without measure or all

the fullness of God. Let us rather realize that at best we have partaken of a mere earnest of our inheritance and that the whole inheritance still lies out ahead of us. We have partaken of a few luscious grapes from Canaan, but just beyond us lies a whole realm flowing with milk and honey and wine. Why should men refuse the meal after they have tasted its goodness? Why do we refuse the inheritance because we have partaken of a few pennies ahead of time? Why be satisfied with a stagnant pool when a river of the water of life is flowing from the throne of God? Paul prayed that we might be filled with all the fullness of God. Jesus declared that those who believed on Him as the scriptures had said would find rivers of living water flowing from their beings. Let us then wake up to the fact that we know nothing as we ought to know, and we have received nothing as we ought to receive. Our confident assurance that we are filled with the Spirit has been a blindfold that has kept us from seeing the rivers and oceans that lie just beyond us. Do not cast away the good that God has given you, but do, I pray you, cast away all self-satisfied belief in your fullness, for this dams up the fountains of living water. If it is true that rivers of living water can flow from the innermost being of men who believe on Christ, then there is one thing of which I am certain. Before those rivers of living water can flow from our being, all obstructions will have to be removed that they might first flow into our being. Let us settle it in our hearts that there is an everlasting fullness that can only be ours as we become empty of self-righteousness and give up our proud belief in our own fullness.

I do not propose to discuss here the many promises that go to prove that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, but the undeniable fact that Jesus Christ, the sign Son, was given the Holy Spirit without limitation or measure is also an undeniable proof that there is an experience of equal glory and magnitude awaiting all those who will enter into sonship. Indeed, every day I am convinced more and more that it is the ever increasing fullness of the Holy Spirit that produces sonship, for by it we are both born of God and brought to the maturity of full sonship. It is a most significant fact that, at the moment Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost, there came a voice from heaven declaring Him to be God's beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. Matt. 3:17

There is a fullness of the Spirit awaiting all those who long for sonship. It is a fullness that none but Christ has ever received. It is a fullness reserved for the time of the manifestation of the sons of God. It is a fullness that brings to a complete maturity. It is the early and latter rain in the first month. It was John the Baptist who said, "Of His fullness have we all received and grace for grace," (Jno. 1:16) and there is no doubt whatever that we have all received of His fullness, but we have by no means received His fullness. It was the beloved Paul who many years later bowed his knees before the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and prayed "that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:19) Have we ever even remotely understood what it would mean to be filled with such divine and almighty fulness - filled with all the fullness of God? For centuries we have groveled along imagining our little stagnant pool was His mighty ocean, so robbing ourselves of His fullness. We have wrestled with the demon at the foot of the mount, excusing ourselves because we could not cast him out, when just above us in the mount God was declaring, "This is my beloved Son," (Matt. 17)

It is unfortunate that Christians in these latter days have always associated the fullness of the Holy Spirit with power for service. They grasp eagerly for the baptism of the Spirit in a vain and selfish hope that they will have superhuman power over sickness and disease, or that they will have a spectacular ministry, or be possessed with spiritual gifts. But there is something far more important than this that has been completely overlooked. There is something far more important than powerful preaching and working of miracles. That important thing is the purifying effect the Holy Spirit will have upon the individual and personal life.

The scripture declares that we are changed by His Spirit from glory to glory until we come into the image of the Lord. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18) This is a truth Christians are missing. It is pitiful that we have overlooked it so long. We are like the disciples who sought who would be greatest, not knowing that he who would humble himself and become least would be the one who would be filled with the fullness of God.

I feel I cannot be too strong in my earnest exhortation to all who read that we would earnestly seek day by day to have an ever increasing fullness of the Holy Ghost. It is your God-given duty to seek the Spirit with far greater earnestness and sincerity than you would for silver or gold. I greatly fear that the god of this age is the dollar bill. It is called the almighty dollar and certainly that is the honor given it by most Christians today. Earthly

and financial gain has become the prime and foremost requisite in most Christian lives while prayer, meditation, the reading of the Word, praise, kindness, love, the grace of giving, tithing, the leading of the Spirit, constant communion, repentance, and all such things that pertain to the fullness of the Spirit have been relegated to the realm of annoying nuisances that hinder us from going all out for the god of his age. How sorely we need to read and learn the lesson taught us by Peter when he wrote, "And beside all this, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Now listen to the promise that follows this exhortation. "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ... For if ye do these things, yet shall never fall; for, so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-8, 10, 11).

It is time to stop, look, and listen. It is time to see if our rush for gold is canceling out our progress toward the kingdom of God. We are living in very, very important times. We are continually hearing wonderful things. But I warn you that the heights of sonship, the kingdom, and all the fullness of God are not attained by merely hearing about them. They must be our heart-absorbing, soul-consuming quest. Otherwise we will be like those who have heard the pipe but have not danced, and those who have heard the voice of mourning and have not wept. It has always been a vicious trait of man to hear but not to do. Thousands love to hear and read new things and listen to spiritual revelation, but never raise a finger to attain. Don't waste time telling me that we need do nothing about it. Don't try to persuade me that all we need do is believe. I would rather far listen to Paul who knew what he was talking about when he said, "Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Again he says, "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." (Heb. 6:1) This last exhortation plainly shows that constant adherence to elementary doctrines is as great a hindrance to spiritual progress as anything could ever be.

I firmly believe it is time to leave the shadowy imperfect things of the dispensation of grace and begin to lay hold on those more permanent things that belong to the kingdom. Let us therefore no longer be interested in laying the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, but let us seek to go on to the perfection of sonship and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

When I speak of the fullness of the Spirit, I am not speaking of an initial baptism of the Holy Spirit such as you may have received thirty or forty years ago, but I am speaking of an ever increasing fullness that gradually saturates and overwhelms your life, your being, and your walk until all your thinking, your walking, your talking, and your doing is done by the Holy Spirit Himself. Your whole life becomes a life lived in a realm that is strange and ethereal to all other men because almost all men live on a plane completely governed by the natural and the carnal mind.

It is difficult to illustrate what I mean because we have spent our lives interpreting scriptures as they seem to suit our experience regardless of how low the plane may be on which we dwell. But let us for a moment consider the pattern son, Jesus Christ, for He is the true pattern and sign of the sons who are to come. The life of Jesus Christ, the pattern Son, the apostle Son, the high priest Son, was a life completely swallowed up by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Immediately following His baptism it is stated, "Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness," and I have no hesitation in saying that in His case from that very moment on there was never a thought or a word or a deed that was outside the realm of the Holy Spirit. The works that He did were in His Father's name. Jno. 10:25, 5:36. All His words were of the Father. "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things." (Jno. 8:28) And again: "I speak that which I have seen with My Father." Jno. 8:38. Nothing was ever done to please self in any way, but rather He said, "I do always those things that please Him." (Jno. 8:29) Empty laughing and joking had no place in His life, but He "rejoiced in the Spirit" (Luke 10:21), and for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame. He was born of the Spirit, was baptized in the Spirit, lived by the Spirit, worked by the Spirit, talked by the Spirit, died in the Spirit, rose by the Spirit, and ascended by the Spirit, and even now, though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.

Perhaps it is beyond the scope of this message to speak much of that blessed person, the Holy Spirit. But that we may better see our vast need of Him as Lord of our lives, let me point out a few of the names and titles of

the Holy Spirit, for each and every name given to Him in the word of God teaches us some new thing that points to our immense need of living and moving in Him. First, He is the Holy Spirit. That is His name. While men struggle for lives of holiness and righteousness, God is telling us that His glorious fullness will make us holy. He is the Spirit of Holiness. Angels are spirits and they are holy, but He is the very essence, the source, and the spring of all the holiness in the universe. He is the Spirit of Adoption (sonship). What a truth is here, for all those who long for sonship, for all who are led by Him and who are under His control are sons of God and cry from the Spirit within, "Abba Father" (our Father). He is the Spirit of Truth. All the truth of the universe emanates from Him and all who are under His control speak only the truth of the Lord.

He is the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 3:16)

He is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, council, and might. (Isa.11:2)

He is the Spirit of the Lord. (Isa. 11:2) He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:19) He is the Spirit of Burning. (Isa. 4:4) He is the Spirit of Life. (Rom. 8:2) He is the Spirit of Grace. (Heb. 10:29) He is the Spirit of Glory. (1 Pet. 4:14) He is the Eternal Spirit. (Heb. 9:14)

Each one of these names is worthy of life-long thought and meditation. This is not a variety of names given to break the monotony of sameness. These names teach us that everything we could ever hope for, desire, or accomplish is found in the fullness of the blessed comforter, the Paraclete, that proceeds from the Father and the Son. To those who seek for holiness He is the Spirit of holiness; to those who long for sonship He is the Spirit of adoption. He is the Spirit of truth to all who love truth and the Spirit of wisdom to those who would be wise. To him who longs for understanding He is the Spirit of understanding and where there is need of power He is the Spirit of might. To those who would be in the image of Christ He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. For freedom from flesh and corruption He is the Spirit of burning and judgment. He is the Spirit of life to all who love life, the Spirit of glory for our transformation, the eternal Spirit bringing all those who are in unity with Him to the fullness of God's life for ever and ever. In Him let us live and move and have our being. He was the all-embracing, all-controlling power in the wonderful life of that pattern Son, Jesus Christ, and He will also be Lord in the lives of all those who by the Spirit of glory are coming into Christ's image.

My heart is filled with a burning longing as I think of those whom God is calling to share the image of His Son. Oh that we all might seek His fullness, that we might cast from us every unclean and hurtful thing, that base thoughts having their beginning in the corrupt fountains of the carnal mind might be swept away. Those who seek for glory and honor, immortality and eternal life will not find it in the flesh pots of Hollywood, but they will find it in the ever increasing fullness of the Holy Ghost, and every man who has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.

CHAPTER TWO SONSHIP THE HOPE OF ALL CREATION

The languages of earth do not contain words descriptive and meaningful enough to adequately describe the immensity and all-embracing scope of the work of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Human vocabularies were designed to fit human needs and are capable of nothing more. Once the heart of man reaches out to a realm beyond the natural, it finds itself lost for proper descriptions and hopelessly bound up in the phrases of human speech. For unnumbered centuries men have sought to extol and magnify the work of Jesus Christ, but their efforts and eloquence have been no more than the shining of a penny candle in the darkness of a world blinded by sin, full of human ways of looking at things, and with no power of perception beyond the darkness of the natural mind. In trying to honor Him, we have often brought Him dishonor and, in trying to magnify His work, we have dragged it in the dust and desolation of human reason and finite understanding.

If only men would open their hearts that they might behold the power and glory of the all-embracing purpose of the Father in that hour when He proclaimed the edict, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." If we could even begin to grasp the depths of meaning of those mighty words, "Let us give him dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and everything that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:26) Oh, that men

might see that at that moment wisdom was rejoicing in the habitable part of God's mountain, so that the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God filled the vastness of heaven with their shouts of joy and anticipation as they beheld what the end of the plan would be! There is always the possibility of our being wrong, for lacking in understanding we always are, but there is a chord deep in my heart that still echoes to that shout of joy. There is a faith to believe that in the long-forgotten past we were there with Him in spirit beholding with joy the unfolding of His marvelous plan. But as Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten his former glory when his brilliant mind was taken away and he was given the mind of a beast, so we, too, have forgotten the glorious things of the past ages, because for a purpose we were born into this world in sin and shapen in iniquity. This assurance I have that, if the "spirit returns to God who gave it", then certainly it must have come from God in the first place. There is little possibility of our denying that.

For many centuries all creation has groaned and sighed under the thralldom of sin and decay, but our heavenly Father had a purpose eternal and omniscient when in hope He subjected the whole creation to the desolation of the fall. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." (Rom. 8:20) Ever since that day the earnest expectation of the creature has waited for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Verse 19)

Every man needs the spirit of revelation from God. I do not refer to that silly spirit so often found among zealous Christians that is always clamoring to come up with some new idea that they can call a revelation. It is not a flurry of fantastic fancies that we need, but a great spirit of wisdom and understanding given by God that will unfold to us the immutable almighty omniscience of God's eternal purpose. That spirit of wisdom and understanding from God gives the heart of man the ability to receive and understand the purpose of His divine mind that has been planned from time immemorial.

There is certainly no lack of fantastic notions among Christians which they imagine are revelations. Should I try to imbibe or believe even half the weird doctrines people propose to me, I would now be floundering in a sea of utter confusion and my frail bark would soon be wrecked upon the rocky reefs that encompass the island of oblivion. Paul once wailed out his complaint against the useless doctrines of the Galatian Christians in these words: "After ye have known God, or rather are known of Him, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed labor upon you in vain". (Gal. 4:10, 11) Then to the legalistic Colossians he insisted, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." (Col. 2:16, 17) All such doctrines are only noisemakers that are sent to attract our attention away from making Christ our supreme Lord and head. See (Col. 2:18, 19) Let us seek to abandon all such side issues and seek to concentrate on Christ. Those who will possess the mind of Christ will find in Him the end of all doctrine, the antitype of all types, the source of all rivers, the fullness of all love, and the culmination of all purpose. He is the head of us all, "and it is from the head alone that the body is nourished and built up and grows according to God's laws of growth." (Col. 1:19) (Phillips). Let us abandon then the doctrines that concern themselves with eating and drinking, touching, tasting, and handling, or of days, weeks, and years, and seek to become one with Christ, for all who have come unto unity with Him need instruction in none of these things. The complete will of God flows forth from their hearts as naturally as pure water gushes from a pure fountain.

Christ is the head of all principality and power; therefore, concern not yourself with principality and power, but with Him. "By Him all things consist"; therefore, concern not yourself with things, but with Him and all things will consist by Him. He is the end of all things; therefore, concern yourself with Him who is the end and all things will have their end in Him. He is the head of the body; therefore, seek to be joined to Him and your place in the body is assured. Christ is our wisdom and our righteousness; therefore, seek neither wisdom nor righteousness, but seek Him and both wisdom and righteousness shall be yours because He is yours. Christ is our life and our light; therefore, seek neither life nor light, but enthrone Him upon the candlestick within you and the bright shining of the candle shall give you the light of God. Oh what time and effort we waste in seeking things, things, things instead of knowing Him. In His presence is fullness of joy; therefore, seek not joy but His presence. "At His right hand are pleasures forevermore," therefore, seek not pleasure but to stand at His right hand. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear. The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall be afraid?

CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE. Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul.
He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil for
Thou art with me.
Thy rod and
Thy staff they comfort me.
Thou prepares! a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

We may have read that beautiful passage ten thousand times. Most of us know it by heart, but today it holds new meaning. I think I see today what David saw when inspiration gripped his soul and he sang those meaningful words. See how he makes the Lord the hub and center of everything - the shepherd, the leader, the feeder, the restorer, the anointer, the comforter, and the eternal abiding place.

We hear a great deal today about many wonderful things. As we draw nearer the end of this dispensation and the kingdom morning sends its first rays upon our waiting souls, there will be an ever increasing flood of light and revelation. This we must certainly expect and accept, for new days bring new things, and new dispensations are sent to flood the world with greater light and greater experience in God.

No truth has come with more soul-gripping force and power to the elect of the Lord than the hope of sonship. Well indeed may we lay hold upon that glorious eternal hope, for divine wisdom has ordained that that sonship should be the hope of all creation. It is for sonship that the whole creation groans in a sort of universal travail while it waits to see the glorious sight of the sons of God coming into their own. Rom. 8:22, 23.

Every man and woman who has even in the least partaken of revelation must learn that to love sonship is not a presumptuous infringement on the plan of God. To love and covet sonship is to love and covet the very purpose of God from timeless ages. When the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy, was it not because they were then beholding the final fulfillment of God's plan for His sons and for the whole creation through them? Let us give ear to the inspired words of Paul as he shouts, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world (before the ages were formed) that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will." (Eph. 1:3-5) I am afraid that we have all failed to grasp the true meaning of that scripture because of the rather weak expression "unto the adoption of children." The true meaning is that He has predestined us to sonship or, as Moffat says, "designed us in His love to be His sons."

It is hard to understand how the true purpose of sonship has been overlooked and missed for so many centuries. For many ages Christians have thought of sonship as a sort of sentimental thing that amounted to little more than a kind expression on God's part that we should be patted on the head and called sons of God. To most people sonship means little more than material for another Sunday morning sermon or at best some title we will possess in the ages to come.

The truth is that our sonship is now and always was the hope of the entire creation of God. Sonship is dearer to God's heart than any other thing. God the Father has carefully planned our sonship from timeless ages. Every detail of the process by which we were to attain the perfection of sonship was laid down in heaven's

blueprint before there was a world, an age, or a dispensation. In the hope of sonship He has subjected the entire creation to the thralldom and decay of ages and dispensations. He has caused men like Abraham to become wanderers and pilgrims on the earth throughout their lives in the hope of bringing them to the perfection of sonship He demands. He has sold men like Joseph into slavery and imprisonment to bring them to sonship. He sends His predestined sons to pass the night in lions' dens and burning fiery furnaces and drops His Jeremiahs into muddy wells all in the hope of sonship. He sends His only begotten Son into the world to learn obedience by the things He suffered, to be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He afflicts His apostle, Paul, with a grievous thorn and causes him to cry with joy from the blackness of his grief, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And for our sakes who are often as sorely tried he names in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews a great cloud of witnesses that died in faith after a life of suffering to wait for that glorious resurrection when both they and us would in the mercy of God be made perfect together.

The sonship which God has planned cannot be attained lightly and with ease. All who bear this eternal hope within their breasts may as well resolve here and now that the only path that leads to sonship is the path of suffering. Along that path is lonesomeness, temptation, despair, trials, tribulations, misunderstanding, rejection, pain - a great variety of sufferings that come in one way to you, another way to me, and in still another way to our brother or sister traveler. It is unavoidable. It cannot be dodged. At the beginning of the road that leads to sonship stands the first Son of God, Jesus Christ the Lord, saying, "If any man would follow Me, let him deny himself (self) and take up his cross and follow Me." It is still the way of the cross that leads us home, and be warned of this: Your associates will become fewer and fewer as you approach the agonies of Gethsemane, and when you reach your cross you will find yourself alone - alone except for Christ who has now formed within you.

It disgusts me to hear these breezy preachers proclaiming abundance for all and freedom from all sickness and pain and poverty. It has a wonderful appeal to the flesh and to the carnal mind, but it is a way that seemeth right unto a man and the end thereof are the ways of death. It is a gross untruth to tell a suffering man that his suffering is caused by some inconsistency or sin in his life. How often I have heard it proclaimed that the tribulations and distresses through which God's people pass are caused through some sin in their lives and that if they were right with God they would have no trouble at all. It is a lie, I tell you. It is a lie. The opposite is the truth. I know that sin and profligacy have caused many forms of sickness and distress among wicked men, but that is another question altogether and certainly gives no license to condemn a righteous man who is living in good conscience before the Lord. Was Job sick because he was sinful? No! A thousand times No! He was sick because God wanted to bring him to sonship and to sonship He brought him. I often think of the nosey way the disciples asked Jesus about the blind man when they said, "Who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus replied, "Neither this man nor his parents, but that the glory of God should be manifested." (Jno. 9:2, 3) I do not ask you to glory in your sickness, your loss of business, or whatever other tribulation may come upon you, but glory in the fact that as you allow these things to work in you the lesson God intended the end will be sonship. Perhaps, if we enquired of God as Paul did, we might hear Him say to us, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness," and then we could rejoice and say with him, "Most gladly therefore will I take pleasure in afflictions, in distresses, in persecutions, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak then am I strong."

I thoroughly believe in divine healing and could write a book on the healings I have seen in my own ministry, but I greatly fear that healing has been taken over by unscrupulous men who, in spite of all their protestations to the contrary, make themselves rich by playing upon the sufferings of the people. The eyes of the people have been turned away from Christ while they run endless journeys to place their confidence in a human being - in a highly advertised man.

What hypocrites we have become as we blithely sing, "The way of the cross leads home," yet senselessly smite the man who has a cross to bear! What inconsistent humbug is it that allows a man to read the words of the Lord, "We shall through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven," while with tongue in cheek we condemn those who are sweating blood as they wrestle in their Gethsemanes or struggle beneath their heavy cross on the way to their Golgotha! Such men and women, void of spiritual understanding, do not know that they themselves are adding their weight to our cross and are casting stumbling stones before our bleeding

feet. Have you ever considered the scripture which says, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God." (1 Pet. 4:1, 2) "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin!" There is something about suffering of any kind that brings the world and the flesh into its proper perspective. Suffering makes us understand things as they really are. By suffering we see the worthlessness of all the passing vanities of earth and by it we are weaned away from the vain deceits that concern a purely physical world. Suffering of any kind causes us to be done with the transient affairs of this present age and inspires us to anchor all our hopes within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered.

Since heaven's greatest desire for the sons of men is that they shall be sons of God, let us learn that God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. For what son is there that receiveth not chastisement? Chastisement is sent that we might learn the will of the Father and come to cherish that will above all the glittering prizes of the world now present or the world which is to come. We are not asked to accept suffering for suffering's sake, but we are asked to accept and endure suffering for sonship's sake. This is the royal road that leads us to sonship. This is the burning cleansing fire that is to try us. It will not singe one hair of our head nor leave the smell of fire upon us, but it will bum off our bondages and shackles and leave us free to walk unharmed in the fire with One like the son of God.

I do not know how or why Christians came to the conclusion that sonship was to be declared and made manifest by mighty works. It pains my heart to hear of men who imagine they are manifested sons of God, because of their prominence in some field of ministry. I know of no man or woman on earth today who even remotely resembles a manifested son of God. We are at the very door of the great manifestation of the sons of God, but God hath reserved it for a time known only to Himself. Then the wonderful perfection of the sons of God will be manifested. There will be a resurrection of those sons who sleep to join those who still walk the earth. "They without us should not be made perfect". Neither shall we without them be made perfect. There shall be a resurrection unto life that shall disclose the wonder of the ages. It was for this very reason that the Lord said to Daniel, "Go thy way, Daniel, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Dan. 12:13) It is near, very near; even at the doors.

There is something about sonship that has a deep root in the hearts of all people. The families of earth anxiously await the arrival of a son. In ancient times it was thought a tragedy that any family should be without a son who would carry on the work and name of the father. This longing in the heart of all mankind had its origin in the heart of the eternal Father who, upon bringing His only begotten Son into the world, proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It must have been a wonderful night for the shepherds of Israel who heard the heavenly choir of angels proclaiming the coming of the Son of God. It was a grand moment in John's life when he saw the heavens proclaiming, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." God was delighted with His Son, His 'only son. So delighted was He in that Son's perfection that even before the worlds began He purposed to prepare a whole family of sons in His exact image and likeness and form of them one great body of sons which should rule the entire universe according to His divine will.

The languages of earth simply do not contain words that are able to express the vast importance of this family of God's sons. There is not a doubt but that every one of us has failed to comprehend the universal purpose of God in bringing many sons to glory. Words utterly fail to explain the truth which revelation inspires, leaving us helplessly groping for expression. If the Spirit of God will come to my aid, I will try to state as best I can the wonderful purpose of God in sonship. Well do I know that my best efforts will fall far short of His glorious understanding, but, if His Spirit will stir the deep chord of revelation, then understand will come. Ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things God hath prepared for them that love Him, but He hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.

"... The works that I do shall ye do also and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father." (Jno. 14:12) This passage of scripture has been the subject of discussion for centuries. The discussion always involves the mighty works of Jesus and the practical impossibility of anyone's doing any work greater than His work. We recount His mighty acts in healing every manner of sickness and disease. We tell with awe of His raising the dead back to life again. We repeat with wonder the story of the stilling of the sudden storm on the

lake of Galilee and of His walking the stormy waves. We love to read the accounts of the devils that were cast out by His word and of the endless hosts of sad and afflicted who went away filled with joy and we tell of His words of wisdom and the teachings which none could gainsay nor resist. We speak of His undying love and mercy to all who needed Him. We glory in His death and resurrection and His ascension into heaven. So many marvels crowned His wonderful life that words fail us to tell or imagine how glorious He really was. Perhaps the beloved John most appropriately described it all by saying, "I suppose, if all the books were written that should be written, even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." (Jno. 21:25)

What then are these mighty works of which He spoke when He who could not lie declared, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do because I go to My Father?" If we are going to understand what He said, we shall have to open our hearts to a completely new understanding of God's eternal purposes. We will have to see that sonship is God's masterpiece, and that in the manifestation of the sons of God the eternal purposes of God find their complete fulfillment.

The great soul-gripping truth is this. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, is the only begotten Son of God. Moreover He is the first begotten Son of God, but not the last begotten. He is the firstborn of a vast family of sons who through the wisdom and grace of God are to be born of God, not of water, not of blood, not of flesh, but born of God. Jno. 1:13. Thus it is that Paul by the wisdom of God given unto him did write, "Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29) I love the translation of Weymouth which reads, "That He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers." Just how vast that family is I am not sure, but I am sure there will be 144,000 who have the name of God in their foreheads. These are sons of God. (Rev. 14) It is a small company in relation to the billions of earth, but for the sake of sonship and one body in the exact image of Jesus Christ it is indeed a vast family. This is the man-child company spoken of in Rev. 12. These are they who are to be caught up to God and to His throne and who will have the privilege of perfecting the woman in the wilderness and of bringing her forth purified, leaning on the arm of her beloved.

Before we speak further of greater works, let us open our hearts that God may speak to us and show us what a son of God really is, for the greater works of which Jesus spoke are not to be performed by ordinary believers, but by that vast family of sons who are now nearing the hour of manifestation. They are that chosen company, selected from many ages, who through fires and furnaces of affliction have been brought into that same glorious image of Jesus Christ. These sons of God are like Him. They are exactly like Him. They are in His image. (Rom. 8:29) They are in His image and after His likeness. They are so completely sons of God, so completely like Him, so completely born of Him, so completely of His mind and will and purpose that their one difference is that He (the blessed Jesus) is the eldest in that vast family of sons, Rom. 8:29. He is the head of the body of sons and they with Him are the bridegroom, the last Adam in all His completeness.

With the pen of inspiration Paul wrote, "It behooved Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain (Jesus Christ) of our salvation perfect through suffering." (Heb. 2:10) In like manner John, his soul aflame with inspiration, wrote, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." (1 Jno. 3:2) When He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Wonderfully like Him! Exactly like Him! In His Image! In His likeness! The omniscience of His wisdom, the purity of His truth, the omnipotence of His power, the immutability of His love, the faithfulness of His purpose! Full of His grace, His purpose. His kindness, and His unending mercy! The sons shall be like Him for He shall dwell in them all.

Oh, what glory divine it would have been to have stood with John that day on lonely Patmos to behold with him that complete Christ! The Christ of Nazareth complete with all His sons in the end of the age! The glorious head with eyes as lamps of fire all complete with the other sons of His body standing with His beautiful feet burning as though in a furnace of fire! And when the voice of that One like the Son of man rang out, it was not the voice of the lonely Galilean, but the voice as the sound of many waters. Many waters means many peoples, and the peoples here are the sons of God. The vision is recorded for our knowledge and inspiration thus: "On the Lord's day I was inspired by the Spirit and I heard behind me a loud voice like the blast of a trumpet... I turned to see who it was who was speaking to me; and then I saw seven golden lampstands, and in

the center of the lampstands One resembling the Son of man, clothed in a robe which reached to His feet and a girdle of gold across His breast. His head and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like silver bronze when it is white hot in a furnace; and His voice was as the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword was seen coming from His mouth, and His face was like the sun shining in its full power. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." (Rev. 1:11-16) (Weymouth)

Before the glory of that vision John fell to the earth as dead. Never in all his long, eventful life, filled with the wonders of spiritual experience, had he ever once imagined the breath-taking glory of the Lord's Christ. He had seen the Galilean subjugate to His control any force or power He desired. He had beheld the awe-inspiring view from the mount of the transfiguration. He had walked with Christ after the resurrection and had seen His glorified body. He had watched Him ascend to heaven and had experienced the glory divine of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. If any man on earth understood the purpose of God, it must have been John, but though he had seen the glory of Christ as He was at first, he was not prepared to see Him as He is at last. Before the effulgent glory of that vision he fell as dead. Years before he had heard the Savior say, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Now as his eyes beheld the harvest, Christ in fullness and completeness, he understood the meaning of those words. Many sons brought to glory! Every one in His image and likeness! Everyone with His nature, His mind, and His voice so that His speaking was as the voice of a multitude. Here for the first time we get a picture of what the body of Christ really is - not a hodge-podge of religious denominations, sects and organizations, but one like the Son of man with one vision, one voice and one likeness.

If by the grace of God the truth of this holy vision can burst upon you, all other loves will fade away from your heart. The activities of a visible Babylonish church system have tarnished and dimmed our vision so that we see nothing of the truth. In our desire to promote we have promoted things instead of Christ. We have loved programs and meetings instead of loving Him until we find ourselves in the end of the age with a sort of Christless Christianity. Oh, how we have lauded our systems, our education, our degrees, and our theology! But the more of worldly wisdom we know, the less we know of the wisdom of God, and the deeper we go into such systems, the farther away from God we get. How proud we have become of our titles and degrees that are supposed to commend us to the world as men of understanding in spiritual things when in reality we know nothing yet as we ought to know! Men love to be called Reverend and Doctor, Most Reverend and Very Reverend, Reverend Doctor, Father, and many other such titles. But this I know; any man who even glimpses the glory of God will be ashamed of his knowledge and repent that he ever thought himself to be someone of importance. Let us drop all these titles that commend us to men, but not to God, and humble ourselves in His sight that we may begin to partake of the wisdom that is from above, for we cannot partake of His wisdom which is from above until we abandon our wisdom which is of this world.

Let us return now to the thought of the greater works. When the beloved Luke wrote the book we call the Acts of the Apostles, he commenced his work with the enlightening statement, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up..." (Acts 1:1, 2) The part of the verse of interest here is the statement "began to do and teach", for this tells us as nothing else can that Jesus did not complete His work when He was on earth, but He only "began" His work.

In making the above statement, I am fully aware that such a thought runs contrary to long-established views of theology, but we are not concerned with the views of theology, for theology is not really the views of God but the ideas of men. I am concerned only with the purpose of God as it is revealed in His word in the light of inspiration and revelation.

When the Son of God came into the world, He came to do only one complete work and that was the work of redemption. The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45. Thus it was that, when He died, He uttered the three significant words, "It is finished." Thus also He declared before the Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." (Jno. 17:4) What people of all ages have failed to see is that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, did the work which God gave Him to do and no more than that. All the other wonderful things He did were only a beginning of a work that was to be carried out by the other sons who were to come into His glorious image as the ages passed. To them it is given to do greater works than He did and to bring to God's universal creation the

endless blessing of the redemption He purchased with His eternal blood, which He gave for the life of the world.

It seems to me that the wild creatures of creation together with the grass of the fields and the trees of the woods have more understanding of God's plan for them than do the theologians of the church, for Paul by the word of inspiration wrote these words: "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not they only, but ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (sonship), to wit, the redemption of the body." (Rom. 8:19-23) Perhaps there is no other single passage of scripture which throws so much light on the great works which have been left for the sons of God to do. The whole of God's creation is breathlessly waiting for the time of the manifestation of the sons of God. The whole creation has been subjected to a sort of universal travail. It has endured for centuries the terrible bondage of corruption, but God has placed a hope in all creation that it will eventually be delivered from its thralldom and decay by the ministry of the sons of God, who are now being formed in the very image of Christ and will be manifested in the glory of His resurrection at the end of this age and throughout the entire kingdom to come.

The mighty works which Jesus, the first Son, began will be completed by the other sons who are coming into His image. This is not presumption on the part of man. This is the plan and purpose of God. Failure to see this truth has caused men to create many hare-brained schemes to try to convert the world or to bring in some Utopia of their own choosing long before God's time.

When Jesus said, "Greater works than these shall ye do," He meant exactly that. As the Head Son of the body He demonstrated the mighty power and glory of manifested sonship and showed that all things, absolutely all things, come under the power and authority of the sons of God. While He was here, He with wonderful grace and power opened the eyes of blind men and caused some who were dumb to speak. But a greater day is at hand when under the rule of the sons of God all blindness and dumbness will flee from the earth, for "the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." In His beginning of miracles He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, but the day is at hand when "the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick." (Isa. 33:24) Jesus by His power of eternal life raised men from the dead, but the day is coming under the government of the sons of God when men shall not die at all, but live out the fullness of their days in reverence and godly fear. (Isa. 65:20)

It would be simple to go on and on with these comparisons. There are, however, other mighty works which Jesus during all His life never once began to do. I am absolutely certain that there was no sickness or disease known to mankind that He did not cure. There was no demon that did not flee at His order. Even death dropped the keys and fled at His command. Wind and water obeyed His will, and those who came to take Him went backward and fell to the ground when He spoke. But did this King of kings and Lord of lords ever attempt to set up a kingdom and govern the world? Did He ever call all the nations before Him and set up a judgment seat? Did He ever attempt to wipe inequity and inequality from the earth? Did He command men to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks? Did He ever command the demon of war to flee from the hearts of men and trouble the earth no more? Did He cause the desert to blossom as the rose or Jerusalem to be safely inhabited? No, He did not - not because He could not, but because God has reserved these greater works of universal magnitude and glory for those sons of God who are to share His image and who appear at the end of the age.

The work and scope of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth was amply described by Himself when He entered into the synagogue and read from the book of Isaiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach (proclaim) the gospel to the poor. He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18, 19) His whole life consisted of a proclamation and a demonstration of those all-embracing wonders that are to come during that coming kingdom age, which He here calls the acceptable year of the Lord.

There is yet another work that transcends by far anything that has ever been known. It has been so carefully hidden from our understanding that for the most part we do not even know of its existence. There is a realm beyond the natural realm where men with spiritual senses see, hear, taste, touch, and smell all spiritual realities. The transcending glory of that realm has been lost to man ever since the fall. Which do you think is greater? To restore a man's natural hearing that he may hear the sounds of earth such as music and the voices of people or to restore that spiritual ear that listened to God's voice in lovely Eden and heard the voice of Alpha and Omega on the Isle of Patmos? Which would you say was greater - to restore a man's physical sense of taste that he might taste loaves and fishes or restore his spiritual taste that he might taste and see that the Lord is good? Again which do you think is the greater - to restore man's physical sense of feeling that he might feel the hard substances of earth or to restore his spiritual sense of feeling that he might feel the moving of the breath of God? The physical sense of smell is a wonderful sense, indeed, but the fragrance of heaven's perfume is greater far and will once again be enjoyed as it was in God's Eden long ago. There is an unseen world all about us that the natural man does not comprehend. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. Yet it is there. We lost our spiritual sight in Eden. We lost our spiritual hearing. We lost our ability to smell and taste and feel all spiritual things. The Bible gives abundant examples of the existence and nearness of that glorious realm of spiritual reality and it is clear for anyone to see that all who have experienced the blessedness of even a momentary entrance into that realm have found that it alone is real, while we who are in this bondage of corruption live in a world of illusion and unreality.

There is coming a day when all the glories of the spiritual world will be opened to men and this glorious freedom, this greater work, is reserved for the sons of God to do. We are nearing the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God. The long, long awaited liberation from bondage, thralldom, and decay is near at hand. The greater works which Jesus, our elder brother, told us of are soon to begin on the earth. The hour is at hand when the government shall be upon His shoulder to order the whole world in justice and judgment, peace and equity for the glorious kingdom age. At this very moment the governments of earth are falling apart at the seams and collapsing, but God is preparing an enduring kingdom that shall never be destroyed. The sons shall reign with Him.

I have found even among good men that there is a tendency to imagine that the Son of God (Jesus Christ) and the sons of God who are to be manifested at the end of the age are two separate entities. This is not true. Such an idea comes from a lack of understanding as to what a son of God really is, and how such a son comes into being at all.

It is impossible to explain to the natural mind how two entirely separate things can, though separate, still be one. Men seem to be able to understand how a foot, a hand, and a head can, though separate and different, all be members of one and the same body. We are able to understand this because these members are joined together by flesh and sinew and blood, but when we are asked to believe that the Son of God at the right hand of the Father is one with the sons of God on earth, we flounder in the bogs of unbelief and trip over the stones of doubt and misunderstanding. If, however, we would ask God to reveal this mystery, we would easily see that, if physical members joined only by the weakness of flesh and blood can be one, how much more one are things joined by the Spirit of the living God! An arm that is severed from the body no longer belongs to the body because the bonds of flesh are broken, but time or place or space has nothing whatever to do with the unity of the Spirit, for the Spirit is omnipresent even as God is omnipresent. Therefore, whether a man's abode is on earth or in heaven makes absolutely no difference to spiritual unity, for to spirit there is neither time nor place. Time, place, distance, and all such things belong to the bondage and corruption of the flesh. The Spirit is confined by none of these things. Some day we will realize what a world of truth lay in the words of Jesus when He said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Jno. 3:13. He who lived as a Son of God and had His being in the Father and in the Spirit, even while standing upon the earth, was able to declare that He was in heaven, and so truly He was.

This should help us to see how we are one with Christ and how Christ is one with the Father. This should help us to understand the fathomless depths of meaning in the words of Jesus, "I in them and Thou in Me that they may be made perfect in one," (Jno. 17:23), and again in **verse 21**, "That they may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." It is this unity with Him and this alone that makes a son of God.

With all emphasis we must declare that sons of God only exist because of their vital relationship to Jesus Christ. By this I mean that Jesus Christ dwells in you as God Almighty dwelt in Him. If He does not dwell in you, you are not a son. It is Christ in you that is the hope of glory. Not Christ in heaven! Not Christ in the Father! Not Christ in your brother! It is Christ in you!

Good works, giving of alms, preaching, signs, miracles, healings, and all the rest have nothing whatever to do with sonship. We can have all these things and yet never live a day as a son of God. There are far too many people in the world who have the mistaken idea that their mighty works are proof of their sonship. Actually these works are proof of nothing. The works may be good; they may be commendable; they may be beneficent; they may be worthy of reward, but they are not proof of sonship, and never will be. Surely Jesus made this fact abundantly plain when He said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out devils and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' " (Mark 7:22, 23) I can truthfully say that I believe in prophecy, but prophecy is no proof of sonship. I thoroughly believe in the casting out of devils, but it is not proof of sonship. Certainly I believe in wonderful works. But though you fill the earth with them, they will not commend you to God nor prove your sonship.

Let us consider again for a moment Paul's statement in (Col. 1:26, 27) "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is now manifest to His saints... which is Christ in you the hope of glory." The glory spoken of here is not heaven as has been generally supposed, but sonship. That is the highest and most glorious glory that God has ever given or ever will give. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them," said Jesus. (Jno. 17:22) "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called He also justified, and whom He justified He glorified." (Rom. 8:29-30) This is glory; this is glorification; this is sonship. The only hope of sonship, the only hope of glory, is for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to dwell in you and control and order every step of your life. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Christ in you is the hope of glory. Christ in me is the hope of glory. Sonship is not what I am, but what He is. Sonship is not what Christ is apart from me, but what He is in me.

Jesus Christ Himself was the Son of God because in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Even He did not hesitate to declare, "I can do nothing of Myself; as I hear I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will but the will of the Father which sent Me." (Jno. 5:30) And again He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do, for whatsoever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (Jno. 5:19) (If you would behold the glory and power of sonship, you should read Jno. 5:18-32.) Both the words and the works of Jesus were the words and the works of the Father who dwelt in Him. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me He doeth the works." (Jno. 14:10) It is the indwelling Christ that fills us with the very spirit of sonship. It is Christ within that causes the spirit to cry Abba Father. We can never be sons of God until that only begotten Son dwells in us. His indwelling presence will transform our lives until we are in His image and we can say with John, "As He is, so are we in this world."

We should earnestly consider the following question with prayer for guidance and understanding. Why was it that Jesus boldly and truthfully declared, "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him!" (Jno. 14:7) Why was it He said to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you and yet thou hast not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father!" (Jno. 14:9) This passage would be without any hope of understanding were it not for the verse following which says, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" Because the Father dwelt in fullness in Christ, therefore whoever had seen Christ had seen the Father. It is equally true that, when Christ lives in fullness in any human being, controlling and ordering his life, then whosoever has seen that man has also seen Christ. Paul the apostle saw that great truth by revelation when he declared, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." The I that was crucified was himself, but the I which lived was Christ.

During the last few days these tremendous truths have flooded in upon my soul. If you would be holy, do not try to be holy. Christ is holy so let Him live in you. If you long for righteousness, do not try to be righteous. Christ is righteous, therefore let Him live in you. If you long for purity, do not seek to be pure. Seek to let Him live in you for He is pure. Do you long for sonship? Do not waste time seeking sonship. Let Him live in you. He is God's Son. Your relationship to sects, denominations, people, or things means nothing at all. It is your relationship to Him that counts, for that means everything.

Did He not say, "He that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on Him?" Why is it that he who hath the Son hath life? Is it not because in Him is life? Is it not equally true then that He that hath the Son hath wisdom, for in Him dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom? Is it not true also that He who hath the Son hath the mind of Christ, and he that hath the Son hath purity, holiness, truth, longsuffering, love, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, judgment, and government? Does not the word declare that God has made Him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Oh! world of truth, in Him are all things! Christ is all and in all, and Christ in you is the hope of glory. Here and here alone is the glory of sonship.

A. B. Simpson must surely have grasped the truth when he wrote these immortal words:

Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;
Once it was the feeling, now it is His Word;
Once the gift I wanted, now the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.
All in all forever, Jesus, will I sing;
Everything in Jesus, and Jesus everything.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PREPARATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

We should approach all the great truths of God with a sense of reverence and godly fear. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and understanding, and all people who would approach unto God should come to Him with a sense of great awe, realizing that He is infinite in all wisdom and understanding but that we know nothing yet as we ought to know. It is much better to listen than to speak in God's presence. It is wise on our part to wrap the mantle of humility about our heads and stand to listen to His blessed voice. If men and women can be found who are more anxious to hear God speak than to hear themselves speak, we will find men and women who know the purpose of God. Sadly and bitterly we must confess that we have stood up boldly to argue our causes both loud and long, but we have spent little time at His feet disowning our own wisdom, disclaiming our own knowledge, emptying ourselves of vain traditions, repenting of our vain doctrines taught to us by men, and beseeching Him that we might be partakers of His eternal wisdom, His infinite understanding, His counsel and His might. Oh, that men would seek to cast off their natural minds, their human ways of looking at things, and become partakers of the mind of Christ!

Perhaps few people will believe me, but there is a day coming when all the great sermons will fade into insignificance in the light of His greatness and all the doctrines will become utterly lacking before the glory of His fullness. The great man will bow his head before God in shame and repentance and confess that he knew nothing as he ought to have known.

My heart's desire and prayer to God every waking hour of my life and in the night seasons as well is that I might be filled with the wisdom of Christ and be made one with His purpose and the knowledge of His will. For this to be accomplished, I find myself repenting constantly of the foolish things I have said, taught, and preached, and of the limited light and understanding I have had when I almost thought my little flickering candle to be as important as the sun and my tiny grain of sand to be the earth itself. Surely once again we need a Gamaliel to say to us, "Ye know nothing at all," or a Paul to say, "If any man thinketh he knoweth aught, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know," or Jesus to say to men who are so self-assured and confident in their knowledge of things, "Ye do greatly err, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God."

I am saying these things here and now so that we might know before we start reading the following pages that there is a universe of truth which we have never touched, heard, seen, nor tasted, and that if we would bow our heads before God and admit our ignorance, He would open to us the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man.

One of the first things that Christians need to learn is that God is God. We need spiritual revelation to show us that God is almighty, that all the power and authority in the universe belongs to Him; that all things were made by Him, all things were made for Him, and all things consist and exist by His power; that thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, whether in heaven or earth or hell, were created and designed by Him as part of His plan and purpose. Nothing can breathe or exist a second without Him. Nothing has power that He has not given. Even Satan himself is helpless and powerless and has no strength except what has been given him in the purpose of God. God is omnipotent. God is almighty. All power in heaven and earth belongs to Him.

Christians need a revelation of God's wisdom. It is not enough to say God is omniscient knowing the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end. We must be able to see that a mind so infinitely wise as to contain all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the universe would never allow anything of any description to sneak unknown into His purpose that He Himself had not planned. No mistakes were made in the Garden of Eden. Every detail was planned as part of an eternal purpose. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." There were no mistakes in Eden. Neither were there any after thoughts about Calvary. All was planned before the foundation of the world. God is not making any mistakes today either. No enemy of any description is hindering His purpose even in the least, but all things are working together to triumphantly complete His purpose even as Paul once said, "We can do nothing against the truth." 2 Cor. 13:8. No man can truly love God until he sees Him wise beyond the possibility of error, omnipotent beyond the possibility of defeat, immutable beyond the possibility of change, incorruptible beyond the possibility of decay, immortal beyond the possibility of death, loving beyond the possibility of loss, and eternal beyond the corroding influence of time.

Such a God as this leaves nothing to chance but includes all in His purpose. Only creatures of ignorance take chances. God never does. It was not chance that sold Joseph into Egypt. It was purpose. It was not chance that shipwrecked Paul on the Island of Melita. It was infinite purpose. It was not fate that confined him to jail. It was purpose. It is not bad fate that three quarters of the earth have not heard the gospel. It is purpose. The glory and the wonder of that infinite purpose will be made crystal clear in the ages yet unborn when all who sat in heathen darkness will see a great light. Once a man sees by the Holy Ghost that all things are working according to His purpose, then with confidence, abandonment, and dedication he can cast himself upon the almighty arms of the Father and submit himself to the direction of Him whose mind is infinite and His purpose immutable.

It is with knowledge of His glorious infinity and of the smallness of our own wisdom that we open our hearts to learn a little more about that purpose of purposes, the manifestation of the sons of God. You may have to change your mind a little or a lot as you read through these pages, but please remember that a change of mind is not a sign of stupidity, but of growth. It was not a backward step when man first began to believe that the earth was round and not flat. Mankind is forever discarding some clumsy old theory as new light is shed on the wonders of the universe. The puff of smoke on the ocean's horizon is a sign that a ship is coming, and the cloud the size of a man's hand was a sign to Elijah that many clouds were on the way, and the sound of abundance of rain.

There is nothing more important at this hour than the preparation of the sons of God for manifestation. The manifestation of the sons of God is God's purpose for the end of this age, or, should I say, for that period between the ages of grace and the kingdom, in like manner as Jesus Christ, the first Son, was manifested between the ages of law and grace. It is the next great event in God's order. There is an event for which the whole creation is groaning and travailing. That glorious event is the manifestation of the sons of God. For years we have been taught that the hope of the church is to be raptured out of the world to escape the tribulation. For years I went along with that belief, but I cannot help but feel that most of the hope for a rapture is built upon man's human desire to escape suffering and tribulation, not knowing that it is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of God. While we have some statements that appear very definite about our being caught

up, we must remember that Paul was caught up to the third heaven and yet remained right here on earth. John at Patmos was twice caught up to higher and higher realms in the Spirit in one and the same experience yet remained here to bear witness to it. Compare Rev. 1:10, Rev. 4:1. Then again the same truth is evident in Rev. 12 where the man child was caught up to God and His throne, yet was found feeding the woman in the wilderness even as Elijah did.

I have no great desire to change the mind of any man about these things, for we can safely leave this to the revelation of the Lord. However, the sons of God are not to be raptured out of the tribulation but will walk victoriously through it. They are not to be burned to a cinder by the fiery furnace of tribulation, but they are to walk as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with the Son of God, preserved in its sevenfold flame, to emerge liberated, unscathed, victorious, and without the smell of fire upon them. They are not to be eaten by the lions of the den, but to stand as Daniel unscathed and unharmed as the angel shut their mouths. They are not to perish of thirst in its wilderness, but to drink as Elijah of the brook of the living waters. They are not to die of hunger in its famine, but to supply the woman with meal and oil till judgment is sent forth unto glorious victory. They are not to be slain by its Jezebel (Babylon), but to defeat her prophets, destroy her altars, and race before the chariot of the king proclaiming rain upon the earth.

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children (sons) of God. For the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (sonship), to wit, (which means), the redemption of our bodies." (Rom. 8:18-23) This wonderful classic written by Paul on sonship shows what the true hope of mankind really is. May I further add that that hope is not confined to man but includes every creature and thing in the animal and vegetable world, and heaven itself is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

We must now prepare to follow along into deeper waters. You will not be able to hear with natural ears nor understand with natural minds what I am now going to say. You must beg God to open the eyes of your understanding that you might know the hope and the purpose that lies before us, and I pray mightily that God will open your eyes and anoint them with eye salve that you may behold these wonders.

It is a source of wonder to me that very, very few Christians can see any difference at all between the church and the manifested sons of God. But there is a vast difference, and I pray God will give us all help as we think about it now, for without His help and revelation we cannot hope to understand. In any marriage there are two bodies. There is one body of the man or bridegroom and another body of the woman or bride. The body of the man is a complete body in itself without the woman, having head, shoulders, torso, legs, and feet with every ligament, bone, and muscle. That body has its own head, its own body, and its own feet. This same thing is also true of the woman. She has her own head, her own body, and her own feet. But when the man and the woman are united in marriage, the man, the whole man, becomes the head of the woman, and the woman, becomes the body of the man. Thus also it is with Christ and the church. We must understand that the sons of God and the church are two distinct companies, the sons of God being the body of the bridegroom and the true church being the body of the bride. When both are complete and perfect they will become one. It is about this very thing that Paul speaks in Ephesians 5. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

At least twice in the holy scripture Jesus Christ is referred to as a sign. In that magnificent prophecy of Simeon recorded in **Luke 2:25-35** things far beyond human understanding are spoken. Even Joseph and Mary were staggered and caused to marvel at his words. In verse 34 it is recorded that he turned to Mary and said, "Behold, this child is set for a sign!" A sign of what?

Again in **Isa. 7:14** Jesus Christ is referred to as a sign. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His name Immanuel." While it is generally understood that the sign was the virgin birth, according to the words of Simeon "this child is for a sign." It is clear therefore that the sign was not the virgin birth but the child that was born of the virgin. Again I ask, a sign

of what? In exactly the same way as the little cloud the size of a man's hand in the days of Elijah was the sign of a sky full of clouds and abundance of rain, so Jesus Christ, the first begotten Son of God, was the sign of a vast number of sons to come of which He is the eldest, the first born, and the head. But all the other sons are with Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. They are one with Him even as He is one with the Father. They are in His image: they are a part of Him; they form the complete Christ.

This is in exact accord with what Paul says in **Rom. 8:28-29**. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose, for whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." This passage does not make sense aside from what I am saying. I know the hope is beyond our wildest imaginations. It takes away our breath, but it is true. There is a company being formed whose members are members of Christ, and sons of God, begotten of God, perfected through suffering, cleansed by His blood, made in His image, and members of the bridegroom. I cannot help but pause again to pray that God will give you the Spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you might know what is the hope of His calling. Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, was formed in the womb of an imperfect virgin. So now in like manner the vast family of sons is coming to perfection in the womb of another imperfect virgin. That is the existing church, torn by strife and division and carnality, held captive in Babylon and taxed by the dominion of a foreign power.

Every healthy body must be possessed of all its organs and its limbs. It must have, not only a head but hands, body, and feet. It should certainly then be easily understood that if Jesus of Nazareth, the first begotten Son of God, is the head of the body of the bridegroom, which is the sons of God, then those of us who are becoming sons will be hands and feet of His spiritual body. Do not turn away in unbelief. My heart has been pounding with joy and anticipation of this glorious thing for weeks, for there are things said about the feet of Christ that are said of nothing else. Therefore let us boldly pursue this course and see at least in part what the glorious truth really is.

In a normal birth the first member to be born is the head, then the body, and finally the feet. Ah! What sublime truth is here! That head was born two thousand years ago and through the centuries the other members of the body of Christ have been forming and coming forth from the womb. We cannot speak in particular about that now, but note that the last members to come forth from the womb are the feet. It is here our interests rest, for we are the members of the sons of God, the body of the bridegroom.

Jacob had twelve sons of whom the youngest was Benjamin. Benjamin was so named because he was born when Jacob was old. But he is the completeness of the family of Jacob and his name means 'son of my right hand, born in the extremity of the age'. That is where we come in. We are the feet of the body of the bridegroom born in the extremity of the age.

Just before the glorious triumph of Christ at Calvary we have on record in John 13 how Jesus poured water in a basin and, girding Himself with a towel, began to wash the disciples' feet. At last He came to Peter, and Peter asked the Lord, "Dost Thou wash my feet?" Jesus with utmost significance replied, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shall know hereafter." For many years I with many others have held foot-washing services, and while there was a certain amount of blessing in it, I always felt that we did not know nor understand what we were doing. There was some significance far beyond what we saw and far greater than the little ordinance we were following which seemed to be in accordance with the instructions of Christ. Peter did not know the significance of the thing Jesus was doing, John did not know, nor did any others. The great truth was to be known hereafter. "Thou shall know hereafter." It was to become plain in our day when we, the feet of the body of Christ, would be washed and prepared and made beautiful to spread the glorious gospel of peace to the universe. The story proceeds thus: Peter declared, "Thou shall never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me." Peter in his customary blundering way cried, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." The Lord bless him! He didn't know what he was talking about. But Jesus corrected him with these words, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." This is the hour of the cleansing of the feet.

The head was born pure, the hands have been cleansed long ago, but the feet, the only members of the body defiled by the earth, are being washed now. They are coming out of Babylon. Those naked feet are being shod

now with "the preparation of the gospel of peace." (Eph. 6:15) They will never again be contaminated with the dirt and grime of the earth.

Oh, how my heart leaped within me today as I read the words of the prophet, "O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments - shake thyself from the dust and sit down - therefore My people shall know My name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak; Behold, it is I."

"How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth: - For they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion." (Isa. 52:1-8)

It is the feet members of Christ who are to publish the tidings of the glory and peace of the kingdom according to Isaiah, and according to Paul it is the feet who are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I cannot help but believe that the preparation is on right now, and the feet members are being washed and shod in readiness to proclaim the glad tidings of peace.

How gloriously do the prophets describe the ministry of the feet. Let your heart thrill to its truth as we read. "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box (tree) together to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee and they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 60:13-15) "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." (Nahum 1:15) (We should notice as we read these passages that it is not said the feet of them, but the feet of him.) Zechariah, describing the tribulation and the war and the upheaval among the nations, ends the struggle by saying, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem." (Zech. 14:4)

It is small wonder that Jesus said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shall know hereafter." Before we leave this part of our thought, I would like to point out one or two more outstanding things which show very clearly the infinite relationship between Christ, the firstborn Son, the first manifested Son, and that other glorious company of sons who come into His image and likeness and are the members of His body, members of His family, and members of the bridegroom.

John the beloved disciple had been with Jesus in the mount of transfiguration. He had seen the transcending wonders of things that were to come. Like the others he, too, had fallen down afraid, dumbfounded by the glory that was manifest, as he saw the face of Christ shining as the sun and heard the voice of God from the glory saying, "This is My beloved Son." Sixty or sixty-five years had gone by since that wonder-filled day and now for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ this same John was exiled on the lonely island of Patmos. I do not think there was any place on earth that was lonely for John. He knew far too well how to fellowship with Christ in the Spirit to ever feel lonely, for the further he was from the earth the nearer he was to Him, and that is what he loved. Well John knew the Son of God and the sound of His voice was indelible in his ear. He had heard Him preach the sermon on the mount, had watched His gentle hand calm the fevered brow, raise the dead, and cast out the demons with His word. His wondering eyes had beheld Him on the mount of transfiguration; he had talked with Him after the resurrection; he had watched with awe as He rose from the earth and ascended into heaven. Yet he was not prepared for the excellent glory of the revelation that awaited him that distant day on Patmos, for the glory he was then to see was unlike any he had ever beheld before. In times past he had seen Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the first born from the dead, the manifested Son, the Son of Mary, the Son of the living God, but now he was to see the Christ in all His glorious completeness, Jesus Christ the Head with all that vast family of sons, every one in His exact image and likeness. The mercy drops of God were falling upon him that day as the glory of the Lord encompassed him as a cloud and from out the glory he heard a voice speaking. How well he knew that blessed voice, for oft its accents had fallen on his willing ear, and yet it was completely different, for he had known the voice of the lonely Galilean, Jesus Christ the Head of the Sons, but now that voice though unmistakable was not altogether identical. Now instead of one voice it thundered forth as the sound of many waters, many people, many sons; yet as many waters lose their identity in one ocean, so the voices of these many manifested sons lose their identity in the glory of Himself that in all things He might have the preeminence.

It was natural that John should turn around to look for the one who spoke, and looking he saw the Christ, the Son of the living God, but was it He? Was it the Christ of long ago? John declared it was "one like the Son of man." Very, very like Him. The exact image of Him. There He stood at the end of the age in all His glorious completeness as if to say, "Here am I and the children which God has given Me," (**Heb. 2:13**), Christ, the first Son, and all the younger sons now perfected in His image standing with Him, one glorious and perfect bridegroom. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet, His glorious feet, like brass as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice was as the sound of many waters. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and His countenance was as the sun shining in its strength. And when John saw Him, he fell at His feet as dead. Oh, the glory of the message that came forth from the lips of the Christ as He took John by the hand to raise him up! "Fear not, I am the first and the last." John had seen Him before and had known him as the first, but never had he seen the glorious end of the matter, Christ as He is at last. There before him stood the One who was dead and was now alive forevermore. The One with the keys of both death and hell. When the blessed Christ rose from the dead two thousand years ago. He led forth from hell a host of captives, but now at the end of the time He stands holding the keys that unlock the gates of both hell and death. No wonder He once said, "On this rock I build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Marvelous are the promises of God made to those members of the body of Christ which are called the feet. Indeed it is positively true and abundantly evident that the final crushing blow that will destroy everything belonging to the kingdom of Satan will be accomplished by the feet members of the body of Christ, the sons of God, who will be manifested at the end of the age.

It was in the sad evening of the same day man fell that the first promise to the feet members of Christ was made. God had come to the garden to talk to the children He loved only to find them hiding from Him among the trees He had made. They had sewn fig leaves together to hide their nakedness, for the glory of God that had covered them at the first was gone and they were desperately afraid. And God said, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me gave me of the tree and I did eat." And the Lord said unto the woman, "What has thou done?" And the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." And the Lord said unto the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt go and dust shall thou eat all the days of thy life; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (**Gen. 3:14, 15**) Here the first promise of the coming of Christ, the seed of the woman, is made, but it is a promise not only of the coming of Jesus Christ who is the head but also of the coming of those sons in His image and in His likeness who are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, that complete Christ whom John saw and described as "one like the Son of Man." **Rev. 1:13**, whose feet were like fine brass (for judgment) as if they had burned in a furnace. These are not idle words. They are words of transcending truth and revelation. The promise to Eve was that the seed of the woman should finally and irrevocably crush the head of the serpent under His heel, or under His feet. We can find greater confirmation of this elsewhere. In **Heb. 2:8** Paul said, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." Paul must be referring to the same thing when he says in **Rom. 16:20**, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." David also speaking by the Spirit said, "Thou hast put all things under His feet."

It is always a fatal mistake for any man regardless of who he is. That mistake will lead him into endless difficulty and make him bigoted in his ideas and so established in his ways that God can never give him any greater light. We should always remember that the revelation of the Lord is as the path of the just that shineth more and more until the day is full. Revelation grows from the frail flickering light of dawn to the glory and fullness of the noonday sun. Oh, so often people send me books and tracts on moldy old subjects that had their day sometimes several hundred years ago. They are still striving to prove things that need no proof. They are strumming harps that have no strings. They are like the Jews hanging on to the law of Moses after the Holy Ghost was outpoured and Paul had come with his marvelous gospel of the grace of God. But even while I write the shadows are lengthening on the day of the gospel of grace. The day of Paul's gospel is drawing to a rapid close and the glorious new day of the kingdom is at hand. Let us not try to revive the age of grace with its flickering lights, its spiritual gifts, and all its imperfections, but let us follow the increasing light into the perfect day where everything in-part is done away. If you want to stay there, my brother, by all means stay, but don't ask me to stay with you, for the Holy Spirit is urging me within to stand with His feet on Mount Zion and

proclaim the glorious kingdom of eternal peace. Farewell to the age of imperfections. Farewell to things that are in part. Farewell to seeing through a glass darkly and good morning to that which is perfect; good morning to that which is complete; good morning to seeing face to face.

Face to face, O blissful moment,
Face to face, to see and know;
Face to face with my redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loved me so.
What rejoicing in His presence
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are straightened
And the dark things shall be plain.

When God revealed to Adam and Eve that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, I am sure they saw the truth only in its embryo form. They saw the woman as Eve and the seed as Seth. Would we dare say they were wrong in so seeing the revelation? No! A thousand times no! They were perfectly right in what they saw, but they saw very, very little. They could not look through the vista of the years and see through the line of their son Seth that the glorious Christ in all His sinless purity would be born of a virgin mother, begotten of God, the seed of the Holy Ghost; and Joseph and Mary, rejoicing in the birth of the Christ-child, the only begotten Son of God, could not look down the corridors of the years to the culmination of the age of grace and see that the seed which fell into the ground and died had brought forth a whole harvest of begotten sons in His own image and in His exact likeness. They could not hear the words of revelation flowing from the anointed lips of Paul as he proclaimed, "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren," **Rom. 8:29**, or as Weymouth translates it, "That He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers!"

In my spirit I hear the weeping voice of Jeremiah come ringing down the centuries saying to us at the end of this age, "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter." **Lam. 4:2**. But the full glory of the revelation was left for John to see, and when he saw it, he fell down as dead at the feet of that glorious seed of the woman, that glorious Christ, that complete Christ, the head, the body, the hands, and the feet - the seed of the woman that was promised to Eve long ago now ready to fulfill all that was promised in destroying forever from the face of the universe every work of the serpent. It was left for the beloved John to witness the final phase of the complete birth of that Son who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Thus in Rev. 12 we read that he saw a spiritual virgin bringing forth a man child, not a male child as some say, but a wonder never before known; a child that is a fully developed man at birth. Even Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man because He was born of a human and an imperfect mother though He was the Son of God. But this child is born of a spiritual woman and so is born a man-child. This is the Son who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This is the final company of the sons of God, the feet members of the body of Christ who are to rule all nations with a rod of iron and finally put their heel on Satan's head to destroy his power in the whole universe.

The days of the preparation of the bridegroom are almost complete. The feet are coming forth from the womb of the virgin. Then the preparation of the sons of God will be accomplished. The feet are ready for the washing that they might be cleansed from the last particles of the dust of the earth and have their part in Him. "What I do thou knowest not now," Jesus said to Peter, "but thou shall know hereafter." Hallelujah! The glory of the truth is left for us, the feet, to know and I know for a surety that Christ is cleansing His feet from every trace of the world and its systems.

The story of the final coming forth of the sons of God is revealed in the twelfth chapter of Revelation in these words: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she being with child cried travailing in birth and in pain to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all the nations with

a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God, that they (the sons of God) should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (Rev. 12:1-6)

No one realizes better than I what difficulty is faced in declaring the things I have here taught. The difficulty arises because Christians have become literally filled with tradition and with stuffy old theories formed in the minds of men who imagine they are students of the word of God. I am a great lover of the Bible, but I am always afraid of any man who thinks he understands it. That man is a deceiver of himself and has closed his eyes to the shining light of the revelation of the Holy Spirit as it illumines His word. He will find himself possessing a stagnant pool and denying that rivers and oceans even exist. But those who can see the truth of these things will purify themselves even as He is pure.

We are in the closing hours of the dispensation of grace. The certain hope of the kingdom of God lies before us. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, together with every living thing that moves draw near to the moment of triumph. The whole creation, that has groaned in travail and pain throughout the night of every dispensation, is soon to hear the joyous song of the kingdom morning where justice and equity will spread like a mantle over the tired world, for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters fill the seas.

Almost two milleniums ago God manifested His first Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the first born and the head of all the sons of God prepared of God throughout the ages, and when all those sons are complete, they will form one body, a sonship body in the exact image and likeness of that first Son who is Himself the image of the Father.

There are many things to learn from types and anti-types, for by them truth is taught with more force than any spoken word. In the plan of God two distinct systems are to rule in power over the entire earth. The first was Babylon, the image of which was vividly portrayed by the prophet Daniel. (Dan. 2:31-35) The second is to be the kingdom of Christ, the Lord and Ruler seen by the Apostle John at Patmos. (Rev. 1:10-18) See also Dan. 2:44. If we consider the image of Babylon with its head of gold, its breasts and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron and its feet part iron and part clay, we will learn this: The image of Babylon is one image, all the various parts of the image contributing together to make one image of the dread forms of Babylonish rule that would prevail over the entire earth. With this in mind we may readily see that, when John beheld the revelation of the fullness of Christ, Rev. 1:10-18, he saw that the head, the hair, the eyes, the hands, and the feet, though all particular parts, were but one body. This was the revelation of the fullness of the sonship company, the in-Christ company, of which He is the head and the first born. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of the image of Babylon. (Dan. 2:38) Christ is the Head of the sons. (Rom. 8:29) The feet of the image of Babylon were ready to fall apart in dust, but the feet of Christ, like unto brass eternally enduring, burned as in a furnace of fire. Just as the image of Babylon representing all dominions and empires was one image, so this image of Christ with its many members is but one body. As many soldiers form one army, so many sons make one body, and that body is the fullness of Christ. When Paul exhorted the Ephesians to come to the stature of the fullness of Christ, Eph. 4:13, he was speaking of the fullness John saw in Rev. 1:13-15.

This is the perfect man among the candlesticks (churches) in His image. And we may further say that could we look more closely we would certainly see that every nerve and fiber, every muscle and sinew of that mighty one like unto the Son of man, was itself a manifested son of God, each the image of the other and all the image of Jesus Christ, the Head of all the sons of God.

The sons of God who are coming to maturity at the end of the age are the feet of Him. (Isa. 52:7; 60:13, 14) The clay feet of the image of Babylon are about to be smitten and crumble to dust. (Dan. 2:34, 35) With them will crumble the whole system of Babylon with all its milleniums of confusion. But the feet of Christ are not of clay but as brass (judgment) burning in a furnace of fire; for judgment shall be given to the saints of the Most High and they shall reign unto the ages of the ages. (Dan. 7:26, 27)

Deep from the depths of my spirit there comes a longing for the purification of the saints of the Most High. Too long have these sons wasted their living with harlot churches. It is time to come out from among them and

return to the Father. It is time for the washing of the feet, not in ceremony, but in reality. This is the hour when we are to know what only Jesus knew when He said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me." (John 13: 6-8) This is the fulfillment of that blessed type so richly manifested when the woman washed His feet with tears of repentance and love and anointed them with the symbolic oil of the Spirit of God. (Luke 7:37, 38) We are those feet of Christ whom He is now washing (John 13:4, 5) that we might be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. (Eph. 6:14, 15) "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:7) (Rom. 10:15) Long ago Jesus showed them His hands and His side, and then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord; but the hour is at hand when He will show unto all the world His blessed feet, for it is they who will publish to all the world the glad news, Thy God reigneth.

There are many today whose feet are defiled, for they are far too interested in the affairs of this passing age though they protest otherwise. I am convinced that no man who has any love left in him for this present evil age will ever attain to that glorious feet company of the sons of God, for those who are with Him are not only called, but chosen and faithful as well. (Rev. 17:14) He whose feet are as brass in a furnace of fire is portraying in parable, expressive beyond words, that those who are to judge the nations of the earth must certainly themselves be first judged in fire, for the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, and all that is wood, hay, and stubble shall be destroyed. (1 Cor. 3:12-16)

Let us then now judge ourselves and thus cleanse ourselves of all that is wood and hay and stubble, for these things vividly portray the passing and not the permanent. Let all who are double-minded purify their hearts. Let us make a clean break with the harlot systems of earth. Let us recognize every denomination, every sect, and every religious system as being part and parcel of the Babylon system that is soon to crumble, bringing destruction not only to itself but to all who are found in her. (Rev. 18:28)

All who are members of Christ must suffer the pains of crucifixion. The Head was pierced with thorns; the hands were pierced with nails, the side was pierced with a spear. So also must the feet be pierced, for He who proudly displayed His hands and His side shall presently display with equal pride His wounded feet. He from whom all men fled that He might suffer alone amid the millions who swarmed around will also have us to share the cross of walking alone and misunderstood amid the millions of this crooked and perverse age. The hour of preparation of the feet company is at hand. It is the preparation of the final company of God's sons. Is it too much that we should be asked to abandon the trifles in which other men are so engrossed? For he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet and is clean every whit.

CHAPTER FOUR THE SEALING OF THE SONS OF GOD

It would be impossible to over-emphasize the importance of the hour in which we now live. It should be plain even to unregenerate minds that the end of the age is upon us. There is a tenseness and an expectancy in the air that causes all men to believe that we are rapidly approaching an unavoidable climax from which there is no escape nor any shadow of turning. Events are taking place in the world that are irresistible. Spiritual forces have been set in motion that are beyond human understanding. As a boat that has passed Redemption Point in the Niagara River is swept by the rushing relentless cataract toward its inevitable doom, so the world, which has long flirted with the river of destruction, has been caught in its rapids now to be hurled with ever increasing speed to dreadful tribulation and destruction.

The twelfth chapter of Revelation gives a wonderful description of the travail of a spiritual woman and of a man-child that was born of her travail who is without doubt a glorious company of sons who are to appear on earth in the last days. At the moment of his birth he was caught up to the throne of God away from the presence of the dragon who sought to destroy him. But at the moment the man-child was caught up into heaven, there was war in heaven, and the devil was cast down upon the earth. Knowing therefore that his time of authority over the minds of men and nations is very short, he has great and terrible wrath and goes forth in all his frustrated fury to utterly obliterate all that oppose his power. "And the dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: He was cast out into the earth and his angels with him." (Rev. 12:7)

The words in this passage, "That deceiveth the whole earth", are most significant. Satan's masterpiece is not tribulation and bloodshed, but deception. He is a liar and a murderer. He murders souls through lies and deception today just as he did in the Garden of Eden long ago. We do not know all the truth contained in the twelfth chapter of Revelation. We admit rather that we understand little of the great events mentioned there which are, without doubt, ordained to transform the whole world. Let us remember, however, that while we have but dimly seen these truths afar off, yet we have caught a glimpse of them and the vision of their vast eternal truth has gripped our imagination impelling us relentlessly toward them that we may partake of them and know as we are also known. We have already known much of the travail of this heavenly woman who stands clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. There has been an almost unbelievable travail in the hearts of countless thousands that the sons of God may come forth to join Christ in His kingdom and deliver the world from its bondage, its thralldom and decay. Dare we think that this sore travail has gone unnoticed by God who gave it? Dare we say that the sons of God have not already been sealed in their foreheads and even now are ascending in the Spirit to cast Satan out of the heavens, his long possessed domain?

However far we have progressed in this direction only the Master knows, but it is clear that, at the time the manchild was caught up to heaven, Satan came down with great wrath to deceive the whole earth. (Rev. 12:1-9) Every day I become more convinced that a strong subtle spirit of delusion has come upon the earth during the last few years. There is something that is fogging up the minds of the people to make them believe a lie. What greater example of this do we need than is found in the almost universal acclaim given to the Pope of Rome by millions of Protestants all over the world? Not only are the religious denominations of professing Christendom openly flirting with the pretty harlot of religious unity as she waits at every corner, attired in her goodly Babylonish garment, but other religious systems are also casting admiring glances in her direction. We are seeing before our very eyes the reality of the parable of King Solomon when in the Spirit he wrote these words:

"Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger that flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house. In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night; And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot and subtle of heart; She is loud and stubborn; and her feet abide not in her house. Now she is without, now in the streets and lieth in wait at every corner. So she caught him, and kissed him, and with impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day I have paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: Let us solace ourselves with loves. For the Goodman (Christ) is not at home, he is gone on a long journey. He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattery of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to a snare and knoweth not that it is for his life." (Prov. 7:4-23) A careful analysis of this passage will show that it is a perfect description of the visible church systems of our day.

Yes, indeed! There is a strong delusion settling upon the earth. It is a delusion born of Satan that makes wrong look right and makes right look wrong. The words of Jesus, "That they all may be one," are being proclaimed far and wide, but the unity carnal men see in these words is not the unity that He saw. He saw a unity that is born of the wisdom and fire of the one omniscient Spirit, but man sees a fraudulent, physical togetherness that demands unity at any price, where the minds of men are frozen together in the darkness and deception of the dismal valleys of tradition, where the sun of righteousness never shines nor living waters ever flow. This is the D-day and this is the H-hour when we must say to wisdom, "Thou art my sister," and call understanding our kinswoman that they may keep us from the strange woman, from the stranger that flattereth with her lips. (Prov. 7:4, 5)

There is a sort of mass production, assembly line spirit in the world. We live in the day when countless thousands of items are mass-produced and individuality is forgotten. I recently watched an assembly line producing tin cans. Eight hundred cans per minute were racing off the end of the line, every one exactly the same size and shape, every one bearing exactly the same label, and each the duplicate of the other. This same spirit has invaded humanity until it tries to squeeze all Christians into one mould. It wants them all to look alike, think alike, believe alike, and be alike, but they must take their likeness from the stamp of tradition and not from the stamp of the Spirit of God. There is a vast impassable gulf between this kind of unity and the unity that is born of oneness with the Spirit of God. The former makes us slaves to a system. The other makes us sons of God, an individual in his own right yet bound by the invisible Spirit to the whole body of sons even as the hands and the feet, being individuals and specialists in their own realm, are united by joints and bands, spirit and blood and life.

In the economy of the antichrist, man is only a number. In the economy of God we are individuals with a name in our foreheads. The new name God will write upon His people will describe exactly what we are. It will describe our position, work, and glory in the ages to come. Our Christ was called Jesus because His ministry was to save His people from their sins. So also will the new name God will write upon His people describe perfectly what they are in God's eternal economy ages without end. Amen!

Let us return for a moment to the thought of the strong delusion that is settling down upon the world and upon the professing church today. Paul the apostle, speaking of the end of the age, described the coming of strong delusion in these words: **“And then shall that Wicked (antichrist) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming; even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they might all be damned (condemned) who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess 2:8-12)**

This scripture is not describing publicans and harlots and the general run of unregenerate men. This scripture adequately and perfectly describes the professing church of our day. If you think for even a moment that the professing church of our day loves the truth, then strong delusion has already overtaken you. The Jewish church of Jesus' day did not love truth. That is why they rejected Christ. They did not love truth. They loved tradition, form, and ceremony. They loved tradition so much that they made the word of God of none effect by their traditions. Their priests did not love truth; they loved to be admired of men and called Rabbi. They loved to wear long robes and to make long prayers in public places to be seen and heard of men. Jesus told them they were hypocrites and whited sepulchres which appeared beautiful to men, but within were full of dead men's bones. As it was in the end of the dispensation of the law, so also it is in the end of the dispensation of grace. Most Christians in spite of all their profession do not love truth. They love their programs, their buildings, their pet doctrines. They love to have their little “song and dance”. They love to get a wisp of blessing or a happy feeling, but that which crucifies the old life and the old world and the old nature, they reject. Show them what the flesh really is and they hate you for it and cast you out. Tell them what it means to walk in the Spirit and they have no idea what you are talking about. You become a proverb and a byword among them, and you are looked upon as some queer individual who has gone soft on religion.

All this is part of the mystery of iniquity. Godliness is a mystery, and great is the mystery of iniquity. Iniquity is really rebellion. It is born in man's human nature to rebel against truth and love it not. Our age will end, not with innumerable multitudes rising to meet the Lord in the air, but with a vast professing church buried in strong delusion. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man. Certainly there will be a resurrection. But the company who will be raised and caught away will be the in-Christ company, not the people who love systems above Christ and traditions above truth. **“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Cor. 5:17)**

In the **sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah, verses one to five**, there is an appalling description of the hypocrisy of Jewish worship. Isaiah saw them going on with their usual forms of worship. They were offering bullocks and lambs on the altar as they had been commanded. They were making their oblations as usual. They were burning incense unto God just as they had done for hundreds of years. But the whole thing was hateful in

God's sight and He abhorred it as only God can because they chose their own ways and delighted in abominations. Therefore God sent them strong delusion that they also might be damned. Therefore He said, "He that killeth an ox (for sacrifice) is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck, (a dog is an unclean animal); he that offereth an oblation as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their abominations. I also will choose their delusions and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes and chose that in which I delighted not." Verses 3-4. Now read verse two and you will see the kind of man God is calling in our day. "... but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My word." But again in verse five we are told what will happen to a man who fears God's word. He certainly will not last long nor be popular among the religious enthusiasts of his day for thus it says: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word: Your brethren that hated you cast you out for My name's sake and said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (Isa. 66:5)

The above verse of scripture is just as true today as it was when it was written. Any man who receives a revelation from God will certainly be cast out of the church, and, when they cast him out, they will think they are doing God a service. They will thoroughly believe they are cleansing the temple of a great evil. They will quote these very words, "Let the Lord be glorified," while they are shoving him out of the door. Twice during my life I have had the bitter experience of being cast out for truth's sake. I can still hear the bitter speech of the superintendent of the denomination as he declared, "We felt before God something had to be done." But thus it has ever been throughout all the ages from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias in the Old Testament, and from the blood of John the Baptist to the blood of the last martyr in our age.

Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne.
But that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch upon His own.

You will notice then from reading these passages that it is God who sends the delusion. The reason He sends it is because men do not love the truth but prefer to believe a lie. Men hate truth because it disturbs them and brings them under conviction. It demands action and repentance even in the oldest saint, for no man can advance even a step with God without repentance. No man can see God and live, for seeing God brings repentance and death to the old life, but a glorious walk in realms hitherto unknown. While no man can see God and live, neither can any man see God and die. He dies to the old but lives to the new even as the songwriter so beautifully said, "There is life for a look at the crucified One." We are always dying on old levels and living on new ones as we are being changed by His Spirit from glory to glory.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound, But we build the ladder by which we rise from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies, And we mount its summit round by round.

The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. To the man who walks with God each day presents a new horizon, new realms to explore, new lands to conquer, new experiences to enjoy, new heights to reach. The journey from infancy to maturity is a long one. The road that leads from childhood to sonship is lifelong. Maturity is not attained by traveling in endless circles nor by remaining just as we were when we were saved years ago. It is a straight and ever narrowing pathway that leads to the Elysian fields of God's eternal glory where we become like Him, for we see Him as He is.

Christians have spent so much time preaching a rapture in which they would all rise to meet the Lord and all be changed in the twinkling of an eye, where they would put on incorruption and leave the world and its inhabitants to the antichrist, but they have completely ignored the parables of Jesus that show so clearly that the kingdom of heaven (the church age) is to be an age when wheat and tares should grow together, none knowing which was which. Matt. 13:28, 29. It is an age when sheep and goats roam the same pastures both bleating alike. It is an age when good and bad fish are caught in the same net, an age when the leaven of

malice and wickedness invades the whole lump of dough. Why have we so willingly overlooked the teaching that at the end of this age there will be a great dividing of one from the other - that the goats will be separated from the sheep, the tares from the wheat, and the bad fish from the good? Why have we overlooked the terrible image of the Babylonish harlot with all her illegitimate daughters and the awful doom that is predicted upon her and all who follow her ways of confusion? Can you not see how Christians do not love truth, but hide from it? They don't want to differentiate between wheat and tares. They don't want to distinguish between sheep and goats. They prefer to go on believing that everything that names the name of Christ will be raptured regardless of whether he departs from evil or not.

Ezekiel in the eighth and ninth chapters of his prophecy unveils an obnoxious picture which has its parallel in our day. He saw the abominations in the temple of the Lord on one hand and the sealing of the true servants of God in their foreheads on the other. A very strong sense has flooded over my soul of late convincing me that the day of the sealing of the true sons of God is at hand.

Six is the number of man and six is the number of this present dispensation, for the dispensation of grace is the sixth dispensation and the sixth day. It is very significant, therefore, that Ezekiel says, "And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, and in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord fell upon me." (Eze. 8:1) Six years, six months, and five days. The complete number would have been six years, six months, and six days. Therefore the sealing took place just one day before the judgment of God burst forth in awful wrath against all the abominations carried on in the name of the Lord.

Ezekiel was carried away captive to Babylon, and he was still in Babylon when God opened his eyes to see the true reason for Israel's captivity and the judgment that was to follow. In the Spirit he was picked up by a lock of his hair and brought in visions of God to the temple at Jerusalem. (Eze. 8:3) He found himself standing at the north gate of the temple where the Spirit of God spoke to him, commanding him to behold all the abominations that were in the house of God. The words of Moffatt's translation add to the simplicity and forcefulness of the meaning; therefore, we will quote from his text. (Eze. 8) "The Spirit lifted me between heaven and earth and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem to the door of the north gateway into the inner court where the idol stood that provoked the Eternal to resentment." (Vs. 3) "Son of man. He said, 'Do you see what they are doing? Do you see the horrible impieties that the Israelites are practicing here, forcing Me to leave My sanctuary? You will see worse than that.'" (Vs. 6) Ezekiel was then taken through a door of the court and commanded to behold the idolatry that was going on inside in these words: "Go inside; look at the detestable impieties they are practicing here. So I went and looked; there pictured all round the wall were all kinds of vermin and reptiles, loathsome representations, and all the idols of Israel. In front of them stood the seventy elders of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, every man holding a censer from which rose the scent of incense in clouds. 'Son of Man,' He said, 'do you see what the elders of Israel are doing? ... You shall see still worse.'" (Vs 13-15) "And He took me to the outer door of the north gateway into the Eternal's temple where I saw women wailing for Tammuz. (Tammuz was a hero of Babylonian mythology who supposedly was killed and resurrected.) 'Son of man,' He said, 'do you see that? You shall see even worse.'" (Vs. 13-15) "And He took me back into the inner court of the Eternal's temple where at the very door of the temple of the Eternal between the porch and the altar I saw about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of the Eternal and their faces turned to the east worshipping the sun. (Vs. 16) 'Do you see that. O Son of man?' He asked, 'and is it too slight a thing for Judah to practice these detestable impieties of theirs here? Must they also fill the land with violence and anger Me still further? They are filling My nostrils -with their stench! But I will take action in My fury. I will have neither mercy nor pity upon them. I will not listen to them, even if they call Me at the pitch of their voices.'" (Vs. 17-18)

The abominations which Ezekiel saw were indeed terrible - the images that provoked God to wrath, the hero worship, the offering of incense to images and representations, the worshipping of the sun and the things which are created rather than the Creator Himself. All these things were detestable in the sight of God, and awful judgment upon them was certain. But the solemn fact is that in our day all these abominations exist. The worship of saints, the offering of incense to images, the adoration of heroes are almost as universal in the professing church as they are in show business. The ancient cathedrals of England and Europe are replete

with grotesquely carved gargoyles which seem to depict evil looking creatures that could come from nowhere but the pit.

Let us remember that a man may be an idolater without having an idol of wood or stone or gold. Covetousness, for instance, is idolatry. Col. 3:5. And covetousness is rampant in the professing church, not confining itself to the pew or to members of the congregations, but clergymen of all sects greedily covet money, large congregations, prestige, worldly goods, luxury of goods, homes, clothing, and many other things. The racketeering in the church system has become so great that pulpits are invaded by unscrupulous characters who in hope of gain deceive the people, making themselves to be great ones and resorting to every trick and to attain their ends. It may seem to some that I speak too boldly on this point, but half a century of observation has revealed many bitter and unpleasant things, removing the veneer of outward show to reveal the true purposes of the heart.

The church system of our day is in a sorry state, and it, with the world, is rushing headlong for judgment. Strong delusion has settled down upon the people making them willing to believe a lie and grasp almost anything that will attract a crowd, bring a measure of excitement, or add to prestige and prominence. In all the vast church system today there is but a handful of people whose hearts are crying out for the will of God. There is but a tiny remnant who long to be filled with the wisdom of God and who make the mind of Christ their daily, hourly quest. Few there are who sigh and cry because of the abominations and injustices everywhere and who wait with longing spirits for the judgment of the Lord. But there is a tiny remnant, according to the election of grace, who can say, "At night upon my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth." There are still a few who cry, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine," (S. of S. 1:2) There is still a handful who pray, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon: For why should I be as one that tumeth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" (S. of S. 1:7, 8) "The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart; Behold he standeth behind our wall; he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; and the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs and the vines with the grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." (S. of S. 2:8-13)

Not only has a spirit of delusion settled upon the world, but the spirit of confusion is rampant everywhere, manifesting itself in every aspect and walk of life. Confusion reigns daily in the governments of the world. Confusion stalks like an evil spectre among the nations, disrupting all their international agreements. Confusion and disorder reign in millions of homes where all authority has gone from the parents and all respect has vanished from the children. Art and music always reflect the temperament and disposition of the people of the day. Certainly music has returned to the jungle and art to the weird grotesqueness of the kindergarten. Juvenile delinquency has attained such proportions that the Attorney-General of the United States has declared that if it cannot be beaten in ten years it will be unbeatable. Confusion reigns among the races and colors of people, among the majorities and minorities. It reigns between labor and management and between nations that have and nations that have not. And by no means least is the confusion that reigns in the church system, which is spiritual Babylon. Babylon is confusion.

At the time when the vision of all the abominations in Israel appeared to Ezekiel, he saw the wonderful spectacle of the true elect sons of God being sealed or marked in their foreheads. This sealing event which was of so great importance to Israel is of no less importance to us who have come to the end of the age. Not only are we seeing a great separation between good and evil and wheat and tares, but our minds are being set apart and sealed unto God in preparation for the great day when the 144,000 sons shall stand upon Mount Zion, having their Father's name in their foreheads.

The vision which Ezekiel saw in the Spirit vividly portrays the events which will shortly come to pass on a world wide scale. The world, that has so thoroughly rejected God, is coming into the judgment of tribulation, and the church systems, that have turned from God to every imaginable vanity, are going to know the full penalty of their wrong and pay the price of walking in their own ways.

Amid the scenes of evil and wickedness which Ezekiel saw he heard the voice of God calling forth the men who were to destroy the city. Thus it says: "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, 'Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.' And behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed in linen with a writer's inkhorn by his side, and they went in and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, 'Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.' And to the others he said in mine hearing, 'Go ye after him through the city and smite: Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark, and begin at my sanctuary.' Then they began at the ancient men that were before the house. And he said unto them, 'Defile the house and fill the courts with slain: Go ye forth.' And they went forth and slew in the city." (Eze. 9:1-7)

You will notice especially that the people who received the mark in their foreheads were the people who sighed and cried because of the abominations in the house of the Lord. The reason the vast majority of people feel at home in the church systems is because their minds have become accustomed to their surroundings. The light of revelation never penetrates their hearts. They have become so accustomed to custom, ceremony, and tradition that they take it all for granted. Tradition says we must go to church; so we go. We are supposed to listen to a sermon; so we listen. We are supposed to sing songs; so we sing. We are supposed to give offerings; so we give them. It is custom to praise the Lord; so we praise. But truth and experience have fled from so many hearts, and serving God from an overflowing fullness of the Spirit is seldom known. The revival fire that burned in the fathers is but a fleeting tradition in the hearts of the children just as the miraculous wonders of Moses in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea became little more than bed-time stories to the succeeding generations. The vision and reality was gone.

But never has God left Himself without a witness. Never has He been without His handful of elect who have not bowed down the knee to the prevailing systems of the day. The seven thousand of Israel who had not bowed down the knee to Baal in Elijah's day were the harbingers of the elect of all ages who bowed not the knee to any but God. They cast from them as profane the authority of Baal, of Nebuchadnezzar, priest, Pope, or preacher, system or organization. There has always been a handful of people who are separate unto God, and there is also today a remnant according to the election of grace who are wholly the Lord's. As Jonah was vomited from the belly of the sea monster, indigestible and indestructible, so these are vomited out of the sea of humanity. They bear the invisible mark of the Lord in their foreheads and the destroying hands of death and tribulation shall not overwhelm them.

The mark of God in the forehead is not a stamp or a brand. It will not be visible to man at all. It is that which God sees but which man overlooks altogether. These men and women who sigh and cry because of the abominations in the world and in the professing church are the people who have the mind of Christ. Their concern and grief over all iniquity is identical with that of the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have the mind of Christ are the ones who have the mark of God, the seal of the living God in their foreheads. Rev. 7:1-3. Furthermore those also who are said to have the Father's name in their foreheads (Rev. 14:1) are those who possess the mind of Christ. To have the Father's name is to have the Father's mind, for none can use the Father's name but those who have His mind.

When the apostle Paul said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," the depths of his meaning reached far beyond all natural understanding. The mind that was in Christ Jesus was the Father's mind. Let us never forget that. The Father's mind dwelt in the Son. It was this above all else that made Him one with the Father. Their purposes were identical because their minds were identical. Their unity was perfect because they had the same mind. Not two different minds, each one alike, but one mind indwelling both, and that one mind was the mind of the Father. Man is never able to find true unity. He has sought it for centuries. He has tried to attain it through teaching, through instruction, through discipline, through dictatorship, through popery, through tolerance and charity. He has tried to find it by avoiding points of difference, but he never has found it because natural minds are never one. There are as many different minds as there are different people.

The only unity that is now and the only unity that ever will be comes when the carnal mind with all its enormities and divisions is crucified and the mind of God the Father comes to dwell in us, even as it dwelt in Jesus Christ. This is true unity. This is true sonship. This is the mark of God and the name of God in the forehead. The countless divisions in the professing church shout from the housetops that there is no unity in the carnal mind, and they likewise prove that millions of men, though believers, do not possess the mind of Christ, nor have they God's name in their foreheads.

During the last few years there has come to many people an ever increasing and almost insatiable longing to be filled with the wisdom that is from above. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easily entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Such wisdom can never be attained by resolve, by endeavor, by teaching, or any such thing. This wisdom comes when the mind that dwelt in Christ Jesus comes to dwell in us. Then, and then alone, are we one with the Father. Then are we one with the Son. Then and then alone are we one with all people in whom that blessed mind doth dwell. Then will our lips truly repeat the words of Jesus, "I and My Father are one." This is sonship indeed and everlasting life. Little earth-bound man pores over his books and his Bunsen burners in search of wisdom. He peers through his feeble telescope to search the heavens and his microscope to investigate the earth, knowing not that the mind which made the heavens and earth will dwell in us if we desire it more than rubies, and the wisdom that planned the eternal purposes will be ours if we covet it more than gold.

This is the mind that will govern the kingdom of God in the age that is at hand. The mind of God dwelling in the sons of God will be the source of everlasting peace when men, with confidence and assurance, will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks and shall learn war no more at all. "And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse (David's father) and a branch shall grow out of His roots, (I am the vine, ye are the branches), and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of the eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of the ears: But with righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: And He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His reins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and them falling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:1-9) It is plain for anyone to see that all this blessedness comes from the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord which dwells eternally in the mind of Christ, for this blessedness reaches the earth when the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Perhaps we have been casual in reading Paul's exhortation, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) But if we meditate upon the whole passage our minds become overwhelmed by the magnitude of what he says and the magnificent glory of the results attained by Christ because He had the Father's mind dwelling in Him. And I suppose the result would be no less great for any man who through consecration to God crucified his own mind that he might be indwelt by the mind of Christ, which is the Father's mind. So the apostle declares, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: That at (in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:5-11)

It seems to me that to comment on this scripture would be to do it an injustice, for the fullness of its meaning transcends the eloquence of men. Its truth beggars description and the extent of its glory defies our understanding. Yet be it known that when all things in heaven and earth and under the earth bow to Christ, it

will be because the mind of the Father dwelt in Him in divine fullness and completeness, bearing Him on its everlasting arms into all the will of God both for time and for ages eternal and without end.

Would God that we might see that to obey a command of God is one thing, but for a man to have the mind of God dwelling perpetually in him is another thing altogether. It is one thing to have the mind of God about a matter, but it is something different altogether to have the mind of God. Jonah had the mind of God about the matter of going to Nineveh, but he certainly did not have the mind of God dwelling in him, for if he had, he would have coveted God's will just as Jesus did, who was able to say, "I do always those things which please the Father." It is clear then that to momentarily have the mind of God about a thing is not the same as having the mind of God dwelling in us.

When one possesses the mind of Christ, He has a re-newed mind. His mind is transformed after the image of Him who created him. Such a man presents his body to the Lord as well as his soul and spirit, and he is the Lord's, spirit, soul, and flesh. Because he is renewed in the spirit of His mind, his body begins to be transformed as well. For this reason then Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, and be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. ..." (Rom. 12:1-2)

In the depths of my spirit I am certain that of all truth being brought to light today none is of greater importance than the truth concerning the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is the mind of God. The mind of Christ is the mind of eternal, immutable, omniscient wisdom. It is the mind of Christ that will govern the world in wisdom in the glorious age into which we shall soon enter. This is the mind that will bring order out of the fearful chaos that now exists. This mind will empty the arsenals of the nations and fill the stomachs instead. It is His mind of wisdom that will fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the Lord even as the oceans are filled with water. Justice and judgment and equity will be everywhere, the reaper will overtake the sower, and none shall ever be afraid. The mind of Christ is a priceless gem, rich and rare above all the treasures of earth. From its eternal wisdom universes roll forth in their orbits and nations dwell in peace.

The carnal mind is the mind which is possessed by all natural men. It is the mind which is concerned only with the carnal, which is the body made of flesh. People hate this truth and cast it from them as profane, but it was given to me by a revelation and proven by many infallible proofs. The carnal mind is an enemy of God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so that they who are in the flesh cannot please God. The carnal mind is concerned only with the physical realm. That is why so many Christians are far more interested in physical healing than they are in spiritual progress. The carnal mind is the mind that is concerned with the literal and physical realm. It can never lift itself higher than this.

To be carnally minded is death. That is why all men die. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. The very moment men begin to have the mind of Christ dwelling in them, there will be an end of death, for the renewed mind will also renew the physical body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

The carnal mind was never designed to reign. It wrecks every kingdom it possesses, because it is centered in self, concerning itself only in the physical realm. It always becomes corrupted because it makes self the center and not God. It manifests itself in men like Nebuchadnezzar who commands all men to worship his image, or in Pharaoh or Herod, who sought to crush everything that might oppose them. It must try to exterminate all that is Godly as did Haman, Jezebel, Hitler, and many religious leaders. It sets itself up as a god so that he as God sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. It desecrates the vessels of the Lord as did Belshazzar and offers swine on the altar of the Lord as did Antiochus.

When the heart first cries, "Thy will be done" the mind of Christ begins to form in man. This is the beginning of the sealing of the mind. When God's people become fed up and sick to death with all the abominations about them in the world and in the professing church, then and then only do their hearts begin to reach out for the will of God and the mind of Christ. When the heart of any man becomes filled with an insatiable longing for the fullness of the will of God, he discovers that all other wills are at an end. He finds that there is no trace of his own will yet remaining. There is nothing he wants to do to please himself, nowhere he has ambitions to go, no great purpose he wants to accomplish. He has one desire, one love, one hope, and that is to have God's will

revealed to Him that he may do it in all its completeness, for it has become his very life. The will of God is his food and drink. This is his joy and crown. This is his love and only aspiration. His soul continually sings, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart."

You will not reach this blessed goal without a struggle, neither will you reach it without a revelation of the will of God. You will find yourself becoming empty of the plans and schemes you cherished to advance the kingdom of God. You will find yourself kneeling in prayer with all requests gone from your lips. But in their place your heart will groan forth the irresistible request. Thy will be done! Thy will be done! And when you have reached the glorious place where your soul at last reposes in God's will, you will find you have become a stranger and a foreigner to all your acquaintances, for your words and speech will seem to them as idle tales because they do not understand you. My greatest and most heart-breaking surprise after entering into this rest was to find that scarcely a soul understood me, but to all my friends my words were but idle tales. That is why I declare that the will of God must be a personal revelation to the believer's heart.

To enter fully into the freedom and liberty of the will of God is the beginning of the sealing of the mind. It is the beginning of the mark of God in the forehead.

In Ezekiel's vision there was deplorable abomination in the house of the Lord. But did you notice as you read that all the abominations had to do with worship? God is not half so concerned about the sins of publicans, harlots, and drunkards as we may think, but His fury is rising every day against the disorder, confusion, and abominations in the professing church. Amid all the abominations that Ezekiel beheld his eye did not miss the fact that there was a small number who sighed and cried because of the abominations on every hand. And those who sighed were the ones who were marked and sealed unto God that they might escape the dread destruction that was to come.

The dreadful scene of destruction which Ezekiel saw following the sealing of the elect is going to be re-enacted at the end of this age, and that will be very, very soon. I am one who believes that the sealing is now taking place. In John's vision on the Isle of Patmos the events of the closing years of time passed vividly in panorama before his wondering eyes. Amid the dread horrors of that tribulation day he beheld four angels of God holding back the winds and all destruction from the earth until the sealing of the servants of God in the forehead had been completed. Thus it reads: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four comers of the earth, holding the four winds of earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.'" (Rev. 7:10-3)

How can we ever possibly over-estimate the importance of this sealing? Certainly there is destruction coming upon the earth as the book of Revelation clearly shows, but not until the sealing is complete. Certainly there will be slaughter as Ezekiel saw in his vision, but not until the servants of God are marked in their foreheads. This sealing of the mind is now in progress. People are being separated unto God in a manner hitherto unknown. I do not think that there has ever been a time when the truth concerning the mind of Christ has been made more clear, and neither has there ever been a people more desirous to understand what the will of the Lord is. Never has there been more spiritual insight concerning the condition of organized religion, and never has Mystery Babylon loomed so large nor been so ripe for destruction.

The hour of the sealing of the mind is here. The hour of judgment and destruction is at hand. The priceless prize of the mind of Christ is available to all who sigh and long for it above all earth's treasures. He who has the mind of Christ will have God's name in his forehead. "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne and before the four beasts (living creatures) and the elders, and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women (the harlot daughters of Babylon) for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." (Rev. 14:1-5)

The Spirit of God has warned us of another mark that is coming. It will not be the mark of Christ, but the mark of antichrist. A system of world government will be set up in which no man will be able to buy or sell until he has received the mark of the Beast or the number of his name either in his right hand or in his forehead. Rev. 13:16-18. Men have long talked of a world government and a world church. There are signs even now that some have already thought of the possibility of numbering all men for the sake of convenience and identification. An article appeared in the August, 1963, Reader's Digest under the title, Call Me 552. The article, though intended to be amusing, is a hint of the way the wind is blowing even as a small straw upon the water indicates the direction the stream is moving. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six." People have tried for centuries to discover what the 666 indicates. The truth is it is the number of a man, and the man will be very evident when the time comes.

Let us not concern ourselves or waste any time worrying about the mark of the beast. That will come in its time and none can stop it. But let us mightily concern ourselves with the other mark, the mark of God, the sealing of the sons of God in the forehead. Let us search for it as for hidden treasure, for the great day of the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads is at hand and none can hinder nor prolong it.

CHAPTER FIVE GOD SPEAKING BY HIS SON

The journey through time from the cradle of humanity in Eden to the manger of Bethlehem was long indeed. Ages waxed and waned; suns rose and set on millenniums; dispensations dawned with their present truths only to give place to the clearer light of a coming day. No age was without its truth, no millennium without its message, no dispensation without its revelation from the Almighty.

Through the changing scenes of time God was speaking. Never did he leave the world without a witness. Never was the voice of truth silent. The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world were clearly seen by the things which He had made, manifesting His eternal power and Godhead. The heavens declared the glory of God and the firmament showed His handiwork. Day unto day they uttered their speech and night unto night they showed His knowledge. No speech or language was bereft of His voice, for like the rays of the sun, itself, His truth was always present in the earth.

If you will but listen, His voice is always speaking, telling of His eternal goodness, omniscience, and power. The marvels of the starry heavens, the day that follows night, the rain that gives life to the earth, the ship that sunders the sea, the bird that flies, the horse that gallops, the motionless rose and the still stone, the winds, the clouds, the fire, the water, the glance of a woman, the smile of a child, the palm tree that bends in the winds, the date that ripens - these all speak of His goodness and wisdom. The trees sing of His power; the flowers waft their perfume toward Him. He is Lord of the pink morning, the white noon, and the blue evening.

You do not have to shout your faith;
Thrice eloquent are the quiet trees,
And the green listening sod.
Hushed are the stars,
Whose power is never spent;
The hills are mute,
But how they speak of God.

Yes, God is always speaking. But there is a secret to hearing His voice. It will not be heard above the excited babble and din of the throng. He will not shout to drown other voices that clamor to be heard. He waits till all other voices are stilled and you have put away from your heart and mind all your own striving, and the din of the multitude who shouts for your attention has completely died away. You must become insensible to the sound of all other voices and hear only the voice of His Spirit speaking to your spirit.

There is a wonderful peace in silence. When your brain is wracked to a turmoil and you have examined every avenue for a solution to the exasperating problems that confront you, only to find that your search leads you to greater confusion, it is time for silence, repentance, and listening to the voice of Christ. He will speak and give His wisdom, but not until all other voices are silent and all other wisdom has become foolishness. "Be still and know that I am God." Then He breaketh the bow, maketh war to cease, cutteth the spear in sunder, burneth the chariot in the fire, and is exalted among the heathen in all the earth. Psa. 46. It was after the earthquake, the fire, and the terrific wind that Elijah wrapped his head in his mantle and listened to the still small voice of God. "He leadeth me beside still waters," said David. "Be still and know that I am God."

When God speaks to your heart He will not simply help you to decide between two or more opinions already in your mind. When He speaks it is revolutionary and the opinions of men are discarded for they are always contrary to His will. We will never find God building on the old foundations we have laid. He will throw down every stone and build a temple after His own order.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." God is always speaking. In the perfumed magnificence of Eden He walked and talked with man face to face until man, through his shame and sin, hid himself from the presence of God and from His voice. But, though man is cast out from His hallowed presence, still He seeks and still He speaks. Even the blood of murdered Abel, shed upon the ground and crying for vengeance, spoke of the wrath and judgment of God, and the skins of slain beasts covering man's nakedness spoke of a sacrifice to be made at Calvary, when once again their nakedness would be covered by His presence and they would see His face and His name would be in their foreheads.

At sundry times and in divers manners He sent His prophets among them, inspiring their words with exactness, proclaiming with wisdom and verbal inspiration the very word of God. They came from divers places, they spoke in divers manners, but all spoke the message of God by verbal (word) inspiration. Moses, the Levite, was rescued from the reeds of the river to speak face to face with his God, and to do all things according to the pattern that was showed him in the mount. Elijah the Tishbite appeared suddenly before Ahab, speaking the word of the Lord. Where he came from is a mystery. His origin matters not at all. The important thing is that he spoke the word of God. Elisha left his oxen to receive a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. David was taken from following the sheep and Amos from among the herdsmen of Tekoa. Shepherds came from their sheepfolds, farmers from their farms. Rugged men came from the wilderness. Kings came from their palaces. Some wore girdles of skin and ate locusts and wild honey; others were arrayed in royal apparel and sat at the table with kings. Others were fed by ravens and widows. Many were destitute, tormented and despised. Singlehanded they put armies to flight, and silenced the wrath of kings. They fed the poor and raised the dead, fled before enemies and prayed for death to take them, but the word of the Lord was in their mouths, burning like an unquenchable fire. They did not speak their own ideas but the Spirit spoke by them, and His word was in their tongues. The prophecy by which God spake in ancient times was not a sermon nor a comforting exhortation. It was the exact word of the Lord, and the prophet was completely incapable of making an error of any kind.

Four hundred years had gone by since Malachi had proclaimed the word of the Lord in Israel. No other prophet had appeared on the scene and there was a great dearth of the word of God in the land. The order was changing. God was removing the old way of speaking and bringing in a better way. In times past He had spoken by the prophets. Now He would speak by His Son, the Son by whom and for whom the world and all things in it were created, the Son who was the brightness of God's glory and the express of His person.

When they heard Him speak, the soldiers said, "Never man spake like this man." The Jews marveled that He spake with authority and not as the scribes who could only quote what others had said. The sermon on the mount excelled all other sermons either written or spoken as light excels the darkness. No words of truth and comfort ever thrilled a human heart as did His words to weeping Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life." No man had ever opened the gates to the kingdom as He did when He explained the new birth to Nicodemus. No words of forgiveness were ever uttered before as were spoken to the trembling woman, "Neither do I condemn thee." He knew the answer to every question, but when He questioned there was none to reply. By His matchless skill the lame were made whole. By the touch of His hand fevers vanished and by the word of His

lips dead men rose to life again. At His rebuke demons fled, fierce winds stilled and raging seas whimpered like babes at His word of peace, and fell asleep. God was speaking by His Son, setting an eternal pattern for a vast family of sons who were soon to follow His steps.

The voice of the Galilean has been silent for almost two thousand years, but all through the centuries God has been speaking by the life of His Son. Consider carefully the thoughts that follow and you will see that God is speaking in these last days by what that Son is even more than He spoke by the words which fell from His lips in the long ago.

Nothing is dearer to the heart of God than sonship. It would be futile vanity for me to presume to argue for the sonship of Jesus Christ, for that must be accepted by us all. That holy thing that was born of Mary was the Son of God. He became a partaker of the human nature, though He was very God, that we who are men might once again be partakers of the divine nature.

There is need of the spirit of revelation here to save us from the gaping cavern of human theology. The driest theologian in the apostate church will admit that God wants us to be sons, and we must avoid that wretched passive admission at all costs. When the truth dawns by revelation to the waiting heart, convincing us that God not only wants sons, but that He has provided a way whereby we can enter into that sonship, then all earthly gain becomes loss in anticipation of the hope of sonship and the whole realm of nature becomes too small a tribute for the prize that is before us.

“Beloved, now are we the children of God (thus says the original) and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” What we are is children. What we shall be is sons. Jesus Christ is the first born son of a vast family of sons. As He possessed the fullness of the divine nature, so also every son will be a partaker of the fullness of the divine nature. What is mortal in them will be swallowed up by His immortality and what is natural swallowed up in the greatness of His divinity. God is speaking by His Son. As He is so we also shall be.

I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We must never belittle, minimize, or disparage that fundamental truth. Yet the birth of Christ is wrapped in a garment of even greater importance. I mean the method by which that birth was accomplished.

The mighty angel Gabriel vouchsafed to Mary the method by which sons of God are to be begotten. Setting aside her virginity and all natural processes of birth as a thing belonging to a natural realm, He declared that the birth of the Son would be on this wise: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, and the holy thing that shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.” God is speaking by His Son. There is no other way to sonship than this.

The overshadowing power and presence of the Holy Spirit will bring forth the son of God within us as surely as it brought forth the Son of God in Mary. There is no other road to sonship. Christ in you is the hope of Glory. Though Christ was separated from Mary, He will not be separated from you, for what is mortal must be swallowed by His life.

Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom. He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Sonship comes about by dwelling and abiding in the overshadowing presence of the Holy Spirit, walking, living, and breathing in Him. It cannot come to those who persist in show or those who crowd in for a few minutes of praise, prophecy and signs only to go away and fill their ears and eyes and hearts with the sounds and sights of earth for the rest of the day. God is speaking by His Son. Our sonship, like His, is accomplished by the overshadowing power of His Holy Spirit continually touching our lives, our hearts, our thoughts, and our minds. All else beside this is vanity and loss. As He was begotten by the overshadowing power of the Spirit, so also are we.

A teacup cannot contain the ocean, neither can the world contain the books that should be written about Him, yet I fear that for all our learning about Him we have missed one of the most essential things. We learn of His doctrine. Word by word, we study His sermons and dissertations. We preach about His miracles and healings. We talk of His love and mercy. We marvel at His answers and wisdom. Our hearts are made strong by His

promises and we are brought to penitence by His rebukes. But have we forgotten that all these glories came from what He inherently was? He gave life because He was life. He spoke wisdom because He was wisdom, and all its universal treasures dwelt in Him. He healed the sick, not because of a gift of healing, but because of the overwhelming presence of life which swallowed up every degree of death that entered His presence. In Him was life. The words of wisdom falling from His lips had no origin in the schools of men, nor yet were they the inspiration of a gift from above. They dropped from a mind from which universal wisdom has come. He is wisdom. God has made Him so. Apart from Him there is neither wisdom nor knowledge. No secret was hidden from Him, not because of learning, but because of what He was.

God is speaking by His Son. Let us pass beyond the realm of doing to the realm of being. Spiritual gifts are an excellent way, but they must cease to make way for the more excellent way. The more excellent way is the way of sonship where everything is God and God is everything. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, I am as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Now please tell me, what is love? Have we not learned that God is love! He who dwells in love dwelleth in God and God in him. But if I speak with tongues, perform mighty miracles and have the gifts of healing, prophesy a great deal, and give many gifts to the poor, yet I am not moving in Him, I will be like those deluded ones who will come saying: "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out demons, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And He will reply, "I know you not." Cease crying for a return of gifts. Gifts are always compassed with the dread infirmities of those who possess them. Seek rather to go on to that more excellent way, for that is the way of sonship and the kingdom. If God is removing the spiritual gifts, it is for a reason. He definitely has been removing them for some years. Jesus did His mighty works, not because of gifts but because of what He was and still is. That is the more excellent way. He showed love because He was love. He showed mercy because He was mercy. He spoke truth because He was truth. "What is truth," Pilate asked, and had he waited for the reply, he would have learned this: "I am the truth, the life and the way." He does not just give life. He is life. When He shows us the way, He shows us Himself, for He is the way.

God is speaking by His Son. Let us come beyond the realm of doing to the realm of being. Let us leave off our imitation of Christ, which at best is hypocrisy, and give Him place to live within that He, from within these temples, may be the truth, the way, the life, the health, the wisdom, the omnipotence, that as He is, so we should also be, in this present world. This is the more excellent way.

"Inasmuch as He has suffered being tempted. He is able to succor them that are tempted." What a revelation this passage really is. It throws into clear light the eternal mystery of suffering and temptation. The age old question, "Why do the righteous suffer," is forever answered by His life of suffering and temptation. The unsympathizing, cynical, and cocky are always found among those who have not suffered temptation's ravaging power. They cannot shed a sympathizing tear, for they have never faced that trial which manifests their infirmity. Those who brag of their boldness are usually the biggest cowards, and those who boast of the greatest strength manifest the greatest weakness under the stress of temptation. "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity but one who was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin." He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. Therefore, like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. God is speaking by the temptation of His Son.

Let us take a different attitude toward temptation and suffering. Let us see by the revelation of the Spirit that the enduring of it and the victory over it are as completely necessary to our sonship, as it was also necessary to His. Though we are tried by fire, we will find the trial of our faith is more precious than gold, that at the appearing of Christ within us, we should be found unto glory and honor and praise. God is speaking by His Son.

The life of Christ was pure and sinless because of what He was. Though we were born in sin and conceived in iniquity, yet we have started on the road to sonship. I know little good is gained by a system of laws consisting of do's and don'ts. I have never taught that there is merit in such a system. But of a truth I declare that those whose hearts are restless and yearning for sonship can never be satisfied with the trivial vanities of this earth, and in our quest for sonship we will have to refuse to let our eyes be turned aside to the profane and earthly things. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee," were the words of wisdom from Solomon. There must be a resolution and a resolve in all our seeking. We must lay aside every hindering weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, while we run with patience the race set before us. Races are

not won by turning aside to view the landscape, but through straining every nerve to reach the goal. Whatever cynical scoffers may say, it is nevertheless true that all the world's fleeting joys tend to dull our spiritual appetite, dim our vision, render us insensible to the voice of the Spirit, and, in general, turn our hearts away from God. I strongly advocate to all who patiently wait for the promises of God that they turn aside from all wordly pleasure and refuse the fleeting satisfaction that comes from excitement and amusement. "Flee also youthful lusts, which war against the soul, but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." If you do this faithfully, your time will be fully occupied. No hours will hang heavily on your hands, nor will you need the world's trash to fill out your day.

Do not seek to be rich, for riches only add a snare and many hurtful lusts that drown men in perdition. Leave hockey and baseball and all kindred amusement to those who belong to that realm. God is speaking by His Son. He spent His life in touch with God and never once did we find Him obtaining satisfaction in pleasurable amusement and excitement. All the games and vain amusements of this earth are for those who belong to this earth, but if your treasures are in heaven then seek the things that belong to heaven. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. Neither is our kingdom from hence, so let us fully turn from it and seek our lasting joys from above. God is speaking by His Son.

Nay, world, I turn away, though thou seem fair and good.
Thy friendly outstretched hand is stained with Jesus' blood.
If in the least device I stoop to take a part,
All unawares thine influence steals God's presence from my heart.
I miss my Savior's smile, when'er I walk thy ways;
Thy laughter drowns the Spirit's voice,
And chokes the songs of praise.
When e'er I turn aside to join thee for an hour,
The face of Christ grows blurred and dim,
And prayer has lost its power.

No mark of sonship was more outstanding in the life of Christ than His constant walk in the will of God. To please self or to please men never entered His divine mind. He had one thought and one only - to do the will of God that sent Him. The fact of His unswerving devotion to God's will is clearly seen in that Jesus said, "I honor my Father and ye dishonor me." (Jno. 5:30) "For I come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." (Jno. 6:38) The temptation, the tears, the strong crying, the agony and the bloody sweat of lonely Gethsemane were the final crucial test of His complete devotion and abandonment to the whole will of God. Neither shame, desertion, nor the prospect of the cross could move Him from the thorny but blessed path of the will of God. He was prepared to endure the cross, despise shame, and be utterly forsaken and alone that He might fulfill the will of the Father. The desperate aloneness of the Son of God in His final hours is amazing to behold, but this is the path that leads not merely to Gethsemane but to His kingdom as well.

God is speaking by His Son, telling us that none can reign with Him but those who embrace His will, become utterly forsaken of carnal men, and lay down their lives that He might live. While tens of thousands of Christians claim to be doing God's will, in reality they know nothing about God's will or God's mind. They are confused, imagining that the purposes they are moving heaven and earth to accomplish, are God's will. In reality these things are their own will and God has not spoken at all. Let us settle it in our minds, however, that none will reign with Christ but those who are one with His will. That blessed company who have God's name written in their foreheads, are those who have the mind of Christ, and I am sure that the mind of Christ and the will of God are one and the same thing. God is speaking by His Son.

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto Me and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14) How can a man read those words and still lightly make himself a friend of the fleeting joys of earth? Turn away from these vanities, for there can be no resurrection or glory except it comes by the way of the cross. The way of the cross is the way of death to all the old life and leads us to the resurrection which lies beyond the veil whither Jesus has for us entered.

Stand with me for a moment with bowed head and reverent heart, while we hear Paul speak again, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 1:20) Without the spirit of revelation this passage is devoid of sense, for how could one be dead and still alive? But when seen in the light of the cross it is full of meaning. The "I" that was crucified is not the same "I" that now lives, but the new "I" is none other than Christ Himself. Read it again with this in mind and you will see why the cross is necessary for you. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in Me. The old "I" that was crucified is my old self, the new "I" that lives is none other than the risen Christ. There is a cross waiting for your crucifixion, that you may be crucified with Him and that Christ may live within you. Herein lies the secret of the resurrection, for the death of the cross is followed by the glory of the resurrection. God is speaking by His Son.

And Jesus when He had cried with a loud voice gave up the Ghost. The earth quaked, the rocks rent, and the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. At the precise moment of the physical death of Christ, which is the death of the flesh, the veil of the temple was rent asunder, and the way into the holiest of all, which is the realm of the Spirit, was made open for the first time. Beautiful as the veil was, it had to be rent asunder before the way to the holiest was opened. In like manner also we must die to the flesh, or be crucified with Him, that we may enter into the realm of the Spirit and be sons of God. There is no other way to sonship. The rending of the veil was the opening of the way. There must come an end of all flesh and a new life in the Spirit must begin. It is not enough to know that Christ was raised from the dead. You must be raised with Him. Neither is it enough that His flesh was rent in death. You must be crucified with Him. God is speaking by His Son.

Away with pride! Away with plans! Away with ambitions! Away with every scheming human device to forcefully bring the kingdom. God is speaking by His Son. Let us follow His path in every detail and we will enter in with Him. Time and space would fail me to enumerate all He speaks by His divinely beautiful life, but if in every circumstance of your life you behold Him, you will find the answer, the truth and the way. God is in these last days speaking by His Son.

CHAPTER SIX ADOPTION OF SONS

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts, but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Who, then, can hear Thy voice but he whose ears the Spirit has opened? What heart can understand Thy precepts but that which Thy wisdom hath enlightened? Open therefore my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of Thy law. Open my eyes as the eyes of Jacob were opened when he saw a ladder reaching from earth into heaven with angels ascending and descending. Open my eyes as the servant's eyes were opened when Elisha prayed that I may see beyond the grime and warfare of earth to behold those chariots of fire and myriads of ministering spirits. Open my eyes as Stephen's eyes were opened to see the Son of God seated at the right hand of His Father, henceforth expecting till all the earth shall be His footstool. Open my eyes as Jesus told Nathaniel it would be, saying, "Henceforth thou shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Open my eyes, oh Lord, that I may understand and enter into the things that are written here. Amen.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit ..." (1 Cor. 2:9, 10) I am inclined to believe that the sincere and humble man fain would flee away and beg to be excused from speaking of the sacred things, mysterious and holy, which God has prepared for those who love Him. The man who would approach even the outer court of God's eternal purpose, which He purposed for all creation in Christ Jesus, with a light heart or a glib tongue has never yet, I fear, been awed by the awful glory of the infinite purpose which was conceived in the heart of God ages ago in the distant eternities.

The man whose spirit has not been overwhelmed by the indisputable knowledge that before all things, behind all things, in all things, and through all things standeth God, all-wise, all-understanding, all-powerful, and forever unchanging, has failed to know as God would have him know and has fallen short of that most

rudimentary principle of sonship, the knowledge of His will. It is not until we begin to comprehend the purpose of God for the ages that we begin truly to love God. It is well nigh impossible to love God while our minds remain in bondage to those purposeless teachings laid down by the misnamed theologians of man-made systems that masquerade as the church of the living God. The God they proclaim is a God without a purpose, a God who, according to their gospel, was tricked and outwitted in the garden of Eden by a vastly inferior creature who by his sinister cunning laid waste eternal design. There is a God who was forced by the imagined disaster and tragedy of the fall to produce a plan by which He could salvage some tiny remnant of His creation while Satan dragged off to perdition ninety-nine percent of the spoils. Is it any wonder that the hearts of men are turned away and unbelievers are multiplied by millions! Not only do I abhor and disbelieve it, but I think it is Satan's second lie.

It is not until our hearts are turned away from the endless cavillings of men and our ears become deaf to their fruitless doctrines and meaningless traditions that we begin to turn our listening ear to the voice of the Spirit. It is then we hear Him speaking from His throne in eternity, long before ever an age, I was formed and before cosmos began to be formed from the wastes of chaos. There in the glory and wonder of His presence, from out the depths of His omniscient mind, His purpose for the ages, the dispensations, the worlds, and for eternity itself was laid down upon the infinite blue-print, plan by plan, purpose by purpose, age by age in order, controlled by the might and glory of an immutable will and the power and majesty of an omnipotent arm. Like as the billion celestials are held in their orbits by His omnipotence, so each eternal purpose and every divine decree shall be sustained by His almighty guiding hand to grow and mature from glory to glory until His vast family of beloved sons shall deliver up to Him all things in perfection that God Himself shall be all and in all.

It was while poor disconsolate Job, full of misunderstandings and human reasonings, sat desolate in his dust and ashes that the Spirit of the all-wise God arrested him, and, bidding his human reasonings to cease. He turned the eyes of the sufferer to the glory of a scene that took place long before ever the ages began. I may be wrong, but an inner witness tells me that I had my beginnings long ages before that winter morning, Feb. 27th, 1909, when I first saw the light of earth's day. That was but the day when my spirit came forth from God to inhabit this chancel house of death, this flesh we call the body, there to walk and await the day when the spirit would return to God who gave it. Eccles. 12:7. When the spirit partakes of flesh and blood, the glory of the ages past is forgotten because of the bondage of corruption and the darkness and death of the fleshly mind. Our blessed Lord, when but hours away from His crucifixion, lifted His voice in prayer, saying, "**And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was.**" (John 17:5) Our kind Father in heaven awakened the memory of Job to things of eternity past, saying, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" I suppose Job could not then remember that he, too, had joined the heavenly anthems in that blest day when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. Rolled out as a scroll before their wondering eyes lay God's blue-print of the ages, the dispensations, the age of the ages, and the limitless eternity. Replete was every minute detail which God purposed through His beloved Son. There their wondering eyes beheld the purpose of the fall, the purpose of suffering and pain, the purpose of war and tribulation, the purpose of bondage and corruption, the purpose of death, the purpose of life, the glory of the plan of redemption and purification, the purpose of grace and the kingdom, and the glory of the ages to follow. So glorious stood the array of infinite purpose that the morning stars lifted their voices in a choral harmony that filled the universe and, as the angels swept their harp strings and trumpets echoed among the eternal hills, the sons of God, both who were and were to be, shouted the glory and praise of God until from mountain peak to mountain peak the chorus swelled and all the great sidereal of God was filled with the harmony of the ages forevermore.

I may be wrong, but a beautiful tenderness fills my spirit when the precious thought thrills my soul that I, with Job, was there among that heavenly host, rejoicing and shouting together with them as my spirit embraced the glory of His purpose and beheld with rapture the part that would be mine in the plan of Him who disclosed this secret: "**Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son...**" (Rom. 8:29) If the inhabitants of this world who now sit in darkness and the shadow of death could but hear the Spirit say that they, too, are the objects of God's eternal purpose, there would be an immediate and unbelievable change in them, for their faith would reach out at once to lay hold on the hope that is before them. Few things have saddened and appalled my heart so much as the knowledge that my fellow Christians all over the world walk blindly on in the darkness of the absurd and worthless traditions of an apostate church system, completely

devoid of any true knowledge of the eternal purpose laid down by God for them before the worlds began. Times without number I have noticed the look of utter incredulity on the faces of God's people when in their ears I unfolded the outlines of God's matchless plan which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

When I was a young man nineteen years of age, my brother Philip and I sat side by side listening to a man of God unfold the mysteries of the word of truth. As he spoke, he made a statement which to our young Christian minds seemed to be radical and completely incorrect, to which we quickly and unwisely expressed our dissent. The brother stopped in his talk. Tears filled his kindly eyes and with an emotion in his voice that remains with me until this day he made this unforgettable observation: "The moment you say 'no'", he said, "you close your heart, and the Spirit of God can teach you nothing." I have never forgotten that word of wisdom. How good it would be for us all if in this final hour of the age we would open our hearts to eternal understanding that we might embrace the wisdom which God displayed in His purpose before the world began. Let us not then judge after the paltry understanding of men nor critically peer through the spectacles of human tradition to cull out and lay aside everything that does not conform to the tradition of the elders. Be not like those unwise Pharisees and doctors of the law to whom our Master said, **"Ye make the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." (Matt. 15:6)** And again, "Ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." What greater promise was ever given to unlearned and ignorant men, blinded by the wisdom of this world, than the promise given by Jesus that **"when He, the Spirit of truth shall come, He will guide you into all truth; For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16:13-14)**

Let us now acquaint ourselves with the following important fact. When we learn the truth I now affirm, many things which have hitherto been an insurmountable mystery, will begin to come clear to our understanding. The fact is simply this: Every purpose God ever devised and every plan God ever made He has planned to fulfill through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When the apostle Paul wrote of these breath-taking truths and unfolded before our wondering minds the unsearchable riches of Christ, he made this remarkable statement from the storehouse of his own enlightened mind: **"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from beginning of the world (the ages) hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:8-11)**

Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact: When God formed the ages and planned the dispensations, He did it in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. When He made the worlds, He did it by and for and through His Son. When He conceived the plan of the ages, He did it through His Son. When He laid the plan of redemption and all the unspeakable wonders of it, He planned that it should be accomplished through His beloved Son. The purpose of God for the government of the universe in the ages to come is committed to His Son, for **"He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet." (1 Cor. 15:25)** When God planned to abolish death, 2 Tim. 1:10, He planned to do it through His Son of whom He said, "In Him was life." And when all things have been subdued unto Christ, then will the Son Himself be subject to Him (the Father) who has put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:26-28)

It is completely impossible for me or for any man who ever lived to explain, or even begin to explain, the abounding, unsearchable, unfathomable love which God has for His Son. God has placed the entire hope of all creation in Him. So unspeakable is His admiration for His only begotten Son that He purposed to create in Him a whole new family of sons who would share the exact image and likeness of Jesus Christ that He might be the firstborn among many brethren, or the eldest in a vast family of sons. (Rom. 8:29) It was Christ Jesus, God's Son, who paid the satisfying ransom of His own blood that we might be redeemed from sin and death. The life is in the blood. (Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23) In Him is life, and the life is the light of men. For this reason His better blood, Heb. 12:24, was given that by its power all men once slain by sin should receive life in Him. The Spirit of life was in Christ Jesus. God decreed that **"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus should make all men free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:1, 2)** The law of sin and death is simply this: **"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17)** Now we stand in Him on the ground of no condemnation, for

there is now, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1. Ah, blessed and wonderful mystery of redemption.

There is scarcely a man on earth who has not secretly or openly desired to become the father of a son, and I am not overstepping reason when I say that this desire, inherent in the heart of every human being, was derived from our Creator, the everlasting Father Himself, whose eternal heart conceived the glory of sonship in those realms before ever the world was or time was formed within the bosom of eternity. It was of that hour the apostle wrote, saying, "In the beginning was the Word." John 1:1. "In the beginning!" Why would the eternal God consent to use such an expression as that for that which is eternal - has neither beginning nor ending? Because man is a creature of time, he is completely incapable of understanding that which is timeless. When we humans think of the omnipotent God, we are capable only of imagining Him to be a man like ourselves, only much wiser and more powerful than we are. When we think of eternity, we can imagine it to be only an extension of time. We cannot understand a realm that is not marked off by the rising and setting of the sun, and by months and seasons and years, and by growing old and dying and all such things so familiar to us. Yet it is true that God lives in a realm of timelessness which He knows to be eternity. Thus to accommodate the timelessness of the eternal God to the limited understanding of men the Holy Spirit allowed the phrase to be written, "In the beginning God ...", **Gen. 1:1**, and "In the beginning was the Word." (**John 1:1**)

There is nothing dearer to the heart of God than His sons. It was God the Father, almighty, all-wise, unchanging and eternal who first conceived the God-like thought of sonship, His purpose being that they, every one of them, should be begotten of God, perfected through the refining fires of suffering, tribulation, pain, disappointment, injustice, inequity, war, sorrow, bereavement and death, that they might come into the fullness of the mind of God. As the darkness of the night shows us the stars, so sorrow shows us truth. The eyes of our understanding are washed bright by our tears until we are to behold the reality of that which is invisible and real. Richter once said, "To love all mankind, a cheerful state of being is required; but to see into mankind, into life, and still more into ourselves, suffering is a requisite." "The happiest, sweetest, tenderest homes are not those where there has been no sorrow, but those which have been overshadowed with grief, and where Christ's comfort was accepted. The very memory of the sorrow is a gentle benediction that broods over the household like the silence that comes after prayer. There is a blessing sent from God in every burden of sorrow." (J. R. Miller). Phillips Brooks, speaking of sorrow, left this wise and beautiful statement. "Wherever souls are being tried and ripened, in whatever commonplace and homely way, there God is hewing out the pillars of His temple." Sorrow is not the handmaid of Satan, but the handmaid of God. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. By the sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken, Prov. 15:13. It is pitiful to find that in this frivolous and selfish age even God's people have forgotten that they are perfected through suffering and not by delights. Even the blessed Christ had His humanity perfected by the things He suffered.

Then when our perfection in His image and likeness is complete, we shall be given the reins of government - first the government of the world in the dispensation of the kingdom of God; second the government and restoration of all things in heaven and earth in the dispensation of the fullness of times, Eph. 1:10; then, the government of the new heaven and the new earth in the dispensation which we can only call the ages of the ages. Ah, glorious mystery of sonship that we should share the image of God and the exact likeness of that first begotten Son, the firstborn of many sons to come. Of Him we will now speak particularly. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, (Greek teknon, meaning adolescent or youth), and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (**1 John 3:1-3**)

That we might better comprehend, at least in part, the all embracing purpose of sonship, we must leave the customary paths, often carelessly trodden to explore the realms hitherto kept secret and walk in the avenues where man's faith has seldom moved. If we now insist that all revelation and illumination of truth must be judged by the narrowness of our past tradition, better far it is that we turn our back now on all illumination and light and join those tradition-ridden Pharisees who could never believe that Jesus spoke aught but blasphemy when He declared in the certainty of divine wisdom, "Before Abraham was, I AM." (**John 8:58**)

The book of the prophecy of Ezekiel is a book that defies the wisdom of man. The natural man never can understand the things of God. How much less when they are hidden! Awe-inspiring truth fills the pages of the book and it is certain none could ever understand them but by the Holy Spirit. But we will discover, I am sure, as the ages pass by that this strange prophecy of Ezekiel is among the most revealing and deeply spiritual of all verbal inspirations because the Holy Spirit permitted this son of man through fiery visions to draw back the darkling veil that our wondering eyes might behold the glory of the infinite purpose of sonship that had its beginning in the glorious flaming whirlwind of fire and light which God the Father is.

The prophecy of Ezekiel begins in this wise: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." (Ezek. 1:1) "I saw visions of God!" The visions Ezekiel saw on this occasion were not visions from God nor visions concerning things God intended to do, but the vision that unfolded before the eyes of this prophet and caused him to fall on his face (verse 28) was a vision of God Himself. And lest I should weary you with explanations and statements hard to understand, I shall tell you plainly that which should cause you to be awed as Ezekiel was and to worship Him who liveth forever and ever.

I wish now to show you, as best I can in human terms, that the dreadfully awe-inspiring vision which Ezekiel saw was that omnipotent act of God bringing forth from the fiery glory of Himself His first and only begotten Son before ever the world was formed. I am perfectly aware that such a statement as the above will stagger the imagination of most who read these lines. Indeed, if it does not, I think it should do. Dare we think that a hope so eternal as sonship must from its very genesis be completely hidden from our eyes since it is the hope of all creation and we ourselves with every created thing in heaven and earth unceasingly groan for its fullness? Are we to imagine that He whom God proclaimed to be His only begotten Son was in fact not begotten at all? Or shall we think that He who, as it is written, was in the beginning with God (John 1:2) had in fact no beginning at all before the manger of Bethlehem? Let us then approach this mighty truth in reverence and godly fear, because I am led to believe that the eternal Father is here acquainting His elect ones with the very beginning of all sonship as the almighty Father Himself brought forth from the fire and glory of His omnipotent self the first of all begotten sons, even the head of that vast family of sons which in a dispensation yet unborn will become the body of the bridegroom - every member a begotten son of God, every member joined inseparably by one Spirit to each other and to the eldest Son, who is the supreme head of that vast and glorious family of sons.

Long ago King Solomon wrote of the glory of the Son of God in the limitless eternity before the world was. He told of His rejoicing in the Father's presence as He shared with Him as the architect and builder of this fantastically wonderful universe and laid plans for the boundless glories that were to follow. Divine inspiration demands that the words and phrases of the eighth chapter of Proverbs extend far beyond the mere attribute of wisdom as they reach out to embrace the personality and being of the Son of God Himself. None but Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. None but He is the power of God, and none but He was in the beginning with God. He is the wisdom and the power of God and by Him who was with the Father in the beginning were all things created and made. Thus Solomon beheld His glory and wrote of Him, saying, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, John 1:1, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto Me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep My ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors. For whoso findeth Me findeth life, John 1:4, 8:12, 10:38, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death."

Thus in confirmation wrote Ezekiel, saying, "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. (Rev. 1:15) ...As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle... As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." (Ezek. 1:4-14)

It is completely impossible to portray a divine image in the mirror of human words. Earthly tongues can but dimly describe things that belong to heavenly realms. We quickly reach the place where things "hard to be understood", 2 Pet. 3:16, are also "not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12:4) Need we wonder then at the stammering lips of the prophet Ezekiel as with human words he struggles to describe the magnificent glory revealed to him with such expressions as, "The likeness of the firmament upon their heads was as the color of terrible crystal." Verse 22. The fire enfolding itself or the color of amber out of the midst of the fire. Verse 4. See also verses 13 and 16. I am sure, however, that the fire enfolding itself, the whirlwind, the amber and the terrible crystal were descriptions of God the Father and of the coming forth of the only begotten Son from the very person of the Father in the eternity, and this we shall now describe as God may give us help and understanding.

"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire." These are the words of **verse 4**. This is a vision of God, Chapter 1, verse 1, and all that Ezekiel saw - the whirlwind, the north, the cloud, the fire, and even the color of the fire, amber, are all descriptive of God. All are elsewhere associated with God and all are symbolic and typical of God. In scripture symbols are used to emphasize the many sided aspect of a truth. Types, though only shadows, emphasize the anti-types. For instance, the word of God has many symbols, each of which in its own beauty serves to portray the greatness, the glory and power of that living word which is Jesus Christ. If we simply speak of the word, we have no more understanding than the phrase expressed. But, when the Lord uses symbols to describe His word, then the mind is filled with the glory of the reality of what the word really is. Thus in symbol the word of God is a lamp, Psa. 119:105; a critic (discerner), Heb. 4:12; a mirror, Jas. 1:25; a cleansing laver, Eph. 5:26; food. Job 23:12; milk for babes, Heb. 5:12, 13; strong meat for the full grown, 1 Cor. 3:2; bread, the staff of life, Isa. 55:10; honey, the perfect sweetness, Psa. 19:10; gold to enrich, Psa. 19:10; fire to purify, Jer. 20:9; a sword, Eph. 6:17; a hammer, Jer. 23:29; seed, Luke 8:2; sun, Psa. 19:1-6; rain and snow, Isa. 55:10, 11; and many more. And then, of course, the word of God becomes much more than the beauties expressed by each of these symbols. It becomes the living Word, the Logos, and finally Christ Himself, who was in the beginning with the Father.

With these thoughts in mind we can better understand how the whirlwind, the clouds, the fire, the brightness as lightning portray the mysterious wonder and glory of Him who is the eternal God and the glory of that wonderful Son who came forth from the fiery bosom of the Father. The reader has probably noticed how frequently God associates Himself with the symbolic whirlwind. There is something about a whirlwind, a cyclone or tornado, that we are quite powerless to understand. Even the smallest whirlwind attracts our immediate attention as it catches up into its peculiar folds anything which may be in its path. All winds are whirlwinds in a sense whether they be little whirlwinds that we see almost daily, or whether they be a cyclone, a tornado, or a hurricane, or even the common wind. All are moving in a circle enfolding in themselves all things that can be moved. God manifests Himself in the whirlwind when there is a sense of urgency either real or implied. Thus twice out of the whirlwind the Lord spoke to the distressed and disconsolate Job, as it is written, "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge...?" (Job 38:1, 2) And again. "Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me." (Job 40:6, 7) Isaiah, speaking of the coming of the Lord, associated the fire, the chariots, and the whirlwind, saying, "Behold, the Lord will come with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind to render anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire." (Isa. 66:15) See also

Zech 9:14. And was not this also the scene at the translation of Elijah? "For it came to pass, as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (2 Kings 2:11)

Reading each of these passages, we notice that, when the Lord manifested Himself in the whirlwind, there was some strange sense of urgency as, for instance, the coming of the Lord with fire, the translation of Elijah, or the events concerning the perfection of Job. How beautifully appropriate it is that the translation of Elijah and the coming of the Lord, Isa. 66:15, should be associated with the whirlwind!

We need not elaborate to any great extent concerning the fire enfolding itself. The almighty God has often manifested Himself as fire or in fire. Indeed, the word of God has plainly said, "For our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24) When the law was given to Israel, the whole of Mount Sinai was smoking in the manner described by Paul in Heb. 12:18. "For ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words." See also Exodus 20:18 where it is said, "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking..." The fire, the smoke, and the lightning indicated the fearful and wonderful presence of God. Each and every one of these phenomena was a clear indication of the presence of the almighty God of Israel, and each was a manifestation of Himself. If a whirlwind is peculiar and awe-inspiring, how much more is fire and lightning! Common as is the sight of ordinary fire and the vivid illuminating flashing of lightning, yet not a man living is truly capable of explaining either. They are as peculiar as life itself is peculiar. The more we gaze upon them the more mysterious and awe-inspiring they become. Consuming fire, illuminating lightning, and enfolding, uplifting whirlwinds are manifestations of the very character and nature of God.

I will not take further space in an attempt to discuss the phenomenon of the color of amber, or the clouds, or the brightness seen by the prophet Ezekiel. All were representations of God. All were manifestations of the Father in this vision of God. The darker the cloud, the brighter the lightning. The greater the dross, the more consuming the fire. The greater the company to be gathered in, the more enfolding the whirlwind.

As Ezekiel stood dumbfounded, fascinated and awed by the splendor of the vision, he beheld a living creature coming forth from out the rolling enfolding fire of God, out of the whirlwind, out of the clouds, out of the amber, out of the north, and out of God. (Ezek. 1:4) "And out of the midst thereof," he said, "came the likeness of four living creatures, and this was their appearance; they had the likeness of man." Verse 5. Then in verse 10 the prophet continues, "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

With all humility of mind and with complete understanding of my own human ignorance and limitations, I want to affirm that Ezekiel in this vision of God was actually beholding the God-like, omnipotent act in eternity of God the Father bringing forth from the glory of Himself His only begotten Son - Spirit of His Spirit, mind of His mind, image of His image, likeness of His likeness, power of His power. This is He of whom it is written that He was in the beginning with God. This is the Son of God who came from the bosom of the Father. This is the Son who countless ages before the scene in Bethlehem was "with God in the beginning", "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." (Heb. 1:3) This is the only begotten Son of whom John wrote, saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1-3) This is He of whom it is written, "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." (Col. 1:19) He is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Col. 1:15-17)

This is indeed God's only begotten Son, begotten of God in the heart of eternity itself. This is the Son of God by whom and for whom all things are made, and this is He who in council with His Father said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness." (Gen. 1:26) This is the pre-existent Son of God who was ordained to be the first Son in a vast family of God-like sons who, having partaken of His redemption, would be changed

into His likeness as the ages roll by. God has predestinated Him to be the oldest and first Son in that vast family of sons who are beginning even now to form His mystical body, and who are being prepared by God to reign with Him over all the earth and over all the universe in the ages yet to come. This body of sons with Christ as its head will become the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, or, as Weymouth has so wisely translated the passage, "the fullness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." (Eph. 1:23) Oh glorious mystery of the ages! Oh wonderful unfolding of truth! "Who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him? Or who hath been His counselor? For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him unto the ages of the ages!" Amen! (Rom. 11:36) (Goodspeed)

Now that this living creature coming forth from the whirlwind, the fire, the clouds, and the brightness of God the Father was indeed the pre-existent and eternal Son of God we shall immediately see. These are the words of Ezekiel: "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; and they four also had the face of an eagle." (Ezek. 1:10) It should not be necessary to go to any great length to demonstrate or prove to any lover of the Bible that the four men who wrote the four gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - were moved by the Holy Spirit to present the Son of God to the world in exactly the same manner after which Ezekiel saw that strange, wonderful fourfold appearance with faces resembling a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle.

The gospel of **LUKE** more than the other three gospels presents Jesus Christ as the **Son of man**. This, I think is clear, first, by the fact that he addressed his gospel to a man, the governor Theophilus. Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1. Secondly, and much more important, he took almost infinite care, after describing the birth of Jesus Christ, to trace His genealogy from Heli, who was Mary's father and Joseph's father-in-law, Luke 3:23, back over four thousand years of time to show that Jesus descended from Adam and that He was, therefore, indeed the Son of man as truly a man as any living. Thirdly, I would say that, since the term Son of man is repeated in the Gospel of Luke some twenty times, this in itself should surely prove that the main burden of Luke's gospel was to show beyond doubt that Jesus Christ, God's Son, begotten in the heart of eternity, did indeed become a man with a human mother on the same basis as ourselves. It is well to remember that it was **as a man that He was made perfect through suffering** - not as God.

Ezekiel saw Him not only as a **man** but as having the face of a **lion** as well. The lion is the king of beasts; and I am sure I am not in error when I say that the theme of the gospel of **MATTHEW** is Jesus Christ, the **King**. It is with the thought of kingship in mind that the very first verse of the book of Matthew was written. It reads thus: "The book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Mat. 1:1) It was to David, the king, that the royal promise was given: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee. Thy throne shall be established forever." (2 Sam. 7:16) And Peter in his sermon at Pentecost confirmed the truth that Jesus Christ was indeed the King of the house of David who was to be raised up to reign. "Therefore," said Peter, "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (Acts 2:20) Therefore **MATTHEW**, who presents Christ as the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the promised King, took great care, first, to prove that He was the direct heir of David, to whom the royal promise was given, and, secondly, to prove that He was the son of Abraham, to whom the promise was given that in Him "shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3)

The theme of the gospel of **MARK** is Christ the ministering servant and sacrifice, both typified by the **ox**. No one but God could include an ocean of truth in a glass of inspiration, but this the Lord did when He included the whole of the gospel of Mark in that one beautiful statement of truth, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:44, 45) The entire book of Mark presents Christ as God's servant and ends with His sacrificial death. That side of His character, servant and sacrifice, which Ezekiel saw as the face of the ox, is brought to its fullness in the gospel of Mark. The ox, the servant and sacrifice, is the theme of the entire gospel.

The particular theme of the gospel of **JOHN** is Christ, the Son of God. The **eagle**, that strange creature of the heavens, signifies that Jesus Christ was from above. The way of an eagle in the air was one of the wonders which the wisdom of Solomon was quite unable to explain. (Prov. 30:19) While Luke sets forth Jesus Christ as the Son of man by giving His long human genealogy, John sets forth Jesus Christ as the Son of God with this

one mighty edict which only the wisdom and glory of God could proclaim: "In the beginning was the Word (the Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:1-4) Many are the passages in this gospel which plainly set forth Christ as the Son of God, begotten of the Father before ever the world was. This is He who was in the bosom of the Father, who both came forth from God and returned to God. (John 13:3)

Space will not permit us to show in detail that the four standards of the house of Israel as they camped about the tabernacle in the wilderness presented this same great truth. The standard of the camp of **Rueben** to the **south** of the tabernacle was a **man**. The standard of the camp of **Judah** to the **east** was a **lion**. The standard of the camp of **Ephraim** to the **west** was an **ox**. And the standard of the camp of **Dan** to the **north** was an **eagle**. Truly it is written that the angel of the Lord (Christ) encampeth round those that fear Him.

My sincere purpose in writing of these mysteries is that all who read might see how dear to the heart of the eternal Father is the hope and purpose of sonship. If I err not, the events of Ezekiel 1:1 took place ages before the events of Gen. 1:1. The latter belongs to time, the former to eternity. How gracious is our blessed Father that He would open the heavens, and draw aside the veil that we who have the spirit of sonship might clearly see that sonship was the very beginning of His purpose and that in the very heart of eternity itself He brought forth from the fiery brightness, the clouds, and the wind of Himself His first begotten Son. God, the eternal Father, has ordained that the Son who was begotten of Himself before ever the world was, should, when the time was ripe, take upon Himself the form of man, and, after becoming a perfect man through suffering and atoning death, should become the first, the oldest, and the Head of that mysterious body of sons who, being redeemed by His better blood, are now coming forth from the fire, the cloud, the whirlwind, and the brightness of Himself into that same image and that same mind, even the mind and image of God's first begotten Son. He who once was called the only begotten Son is no longer the only begotten Son, but the first begotten of a vast family. Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11. And that vast family, of which He is the Head, is becoming one body and is itself the only begotten of the Father. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him?" Oh, how great is the mystery of godliness!

"When the fullness of time was come," says the scripture, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4,5) Oh that the darkling veils of tradition might be torn from our eyes that we might see beyond the mists and theories of time and tradition right into the very heart of the eternal! How useless and blinding have become the theories of a church system that has wandered far away from the eternal purposes of God to build their own doctrines and teach their own traditions, which are cisterns that can hold no water and bags that are empty and full of holes! Oh, that men might know that before all things stands God, infinite, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, and omnipotent! He who cannot understand that such a God and Lord as He is completely incapable of errors, mistakes, and blunders knows nothing of God nor understands any of his ways. And yet I tell you plainly that the childish notion that Satan by his cunning foiled God's plan in the Garden of Eden is preached in assemblies, taught in schools, and religiously believed by preacher, priest, and people alike. Abandon such inconsistent blasphemy now. Could He who is omnipresent be absent that Satan should thwart His purpose? Can He who is all-wise be guilty of foolishness? Shall He who is almighty be charged with weakness? Oh that all men everywhere would awaken to see that before all things stands God, directing His eternal purpose ceaselessly after the counsel of His will! Oh, that men might see the plan of the ages. Preachers are forever preaching about the fall of man, but they never see the plan of the fall nor the purpose of the fall. They speak with fervor of the plan of redemption without seeing that the plan of redemption was but part and parcel of the plan of the ages. Seeing these things as we do in the light of tradition, we make God to be such a one as ourselves, full of blunders, prone to error, and subject to mistakes. When will our hearts rejoice in the confidence that "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?" (Col. 2:3)

Therefore when Paul wrote, "When the fullness of time was come. God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons", he showed us three blessed parts of God's plan. First, there was an appointed time for the incarnation (the enfleshment) of the pre-existent Son of God. Second, the Son of God thus sent into the world to be born of a woman was that same only begotten Son whom Ezekiel saw come from the bosom of God Himself in the very

heart of eternity, the pre-existent Son, the only begotten of the Father. Thirdly, the passage shows that the great purpose of His coming was that we who are redeemed might receive adoption.

It should not be necessary here to speak of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. That fact is familiar to us all. But, when the Son of God, equal to the Father in all the attributes of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, holiness, power, and every divine essence, came forth from God to enter this world through the womb of Mary, He divested Himself of the glory, laid it aside, and made Himself of no reputation that He might become a man in the fullest sense of the word. "He stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bond-servant by becoming a man like other men, and, being recognized as truly human. He humbled Himself and even stooped to die, and that to a death of the cross." (Phil. 2:6, 7)(Weymouth).

It may stagger your imagination to hear what I now say, but, once you see the truth, you will be mightily helped by it. The cross of Calvary was not all the cross that Jesus was called upon to suffer. His whole life from Bethlehem to Calvary was not all the death He suffered. Jesus partook of death and entered into death the moment He laid aside His glory and entered into Mary's womb to be formed as a man. His entire life from the cradle of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary was death, death, death, and cross, cross, cross. Calvary was but the termination of both death and the cross. For this very reason, facing the cross, He prayed, saying, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:4, 5) When Jesus left His home beyond the skies, He laid aside all His glory. He laid aside even His pre-existent life, the life of the ages, that He might taste all the fullness of death, a lifetime of death, even as we also are called upon to do.

It will be a great blessing to your heart to understand that the life you now live in the body and which all men now live is not life at all, but death. When men are placed in a coffin and buried in the ground, we say they are dead, and, indeed, they are dead, but the real truth is that the existence here on earth which we call life is, in fact, death. We experience death from the cradle to the grave and the grave is but the termination of that death. God was deceiving no one when He said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam did not wait nine hundred and sixty years to die. He entered death right there, and the grave in which he sleeps is but a climax of that death. It is small wonder that so few people can understand the second death since practically none understands the first death. This whole life we live in the flesh is death. Paul called our physical bodies the body of this death. Rom. 7:24. And he wrote saying, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead, while she liveth," 1 Tim. 5:6. Again, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15:53-55. Two questions are here - O death and O grave - and the answer to them both is the resurrection unto life through Christ. How blessed is the Lord our Savior that He partook of our death in all its fullness, abiding for thirty-three years in its power, that we might be made partakers with Him of the life of the ages! Blessed be the name of the Lord!

If the reader will earnestly consider the truth I have stated in saying that the life we now live in the body is in reality not life at all, but death, then his whole attitude to all that surrounds him will be instantly changed. He will cease to lay hold on this present transient thing we call life, knowing that it is as a mist that the wind drives away. It is as the grass that is green in the field today and tomorrow is withered with the heat of the summer. He will know that riches corrupt, garments are eaten by moths, youth fades away and every pleasure that earth offers is nothing but vanity. And I will say further that, once he sees that his present existence is not life, but death, his whole attitude to the things he suffers will immediately change, for he will have learned that tribulation, suffering, bereavement, disappointment, pain, misunderstanding, and every distress are blessings sent forth from the loving hand of the Father in heaven to bring about in him the perfection of full sonship.

When Jesus came to this world. He laid aside His pre-existent life and became obedient unto death, thirty-three years of it, the cross of Calvary included. He became a man in the fullest sense of the word, and, because He did, as a man - not as God - had to be perfected by the things He suffered. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation (Jesus Christ) perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 22:10) If you have wondered why Jesus, who was God manifested in the flesh, should need to be perfected, you must remember that it was as a man that He was perfected through suffering that He might become the first perfect man in the image of God

as God had planned when He said, "Let Us make man in Our image." God the Father did not save this captain of salvation from any affliction or suffering known to men that He might both save us and lead us to the glory of full sonship in Him.

Seeing the vast benefits of suffering as a pathway to our sonship, we can better understand why Paul wrote, saying, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:10) You and I together will also take pleasure in all suffering and affliction when we will clearly understand that every stormy blast and every sting of pain and affliction is a stepping stone to our blessed sonship in Him. As it is written, "He that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." (1 Pet. 4:1)

Now as this article is being written to show how God's delight is in His sons, I have pointed out that Jesus was a true man, subject to all the sinless infirmities of the human nature that He, being made a perfect man through suffering, might show us the path and lead us to perfection and full sonship in Him. Paul, writing to the Galatians, clearly showed the purpose for which God sent forth His own Son in these words: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4, 5) The great truth of adoption is not understood properly at all. Very seldom do we ever hear even a feeble explanation of its profound truth. To those of us who live in the western hemisphere adoption means something entirely different from the meaning it has in the eastern hemisphere. The eastern meaning is, of course, the Bible meaning. When we in the west speak of adoption, we think of an orphan or a homeless child being adopted by benevolent foster parents. But this is not the Bible meaning nor the meaning understood by eastern people. In Israel and in the near East adoption is a public ceremony in which a young man who had proved his responsibility and faithfulness was proclaimed as a son. This ceremony is called adoption.

At the ceremony of adoption, with friends, neighbors, and relatives present, the father publicly proclaimed his hitherto adolescent boy as his son. This proclamation gave the son certain privileges not enjoyed by him before this time. These privileges are very important and will teach us much if we think upon them. First, the son at the adoption ceremony was given the right to use his father's name. He could buy or sell or do business in his father's name. In short, he had the power of attorney. Secondly, at the adoption ceremony the son was given his inheritance, and thus was able to use the wealth that his father had provided for him. It was his from then on and he needed not to ask any questions about its distribution. Thirdly, at the adoption ceremony the son was given equality with the father.

In consideration of these facts which I have briefly stated, it should be easy to understand the reason for so much failure among us. Men and women are forever trying to use the name of Jesus who have absolutely no authority to do so, because they have not come to the maturity of sons and have not been proclaimed as sons by the Father. Consequently their attempts to use the name of Jesus by the power of attorney are false. They become deceivers of their own selves, pretending to be the sons of God by adoption when, because of their immaturity, God has not proclaimed them so. This we will readily see is a most serious matter and we should not use the name of Jesus so lightly before having received authority from Him.

Paul had evidently received this proclamation of adoption and had been given the authority of a son of God, at least to some degree. Thus he was able to heal the sick and cast out demons in the name of Jesus. But when the seven sons of Sceva took upon themselves to use the name of Jesus, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth, ..." the evil spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped upon them and prevailed against them so that they fled naked and wounded. See Acts 19:13-16. The spirit knew Jesus and Paul because they had received the adoption as sons and had been given authority to work in the Father's name, but these sons of Sceva and other exorcists had received no such adoption and no such authority, and so they miserably failed. How often I have seen men struggle and pray and adjure, commanding sickness and devils to depart in Jesus' name, but nothing happened. The solution is perfectly simple. That man, no doubt, was a Christian, having every good intention, yet he had not received the privileges of adoption. The Father had not proclaimed him as a son with power. Consequently he failed. Better far it would be to spend long years in faithfulness, tuition, and fiery trial as adolescent children that God may at last call the world to witness our adoption and hear Him proclaim our full sonship and authority

I make no profession whatever of being a Greek scholar, but any good Greek-English lexicon can give us much help as to the true meaning of original words. Young's Analytical Concordance lists three words in the Greek New Testament which clearly indicate three stages in our progression toward full sonship. These words are:

1. Teknion. This is the equivalent of our English word infant. An example of this word can be found in Matt. 18:2.

2. Teknon. This word means an adolescent or youth. An example of this word is found in 1 John 3:2 where in the King James version the reading is: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." The word sons gives the wrong understanding. We are not now the sons; we are adolescents, youths, children, and it should read, "Beloved, now are we the children of God." So the writer goes on: "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." That is where full adoption or sonship begins. So let us understand this as we should, for it is very wrong for little children to imagine they have reached the adoption.

3. Huios. The Greek word Huios means a son, that is, a mature son, a son who has received the rite of adoption. An example of this word is found in **Heb. 1:2, 5** where Paul says that God has spoken to us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things. And again, "To which of the angels said He at any time. 'Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.'" **Verse 5.** If you will look closely at the life of Jesus, you will plainly see that His life and experience progressed from infancy through adolescence to full adoption, or from teknon (infancy) to teknon (youth) to huios (full sonship or adoption). There should be no story more vivid in our minds than the story of the manger of Bethlehem and of the Virgin who brought forth her baby, wrapping Him in swaddling clothes, laid Him in a manger. Here we have the appearance of the infant, the little child, the teknon, as helpless and dependent as any other baby, a baby who was to smile and gurgle and play and grow like all others. It is true He came from God, but He as all other true men must pass from infancy through youth to sonship. When Jesus reached the age of twelve years. He was no longer a baby, but had come to the time of adolescence. He was a youth now and could properly be described by the Greek word teknon, and thus as a boy maturing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man He was found in the temple, sitting among the learned doctors, the lawyers and priests, both hearing them and asking them questions; and all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. When His mother said, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?" the word is teknon, signifying a child, (so it is translated by Rotherham, Weymouth, Diaglott, and others), not huios, a mature son. And Jesus, being fully aware of His youth, remained subject to His parents and returned with them to Nazareth. Compare Luke 2:41-52.

The years in the life of Jesus between the ages of twelve and thirty are often called the silent years. During that time we read nothing of Him, but there is no doubt that He continued holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, increasing in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. But at last the long awaited day arrived, the day for which even Jesus must often have groaned as He with all creation longed for adoption, the day when He would receive full sonship and be publicly proclaimed as the Son of God.

John the Baptist, full of the Holy Spirit from birth, was heralding the kingdom message across the land. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," he proclaimed, while whole cities and towns emptied themselves of their inhabitants and departed to the wilderness to hear John's message and to be baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," shouted John, "but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will bum the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straight way out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3)

This, my beloved friends, was the hour of adoption. This was the public ceremony at which the eternal Father openly proclaimed Jesus as His huios, His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. (Matt. 3:17) And John, bearing witness of these things, said, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me. Upon whom thou

shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God (the huios)." (John 1:32-34) Up to this time the Bible gives no record of any miracle or sign or wonder performed by Jesus, but now, as He stood in Jordan fulfilling all things required in sons, His Father publicly proclaimed Him as "My beloved Son". And with that proclamation came all the authority sons receive at the ceremony of adoption - the right to use the Father's name, the right to use the limitless resources of the wealth of Him who is all in all. Jesus was only speaking truth when He said, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto Me." That is what adoption means. That is what adoption is for. This is a fact of adoption and full sonship. Thus from His adoption in the waters of Jordan He went forth in full sonship, no longer an infant at the breast, no more a youth, but a beloved Son, equal to His Father in authority, riches, and power.

We may not spend time here rehearsing the events of His remarkable ministry, telling in detail of the display of authority and power that were truly His by His rite of adoption, but we will say with utmost confidence that He manifested the God-given authority of His adoption in all things. Nothing was His master, yet He moved so completely in the mind of His Father that He was able to say, "I do only those things which I have seen of My Father, and I do always those things that please Him." Thus this blessed Son was master of every sickness, every demon, and every disease. Death fled before His word. Stormy winds fulfilled His word. Raging seas whimpered like babes and fell asleep at His command; and even those who came to arrest Him and lead Him off to judgment sprawled helplessly on their backs at His simple question, "Whom seek ye?" (John 18:4-6) When He stood before the cross, power was in His word to call to His side twelve legions of angels, but this He would not do that the scripture might be fulfilled.

I am sure the reader has often noticed how John in his epistle leads our minds through the three stages of experience - **little children, young men, and fathers**. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake." (1 John 2:12) "I write unto you, **young men**, because ye have overcome the wicked one." (1 John 2:13) "I have written unto you, **fathers**, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning." (1 John 2:14) Little children, teknon; young men, teknon; fathers, mature sons, equal with the father by adoption, huios. You may always recognize little children because of their great interest and excitement over the things they can receive, forgiveness of sins, gifts of the Spirit, healings, baptisms, blessings and anointings. All these things are evidences - not of mature sonship - but of spiritual childhood. You may not be pleased to hear it, but it is indisputably true that, whenever you find people curious to see signs and wonders, anxious to receive and full of excitement about the things they have received from God, then you may know immediately that they are still little children in Christ though they will certainly imagine themselves to be very mature. The real truth is they are still babes at the breast, delighting over gifts as children on Christmas morning.

Young men are prone to rejoice, not in receiving gifts, but in their strength and in the wonderful fact that through Christ they are living overcoming lives, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race amid a world of men groveling in sin. Thus it was that John wrote to them in these words: "I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." This is a very great advance from childhood. How precious and wonderful it is that in our day spiritual young men and young women, **teknon**, should be found who have overcome the world, being strong and full of the Word of God, which is Christ Himself!

Then comes the **huios**, the **adoption**. Says John, "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning." I tell you with all sincerity, soberness, and truth that there is nothing higher in all Christian experience than knowing the Father. To become acquainted with Him and to know His ways, being filled with His mind, His will and understanding, is the highest of all Christian experience. No man can ever receive the adoption until he comes to know the Father. None can receive the adoption until God's will consumes his own and God's mind is his mind. Disaster would follow at once if one could receive the rite of adoption who was still bedevilled with a carnal mind. So, John wrote to these mature sons whom here he calls fathers, saying, "I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning."

How precious and dear to the heart of God is full sonship! That which Ezekiel saw in his vision was the very genesis of sonship as from the fire, the brightness, and the whirlwind the Son of God came forth. And so delighted was the Father in that Son that He proclaimed the edict, "Let Us make man in Our image and after

Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion." So this Son of God from eternity became the Son of man, and, being proclaimed at the river Jordan as "My beloved Son," He became the captain and has led the way whereby we who were the sons of men could be proclaimed the sons of God. Oh Lord God omnipotent! How wonderful are Thy purposes and Thy ways past finding out!

Even while I write, all who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves while we wait for the adoption in Him. Though we have not yet received the adoption, we have already received the Spirit of adoption. Therefore our spirits loudly cry, "Abba, Father." "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children (teknon) of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:17)

Abba, Father! the Spirit of sonship cries.
'Tis deep calling unto deep.
Far, far beyond the scope of natural man lies
The sons' great eternal realms.
Naught but the spirit of sonship can take the veil away.
Naught but deep calling unto deep will bring in God's new day.
Night and day must the cry go forth from deep down within,
Cleansing, purifying, changing till I'm fashioned just like Him.
Then in all His glorious fullness I shall come.
Deep will call to deep, "Abba, Father, I am Thy son."
Father! I am Thy son!
Mrs. Frances Quantz.

Hear now in conclusion these illuminating words from Romans 8:18-30. Phillips translation.

"In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited - yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!

"It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in Him. We were saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience.

"The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations. For example, we do not know how to pray worthily as sons of God, but His Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words. And God who knows the heart's secrets understands, of course, the Spirit's intention as He prays for those who love God.

"Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to His plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good. God, in His foreknowledge, chose them to bear the family likeness of His Son, that He might be the eldest of a family of many brothers. He chose them long ago; when the time came He called them, He made them righteous in His sight, and then lifted them to the splendor of life as His own sons."

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 2
THY KINGDOM COME
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-4

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Our Father Which art in heaven,
 Hallowed be Thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come.
 Thy will be done in earth, as it
 Is done in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts,
 As we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation,
 But deliver us from evil:
 For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power
 And the Glory, for ever.
 Amen.

CHAPTER ONE
THE GLORY AND POWER OF THE KINGDOM

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen."— Math. 6:13

The prayer, which for centuries has been known as the Lord's prayer is a pattern prayer. Jesus introduced it to His people with these significant words: "But thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye:"

For centuries men have practiced their vain repetitions before the Lord, thinking they would be heard for their much speaking, hoping that by often repeating their requests God would at last i tike heed to their supplication and grant them the answer they desired, all the time forgetting that our heavenly Father knows what things we have need of before we ask. It is not our intention here to give an exposition on the subject of prayer, but let it

be forever known that faith can never operate until first you are sure of the will of God. Therefore our quest should never be an effort to coax God to do a thousand things we think should be done, but rather to wait before Him until He fills our being with the prayer that is born of His own will. Once the heart has become one with the will of God, there need be no striving to exercise faith, for the will of God about any matter is the supreme element of faith. Study the lives of the great heroes of faith as Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and a host of others and you will find that the secret of their mighty works lay in one thing and in one thing alone. They did what God told them to do. Therefore all the faith they needed was to obey His will.

You may be shocked at first by the following statement, but consider it well and you will find it true: Any man on earth could do the works of Moses or Elijah providing God Almighty commanded him to do them, or any man could do the works of Noah, Abraham, or Samson providing God ordained they should be done. The secret of faith is the will of God, not some exploding gift of power within you that can demand from God anything imaginable and see it accomplished. Certainly faith can remove a mountain, but Father must first say that He wants the mountain moved. Outside of the will of God there is no such thing as a commanding faith,

The first request made in this prayer was "Thy kingdom come." The second was "Thy will be done." The coming of the kingdom of God to the earth was without doubt the uppermost thought in the mind of Jesus Christ. That was the thought of thoughts and the prayer of prayers. The entire life of Jesus Christ on the earth was a parable of the coming kingdom. Every man He healed, every leper He cleansed, every sin He forgave, every blind eye He opened, every deaf ear He unstopped every word of wisdom He spoke, every act of kindness He performed was a display of the glory that should be revealed when He, the King of kings and Lord of lords, reigns in the glory of His Father on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

His entire life on earth from birth to resurrection was a testimony to the glory and wonder of the kingdom age to come when He will reign as King and prosper, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end Where could place be found for sin, sickness, war, hate, poverty, greed, anarchy, violence, disobedience, lust, and a thousand other curses when He reigns who during His life on earth abolished these things from the lives of all who misled Him.'

The prayer, Thy kingdom come, has gripped the heart of all creation. There is a secret longing in the innermost being of all mankind that the kingdom of God shall come and God's will shall be done in earth even as it is done in heaven. For almost two thousand years this prayer has been both upon the lips and in the hearts of countless millions of people. Some have prayed it with the revelation and understanding given them by Almighty God, who has already taken His throne within them, for it is in the heart of the believer that the kingdom of God first appears.

That is why Jesus told us, "The kingdom of God is within you." As a seed sprouts in the ground, so the kingdom of God begins within His faithful sons and daughters. Thence it will spring forth, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, until its fertile fruit fills the whole earth.

Not all have prayed with understanding, yet because of the universal hope of the kingdom in God's creation, all have prayed. The wonderful words, "Thy kingdom come," have been mumbled in the litanies of the unthinking, they have been recited at the death beds of men who knew not God, and they have been intoned by condemned men as they stood on the scaffold waiting to be dropped to their death. Men hiding in fox-holes, knowing no other prayer, have prayed, "Thy kingdom come," and in the heat of battle amid the blood and fire and vapor of smoke both the living and the dying have sighed out their longing to God, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth even as it is done in heaven." The mind of man, struck dumb and insensible through the fall, still responds to the longing born of God within him that eventually the glory of the kingdom age will dawn upon the earth when God's will shall be done from sea to sea, and the dread rule of the carnal mind will be no more. When the British armies under General Allenby marched into the city of Jerusalem in 1917, their massed bands played as they marched,

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom reach from shore to shore

Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Without doubt the hope of the kingdom is in every heart and somehow by divine power God has placed these three words. Thy kingdom come, in the hearts of all creation. And is it any wonder that man should long for that glad hour to come, for the beasts likewise, together with the trees, the winds, and the waters, without understanding groan in travail for the day of sonship and the kingdom. It was Paul the apostle who said, "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." **Rom. 8: 18-21**

Man does not understand the longing that is within him and we may be sure that all the inanimate creation is also blind and in the dark. We have become like babies who sometimes cry for reasons they know not, refusing to be comforted. Our souls often deplore the awesome conditions that are in the world - the rebellion, anarchy, delinquency, self-assertion, and war - yet if we could look deeper than the surface, we would understand that all these things actually spring from man's hatred and rebellion against the bondage he is in. In his darkness and bondage he imagines that could he but throw off his restraints he would be happy, that could he have all he wants, he would be content, but he does not know that his discontent lies far deeper than his outward life. While he thus seeks liberty from without, he does not know that the inner man is seeking for freedom from the bondage of corruption and all the wretchedness into which the carnal mind has brought him. Man is longing for freedom from the slavish thralldom he is in, but, not knowing God, he seeks freedom by rebellion only to find that his new, found freedom is even a greater and more hateful bondage than the one from which he escaped. But those to whom Christ the King has revealed Himself know that true freedom is found only when Christ is crowned King. When He comes into the life, the snares of the fowler are broken, the tears of sorrow turn to pearls of praise, and sins of years are washed away by His blood.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE KINGDOM

We need no greater evidence of the certainty of the coming kingdom of God on earth than the fact that Jesus taught us to pray for its coming. The prayer prayed by Christ, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth even as it is done in heaven," should in itself be indisputable proof that God intends to set up a literal kingdom in which His will shall be done in the entire earth even as it is done in the entire heaven. The evidence, as we shall abundantly see, does not stop with this prayer, but rather the prayer "Thy kingdom come" was the earnest request of Christ that the eternal purpose of God for such a kingdom would soon be accomplished.

The hope of a kingdom in which God's sons would reign existed long before Eden and was first manifested to us in the words, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness and let Us give him dominion." The Kingdom of God was the theme of the prophets as we shall presently see. When the birth of Jesus was announced to Mary, these words were spoken by the mighty Gabriel, who came from the very presence of God: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall he called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over (he house of Jacob; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." **Luke 1:31-33** What greater proof do we need at the birth of a king than the word of God as to what His future shall be? No better identification can be given than this: "The Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." Therefore let God be true though every man should be a liar. The earth is yet to see the literal and glorious reign of Christ in a kingdom that shall have no end.

When Jesus prayed, "Thy kingdom come," He was certainly looking beyond this age when good and bad are everywhere together and light is mixed with darkness. He was looking to the age of the kingdom of His Father when the will of God should be done in the earth, and the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. When the angels of God gather out of the kingdom of heaven all things that offend (Matt. 13:41), that at last will be the true beginning of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the Father on earth.

David was anointed to be king of Israel while Saul was still on the throne. David is typical of Christ while Saul is typical of the carnal systems that have ruled the world in Christ's stead for thousands of years. David, though

anointed king of Israel, never once put forth his hand to wrest the kingdom from Saul, but waited patiently until God's hour came in which he would be set upon the throne. Even so it is now and has been for centuries past. Christ (the anointed) has made no effort by force or by power of arms to take the kingdom for which He is anointed, but like David is waiting until the Father shall give Him the kingdom and the government of the whole earth. Though David would not lift a finger to take the kingdom from Saul, yet all through his rejection he reigned as king in the hearts of all who loved him and followed him even though Saul was still on the throne of Israel. David had his mighty men. There were those with him who were ready to lay down their lives for him. He ever delivered those who were oppressed and gathered unto himself all who were discontent with the reign of Saul. His followers were a motley crowd indeed, for it is said, "And every one that was in distress and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men." **1 Sam. 22:2** They were indeed an unlikely group, but they were mighty and they were faithful to him. They were the ones who followed him in his distress and in his humiliation and they were the ones who entered with him into the glory of his kingdom and of his reign. So also it is today. The flesh and the carnal mind are usurping the throne of Jesus Christ while the anointed Christ, like David, is rejected by His enemies. Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head. But in His rejection and His humiliation He has His faithful followers to whom He says, "Ye that have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." **Matt. 19:28**

The days of David's rejection came to an end, and the days of the rejection of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, are also near their end. Soon Saul will be dead and David (Christ) will be king.

The kingdom of heaven is an age of mixtures, an age when it is difficult to know who is who, a day when sheep and goats flock together, when wheat and tares grow in the same fields, when the leaven is working in the meal, when good fish and bad are in the kingdom of heaven net. But at the end of the age God will send forth His angels to gather the wicked from among the just. He will set the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left. He will gather up the good fish and cast the bad away. He will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie, and then His kingdom will have come and His will shall be done in earth even as it is done in heaven.

The kingdom for which Christ prayed was the Father's kingdom. "Thy kingdom come," He said. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." He was not praying for the kingdom of heaven to come, but for the kingdom of God to come when He should reign in the kingdom of His Father. That is why it is said, "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." **Matt. 13:41-43** The kingdom of God is the kingdom of the Father. "But I say unto you I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father." **Matt. 26:29** Jesus Christ with all the sons of God will reign in the kingdom of the Father even as Joseph reigned under Pharaoh, having complete authority in all things. "And He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." **Cor. 15:25-28**

When we realize that there is so much similarity between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, it is not difficult to understand why the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

THE GLORY OF THE KINGDOM

Whenever it pleases God to reveal a truth, it will immediately be found that the whole Bible springs into life regarding that revelation until every page of Holy Scripture breathes forth the fragrance of its message. You discover that wherever you look within its inspired pages golden threads appear, weaving themselves into a pattern of truth until the finished product shines forth with a magnificent beauty and fullness that only God Himself can devise.

Both New Testament and Old Testament writers are forever forging links in the golden chain of kingdom truth until we are left to marvel at so great a restitution and so wonderful a regeneration. These significant words of Peter fill the soul with wonder: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets from the beginning of the world." Is it then any wonder that the Bible literally breathes the message of the kingdom of God and the restoration of all things that fell under the curse even from the beginning of the world?

The Bible itself does not contain all the things that could be written on this subject. How much less are we able in such limited space to unfold more than a mere outline of the majesty of that kingdom which is even now at hand. We must therefore confine ourselves to small portions from one or two books that we might better understand the whole.

Isaiah is certainly a prophet of the kingdom of God. His prophetic ear seemed always tuned in to the glory of the coming age. His prophetic eye overlooked the scenes of his own day. Spanning the centuries, he saw a Savior who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and chastised for our peace. Then, leaping far beyond the sorrow of the cross, he saw every valley exalted, every mountain made low, every crooked place made straight, and every rough place smooth. Isa. 40:4. He saw a king who would not fail nor be discouraged till He had set judgment in the earth, and the isles would wait for His law. Isa. 42:4.

THE KING AND THE KINGDOM

It is the king that determines the kingdom. If the king is righteous, so also is the kingdom. If the king is iniquitous, the kingdom will be filled with evil. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." The nations of the earth have been plagued for thousands of years by strife, inequity, and every imaginable evil because there has been an unceasing reign of the carnal mind in every kingdom from the beginning of time. Throughout all the history of Israel the testimony was "like people, like priest." If the king was righteous, the people were righteous. If the king was evil, so also were the people.

The kingdom of God will be all glorious because the King is nil glorious. All that He is will fall in blessing upon His kingdom as the dew of Hermon falls in blessing upon the mountains in Zion, for there the Lord commandeth the blessing, even life forevermore.

The life, which Jesus lived on earth, was the greatest parable ever known. It was a parable of the kingdom of God. He fully demonstrated by His divine life and power all the blessings that were to follow in His kingdom. The evil things, which we have learned to live with and accept as part of our very existence, He conquered, putting them beneath His feet. He delivered those who believe from every sickness known to man! The word of His mouth makes the lame man to leap as an hart. Hear Him as He commands deaf ears to be unstopped and blind eyes to see. Listen as His wisdom puts all His enemies to silence, causing them to say, "Never man spake like this man!" Stand in awe beside the tomb of the dead while He who is the resurrection and the life calls, "Lazarus, come forth!" Weep with the forgiven woman to whom He said, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." Feast as He feeds the hungry multitude with enough and to spare. Rejoice as He preaches, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Stand in awe as He stills the raging storm even as He stilled the fevered brow. Weep with His friends as He died. Rejoice that He liveth again soon to return on the clouds of glory to reign, no more in humility and rejection in tiny Palestine, but in power and wonderful glory over all the earth.

Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps.
Fire and hail, snow and vapors' stormy wind* fulfilling
His word: Mountains and all hills- fruitful trees and all
Cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl:
Kings of the earth and all people; princes, and all judges of
The earth. Both young men and maidens; old men and
Children: Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His

Name alone is excellent.
His glory is above the earth and the heaven.

It is almost possible to hear the thrill of Isaiah's voice as it comes ringing o'er the centuries; "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isa. 9:6,7. I stand in awe before these mighty words. They are too much for my feeble words to describe. Think of it! A King reigning whose very name is Wonderful, whose very title is Counselor, who has a name written The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace! We who are accustomed to seeing the increase of strife, anarchy, war and evil are asked to behold the increase of His government and peace which shall flow like a river over all the earth until every sword is a plow share and every spear a pruning hook. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Thus upon the throne of David and from Jerusalem (the city of peace) shall the throne of the Lord be established with judgment and justice from henceforth for the kingdom age. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isa. 9:7

THE SON AND THE SONS

The apostle Paul taught that, "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. 8:19. Sonship is the hope of the entire creation. In sonship we are to include that first glorious Son, Jesus Christ, who is the firstborn of God's creation of sons, but with Him we are to include also that vast family of sons who are to follow after Him to finally come into His glorious image. Jesus Christ is the firstborn of many brethren, many sons who through His grace were to come into that same image. When John saw the fullness of Christ in his blessed vision on Patmos, he fell as one dead before Him, for he saw Him in completeness, His voice as the sound of many waters, for all the sons of God were complete in Him.

Though the apostles taught the truths of sonship, we must not think that the doctrine began with them, for it did not. Isaiah, David, and many others wrote of sonship. Isaiah in his prophecy opened a revelation which Jesus later completed when He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." **John. 15:5** In Isaiah 11:1 we have these wonderful words: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of His roots." Jesse was the father of David (Matt. 1:6) from whom according to the flesh Christ came. Rom. 1:3, Matt. 1:1. Jesus Christ was the rod out of the stem of Jesse and the sons of God are the branch that grew out of His root. For this reason Jesus declared, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." His inspired words without doubt explain the true meaning of the prophecy. Speaking again of the kingdom day in chapter **4:2, Isaiah** says, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious ..." Jesus Christ was the corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died. The sons of God are the full corn in the ear. He was the seed; they are the fruit in His image. Let us not miss this great truth, for it shows us as nothing else can what the place of the sons of God will be in the kingdom of the Father. Indeed, it manifests the true meaning and purpose of sonship. The manifestation of the sons of God will be during the kingdom age. Then the works that Christ did they will do also and far greater works than these. Their ministry will be to restore the whole creation to the glory of Eden during the entire thousand years of the millennial kingdom.

Let us not be deceived by crafty men who now profess to be manifested sons of God. If they were such, they would have no need to proclaim it, for their undeniable glory and power would stand open before all the world, none being able to dispute nor gainsay it. For the most part these men are as unlike Jesus as it is possible to be. When the sons of God are manifested, all the world will feel the power and authority of their ministry, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

When John saw the 144,000 stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion (Rev. 14), he was actually beholding the complete body of sons gathered out of the church age and prepared for the government of the kingdom, for the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

To understand the character and glory of the millennial reign, which is identical with the kingdom of God, we will need far more than ordinary understanding. God grant that His revelation may be given us to see beyond

the misty shadows of doubt and fear that belong to this age of carnal men that we may behold the day which the Lord has made, even His Sabbath of rest.

Men who are accustomed to fighting every curse in this age would not know what to do if they were to suddenly find themselves in Eden where no curse is. All our lives we have struggled against the curse of thorns and weeds. In the sweat of our faces we have fought with drought and heat; we have wrestled with floods and endless pests. Frost and hail have snatched away the hope of our labors; fire has devoured the dreams of a lifetime. During the days we have been scorched with heat; in the night we have been bitten with frost. Sickness, disease, war, fear, and death have dogged our pilgrim pathway from the cradle to the grave. Our days have been full of trouble and sorrow as the sparks fly upward. To understand, therefore, the character and glory of the kingdom reign we must know that the nations who then will inhabit the earth will be free from all these blighting curses, for the ministry of the sons of God, the branch of the Lord, will have removed them all. Then shall be brought to pass the saying of Jesus, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do because I go to the Father."

Let us now notice that upon this branch of the Lord, which is the sons of God, will rest the sevenfold Spirit of God. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him; the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of might, the spirit of knowledge, and the spirit of reverence or the fear of the Lord. Isa. 11:2. This is the Spirit and anointing which will rest upon the sons of God who will reign with Christ to govern the earth in the kingdom of the Father. The sevenfold Spirit that is named in detail here is the same as that which John in the Revelation calls the seven spirits, which are before His throne. Rev. 1:4, 3:1, 4:4, 5:6. (Please read these references. Their teaching is most enlightening.) Need we remind ourselves that the throne is the seat of government? Therefore these seven glorious spirits appear before the throne.

The very thought of an age governed by the sons of God who are full of the sevenfold Spirit of God leaves us almost breathless. Words become totally inadequate and human expression collapses completely. Our innermost beings must begin to respond to the revelation and the inspiration of the almighty God; otherwise we will be as dumb as beasts in our understanding. Compare the governments of our day with all their graft and greed, their political maneuvering, their heartless intrigue, their oppression and inequality, with the government of the sons of God upon whom shall rest the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and reverence for the Lord. If our hearts can comprehend the vast gulf that lies between these two systems, then we will see that all who enter into that blessed realm of the kingdom of God will have awakened to a new age where old things have truly passed away and, behold, all things are become new. Is it any wonder that Paul, thrilling to the inspiration of the Spirit, cried, "I reckon that the sufferings of this age are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us, for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18,19**

Now notice the kind of judgment the earth will share in that age. "And He shall make Him (the branch, or the body of sons) of quick (living) understanding in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of the ears. But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod (authority) of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." (Isa. 11:4,5) The judges of the earth for centuries past have judged by the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears. But we have yet to learn that what the natural eye sees and the natural ear hears are outward and undependable. Man can see only the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. I know of only one judge who cast outward evidence aside and judged righteously by the Spirit. That judge was, of course, Jesus Christ, the first glorious Son who was the pattern for all God's sons. When the woman taken in the very act of adultery was brought before Him, He judged neither by what He heard nor by what He saw. Casting aside the outward and visible, He judged by what His spirit knew within. Therefore He was able to release her without condemnation and send her away to sin no more. (John 8:1-11) His gracious act on this important occasion proved and confirmed His own inimitable teaching, for He had taught that we should "judge not according to the outward appearance, but judge righteous judgment." **John 7:24** The Holy Spirit centuries earlier, speaking by the lips of Isaiah, had said, "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." This without doubt is to be the character of the reign of Christ in the kingdom of the Father. Upon Him with all the sons of God will rest the sevenfold Spirit of God that "righteousness might be the girdle of His loins and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." **Isa. 11.5**

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

The dispensation of the kingdom of God is to be a dispensation of restoration. The things lost through the fall are to be restored from the least to the greatest. Certainly there is a further vast unspeakable gathering of all things into Christ in the dispensation of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:9,10), which dispensation follows the dispensation of the kingdom of God. But, during the kingdom of God, when Christ reigns on the earth with His sons from Zion and Jerusalem, there will be a restoration beyond man's ability to comprehend. We must believe the word of God as we read it and seek the Holy Spirit to give us understanding of the unspeakable glory of that coming age.

When Peter spoke of the restitution of all things (Act 3:21), he was without doubt speaking of the kingdom day. He said that the heavens must receive Jesus until the times of restitution of all things. The blighting traditions of the church have stolen the truth of this scripture from the hearts of believing men, teaching them that God would not restore all things, but I am sure that He who gathered up the fragments of bread and fish that nothing be lost cannot consent to the loss of the greatest purposes of His creation. Nor will He who left the ninety and nine sheep in the fold to seek the one that was lost be content to have one sheep in the fold while ninety and nine are lost. Such thoughts are inconsistent with the very nature of God and contrary to all He is and does. Let us then follow the prophet Isaiah and move with him in inspiration as he paints the picture of restoration on the canvas of our faith.

RESTORATION OF LIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING

Since the day that Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, man has lacked spiritual understanding. His heart has been blinded because he has walked almost entirely by the dictates of the carnal mind. The chief interest of a carnal mind is the preservation of his flesh, which is naught but the physical body of flesh. A heavy darkening veil has clouded his spiritual mind. He has groped about in darkness neither knowing nor understanding spiritual things. Like Nebuchadnezzar he has become as a beast because he was given the mind of a beast. But all this dimness will be removed when the sons of God reign in the kingdom of the Father, which is even now at our doors.

In the ninth chapter of Isaiah the prophet overwhelms our minds with these truths. After describing the darkness of the earth (**Isa. 8:21,22**) which has prevailed in all ages, he throws open the gates of light to illumine the kingdom day. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light hath shined." **9:2**. For centuries humanity has been as prisoners gathered in a dark pit, but after many days we will be visited. So great will be the light that the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His ancients gloriously. Isa. 24:22,23

The dark covering that has been cast over the hearts and minds of the people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed when the sons of God reign in the kingdom of the Father from Jerusalem and from Mount Zion. For thus saith the Lord by the mouth of Isaiah, "And He will destroy the covering cast over all the people, and the veil that is spread over all nations, and it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us: This is our God; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." **Isa. 25:7-9**

Few people have believed in ages past because there has been a veil over their understanding. Even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts; nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. (2 Cor. 3:15) God has a definite purpose in allowing a veil to cloud all human understanding. Contrary to the tradition of the church it is not God's intention to bring all the world into the fold in this age. His intention is to choose out a people for his name, who in a coming glorious age would be used to bring light to all men. This is the plan laid down by the inspired word of the apostle James when he said, "God at first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And lo (his agree the words of the prophets; as it is written. After this (after He has taken out the people) I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." **Acts 15:14-18**

It is after Christ's return to set up the kingdom that the residue of men are to be saved. To look for a world-wide ingathering during the church age is unscriptural and ridiculous. The world-wide revival will be during the kingdom age under the government of the sons of God. For then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Some years ago it was revealed to me that the evangelization of the nations during the kingdom age would be accomplished in exactly the opposite way to the method used in this age. In the church age the commission has been, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." In the kingdom age entire nations will come to Jerusalem and to Zion to seek and find the Lord. What could be more certain than the words spoken by Micah the prophet when he said, "But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain (Zion) of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it and many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord (Zion), and to the house of the God of Jacob (Jerusalem) and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." **Micah 4:1,2**

During this age of grace the Lord has sought the people, but in the age of the kingdom He will pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication and the millions of earth will come as nations, seeking the Lord in Jerusalem and in Zion. What an indescribable wonder! But once the Lord removes the covering cast over the minds of all people, then all men will see in a clear light and will come by the millions to seek His face. To this also agree the words of the other prophets. Isaiah has said with great clearness, "Behold, thou shall call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations which knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee." **Isa. 55:5,6** Here we have the wonderful promise of whole nations running to seek the Lord, because God has glorified His sons.

"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then shall thou see and flow together and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged: because the abundance of the sea (the people) shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." **Isa. 60:1-5** "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands that I have glorified." **Isa. 60:20,21** Please read Isaiah, chapter 60.

It is completely hopeless here to even try to quote all the scriptures that refer to the universal conversion of the seeking nations during the dispensation of the kingdom of God; therefore, with these scriptures we will pass on: "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: For I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that onto Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." **Isa. 45:22,23** Thus saith the Lord of hosts. It shall yet come to pass that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: For we have heard that God is with you." **Zech. 8:20-23** Thus shall the covering cast upon the minds of the people since Eden be destroyed by the sons of God, and all nations will see the light and seek the Lord.

THE END OF OPPRESSION

What a dreadful sermon could be preached on the theme of oppression! But the subject is too well known by most people to speak of it here. From time immemorial the history of the world has been one of the oppressor and the oppressed. The poor have been robbed because they were poor. The hireling has been cheated of his pittance while rich men have grown fat by his loss. The widow's house has been devoured while the rich man's riches have cankered and rusted. The wages of the hireling that reaped the field have been kept back by fraud

that the rich might heap treasure for the last day. The innocent have been condemned and killed while the guilty have gone free. The strong have made slaves of the weak and have taken by force the little he had. But the end of all oppression will immediately come when the law of the Lord goes forth from the 144,000 sons who stand upon Mount Zion, for the righteousness and justice of Christ will fill the entire earth. "For the extortioner is at an end, and the spoiler ceaseth; the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established: and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and hasting righteousness." **Isa. 16:4-5** "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." **Isa. 11:4,5** Thus shall all oppression end.

PHYSICAL RESTORATION

The kingdom age will see the final end of all sickness and physical disability. A pitiful cry is rising today from all mankind, saying, "I am sick!" Every part of the human body is subject to disease. No member of the physical body has escaped. In spite of all the remarkable accomplishments of medical science we may safely say that the human race becomes weaker as the years go by. Practically every doctor and dentist has a long waiting list. Hospitals are filled to overflowing all the time. One out of every twelve persons requires mental treatment during his life, and cancer and heart disease have reached epidemic proportions. The whole creation groans in pain and the cry of the sufferer never ceases. Is it any wonder that the suffering creation sighs in a sort of universal travail, longing for the manifestation of the sons of God when at last they will be delivered from the awful bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

Jesus Christ, who will reign in the kingdom of His Father, demonstrated while upon earth that His power over every human ailment was complete. Even the maimed (people who had lost limbs) were healed by His matchless power and went away rejoicing. Demons who had filled men's minds with wild insanity were cast out. Lepers were cleansed with a word and dead men raised to life again. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "I am the resurrection and the life," He said, "Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." The healings and miracles of Jesus were performed, not to try to rid the earth of sickness nor even to prove His power as the son of God, but rather to demonstrate the power, the authority, and the character of that King whom God has fore-ordained to reign over all the earth in the coming age. If He did these mighty things in His rejection and humiliation, what will He do in His glory? Or if these things be done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?

The prophecies which concern the kingdom of God leave no stone unturned to fully assure us that there will be a full and complete deliverance from all the diseases and sicknesses which have brought such a night of suffering and death upon the whole earth. The deliverance of the entire creation from this bondage will be one of the greater works of which Jesus spoke. When Zion is the city of our solemnities and Jerusalem a quiet habitation, the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick." (Isa. 33:20,24) What a change that will be! "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads: They shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." **Isa. 35:5,6,10** In that glorious day man shall be satisfied with long life (Psa. 91:16), and they will see the salvation of the Lord, for He gives His followers aionian life and they shall never perish.

RESTORATION OF THE EARTH

Like all other things the good earth has suffered the result of the curse ever since the fall. The very ground itself has been cursed for man's sake. The productiveness and life-giving power it once possessed has vanished from it with the coming of the curse, for God said to Adam, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded of thee saying, Thou shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return lo the ground." **Gen. 3:17-19**

Never has man been able to remove the curse from the earth. He does not know how much the earth is capable of bringing forth, nor does he understand the creative ministry that Adam enjoyed when he was given the joy of dressing the garden. Of the earth man knows only toil and sweat that he might eat the herb of the field to keep life within him until he returns to the dust. But to His glorious sons God has given the ministry of removing the curse from the earth. This, too, will be restored, for it is written, "Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." **Isa. 40:4,5** The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: ... The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." **Isa. 35:1,2,7** "Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace: the mountains and hills will break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." **Isa. 35:12,13** "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the 'lawman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him hat soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all he hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit hem; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; hey shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them, and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." **Amos 9:13-15**. Thus shall the kingdom restore the earth to an Eden of glory.

RESTORATION OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Not least of all that fell beneath the weight of the curse was the animal kingdom. Their once bright minds were forced downward by the fall of man lest they should be wiser than their alien lord. Throughout the dispensations they have groaned under a fearful travail which even man has not known. They have unwillingly been made man's enemy. They have been sacrificed on the altar for his sin. They have been butchered for his meat. They have been hunted for his pleasure, and made slaves for his industry. But the days of their bondage and thralldom are almost over, for the sons of God will restore them to their original glory. Then shall "the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead hem. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." **Isa. 11:6-9**

Most men have a love for animals, and I cannot resist saying that I think I shall weep with joy when I see a mighty lion lying in peace with the calf and the falling. How I shall rejoice to palp his lawny head and see him restored to the peace of Eden! Then shall our glad hearts repeat, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father."

Then the bear shall be gentle,
And the wolf shall be lame;
And the lion shall lie down with the lamb.
Then the beast from the wild
Shall be led by the child,
And I shall be changed from the creature that I am.

RESTORATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE

The reign of King Solomon with its universal peace is symbolic of the millennial reign of Christ. From the beginning of time war and strife have been so universal that mankind has accepted them as necessary evils and an important part of international relations. All nations have their ministers of war and all have their armies, either small or large. War is the method of the carnal mind. Carnage and the carnal mind go hand in hand. Though nothing is ever truly settled by war, yet the carnal mind never learns that lesson. Should this age go on forever, there would still be armies and bloody battles in the earth. War exists not only on the level of nations,

but it exists in the hearts of the people. It is waged between members of families, between husbands and wives, between rival gangs, and even in sports. The world of religion gives no relief from this spirit of rivalry, for the bitterest of all struggles have been the religious ones, for they never end, neither are they ever forgiven.

All wars in history come from the carnal mind. The carnal mind is the mind that is interested only in the carnal, which is the flesh. The carnal mind is the physical mind and not the spiritual mind. The carnal mind is concerned only with the things of the body - what it tastes, feels, hears, sees, and smells. For the sake of these five senses the whole physical world exists, and for their gratification all war and strife is waged. But the kingdom of God will not be governed by the carnal mind but by the mind of Christ, which is the Father's mind. That glorious mind of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding will be possessed in fullest measure by every reigning Son of God that peace might reign supreme among all nations and all families of the earth. It will change the nature of carnivorous beasts. Then the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (Jas. 3:17) This is the wisdom that comes from above and this is the wisdom of the mind of Christ. The wisdom from beneath is earthly, sensual, devilish (Jas. 3:14-16), and the result of it has been war and continual confusion throughout all ages. But the wisdom from above, which is pure and peaceable, gentle and easily entreated, will bring a reign of peace, purity, and gentleness.

With wisdom there is always authority. There is no true authority apart from wisdom. It could not possibly be. Therefore the wisdom God has given to His sons possesses the authority to remove all greed and the resulting strife from the face of the earth, for "He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up word against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." **Isa. 2:4** "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." **Micah 4:4,5**

During that glorious reign there will be no lawlessness, greed, graft, or rebellion permitted, for the "spoiler ceaseth, and he oppressors are consumed from the land. And in mercy shall he throne be established: and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness," **Isa. 16:4,5**. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord... Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts. - And in that day there shall be no more Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." **Zech. 14:20,21**

THE INCREASE OF THE KINGDOM

The kingdom of God will not spread over the entire earth in a moment of time. Never in any dispensation has God undertaken to fulfill His purposes in an instant. There will be increase and a steady growth of the kingdom that will gradually fill all the earth until no man will say, "Know the Lord, for all will know Him from the least to the greatest." Isaiah certainly gives a wonderful understanding of the increase of the kingdom when he says, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever (the age). The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." **Isa. 9:7**

When Daniel saw the vision of the destruction of the Babylon of the world systems, he saw a stone (Christ) cut from the mountain (Zion) which smote the image of the world systems on the feet. The whole image collapsed, and the stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:34,35)

I am convinced that we are at the end of this age. The dispensation of the kingdom of heaven, which we have known as the church age, or the dispensation of grace is at an end. It has been an age of good and evil, right and wrong, wheat and tares, sheep and goats, light and darkness, mingled together so that scarcely anyone knew which was which. Jesus Christ, like David, though anointed to reign, has seen Saul seated on His throne while He in His rejection has reigned only in the hearts of His true followers. But those who have truly followed

Him in this age of uncertainties, division, and carnality will be the ones who sit with Him in His throne in the kingdom of God. (Matt. 19:28)

Two thousand years ago John the Baptist came proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His message was true and that age came with great power. From its fields of wheat and tares the Lord has gathered the seed of the kingdom of God. The message today is not "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," but, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!" It is scarcely necessary to repeat the signs which Jesus declared would precede the end of this age, but certainly they have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled on an ever, increasing scale. We read in the seventeenth chapter of Luke that the disciples asked Jesus when the kingdom of God should come. Verse 20. In the following verses of the chapter He outlined many signs. "The Son of man must be rejected of this generation," He said, and so it has been. As it was in the days of Noah, so should it be in the days of the Son of man. Certainly the days of Noah are with us. the kingdom of God is at hand.

Great preparations are being made in the spiritual world for the coming age. The image of great Babylon is rising to its fullest height. The sons of God are being secretly prepared and anointed to reign. Very soon the little stone cut from the mountain without hands will strike the image on the feet, and the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

CHAPTER TWO THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITHIN

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come. He answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say Lo here! or Lo there! For behold the kingdom of God is within you.**" **Luke 17:20, 21**

The end of all things as we have known them is at hand. The unsound and worthless feet of the image of Babylon, part of iron and part of miry clay, are even now crumbling beneath the awesome weight of the legs of iron, the belly and thighs of brass, the breast of silver and the haughty head of gold. (Dan. 2:31-45) The image of Babylon is complete. This art of human device now stands before the deceived but admiring eyes of men, a thing of infinite beauty, an image to be trusted, having stood the ravages of millenniums of time. But they do not seem to know that its feet are dross, mingled, weak and corrupt, for they are formed of iron and clay which cannot cling together, and, should a stone but fall upon them, collapse they must and with them the haughty image of the systems of this world.

I need not tell you that Daniel, a prophet dearly loved of God, saw the total collapse of the confused systems and governments of this world when in spirit he saw a stone, cut out without hands, smite the image on its useless feet of iron and clay, shattering them in pieces. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind (the Spirit) carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" **Dan. 2:35**

The stone that smote the image, utterly destroying it with one blow upon its deficient feet, must not be regarded as another of earth's corrupt governments. This stone is not of flint or granite. This is a stone, chosen of God and precious. This is the stone, which the builders rejected, but God has made it the head stone of the corner. (Psa. 118:22) This precious stone is also a living stone, a person who is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ the King. It was of Him that Peter wrote, saying, "To 'horn coming, as unto a living stone disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively (living) stones, re built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also icy were appointed," **(1 Peter 2:4-8)** The inspiration of the Almighty leaves us in no doubt as to what and who this precious one is that smote the image of Babylon on its feet and then went on to build a

kingdom that filled the whole earth. God has declared that "in the days of these kings (represented by the image) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall ever be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Dan. 2:44

There are many sacred realms in scripture where I often fear I tread, not because I doubt their truth or fear to believe the wonders which their truths portray, but I fear those impious men who would with rough-shod feet and unbowed head stomp in to gaze with unsanctified eyes at the burning bush of God's sacred revelation, or who, like Uzzah, stretch forth an unsanctified hand to steady and adjust that which is wholly of the Lord, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." **Job 28:7,8** It was because of such as these that Jesus always spoke in parables that He might safely hide the deep things of God from the carnal heads of the wise and prudent men and reveal them unto babes who walked in the love and fear of the Lord. I find little difficulty in persuading men and women to believe in sonship. They pounce on the truth like vultures and peddle the message like the hucksters of Petticoat Lane, but I find very, very few men who have the spirit of sonship, the spirit that with bowed head and contrite heart breathes in love and yieldedness, "Abba, Father!" He who has the spirit of sonship has no will of his own; neither has he any plans of his own, nor any ambitions of his own. He has no joy or humility of his own, nor gifts, nor sacrifices, nor righteousness, but his soul is bound in a bundle of life with the Lord his God, and the souls of his enemies, them shall he sling out as out of the middle of a sling. 1 Sam. 25:29. His one love and all-consuming passion is bound up in the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

I have written these solemn facts with purpose and fear lest the ambitious and unsanctified Christian should seize upon the truth we now discuss as just so much more ammunition for his gun or wind for his bag, for some preach Christ of envy and strife and some of good will, while others preach Christ of contention, not sincerely. (See Phil. 1:15,16)

The stone, which the builders rejected, is Christ. He is the head stone or the cap stone. The builders of the systems of this world, whether of government or of religion, have rejected Him as their head. Through all the ages the defiant shout of the multitude has been, "We will not have this man to reign over us." He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him. My heart's desire and prayer to God for those who read is that the Holy Spirit would now open our eyes to clearly see the full force of the truth set forth in this inspired statement of Peter: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." **1 Peter 2:4,5** May God now open the eyes of our understanding to see that the precious living stone of whom the Spirit speaks is not one stone, but many individual living stones, united by the Spirit of God to become one stone. We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another. With all reverence and godly fear I tell you that that one stone, formed of many living stones, is the fullness of God's Christ. The spiritual house which God is building of many living stones is nothing less than the body of Christ, every stone in this building, this house not made with hands, is a living stone. Every living stone is an elect and chosen son of God. Every elect and chosen Son of God is a member of His spiritual body. This is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. 5:1. This is the Father's house of many mansions which Jesus called "My Father's house". **John 14:1,2** It is in this spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5), this holy temple, this spiritual body, that God is preparing a place for us even as Jesus said: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." **John 14:2,3**

While we entertain the idea that the Father's house is heaven and the many mansions are beautiful palaces in which we will live when we get to heaven, we miss a whole realm of truth as well as being guilty of very childish understanding. The truth that God would have us know is this: He at infinite cost is building a house for Himself, an eternal mansion in the heavens from which He will govern the whole universe in glory and righteousness. The stones of that mansion are living stones. The living stones are elect and precious saints of God. With reverence and godly fear I proclaim the ineffable truth that these living stones are the enchristed, the people Paul speaks of as being "in Christ". They are members of His body (1 Cor. 12:12), of His flesh, and of

His bones (Eph. 5:30). In one Spirit, even the Holy Spirit, they are all baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), and that me body is Christ's body (verse 12), the spiritual house (1 Peter 1:5), the temple of the Lord (2 Cor. 6:16), an house not made with hands (2 Cor. 5:1), and My Father's house (John 14:2).

Oh, the goodness and the greatness of the purpose of God! How infinite His understanding! How wise His ways! How almighty His acts! How infinitely patient His longsuffering! Who among men can fathom or describe the purpose of the Lord? Who can ever add to His wisdom or detract from His power? God in wisdom has created the heavens and the earth. From the lass of the earth He took a portion of its dust to form a man, and from the mass of mankind and all the stones thereof He elected and chose the living stones who would form His living temple, His house not made with hands. See with what infinite power the Almighty presses His searching and edifying question upon us, for thus the Lord demands: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." **1 Cor. 3:16, 17**

Read these inspired and holy statements with all diligence and prayer. Halt now in your reading, if you will, and with bowed head and contrite heart ask the Spirit of God to fill your spirit with the reality of the infinite work He is doing. Through suffering, fiery trial and tribulation, with infinite care He is chipping and cutting, fashioning and polishing that living stone which you are that as a finished, mature, and adopted son you may be placed by Him in the temple of the Lord, the house not made with hands, the Father's own house and eternal dwelling place. Faithfully does He rebuke us, saying, "If any man defile the temple of the Lord, him shall God destroy." In the end of this age the proclamation will be heralded from sea to sea and to the four winds of heaven, "All who are with Him are called and chosen and faithful." **Rev. 17:14** It is the combination of these three - called, chosen, and faithful - that will decide our place in His temple. None but these can reign. When I consider the universe, the work of God's hands, the sun, the moon, and the stars with all their infinite and timeless majesty, I fain would fall before God in wonder and adoration; yet all the myriad stars, the suns and planets are but lifeless dust. But when I consider God's holy temple, formed of the living stones which we are, each precious stone chosen of God, each one a son of God, each one a stone of fire, each one a temple in itself where God sits enthroned, every stone filled with the life that God is, the wisdom which God is, the understanding which God is, the omnipotence which God is, then there is no strength left in me, nor scarcely room for praise nor any word at all, for my spirit is struck dumb by the majesty of such infinite purpose.

It is not my intention here to write concerning the temple of the Lord. Perhaps at a later date we can explore more fully the infinite greatness of God and the wonder of the mansion He is building, but we will close the thought with this one question posed to us by the wisdom of God. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living rod; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor.6:16**. This magnificent statement of truth is followed by definite and infinitely important instruction which millions of Christians now reject. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **Verses 17, 18**. What, my brother, and what, my sister, does this demand mean to you? Can you not see that those saints who are to be members of His true body, His true temple, His true church, must of necessity separate themselves from the unclean harlots of this resent evil age? However violent may be our reaction to the Spirit's constant call to come out from among them, I tell you in sincerity and truth that you will never be able to understand, much less partake of, the depths of the things I have written until you deliver yourself from the blinding tradition of the harlot system. In these dreadful days, days such as have never been known since the violent and corrupt days before the flood, can you not see that the shadows of night are falling all about us and that Babylon, both spiritual and political, is tottering on its feet "clay? Leave now the temple of Belshazzar where the vessels of ie Lord are defiled with the corruption of the flesh. Leave it, I say, for in this dispensational night that is now upon us Babylon shall fall and all who are therein shall partake of her plagues, eave it now and flee as from Sodom. Flee not to some other tie town as Lot did, but flee to the mountain of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, even as the angel at first instructed him.

THE EVER EXPANDING KINGDOM

From time to time in these writings we have pointed out the significance of the truth Peter taught when he said that no prophecy of the scripture was of any private interpretation. 2 Peter 2:20. All scripture must be

understood in conjunction with the whole mass of scripture. Furthermore we can safely say that every statement in God's word has a primary meaning which lies right on the surface, like the words of a parable, plain enough for any man with eyes to see. Let us, however, be sure of this: It is not the surface meaning, which is of greatest importance, but the golden nugget of truth, which lies in the mine beneath the surface. And if you will dig still further, you will always find a third and greater enlargement of the truth you found lying in its simplest form on the surface. When asked by His disciples why He taught in parables, Jesus clearly indicated this divine principle. He answered them, "Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." **Matt. 13:11** Any man can understand the surface meaning of the parable of the sower and the seed, but only the spiritual mind sees the underlying spiritual truth. The truth which lies buried as a treasure beneath the surface dust is the meaning the Lord would have us see and, until we thus perceive, all our spiritual understanding lies dreadfully confined and straitened, leaving us to grope among the surface stones for priceless gems to enrich the inner man.

A simple example of the above proposition is found in the statement, "Six days shall thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work." **Exod. 20:9,10** Surely any natural mind can understand this simple statement. On the surface of this commandment we have seven twenty-four hour days. In the first six of them we may work all we wish, but on the seventh day we must not do any servile work at all. The majority of men see no further than this primary statement of truth, and many, therefore, spend their lives proclaiming the command, arguing about it, quarrelling about it, proving it, and in general making their lives miserable about it. But if, upon accepting the primary truth, we begin to dig beneath the surface, we will hear the Spirit whisper, "A day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousands years as one day." **2 Peter 3:8**. Then our eyes are opened to see that six thousand years of travail and labor are destined upon the earth to be followed by a seventh one thousand year day which is God's day of blissful rest. The Sabbath of God's rest is the kingdom age when all labor will be joy. Our peace will be the Prince of Peace. Our rest will be that Sabbath which He is. He who has entered into His rest also has eased from his own works as God did from His. Heb. 4:10. Just as surely as Christ is our light and our peace and our Passover, so also is Christ our Sabbath. Is not this the plain and forceful caching of Paul in his letter to the Colossians? "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." **Col. 2:16,17** All the things contained in the law, good and wonderful as they were, are only shadows of things to come. A shadow falling upon the ground tells us that there is a body nearby, and, if you will lift your eyes away from the dusky shadow on the surface of the ground, you will see the body that made the shadow. You will behold the reality rather than the reflection. Therefore Paul says, "The body is of Christ." New moons and Sabbaths are but shadows, lying darkly upon the surface of the ground, but look a little farther and you will see the reality - Christ our Passover in whom we are saved; Christ our Sabbath in whom we rest. Having now seen how the twenty-four hour day extends itself into a thousand years, we need only to dig a little deeper to discover a seven thousand year day and a forty-nine thousand year week (Lev. 25:8-24) during which time, according to God's infinite purpose, all things are gathered into Himself (Eph. 1:10; Col.2:19, 20), and the entire universe enters into Christ's rest. That is the meaning of the jubilee. What better name could God have given it?

When Jesus Christ our Lord commenced His ministry, His first message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." If you will follow His miracles, His sermons, and the signs and wonders of His three years of ministry, you will find in them an exact pattern of all that the kingdom of God will be. How simple it would be to fill this entire book with the spiritual significance of the marriage at Cana of Galilee where in His first miracle our Lord turned the water into wine. John 2:1-10. The six huge water pots represent the six past dispensations that precede the kingdom of God - innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, and grace. All through these ages past the wonderful truth they contained has been as water. People have despised the sanctity of innocence, the blessedness of conscience, the glory of human government, the assurance of promise, the holiness, justice and goodness of the law (Rom. 7:13,14), and the wonders of grace. They have reckoned them all as a thing to be done away, but the hour is at hand when all the water pots will be refilled with the water of truth they were intended to establish in the earth, and all the excellence of the truth of those dispensations will be completely restored. Their truth, hitherto lacking in Spirit and rendered helpless by the unregenerate nature of man, will be transformed from the deadness of water to the vibrant life of old wine, for God's Spirit will make them alive and vital and, being thus made alive, they will become the knowledge of the Lord that will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea in that blessed Sabbath day of the kingdom of God.

His truth shall endure to all generations. The beauty of innocence made perfect through experience and suffering; conscience fully enlightened and indwelt by the Spirit of Christ; human government, not by carnal men but God-men, even God's sons. "He that overcometh shall sit with Me in My throne." Promise, not afar off nor seen distantly by faith, not a mystical shadow, but the reality of walking by faith changed to walking by sight; and the law, which is the inherent nature of God, not done away, but enthroned in every transformed heart because He who made the law, yea, is the law, is enthroned in every heart. The law was never done away as people suppose. It was only removed from one place to another - removed from tables of stone to be written in the hearts of the sons of God. The law is God's nature, and all who have the nature of God find themselves living in obedience to the law of God, even though they may never have seen it in writing. The law is fulfilled in Christ, and Christ fulfills it in the hearts of His people. And what shall we say of grace - that unmerited favor of God? Shall we find it missing in the kingdom of Christ? Will it be absent in the fullness of times or in the ages of the ages, which are to follow, or in the period of the second death? No! No! A thousand times no!

Those dear people who teach and preach that the day of grace will soon be ended know nothing at all of grace, nor do they understand that God Himself is grace. He is the God of all grace. You may as well say that God can die as to say that grace will end. I am sure you have read that God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." **Eph. 2:6,7**

Oh, what a wonderful gospel will fill the world in that blessed age of the kingdom of God! No more as in the past will dispensational truth be as weak as water, but it will be water lade wine, even the strong wine of the kingdom, intoxicating very heart and mind in a glory more vivid and powerful than Pentecost. All men at the beginning of a feast set forth the best wine and, when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but God set forth water first and has reserved the best wine until now. Truly, Lord, Thou doest great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number!

If you will read a little further, you will see that Jesus, having made the water wine, began to cleanse the temple of rod. John 2:13-25. I need scarcely remind you that you are the temple of God, members in particular of Christ's own body, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This was the temple to which He referred when He said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." **John 2:19** On the third twenty-four hour day after His crucifixion His own body was used incorruptible and in like manner in the third one thousand year day after His own resurrection He will raise up His spiritual body to incorruption. Follow the miracles with which He adorned the gospel of the kingdom and you will find Him opening the blind eyes, because in the kingdom all eyes will be opened, both physical and spiritual, and blindness will depart forever. Then He touched the lepers, delivering them from their uncleanness, for leprosy is symbolic of sin. By His matchless skill He delivered men from madness and insanity, for all who inherit lat kingdom must be filled with the perfect mind of Christ. We are living in an age of gross insanity. Wherever we look men are walking in contradiction to the revealed will of God with the consequence that God has abandoned them to the lusts of their hearts. The leaders of mighty nations rush madly to prop up a system, which is crumbling all about them, trying desperately to make things work without God, a task which is completely hopeless from beginning to end. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Oh, what a day of unspeakable glory when He in His living temple shall reign! Then "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall there be, and a way, and it shall be called, the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it

shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." **Isa. 35**

There was a day when the Pharisees came to Jesus, demanding to know when the kingdom of God should come. Luke 17:20. The answer, which He gave indicated none of the wonderful blessedness spoken of above or written by Isaiah and other prophets who proclaimed the kingdom of God. Indeed, at first thought would seem that Jesus was making the kingdom of God to be very small and insignificant by His saying, "**The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**" **Luke 17:20,21**

The words of our Lord in this passage demonstrate vividly the truth we have been dealing with heretofore. First there appears that primary meaning. The kingdom of God is within you. Within you is the seed bed of that kingdom which will fill the universe. You will not dig much deeper before you make the wonderful discovery that the same kingdom which had its beginning in you has begun to burst its shell and spring forth as a tender plant — first the blade, then the ear, afterward the full 3rd in the ear - until the power and glory of the King who signs within you begins to spread His influence far beyond into all the earth and all things are gathered into the kingdom of God and nothing is left outside of it. "**Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.**" **Jer. 23:5,6** As the tiny mustard seed is planted in the warm earth, thence to spring forth and grow exceedingly until it becomes the largest of the herbs, the fowl of the air lodging in its branches, so the seed of the kingdom, which is Christ the King, is planted in the earth which you are. There His reign begins. There the tender plant is nourished, and from that lowly place it grows to fill the whole earth until all people find safety in its branches. As we have pointed out before, we now remind you that the kingdom of God, having filled the earth in the dispensations to come, will from thence extend eternally outward to reconstitute, rehabilitate, reconcile, and replenish the entire universe, enfolding within its mighty branches the vast limitless firmament of nebulae, luminaries, and galaxies until the multiplied myriads of lie ransomed and reconciled shall in chorus fill the vastness of the universe with these words: "**Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created, he hath also established them forever and ever: He hath made a decree, which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints; even the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the Lord.**" **Psa. 148**

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

It is completely impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this foundational and fundamental truth: The kingdom of God is within you. It is here, Oh child of God, that the magnificence of the all encompassing, all-enduring, everlasting kingdom of God has its beginning. God Almighty, full of wisdom, longsuffering, and faithfulness, is preparing a people in the lowly estates of this present evil world who will reign with Christ in His throne, first from sea to sea and then from universe to universe. Make no mistake about it, my friend and brother! These present hours of preparation in the lowest parts of the earth are fraught with infinite importance and eternal significance. It is here and now that preparations are to be made. The enchrusted who are to reign in glory with Him are being prepared. It is a faithful saying and full of truth that all who are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful, Rev. 17:14. Think not in your heart that you may pass your life here, carefree and dilatory concerning the purpose of God, suddenly to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the universe, because such a thing will not be. Well did Paul say, "If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him; but if we deny Him, He will deny us." If my understanding of this passage is correct, it simply means that, if we deny Him in our identification with Him in His suffering, rejection and death to self, He will deny us the right to reign with

Him. It was not enough that the loving mother of James and John should ask this favor for her boys: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand and one on Thy left, in Thy kingdom." Jesus gave the answer to all such presumption when He answered, "To sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father."

The kingdom of God begins within you on that day when Jesus Christ is first invited to enter your heart. In the day you repent of your sin, particularly the sin of unbelief, even that very hour Jesus Christ, the Savior of all men, becomes your personal Savior, bringing into your heart then and there the redemption purchased for all men through the blood of His cross. The work of salvation is wholly of God. Even the faith that brings it into your heart is wholly of God. For this reason the scripture has said, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves. It is the gift of God." **Eph. 2:8**

Though the work of salvation is wholly and entirely of the Lord, we can never absolve ourselves from personal responsibility and faithfulness to God. While redemption is wholly of the Lord and "we are God's workmanship", yet it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. 1 Cor. 4:2. To what extent the reign of Jesus Christ and the glory of His kingdom will increase and prosper within us will depend upon the kind of loving co-operation and submission He finds in our hearts. Our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, our King, means absolutely everything, both now as He reigns within us and in the ages to come when He grants us a place in His throne. The reason John was that disciple whom Jesus loved was because Jesus was the Christ whom John loved more than all else in heaven or earth. The more we love Christ the more abundantly He requites our love. The more we listen for His voice the more readily He will speak to our hearts. The more our searching eyes seek the beauty of His face the more He will reveal His face to us. The more patiently we await His leading the more diligently He will lead us. The more implicitly we trust Him the greater will be His confidence in us. The greater delight we display in carrying out His will the more His soul will rejoice in opening our understanding to the sacred mysteries of God. "I love them that love Me," saith the Lord, "and they that seek Me early shall find Me." Love is an attitude of the heart. There is no way of explaining love that will enable men to grasp it with the natural mind. Love is of God. Yea, love is God and God is love. Love has nothing whatever to do with the sentimental, meaningless bosh we hear all about us. It is abundantly true that God loves those who love Him. He loves all men, even those who hate Him, but how much more is His love made manifest toward those who hourly requite His love and breathe out, often silently, the adorations and contemplations of their souls even as Mary did, who filled the house with the odor of her ointment, though it seems she spoke not a word.

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." **John 14:21** Do you see the divine secret hidden here? "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father." Does that not tell us that God requites our love? Does it not clearly show that all who love Him, cherishing His commandment, His will, and His eternal purpose, become the special objects of His admiration and His loving kindness? If I ask you why it was that Daniel was a man dearly loved of God, will you not with one consent give me one answer? Will you not tell me that Daniel was dearly beloved of God because he dearly loved God? There is no other answer that can be given. Could it be different with you or with me who dearly love God? Shall our fervent love go unrequited and unreturned? No, indeed no! But it will be returned in that abundance which only God Himself can pour forth.

Furthermore, in this same passage our Lord and Christ has clearly shown that our love for Him is the source of all revelation and spiritual understanding. "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." **Verse 21** To love Christ is the secret of all revelation and spiritual understanding. The Lord is not interested in the letters that are indicative of our much learning. He is not sufficed by tradition nor delighted by head knowledge; but to all who love Him He reveals Himself that they may love Him yet the more, and, beholding Him, may be changed into the image of Him who has manifested Himself to them. So beautiful was this truth in the ears of Judas, the brother of James, that he was moved to make the useful inquiry, "How is that Thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" To this Jesus in answer said unto him, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." **John 14:22-24** Love is the secret key that opens the storehouse of revelation and spiritual understanding. Love enlightens the eyes and gives understanding to

the heart. Love ends the heavy veil that hangs before each holy place revealing the glories of God and His kingdom. Love opens the locked treasure chest where lie the priceless jewels of all eternal things.

Two men looked through prison bars:
One saw mud and the other saw stars.

Thus it ever is with us all. The man who has no burning love for God, though he be a professing Christian of many years, sees nothing but the bondage of corruption, while he who loves God sees in every chastening rod and every wearisome affliction the excellent power of the Lord working in him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In the work that I am doing I receive many hundreds of letters. Some who write them are very sad and distressed because they seem to be doing nothing for God. People love the excitement of ever doing things, and the more they do the more they imagine they are pleasing God. This line of thinking is a great mistake. It is one of tradition's most stubborn lies. God has not said that as many as are up and doing, they are the sons of God, but He has said, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I know you have read this verse: Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." You know, I am sure, that it was the Spirit who led Moses to the backside of the desert to seemingly waste his life, tending sheep for forty years. You know, too, that it was the leading of the Spirit that placed Paul through shipwreck on the Island of Miletus that the heathen might receive the glorious gospel of Christ. Was it not the Spirit of Christ who locked Paul in a prison cell and led John to Patmos through exile and banishment? Of course it was! Happy is that saintly man who sees God's hand in everything, leading him in the way he should go! When we are led by God's Spirit and our lives are yielded to Him, we must expect many of these strange and often cruel experiences. But, if we love Him enough to lay our head in worship upon His breast and say, "Thy way is in the storm, and Thy paths through the great waters," then we are holding the right relationship to Him and we are receiving the molding that will prepare a vessel fit for the Master's use.

As the protoplasm contains within its minute cells the very essence of that life which is to be, so the kingdom of God within us, infinitesimal in its smallness, contains within itself every essence of that vast universal kingdom to come. We must rightly conclude, therefore, that all things spoken of the kingdom of God within us will later be carried out in greater fullness still when at last that kingdom embraces the universe. Conversely, then, it must also be true that all things spoken of the vast universal kingdom of God equally apply to the kingdom of God, which as a tender plant has taken root within us. In this connection I would like to make special reference to one mighty edict of the Lord, spoken of by Paul concerning the kingdom of God. "As in Adam all die," he said, "even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (including the second death, of course). For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things are subdued unto Him, then all the Son (which includes the whole sonship company) also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him, that God may be all and in all." **1 Cor. 15:22-28**

It is inconceivable to imagine any scripture or any inspired saying that could possibly enlarge on such all-embracing words these. Meditate at length on their fullness and, as your spirit asps the boundless realms of their significance, you will comprehend as never before how great are the things God has prepared for Himself and for those who love Him. Nowhere will there remain any sin nor will there be one sinner, for He must reign till all enemies are under His feet, yea, until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, whether they be things in heaven or earth or under the earth, and every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea will be heard lying, "Blessing and honor and glory to Him that sitteth upon tie throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever." **Rev. 5:13**

I have solemn and important words for every man who has his hope within him and who today rejoices in the knowledge that Christ, the King who shall reign in triumph on David's throne in ages to come, has already taken the reins of the kingdom of God within him. How blessed and wonderful is the force of such an almost

incredible truth as this! But it is in the knowledge of this ineffable fact that our responsibility as sons of God finds its deepest significance, as I will endeavor now to show.

We who were once dead in Adam have been already made alive in Christ. He who is alive forevermore has become my life and now He who sits upon the throne of my life must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. I do not ask you to struggle with those arch-enemies of yours - the world, the flesh, and the devil - but I do beseech you to yield the kingdom which you are to Jesus Christ, the King, that He may destroy these enemies from within you and reign on the throne of the kingdom of God within you until He has put all enemies under His feet. Your greatest enemy is not the devil; it is your own flesh. If men did not love their flesh so much, the devil would have no power at all in their lives. You will find men and women who claim to hate the devil and all he stands for, but no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it. Yet it is the flesh that lusts against the Spirit of Christ! The flesh unceasingly wars against the Spirit of the King and His kingdom that is within us. Just as the forces of evil and wickedness in the world in hate and envy proclaim, "We will not have this man to rule over us," even so the flesh, desperately striving to revive the corrupt nature of Adam within us, would push Christ from His throne and reign in His stead. It is never our striving against the evils of the flesh and the world and the devil that counts for anything at all; the Christ within us would make short shift of them, but we have the wretched habit of failing to yield these evils to the King. Yea, we protect and excuse them until our willfulness calls forth the rod of iron. We cannot overcome our enemies ourselves. Christ alone can put them under His feet. Our responsibility is to yield ourselves to God that He may reign. It is the civil wars that rage in the kingdom within that hinder the work of God, closing fast our eyes to understanding and shutting up the gates of revelation, experience, and growth in Him.

Times almost without number the Spirit has warned that danger and death await those who remain in the organizations of Babylon, but people go heedlessly on as though no voice had spoken, their eyes darkened by church tradition and their spirits taken captive by the outward beauty of the deceiving harlot. People harshly rebuke me for daring to expose her drunkenness and sins and for warning them to flee from the awful destruction that awaits her and all who dwell in her, until I seem as one who mocks, but they have forgotten that in the end of this age angels themselves will pass through the heavens, crying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." **Rev. 14:8** And another voice came from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:4,5** I have no hesitation in saying this: If you desire to have Christ the King establish His throne and reign within you, then your first and foremost step will be to divorce yourself from the harlot system. The Spirit has said, "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." **1 Cor. 6:15** And yet this is the position of all who remain in the church systems.

To the lowly apostle, Peter, our Lord Jesus Christ gave a special ministry. Once He bade him, "Feed My lambs," and twice He spoke, saying, "Feed My sheep." **John 21:16,17** Wonderful are the instructions of Paul. Practical beyond measure are the words of James. Infinite in love and communion are the epistles of John; but Peter above all others is a feeder of the sheep, a feeder of the soul, of the spirit, and of the spiritual mind. Who more than he could prepare our hearts for this reigning King that all our enemies within and without should be subdued into Christ? Yes, even that last enemy, which is death, is not beyond the power of Him who said, "Behold, I am alive forever more, and hold the keys of death and hell." Hear now the instruction of this wise feeder of the sheep as he tells us the way by which we may have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather,

brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:2-11**

The subject we are now considering, the kingdom of God within us, is of such dimension and vital importance in these closing hours of time that one scarcely knows how best to present its significance that God's people may be inspired to leave the weak and beggarly things of tradition and religion and to lay hold on the precious promise that is set before us. You will do yourself a great injustice if you read this message carelessly. It should be read and re-read. Its scripture references should be referred to separately. Time should be taken in meditation and prayer for guidance and understanding. There should be a death to self, that impudent, ego-centric devil that would and does usurp the very throne of Christ's kingdom within. There should be a forsaking of the traditions of the elders, for they are often a stupefying drug that deadens the senses and blinds the eyes to all spiritual understanding. Traditions and doctrines that are contrary to the gracious nature of God will certainly cut us off from the revelation of God's eternal purpose. These are days when the flesh is rampant on every hand. Compare Rom. 1:21-32 with 2 Tim. 3:1-8 and decide for yourself if this is not a true comparison with our day. Everything now is for the flesh - wine, women, song, drugs, sex, luxury, ease, and pleasure. Even the religions and forms of godliness are designed for the lovers of flesh. Everything everywhere for the five physical senses! Bad and corrupt as all this is, it is extremely awful to know that God's people have permitted themselves to become a ready part of the abominable way of this present evil world. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance; broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate ..." **Isa. 24:5,6**

I know my words will greatly shock many who read them, but in truth I tell you that the vast host of professing Christians have become just like the people who inhabited Samaria after the ten tribes of Israel were carried captive to Assyria. Of them it is written, "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence." **2 Kings 17:33** Preachers today are for the most part professionals who run their "churches" as a business, measuring their success by visible gain. Instead of feeders of the sheep they are fleecers. They are the false shepherds and the false prophets of whom Jesus said there would be many. Thus saith the Lord, "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden My portion underfoot, they have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto Me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." **Jer. 12:10,11**

I do not believe you will be able to understand this truth of the kingdom of God within you unless you are willing to take time for fasting and prayer. Fasting lays the flesh low. It gives ascendancy to the Spirit. The spirit of man is the same essence as the Spirit of the Lord, for it was God who made man a spiritual being and gave a spirit to him. Eccles. 12:7. It is necessary, therefore, that we avail ourselves of the methods which the Lord has put at our disposal to better enable us to enter into new and holy places and to ascend to new realms of experience and understanding in Him. Fasting, though hateful to the flesh, is simple enough for those who have a mind to do it. What reason can we offer to God for failure to apprehend spiritual blessing just because the flesh, that enemy of the Spirit, loathes to fast? After a fast has been entered into and accomplished, the faithful begin to find new and refreshing understanding in the spiritual realm. Paul taught that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and I am not speaking amiss when I tell you that fasting from food brings about a deliverance from the body that permits the spirit to enter into its own realm, which is the realm of God. Though this is difficult to understand, it is none the less real. Set aside a week for fasting and waiting upon God. Quit eating food altogether. Drink all the water you wish, but eat nothing. During the first four or five days you may imagine you are ready to die, but it is your flesh and maybe your friends who tell you that. You could live on for many weeks just as Jesus, Moses, Elijah and many others have done. After a few days of fasting your physical strength will begin to return. Body poisons, accumulated through years, are cleansed away, and you will be surprised at how much work you can do and how well you feel. Fasting is excellent for the body and a sure cure for many physical ailments. Spend as much time as possible reading the word of God and in meditation and waiting on the Lord that He may reveal His mind to you. Forget about praying for the things you have always wanted, such as gifts, healings, blessing and power. Seek rather to find out what God wants. Enter into communion, personal relationship and unity with Christ until through association with Him you

become a living representation of His mind and will. Be careful to maintain all that was gained in fasting and not to lose out by rushing back to much eating and drinking and living after the flesh. Our attitude should be as the attitude of Christ: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Man shall not and must not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

We have already pointed out that all the mighty acts accomplished during the life of Jesus Christ were intended to be a typical display of the glory of the kingdom He will establish in the earth when He begins His reign. But be perfectly assured of this remarkable fact: Jesus Christ has been in the process of preparing the kingdom for almost two thousand years. His first message was, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was at hand when He spoke. The display of the glory of that age began with His ministry by which He demonstrated the power and glory and peace of His coming universal reign. After preaching the kingdom and displaying part of the excellent majesty of it, He then began to prepare through many fiery trials the elect people who will reign with Him in the inconceivable glory of that blessed age. The kingdom of God began to be established in individual, faithful, believing hearts. Christ enters the throne room of the believing heart. He takes the throne and begins to rule and govern and lead the believer till in him Christ is all, and all is Christ. This is the kingdom of God in you. In some Christians His kingdom is unable to gain a foothold and become established because the ground is not made fit for the seed. It is thorny, or stony, or full of weeds, or unreceptive as the uncultivated roadside, where, finding no root, it brings forth nothing, but is carried off by the birds of the air. See Mark 4:1-20. But in others, certainly not many, the seed of the kingdom brings forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some a hundredfold. Thus it has been through the centuries as God has prepared His kingdom in men. Let it be fully understood that all through the past nineteen hundred years or so the kingdom of God has been among us, not yet visible, not yet with observation (Luke 17:20), but within the elect and en-Christed ones. The King is ready. The sons are now prepared. Many are waiting in the dust of the earth because God has promised us that they without us will not be made perfect. (Heb. 11:39, 40) Very soon the en-Christed, whether asleep in graves or waiting here, will rise. They will join Christ in the air, which means the Spirit. They will stand in an entirely new realm, but not a strange realm, for we have already partaken somewhat of its glory. Like Paul who, though here on earth in body, was nevertheless caught up into the realm of the third heaven, so these en-Christed ones will stand where He stands forever with the Lord, that the kingdom reign may begin and spread its blessed government abroad in all the earth. Thus shall "Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven."

These spiritual realms are being entered here and now by some whether we know it or not. But Satan, knowing that his time is short, has great wrath and has come down to destroy this manchild as soon as he is born, for he is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The tactics Satan uses are not what saints expect. He is destroying them with sleepiness, carelessness, much catering to the flesh, and with human zeal to accomplish things for God. Christians dread prayer and fasting but love crowds, excitement, and forms of godliness with imaginary power. These are the weapons Satan uses while God's people sit looking for war or death or persecution to destroy them.

According to the gospel of John the second great work in our Lord's ministry was the cleansing of the temple. (John 2:13-17) We have written pages now to show that you are the temple of God. There will never again be another temple made by hands that God will recognize. Even the mighty temple which Ezekiel described (Ezek. Chapters 41-48) must be understood to be the spiritual temple. Ezekiel's temple can no more be physical than can the New Jerusalem which John saw descending from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:2) The New Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9,10), is here portrayed as a magnificent city of surpassing splendor. I stand weak and trembling with awe before its magnificent radiance. I have no ability to unfold the significance of the beauty of its precious stones; but I know of a certainty that they are living stones, chosen of God and precious. I do not understand the blessedness of the twelve gates; but I know the gates are never closed by day, and there is no night at all. (Rev. 21:5) If Christ is the door by which men enter, surely the bride is the gate through which nations shall come. I do not understand the wall great and high that surrounded this city; but I know it was a living thing. What did the king of Israel mean in that highly spiritual writing we call the Song of Solomon when he said, "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver (redemption): and if she be a door (gate), we will enclose her with boards of cedar (incorrupt-ion). / am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then was I in His eyes as one that found favor." (S. of

S. 8:8-10) This strange but beautiful meditation is spoken of the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, that holy city/w// of living stones, full of gates, with breasts like towers full of the milk of truth to nourish the nations who are yet to be saved and bring their glory and honor into it. (Verse 26)

The bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem. The bridegroom is the temple of the Lord, the sons of God, elect and chosen throughout the ages. Jesus Christ Himself is the head Son of this vast family of brothers. Adam was first formed, then Eve. The bridegroom is first formed, then the bride. The bridegroom company, God's living temple will be ready, prepared, finished, and complete by the end of this age of grace. The bride company, the New Jerusalem, will be ready, prepared, finished, and complete at the end of the millennial kingdom. It was at the end of the millennial kingdom that John was carried away in the Spirit to behold the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven. With the marriage of Christ, the temple of God, to that mysterious, unspeakably wonderful New Jerusalem bride the mystery of God is complete; the seven days of this dispensational week are over; the eighth day, the day of new beginnings, has come; Eden has been restored, and the life of the ages has begun.

During the all important hours before our Lord Jesus Christ departed this world, He filled the moments with fervent reminders of things of greatest importance to us, vividly marking the rugged path which we who take the road to sonship and the kingdom of God must follow. What man, leaving on a long journey, does not call his loved ones to him and refresh their minds with his final and most important instructions? The things of greatest importance are the things he emphasizes the most often with solemn repetition. **"The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods."** **Matt. 25:14** Thus the last days of our Lord's earthly ministry were filled with reminders and instructions to those blessed ones whose hope it is to inherit the kingdom of God. With infinite care He explained what our relationship to the Father must be. He warned us of the severe tribulation and loneliness of the way. He made it very clear that our understanding of the purpose of God would be commensurate with our love for Him. "If a man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." It is not the learned and educated, nor the wise and prudent, who comprehend the deep things of God or who taste the glories of the kingdom, but "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is not the "food, fun, and fellowship" crowd that enters in, but "blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The mountain peaks of joy that will brighten our morning are reached through the valleys of weeping that endure through our night. There is a blessing sent from God in every burden of sorrow. It is not the proud and violent, the high and mighty, nor the rich and affluent who inherit the earth, but "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Woolman said, "Selfish men may possess the earth; it is only the meek who inherit it from the heavenly Father." It is those who hunger and thirst for righteousness who will be filled with the righteousness which Christ Himself is. Never repay your enemies in their own coin nor entertain the crude notion that one injustice deserves another. Remember rather that it is the merciful who will obtain mercy and the blessing of the Lord. The pure in heart will see God; therefore, if your eye be single (pure), your whole body will be full of light. But, if your eye be evil (mixed with self and selfishness) and your motives impure, then your body is full of darkness. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Christian people, I have observed, are carelessly prone to regard the awesome proclamations of Almighty God as nice little meaningless day dreams. It is comforting to believe in heaven because it's nice to think the dead are there and we might have to go there someday, too. It is convenient to believe in God. Who knows? We just may happen to need Him. And isn't it nice to know the kingdom will come someday and we won't have to work or war anymore? They remind me of the millionaire socialite who, speaking in the stuffy accents of her sophistication, remarked, "In our set it is chic to be born again." Oh, fools and slow of heart to believe! These mighty edicts, these divine fiats, are not for the stuffy, the sophisticated, the dilatory, the worldly minded, nor the careless but for those who hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God till all else fades into insignificance and for those who desire the words of His mouth more than their necessary food.

The dispensation of the kingdom of God is very, very near, even at the door. The hour to which we have come is all important. Let not your lamp be depleted of its oil lest you hear the Savior say, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" The kingdom of God is the purpose and focal point of all previous dispensations. Jesus said that the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world. (Matt. 25:34) All previous dispensations with all the beauty and power of their truth are combined in the glory of the kingdom of God. Awaken, then, and

sleep not lest its morning come upon you unaware! The signs of the end of this age abound on every hand. Every sign that heralds the end of this age is at the same moment the swift and glorious harbinger of the kingdom of God in the earth.

Jesus spoke of a day when Jerusalem would be encompassed with armies. (Luke 21:20) She is completely surrounded now. He said men's hearts would fail for fear. (Luke 21-25) Heart failure is one of the most merciless killers of the day. Fearful sights are everywhere as nature itself reacts with violence against man's morbid abuse. Perilous times have come to an extent inconceivable even ten years ago. The violence and evil of Noah's day with all its intermingling and mixing of things God made to be pure and separate are upon us, together with all the filth of Sodom. False prophets, false churches, and false christs abound as part and parcel of the Babylon system.

While all this confusion is consuming the world and the vast majority of professing Christians are falling in line with it, and while Babylon has become the habitation of devils and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird, the kingdom of God is coming to the fullness in the hearts of God's elect, "You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the corner stone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:20-22** (Weymouth) The kingdom within you will soon be complete. The kingdom of God without and in the earth is now at hand. Everywhere you look the kingdoms of this world are falling to pieces. The feet of iron and clay are smitten. Soon we shall hear the triumphant cry, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages." Amen.

CHAPTER THREE THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isa 9:7)

The deep and hidden mysteries of God are never discovered by the investigations or probings of the natural mind because they abide in a realm beyond the reach of the natural. God is not far from any one of us, for "in Him we live and move and have our being", yet "no man hath seen God at any time." When men with natural minds try to describe God, they manifest themselves to be the fools that they are, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14** As man cannot fathom God, neither can he fully comprehend His plan for the ages, His great redemption, or His merciful purpose, which He has purposed in Himself to gather all things in heaven and earth into His Son, Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:10)

I earnestly pray that God will give a spirit of true humility to all who read these lines, for revelation and understanding are given only to those who humbly confess their ignorance before God. While there is no searching of His understanding, yet "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." **Isa, 40:29-31**

Long ago our Lord Jesus Christ warned the Pharisees, saying, "Ye make the word of God of none effect through your tradition." **Mark 7:13** What a painful thing it really is that men through centuries of imbibing the teachings and sermons of men should have their hearts so full of religious tradition that they can never see the truth because it is contrary to their tradition. The scribes and Pharisees had formed such definite opinions as to who and what Christ should be that, when He appeared before them, they not only did not know Him but thoroughly rejected Him. Our Lord Jesus was forever knocking holes in their traditions, but for all that they would not abandon them. "What think ye of Christ?" He once asked. "Whose Son is He?" To this they replied, "He is the Son of David." "How is it, then," He asked, "that David in spirit calleth Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' If David then called Him

Lord, how is He his son?" Matt. 22:41-46 Though they could not answer His question and dared not try, they still held doggedly to their traditions. But were these scribes and Pharisees more blind and stubborn than the preachers and people who are their counterparts today? I tell you, nay, for the same blindness fills the minds of those who adhere to that unchaste harlot who dares to call herself the church. Blindly they grope and grovel in the darkness of her tradition, obscuring the light of revelation and the understanding of the truth.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the ages." Acts 11:18 How could it be otherwise with an omniscient mind? We may therefore rest assured that the all wise God planned in the minutest detail each eternal purpose. Nothing happens without His will. No power prospers without His permission. Nations rise at His command and fall at His bidding. He raises up kings and puts them down again. Every stormy wind obeys His command. Angels, principalities, and powers are made subject unto Him. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. Everything everywhere, whether seen or unseen, obedient or rebellious, is fulfilling His mind and will in some way work toward His infinite purpose and the spokes of a wheel are centered in the hub. From the foundation of the world and the beginning of the ages, before ever there was a man on the face of the earth, the Lord God omniscient and almighty **"appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31** That man whom He hath ordained is none other than Jesus Christ, and it is of Him and the increase of His government and peace that we will concern ourselves in this chapter.

When the Lord declares Himself immutable, saying, "I am the Lord; I change not", we should understand that His purposes are the same now as they were in the beginning. He is not changing, but is working out that which from the beginning flourished in His divine mind. The ways of God are eternally progressive, for progression was His purpose in the beginning, and progression was His purpose when He declared, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." Why do men quote the scripture, "I am the Lord; I change not", or "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever" hoping to relegate God to the static, hearing of no progression or change in anything? The real truth is that God never changes His purpose, but all the growth and development and the glorious increase of His government are according to His unchanging purpose. How often we have read the truth, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more until the day is full", but while we rejoice in the statement, we reject its truth, preferring to believe that God, being perfect, remains static in all things.

Have we not noticed the ever increasing growth of revelation in the life of John the Apostle? He who fell down in a daze before Christ at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:6) fell down as one dead before the greater glory when Christ was revealed as the Alpha and Omega in Rev. 1:17, and later still, when carried in the Spirit to behold the bride of Christ, he fell down once more, staggered by the wonder of that which is yet to come. (Rev. 22:8) Let us then raise our sights and lift our eyes unto the high hills of God that we may behold the increasing greatness of the revelation of Christ and the increasing greatness of the revelation of His government.

THE GATHERING OF THE ELECT AND THE REIGN OF CHRIST IN THEIR HEARTS

When the Apostle James stood to speak in the council at Jerusalem, he began by making this remarkable statement which embraces within itself the complete outline of God's purpose for the age of grace in which we live and the dispensation of the kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom, which is to follow. In these words James instructed the brethren at Jerusalem, saying. **"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written. After this (i.e. after God has taken a people out of the Gentiles) I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:14-18**

It is true that God has known all His works from the foundation of the ages, for it was God who formed the ages and appointed what should be done in each one of them. I must, therefore, with utmost force impress upon all who read these lines that, if we are to comprehend God's great plan for the ages, we must raise our eyes far above the engulfing muck and sucking quicksand of Babylonish church tradition handed down to us by the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth to keep God's people in bondage, and, as though this were not

enough, she has bequeathed many of her sordid and hopeless doctrines to her harlot daughters of so-called Protestantism. As long as you tenaciously hold to the tradition of the church system (which is not the church at all, but Babylon), believing that every Chinaman or African or Indian is forever doomed who through no fault of his own has never heard the name of Jesus Christ, then you will fail to see God's plan for the ages, but if you see, as the Apostle Paul taught, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ (Eph. 1:9-11), then for the first time in your life God's marvelous working in every age will make good sense.

God's purpose for this age of grace is not the conversion of the whole world. This never was His plan. God's purpose for this age is to take out a people for His name. (Acts 15:14) And may I further add that, if it were God's plan to bring the whole world to repentance in this age, then the whole world would come to repentance in this age, and nothing could stop it from doing so. Is not God almighty? Does He not hold all the nations in the palm of His hand, turning them about as a watercourse and appointing the bounds of their habitation? Did not our Lord Jesus Christ say, "All that the Father hath given Me will come to Me?" **John 6:37** And did He not also say, "No man cometh to Me except the Father draw him?" **John 6:44** On that wonderful day of revival when the church was in its infancy was it not said, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed?" **Acts 13:48** Who else could believe but they? Did God ask Saul of Tarsus whether or not he wanted to be saved? Or did He say to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel?" **Acts 9:15** Where do these man-made preachers get the notion that man is a free moral agent? Indeed, he may be free in some minor things that concern his personal conduct, but concerning God's eternal purpose for him he is not free to do his own will, for "it is not of him that willeth or him that runneth, but God that showeth mercy." **Rom. 9:16**

God's purpose, then, in this dispensation of grace is to call out a people for His name. Out from among the billions of earth God is choosing an elect company to bear His name. Even the word church means the called out ones. These are the ones who are being called out of the world, called out of every nation, called out of the Gentiles, called out of Israel until there is a multitude which no man can number of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues. (Rev. 7:9) Just as God passed by all the inhabitants of Ur of the Chaldees, choosing out one man by the name of Abram, saying to him, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee" (**Gen. 12:1**), so He does today. Passing among the nations, He calls out all those who were ordained to eternal life, leaving the rest to fulfill His purpose in ages to come.

I am persuaded that the true church, which God sees and recognizes, is not the church which man sees and recognizes. God pity us if it were! The visible thing which man sees is a church made by the art of man's device of which he, like Nebuchadnezzar of old, can say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" **Dan. 4:30** But the church, which God sees and recognizes, is comprised of those called out ones, for they have heard the voice of God and not the voice of man. They are the sheep of His fold. They are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10) He has become our peace, having broken down the walls and partitions erected by sects and denominations and by the ingenuity of the carnal mind. They are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and the household of God. They are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

"So you are no longer outsiders or aliens, but fellow-citizens with every other Christian. You belong now to the household of God. Firmly beneath you is the foundation, God's messengers and prophets, the actual foundation stone being Jesus Christ Himself. In Him each separate piece of building, properly fitting into its neighbor, grows together into a temple consecrated to God. You are all part of this building in which God Himself lives by His Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22** (Phillips)

My earnest prayer to God is that those who read this message may quickly come to see the vast and abounding difference between the true church, the mystical body of Christ, which is rising to form a spiritual habitation and dwelling place for God, and that visible thing, the work of man's hands, which like a lewd harlot waits at every corner to catch the man who is void of true understanding. The thing which men today call the church is not the church, but an enormous usurper, full of the lames of blasphemy, abounding in false worship

and every service of man. Name off every denomination and every sect in the world and I will still affirm, after you have completed the list, that these are but names. They are neither the true church nor segments of it. Their worship is neither in spirit nor in truth. You owe no allegiance to them, but you owe God the obedience of "coming out from among them and being separate from them."

I suppose all the arguments and persuasions in the world will not awaken Christians to the falsehood of the visible church system or to the reality of that spiritual temple, every member of which is stamped with the name of Christ, washed in His blood, and made partakers of His Spirit. They hear His voice and follow Him and strangers will they not follow. It is here in this blessed virgin church that Jesus Christ first sets up His government that He might begin to rule and reign on the throne of their hearts. God never intended that Jesus should reign over all the earth in this age. His reign is confined completely to that company of believers who have heard His voice and who follow Him.

As soon as a man believes, the Lord Jesus Christ desires immediately to set up His government in that life. He plans to subdue it completely unto Himself, to imbue the believer with His mind, with His Spirit, and with His thoughts until the soul is so yielded to Christ and filled with His ways that it can with truth be said, "As He is, so are we in this world." Under this blessed reign of Christ the believer partakes of truth until he becomes truth. He learns wisdom until he is wisdom. Judgment, justice, and equity become integral parts of his redeemed spirit. All that Christ is the believer becomes. He is a partaker of the divine nature. He escapes the corruption that is in the world. He, like his Lord, becomes meek and lowly in heart. He loses his own will and delights himself in the will of God. God's will is his will; God's love is his love; God's justice is his justice. In this age of grace Christ is the King and those who follow Him are the kingdom over which He reigns. This may seem to be a very small kingdom for such a great and eternal King, but we cannot over-emphasize the importance of this lowly beginning for a government whose authority is destined to be as boundless as eternity, for "of the increase of His government there shall be no end."

How pitiful it is that for centuries Christians have been taught that their hope was to die and fly away to heaven where they would spend eternity shouting "Hallelujah" up and down the golden streets! Oh how much truth is missed by confining ourselves to such doctrines of men! This is not and never was God's purpose for the saints, but the kingdom of God and the sovereign reign of Christ is being set up in the hearts of His believing saints. Thus He is preparing them for the government of the world when the time is ripe for it. He is bringing the true saints to full sonship that these sons, begotten of God, may, together with Jesus Christ the first begotten Son, be used to display unto principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. Eph. 3:10. These are the sons of whom it is written, "That He might be the firstborn among many brethren," **Rom. 8:26**, and again, "Here am I and the children (sons) which God has given Me." **Heb. 2:13**

When Jesus the Lord came to earth, His own received Him not because He did not come according to their tradition. For centuries they had cherished the hope that the moment the Messiah appeared He would immediately seize authority, cast down their enemies, and begin His reign over the nations of the earth. They expected that He would smite down the Caesars Tom their thrones and restore the kingdom immediately to Israel. Even His disciples were filled with this doctrine, for after His resurrection they inquired, "Wilt Thou at this time restore he kingdom to Israel?" But He answered, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own lower, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." **Acts 1:6-7** The people unto whom He came understood not that this King who had come from glory was not ready to set up His kingdom and reign, but first with utmost care He must choose and prepare through seemingly endless centuries that blessed "cabinet", God's sons, who were to reign and rule with Him. He must first set up His throne and reign in all their hearts, bringing them to the exact likeness and image of the Son of man, knowing full well that, when they had all become partakers of His Spirit, of His flesh, and of His bones, they would be in His image in all things and ready to take the kingdom and reign with Him, not in a limited, confined, and restricted kingdom, but over the whole earth and everything in. He knew that at the end of the age they should be in His image. They would be like Him - so wonderfully like Him that they would be indistinguishable from Him.

Those Jews who rejected Him as their king knew not that He would employ the next two thousand years to slowly, surely, and wisely choose that governing body of sons, preparing them through fiery furnaces and trials

of affliction to sit together with Him in His throne, for those who suffer with Him shall reign with Him and those who deny Him He will deny. When that glorious kingdom comes, God will manifest twelve times twelve thousand sons in the image and likeness of God's firstborn Son that all the earth may be filled with the glory of the Lord.

It would take volumes without number to write of the infinite preparation our Lord is making in the hearts of those saints who are to rule and reign with Him. See how He is preparing our hearts, conforming our very nature to the likeness of His own: First, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; second, that we may be rooted and grounded in love; third, that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and depth and height and to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge; and, fourth, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God, that the church should bring glory to Him throughout all ages. Cf. Eph. 3:16-21. Since the reign of Christ is to be one of increasing peace, judgment, justice, order, love and equity, it is necessary that the King of kings and Lord of lords should take this whole dispensation to prepare the hearts of His sons that they might be prepared to reign with Him in the same spirit and with the same knowledge that He Himself possesses. He is not only preparing our spirits and our minds to shine in His exact likeness, but He is making known the mystery of His will, opening the eyes of our understanding that we may know the hope of such a sublime and worthy calling and what riches He enjoys among His saints. See Eph. 1:9-11, 18. It is through His great kindness freely bestowed on us that He will demonstrate the exceeding riches of His grace in the boundless ages, which are yet to come. See Eph. 2:7.

This then is the beginning of Christ's reign - silent, unpretentious, and unnoticed as He reigns in the hearts of those elect whom He has chosen to reign with Him in the ages to come. But how boundless and important is this the beginning of His government, and how necessary that all the saints should walk in Him and suffer with Him, being **"worthy of God who has called us unto His kingdom and glory"** (1 Thess. 2:12) that we might walk continually in His will and stand at last in His image.

THE REIGN WITH HIS SONS IN THE KINGDOM

The world, which for six thousand years has endured the ever increasing injustice and inequity of the rule of man, is soon to see a change so unbelievable in its glory and magnitude that even he that seeth it will scarce believe it. For centuries and dispensations the world has been blighted by the government of the carnal mind until the confusion and disorder has become so real that men's hearts fail them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth. But the long, long night of sin and misrule is nearing its end. The Sabbath of the dispensations draweth nigh - that seventh dispensation in God's order, which is the millennial Sabbath. In six days God made the heaven and the earth and all that in them is, and on the seventh day He rested from all His work of creation. Those six days of work and labor represent the six thousand years of man's travail under the misrule of the carnal mind, to be followed by a thousand year Sabbath day of rest in which all the former things will have passed away and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with slice from henceforth even forever (or, for the age). The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:6,7)

What a glorious day for all the world and all the inhabitants thereof will be this millennial day when the Christ shall reign! And how much more glorious will it be for those saints who, having suffered with Him through the ages of darkness and wail, will now reign with Him in love and peace that the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters now fill the seas. Then no man shall ever say, "Know the Lord", for in that day all shall know Him from the least even to the greatest.

Throughout the ages of sin and travail, puny man with his carnal mind has devised many forms of government, but each in its turn has proved a failure. The carnal mind wherever it is found continually seeks his own at the expense of others. Thus do all man's efforts fall into decay and pass away. But in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and that kingdom will be the glorious kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with all the sons of God, which is in truth the body of the bridegroom. With the coming increase of His government there shall be also an increase of those who govern,

and we shall now attempt to show as best we can, limited as we are to words and phrases of human language, the very image of that majesty who is to reign over all the earth in the kingdom of our Lord, which is the kingdom of God.

The Apostle John had been exiled to the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of the Lord. He was one of those precious saints in whose hearts the meek and lowly Jesus reigned supreme. He was one of the in Christ company, or shall I boldly say he was one of the enchristed. He knew experimentally the truth of the words of the blessed Master, "Thou in Me and I in Thee that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." But he who was exiled to Patmos for permitting Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom in his heart was now to clearly see the meaning of the words, "Of the increase of His government there shall be no end."

As he walked the lonely shores of Patmos, he found himself borne away into the realm of the Spirit. In Spirit he traversed the two thousand years of the dispensation of grace to stand in the day that he calls "the Lord's day" or better understood by us as the day of the Lord. From his vantage point in the Spirit he was to behold the tribulation with all its horror unveiled before his eyes. He was to see the rise of antichrist and view the swaggering harlot of Babylonish religion as it exists in our day. He was to hear the voice of an angel proclaiming to God's people, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues; for strong is the Lord that judgeth her." He was to look upon the awful smoke of her burning and destruction and hear the angel voice proclaiming, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign unto the age of the ages." How awesome was his vision!

It is significantly wonderful that, at the very beginning of this great vision in which he was to see the reign of Christ with His saints for a thousand years, he should first be given a vision of the Christ who is to reign. The reign of Christ, which for two thousand years had been restricted to a mystical sovereignty in the hearts of His saints, is now to be greatly increased that He with all those sons whom He has chosen should now reign over all the earth, filling it with the knowledge of the Lord. Thus did John stand in the Spirit on the day of the Lord, and in his own words he declared. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia... And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed in a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in His right hand seven stars; .and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." **Rev. 1:10-17**

Let us take particular note that this mighty One who stood among the candlesticks, proclaiming, "I am Alpha and Omega", was something more than the meek and lowly Jesus of Nazareth, It is stated with great clearness that John, being turned, saw one like unto the Son of man. This is none other than Jesus Christ, the first begotten Son of God, together with all those other precious sons that have come into His image and likeness throughout the ages. This is in truth the fullness of the body of the bridegroom, for the bridegroom is more than Jesus of Nazareth. He is Jesus Christ and all the sons whom God has given Him now joined together as one glorious body of sons, the bridegroom of whom it was said, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

I am terribly at a loss for words to explain or express the glory of that which is soon to come to pass. John, who had been so near to Jesus during His time on earth, could not endure the glory of that mighty One which he now beheld. All his strength ebbed from him until he fell upon the ground as one who is dead. No wonder it is said, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit." This He desires to do that we might abandon fully all the weakness of the beggarly things of this age to grasp by faith the marvels of that age which is soon to come.

The voice of this all glorious One was as the sound of a multitude. The significance of this lies in the fact that this was not the voice of the lonely Galilean, but this was Christ, the head, together with all the sons appearing

as one body of Christ. Therefore it is fitting that the voice that proceeded forth from Him was the voice of a multitude, or as the voice of many waters. I shall never forget an occasion when we sat amid a crowd of thirty thousand. As they waited for the parade to begin, each was chatting to the other, and as they talked, I heard the swelling voice of a multitude. The only fitting description was that it was as the sound of many waters.

Time's clock is striking the hour and the time is near at hand for the manifestation of the sons of God, and what a manifestation it is going to be! All creation from time immemorial has groaned and travailed for the manifestation of God's sons, but soon their prayer will be answered in this mighty One, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

I am too weak and earthbound to describe the glory of that heavenly vision that caused John to fall as one dead. Perhaps one should just read it and pass along to let the truth speak for itself. Nevertheless, we shall pause to notice briefly some of the outstanding features that John beheld. This Alpha and Omega was like unto the Son of man. His whole body was clothed with one single garment. He was girt about with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet were like brass as if they burned in a furnace. In His right hand were seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. His voice, though the voice of a multitude, was as the sounding of a trumpet, which tells us clearly of the sublime unity of these many voices. Oh, how different it is today as we hear the seven thousand voices of Babylon, each proclaiming his own doctrine! But not so with the sons of God! They have become one Spirit with the Father in heaven. His will He has imparted to them. His will is their will, His purpose their purpose, and His plans their plans. Thus was the multitude of voices as the sound of a single trumpet.

His head was white as wool, as white as snow. The scriptures clearly teach that the hoary head is to be greatly honored, for therein lies the wisdom, experience, and knowledge of great age. The Ancient of days will be no novice in government, for in His hoary head is the wisdom of God who reigneth forever and ever. His eyes were as aflame of fire. How unlike the eyes of mortal man, which can do nothing more than receive light and images from without! Not so with his blessed One. His eyes are as fire, and in the beautiful words of Daniel, who evidently saw the same vision, as lamps of fire. (Dan. 10:6) Everything about the Ancient of days will exude light. All He beholds will receive light, for His eyes are as lamps of fire, and, because they will thus receive light from His countenance, they will receive life as well. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." His feet were as burnished brass as though they burned in a furnace. As brass is symbolic of judgment, and fire, I am sure, has a score of symbolisms, we can behold here the judgment of the nations through those blessed feet members of the body of Christ. Judgment, we must remember, is not merely condemnation as so many seem to think, but judgment may mean acquittal just as it may mean condemnation. The judgment of God has the distinct purpose of setting things right, and, indeed, all things will be set right and all things will be gloriously reconciled unto Himself, yes, things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under earth, or wherever they may be. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. The word of God that proceedeth forth from the mouth of the Lord is a sharp two-edged sword. It wounds and heals; it kills and makes alive. The whole world is to be judged by that blessed word of God. Just as the eyes give light, so the word that goeth forth from His mouth gives life. There will be no reprieve from its truth nor any error in its judgment.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Of such great import is this revelation which Jesus Christ gave to John and all the church that He allowed a vision to be given to Daniel which is so exact in detail with that given to John that none of us can doubt that the two visions were in truth one. As Daniel fasted and prayed, he stood beside the river Hiddekel. "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude ... Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me to corruption, and I retained no strength." **Dan. 10:5-8**

Thus has the Lord revealed that in preparation for the increase of His government He has mightily increased the Governor in that through trial and affliction He has perfected a vast family of sons that they with Christ as one body in God may be able to take the kingdom and reign with Him for one thousand years.

The prophet Daniel, speaking of those days, sums them up in these wonderful words: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of His head like pure wool: His throne was like a fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake. I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." **Dan 7:9-14**

It would be futile to close this part of our meditation without mentioning a few of the blessed events of that reign of hitherto unexcelled excellence. Do not relegate the kingdom of God to pure mystery as a thing ethereal, having nothing in common with time. The millennial kingdom is the reign of Christ on the earth. It is just as real as the kingdom of David or Solomon. Into it will be gathered the glory, majesty, and truth of all past ages and dispensations, for it is the millennial Sabbath in which under Christ the world will rest from the travail of the past dispensations.

HIS REIGN OVER THE ENTIRE EARTH

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one. And the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place . . . And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction..." **Zech. 14:9-11** "And in the days of these kings (the present forms of government) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." **Dan. 2:44**

The universal extent of the kingdom of God was foretold by the angel Gabriel at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Appearing to Mary, he proclaimed, "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." **Luke 1:31-33** And our blessed Lord taught His disciples to pray for the coming of this great kingdom when He said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is done in heaven . . . And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." **Matt. 6:9,10,13**

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." **Isa. 35:1, 2** "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 40:4, 5**

The transformation of the world in that day will be the marvel and joy of the inhabitants of earth. The weeds and pests that now blight the earth will be no more. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." **Isa. 55:13** "Behold, the days, come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt... And they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." **Amos 9:13-15**

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PEOPLE

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass and reeds and rushes". **Isa. 35:4-7** Then shall "the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." **Isa. 11:9** "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord..." **Jer. 31:34**

Even the animals will be changed in the glory of that reign. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and falling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." **Isa. 11:6-9**

"And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." **Rev. 20:4, 6**

In the years of my preaching I am not sure that I ever attempted to preach from John 3:16. It is too big for man's little mind to comprehend, let alone explain. It may be better just to read it and pass on. So also are our voices hushed as we contemplate the effulgent glory of that coming reign of reigns when Christ in the magnificent glory revealed to John (Rev. 1:9-18) shall reign over all the earth, the sons of God in His perfect likeness with Him. Then shall the whole earth know the wisdom of the mind of Christ, which shall fill every governor of that glorious and holy realm.

THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES

The dispensation of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10) is the eighth and final dispensation. In it God will gather all things in heaven and earth into Christ. This will be the most glorious of all ages, exceeding the millennial kingdom of God in glory as that age exceeded all others before it. The dispensation of the fullness of times is a completely new age, which follows the kingdom age. It is the eighth dispensation, typified by the year of jubilee in which year all debts were cancelled and all property returned to its rightful owner. (Lev. 25:1-24)

Seven is God's number of completeness, and as seven twenty-four hour days make one week, so seven dispensational days make one dispensational week. The number eight is the number of new beginnings. Therefore the dispensation of the fullness of times, being the eighth dispensation, is identical with Eden. To make this point clear you will notice by looking at the calendar below that, when the first day of a month falls on a Sunday, the eighth day also falls on a Sunday and is the beginning of a new week. Eight is the number of new beginnings.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8					

The dispensation of the fullness of times, then, is the eighth dispensation due to begin when the seven dispensations of innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom of God are complete.

In reading these pages, you have noticed that the beginning of Christ's reign during the dispensation of grace was confined completely to the reign of Jesus Christ in the hearts of those few people whom He has chosen for Himself. There is now no outward sign anywhere of the reign of Christ over the nations of the earth. The so-called Christian nations are not Christian in reality. They are only called Christian because they have come under the influence of the gospel, but they continue to live in sin, war, and the turmoil and confusion of the carnal mind. Greed and wickedness reign supreme and the nations are as little like Jesus Christ as they can possibly be. Thus, while sin reigns over all nations, Christ reigns in the hearts of a small but elect company who have been chosen of God in this age that they might be prepared to reign over all the earth in the coming kingdom of God. In that age, as we have already seen, the reign of Christ will have been increased and extended over all the earth. There will be no other government anywhere but the government of Christ, whose voice is as the sound of many waters, and all who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. (Rev. 17:4)

Christ, together with all the sons of God, is the completeness of the body of the bridegroom. It is this many membered bridegroom, whose voice, though sounding as many waters, rings with the unity of one trumpet, who will reign over all the earth in the kingdom of God. But this is not the end of the matter, for this all glorious bridegroom, at the sight of whom John fell as dead, is about to immeasurably increase Himself. The long awaited time has come to take the bride, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready. The marriage of the bridegroom, the male company, to the bride, the female company, will be the signal for the beginning of that age of all ages in which everything in heaven and earth will be gathered into Christ. (Eph. 1:10)

Adam was male and female in one in the beginning, but the female was separated from the male and thus began the tortuous ages of sin which we have known for so long. But now at last, in greater glory far, Christ, the last Adam, is joined to the New Jerusalem bride, for it is the eighth day - the dispensation of the fullness of times in which God has declared, "Behold, I make all things new."

It was after the millennial kingdom was past and the thousand years of Christ's government ended (Rev. 20:1-6) that a mighty angel came to John, saying, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." **Rev. 21:9-14** (Please read the entire chapter.) "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them, which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." **Rev. 21:23-27**

John, who had fallen down as dead before the excellent glory of the revelation of Christ (Rev. 1:17), now, beholding the bride, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, and overcome by her splendor, falls down to worship at the feet of the angel. (Rev. 22:7) And how can we wonder at it? I am at a loss to know which was the more glorious, the bridegroom in all His lordly splendor as portrayed in Rev. 1, or the magnificent glory of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem bride of Christ manifest for the first time in (Rev. 21:9-27). The things of which we speak are too sacred for much elaboration. Rather does my soul desire to fall down to worship at the feet of Him who hath showed me these things. Philosophers and sages could not with golden pen trace the glories that must inevitably follow such a long awaited union as this, for with the marriage to the bride the bridegroom is mightily increased, and with the increase of the governor comes the increase of His government in an eternal reign. Here at last the truth is complete: "In Christ there is neither male nor female," but being joined to Him they are sons of God indeed.

It would be impossible to describe the wonderful glory of the dispensation of the fullness of times. In fear and trembling we will therefore mention a few of these more excellent glories and leave them for the Spirit of God

to make real to our hearts. Paul only once mentioned the endless accomplishments of that age, including in one inspired statement universality of purpose so great that the imagination is staggered. Thus he writes: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth even in Him." **Eph. 1:9,10** And again, he says, "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet," (**1 Cor. 15:25**), for He must put down all rule, and all authority, and all power, that there shall be no power or will in the universe but the will of God.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. 15:26) Death in all its forms shall be destroyed until it shall be said, "There is no more death!" This dreadful enemy has from the beginning devoured all things, eating the vitals of the young and swallowing up the old, destroying beasts and birds, plants and trees, until nothing can escape it. But He must reign until even death has been destroyed to exist no more anywhere in the universe. Then shall every creature in the universe in glad chorus sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." **1 Cor. 15:55-57** "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever." **Rev. 22:3-5**

"... So abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him." **Eph 1:8-10**(Weymouth) "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."

When I consider the greatness of God's program, and the vastness of His eternal plan, my soul grows weary with the vain bickerings of earthbound, tradition-ridden men who never are able to deliver themselves from their own trivial calculations about heaven and hell, what we must eat, what we must drink, what we must put on, and as a consequence are not able to see who God is or grasp the wonder of His ways.

I like the words of Walt Whitman, entitled When I Heard the Learned Astronomer, in which he says:

When I heard the learned astronomer,
When the proofs and figures were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams to add,
divide and measure them,
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer
where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon, unaccountable. I became tired and sick
Till, rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself
In the mystical, moist night air, and from time to time
Look'd up in perfect silence to the stars.

Ah, my brethren, that is the secret of it all. There may be truth in cold, hard facts about God's universe and the number of light years this star is from that. It is all very interesting and good and I love to know and hear about it, but there is nothing so refreshing as to wander into the breathless stillness of the night, there to lift one's wondering eyes in admiration of the handiwork of God, uncluttered and unspoiled by human calculations. There in the wonder of the starlit night, standing alone in the glory of God's presence, our hearts breathe out that holy inspiration, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the sun and the moon which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" There the heavenly architect in accents rare begins to reveal to the inner heart that it was from those realms of glory we came, and our coming to this world was by reason of God's great intention, that we should be prepared to reign in Christ's image over all these beautiful works of God's hands. Did not the beloved Paul by inspiration

say, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him (man). But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." **Heb. 2:5-9** Jesus is the first man to be in God's image, but He is not the last. What He is we also shall be; that is the purpose of His redemption. He was tempted in all points as we are. We are tempted in all points as He was. What He is by His grace we are becoming.

Perhaps in spirit we have stood with our adorable Christ as He in His rejection tasted death for every man. But have we stood with Him in His exaltation, where He sits far above principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the ages to come, highly exalted and given a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father? The purpose of the sufferings of the Christ of God is revealed by the glory of the things that follow His travail. In like manner the purpose of the suffering of all who are His is revealed in the words, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." **2 Tim. 2:12**

Christians everywhere, like Israel of old, stagger on in their blindness, reveling in the acts of God, but remaining perennial strangers to the wonder of His ways. Why is it, my brother, that thou canst not see that "God hath reconciled all things unto Himself? Why do thine ears remain closed to the voice of His Spirit as He speaks the message that "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"? Why can we not hear the mystery of His will, which He has made known unto us and which He hath purposed in Himself - that "in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him?" **Eph. 1:10** Weymouth has so beautifully portrayed the message of this scripture in these words: "This is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him." That which He hath purposed in Himself the unbelief of man can never undo.

When we were dead in trespasses and sins, He quickened us together with Christ (by grace are we saved). He raised us up together and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. But to what purpose did He so marvelously demonstrate to us the wonder of His grace? There can be only one answer to that great question: "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kingdom toward us through Jesus Christ." Compare Eph. 2:5-8. It was by grace that you were saved, my brother. Paul keeps reminding our believing hearts of that fact that he might the more clearly reveal to our tradition-ridden minds that, if it was through grace alone that we were saved, then we should not think it either impossible or strange that in the ages to come His grace shall freely reach all men and touch everything in the universe with the eternal life of Him from whom all things come, by whom all things exist, and in whom all things end.

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. There shall be no end to its increase in this age, no end to its increase in the age to come, and no end to its increase in the ages of the ages. His increase shall reach far beyond the measure of man's mind until planet after planet, star after star, galaxy after galaxy throughout the vast rock strewn sidereal shall taste the increase of His government and the glory of His restoration and no inharmonious chord is heard in all God's universe forever, but order, interdependence and unity, where Christ is all in all.

CHAPTER FOUR THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

"And there were great voices in heaven, saying. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 11:15)

Watchman, tell us of the night—
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler, o'er yon mountain height
See that glory beaming star?
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?
Traveler, yes, it brings the day.
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its course portends.
Watchman, will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own;
See, its glory fills the earth.

Watchman, tell us! Does the morning
Of fair Zion's glory dawn?
Have the signs that mark its coming
Yet upon thy pathway shone?
Traveler, yes. Arise! Look round thee!
Light is breaking in the skies!
Gird thy bridal robes around thee!
Morning dawns! Arise! Arise!

With the ever increasing and rapidly multiplying signs about us, all of which signal from one end of heaven to the other that the age is ending and the coming of the Lord draws nigh, I thought it both good and profitable to rehearse some of the many statements the Lord has made. These all, being fulfilled in order, now loudly proclaim that we have almost reached the end of man's six days of misrule and inequitable government. The kingdoms of this world are swiftly passing away, having fulfilled their purpose that they might make way for Christ's kingdom, which shall never pass away and shall never be destroyed.

The kingdoms of this world from the beginning of time were all designed in the wisdom of God to continue for a little space and then pass away and be no more. They were made to endure for a little moment during the long period of the world's night, after which they must be overthrown, each in his own order, until the King of kings shall come, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom that which shall not and cannot be destroyed.

A man must have a blind soul, indeed, if he cannot see that Daniel's prophecies concerning the kingdoms of this world have all been fulfilled to the letter with the exception of that final kingdom of living stone, which shall never be destroyed, but which will increase and expand until it has filled the whole earth. I am sure, from the unfolding revelation of scripture, that His kingdom will expand and fill the whole earth and finally the entire universe as well. The vastness of the heavens, teeming with rock strewn planets and stars, now keep their lonely night vigil, waiting like mother earth for the times of the restitution of all things, even the day when the Lord will restore and make the heavens new and the kingdom of God will spread from the earth into the vastness of the limitless universe.

The Old Testament abounds with living promises of a coming kingdom of heaven that will displace all the kingdoms of the world and fill the earth with its magnificent glory.

Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy;
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy.

Dreams cannot picture a world so fair;
Sorrow and death may not enter there.

It has always been a conundrum to me to find that a truth so prominently set forth in Holy Scripture should be so seldom preached in our day and then mentioned as a sort of inconsequential misnomer. The light, frivolous orations we hear from the pulpits seldom contain any vital message - certainly no kingdom message. The Bible all too often is opened as a matter of form, a text is read, and a few words are spoken to tickle the ears of the hearers, but as for any real searching out of kingdom truth, there is practically none.

The intention of a world wide kingdom was in the omniscient mind of the omnipotent Lord from the very beginning. Adam, created and made in the image of God, was given dominion over the whole earth. He was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every living thing that moved upon the face of the earth. It is clear also that this dominion was not to be given to Adam alone, but to all his posterity. Therefore the plural word is used, "Let them have dominion." **Gen. 1:26**

It must always be remembered that the immutable God never changes or alters His purposes. His intentions in the beginning are His intentions now and forever. If for a small moment some event, such as man's transgression, seems to have delayed or thwarted His intention, we must never forget that omniscient wisdom foresaw that event - nay, not only foresaw it, but purposed and planned it. The childish doctrine, born of ignorance and misunderstanding, contending that Adam's transgression was an unforeseen tragedy that ruined God's plan, should be rejected by all as inconsistent with the Father, who is perfect in wisdom, full of understanding, omnipotent in power, omnipresent in being, and above all else immutable in purpose. When the apostle Paul by inspiration spoke of the transgression and fall of man, he stated the facts as they really were when he said, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who hath subjected the same in hope." Rom. 8:2. The hope, of course, was that Adamic man, advancing into sonship and the image of God through the experimental knowledge of good and evil, should deliver the entire creation from the bondage of corruption, sin and death into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. It was a marvelous purpose divinely executed, infinite in wisdom and full of understanding.

There were no mistakes made in Eden. Every detail was in harmony with a master plan for the working out of an eternal purpose. I may be wrong, but I think I discern a measure of satisfaction in the words of the Omniscient immediately following the transgression. "Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil." Gen. 3:22. Thousands of years later Paul, his spirit basking in holy unction, uttered these inspired words: "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." **Heb. 5:14** It is not God's intention that we should know merely the difference between good and evil. It is God's determination that we should know both good and evil. And we, having been delivered from evil by the life blood of Jesus Christ, shall never again fall there into. Because of our experimental knowledge of the power of evil, understanding will enlighten our minds for eternity. Experience is always the only true teacher.

Having established that nothing comes upon the Omniscient unawares, but all purposes are planned by Him, let us also remember that the kingdoms of this world, weak and evil as they have always been, were the resolution and design of the Father. He it is who raises up mighty kings and kingdoms and disposes of them again when their purpose is fulfilled. He has power to raise up men like Daniel and Joseph and He has power to exalt the basest of men. Dan. 4:17. "The powers that be are ordained of God." **Rom. 13:1** Our Lord Jesus Christ, being aware that the Empire of the Caesars was raised up by God, confounded His adversaries by saying, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and again, though He owed no taxes for the existing government, He said, "Lest we offend, this give for thee and Me."

It is certain that all of us chafe betimes under the misrule of bad government so prevalent in the world. We despise the evil men and seducers that everywhere wax worse and worse. We hate the lawlessness and corruption in high places, but all unknown to us the darkness of injustice, inequity and unrighteousness is teaching us something of justice, equity and righteousness. If we are not learning our lessons, then woe be to us, for only those who are taught by these evils will be able to reign in equity and unsullied goodness in the kingdom of righteousness to come. The man who has suffered evil and in its place returns good is of God. He

who has suffered evil and returns evil for evil is a corrupt and fallen man, but he who returns evil for good is of the devil.

Concerning man's coming glory and dominion over the earth David, rejoicing in heart, wrote, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." **Psa. 8:5, 6** Paul, adding even greater force and explanation to David's statement, wrote, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He puts all things in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now (at present) we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." **Heb. 2:5-10**. These remarkable passages not only make plain God's purpose for man — that is, that he might be given dominion over all things — but they also make very clear why it was that man must first suffer the humiliation of the fall and come under the tyrannical kingdoms and dominions of this present evil world. Only by suffering injustice will he learn justice. Only by enduring inequity will he learn equity. Only by feeling the pains of unrighteousness will he learn righteousness.

If we are to have a kingdom, first there must be a king. Then there must be a domain and finally there must be laws. Thus Eden was earth's first manifestation of the kingdom of God. God was the king. Eden was the domain. The law was, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die." The moment the law was broken, Adam himself was put away and condemned to earn his bread by the sweat of his face and, Adam being driven out from his kingdom, the kingdoms of this world and the six days of man's carnal and unrighteous rule began.

When Jesus Christ died and rose again, He redeemed man that in his regenerate state and renewed mind he might once again inherit the promise originally given to him: "Let Us give them dominion." The title deed and security to this dominion is now held by our Lord Jesus Christ, who during all this age of grace has been preparing sons in His likeness that they might be given rulership in His kingdom in the age directly following the age of grace. Thus it was that Daniel beheld the kingdoms of this world endure until "the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom." **Dan. 7:22**. Again, following the destruction of the kingdoms of this world, Daniel was told that "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." **Dan. 7:27** At the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet (Rev. 11:15), there appears to be a very great stir in the heavens as great voices sound forth, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign forever and ever."

The book of Daniel is a most remarkable book. Its pages give an excellent record of secular history and in so doing gives an exact prophetic forecast of the existence and progress of the kingdoms of this world as they were to arise in their order. The singular thing about the first vision of the book of Daniel is that it came in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar and was later amid great ceremony interpreted by Daniel the prophet. The second vision (Dan. 7), which is an enlargement of the first, was entrusted to Daniel in the reign of Belshazzar.

It would be well here for us to take particular notice of the events as they are recorded in Daniel chapter two. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed a strange dream that greatly troubled his spirit. Being unable to interpret the dream himself, he called in all the wise men of Babylon to interpret the dream for him. (Dan. 2:2-13) Nebuchadnezzar insisted he had forgotten the dream and that it was gone from him. This unlikely story may have been true or it may not have been, but we may be sure the king was not unaware of the trickery of Chaldeans and astrologers. Thus to make certain these self-styled wise men were not deceiving him, he demanded that they both tell him the dream and give the interpretation of it. Otherwise they would be destroyed and their houses made a dung hill. Whether Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten the dream or was only

pretending to have done so matters little. The truth is that his irrational demand was indeed a foolproof way of avoiding deception.

After the edict was given that the wise men should be destroyed, Daniel went to Arioch, who had been assigned the task of execution, and asked for a stay. He then required of the king that he would "give him time" and he would give him the interpretation. Daniel then went to his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who with Daniel took the matter to God in prayer. The secret was then made known to Daniel, who went to the king and expounded both the dream and the interpretation to him. Surely this is a remarkable affair. The Lord must be teaching us something very special, for here we have a triple confirmation of a very important prophetic vision. First the vision was given to Nebuchadnezzar, who straightway avowed that he had forgotten it. Second the same vision was given to Daniel, and third, the dream, after being expounded to Nebuchadnezzar, was recognized by the king as being the exact representation of all that he had seen. I know of no other place in scripture where such a remarkable thing occurred. Joseph interpreted dreams after being told the dream, but only here do we find a man both restating and interpreting a vision that was received and forgotten by another. This illuminating vision was of exceptional importance because it forecast the outline and succession of the kingdoms of this world from Daniel's day right down to the millennial day when the God of heaven will set up a universal kingdom which will break in pieces and devour all other kingdoms that were before it.

The vision seen by both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel was as follows: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that 10 place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." **Dan. 1:31-35**

The interpretation of this vision was given by Daniel. (Dan. 2:36-45) In his interpretation he shows that four great world empires would arise in succession. Secular history has proved these to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, and history will also eventually prove that the final kingdom, the stone cut out without hands, is the kingdom of God, for which all creation in every age has patiently groaned. With this in mind, Daniel, after having described the succession of the kingdoms of this world, described with inspired glory the glory of that coming reign which will never be destroyed. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure." **Dan. 2:44-45**

It should not be necessary here to rehearse in detail the conquests of these four great world empires lest we be guilty of tediously repeating many things that are already well known to most readers. There are, however, a few worthy considerations that are seldom, if ever, mentioned. First, the vision must be considered as one vision. The whole vision is Babylon, past, present and future. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was the golden head of the entire Babylon system from beginning to end. It is most important that we understand that Babylon's golden head is the supreme authority of every empire and kingdom in all times, dispensations and ages with the exception of that final age when Christ, the living stone, becomes head. The vision is one vision and the image is one image. The empire of Medo-Persia represented by silver, the empire of Greece represented by brass, the empire of Rome represented by iron and the iron and clay representing a mixture of democracies, state churches, dictatorships, emperors and kingdoms are all under one head. It is Babylon. It is a head of gold. Gold ruled then as it does now. As the love of money is the root of all evil, so the rise and fall of empires is in hope of worldly gain in perfect deference to Babylon's head of gold.

Not only has this been true of the political systems of the world, but it is equally true of the ecclesiastical system as well. It was true when Tetzal filled the Pope's coffers with the indulgences of the poor and ignorant

people and it is true of the church of the twentieth century. It is true of those ambitious pastors and radio preachers who capitalize on every opportunity to make their appeals for more and more gold to carry on their worldly schemes to make more and more proselytes. The inspired words of Revelation are literally true of the entire ecclesiastical system. "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." **Rev. 3:17** Long ago the Pope of Rome remarked thus to Thomas Aquinas, "Well, Thomas, the church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none.' " To this Aquinas adroitly replied, "And neither can it say, 'Rise up and walk.' "

All the kingdoms of this present world, whether they be under the rule of emperors, kings, dictators or democracies, are ruled by the golden head of Babylon. The Greek, the Medo-Persian, the Roman empire, together with all the offshoots of Rome that have persisted through the centuries, consisting of feet and toes of iron and clay; are all part of the great image, of which Babylon is the head. Babylon means confusion. Thus it has been and thus it will always be that wherever empires or kingdoms or church systems are dependent upon gold for their very existence they must all be classed as Babylon. All the unrest in the world at the present time is caused by man's lust for gold. The world is full of plenty, but all manner of shortages are connived that more and more gold may be added to the already bulging fortunes of those who presently possess so much that ten thousand lifetimes could not exhaust their wealth. How different was the attitude of Paul, who taught, "Having food and raiment, let us be content."

In our day the golden head of Babylon is even more prominent than it was in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but the words of James are soon to be fulfilled: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days ... Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." **James 5:13, 5, 6** The hour is at hand when the kingdom of God will make dust of all former kingdoms and righteousness, equity and truth will fill the whole earth.

It must be noted that this great vision does not end with the fall of Rome as an empire, here represented as legs of iron (a possible allusion to the eastern and western sections of the Roman domain), but it continues on down to the feet and the toes, which are described as being part iron and part clay. The feet and the toes are also a definite part of Rome and they continue until they are destroyed by the stone cut from the mountain without hands. My understanding of great spiritual matters is often woefully small; nevertheless it is my opinion that the feet and toes of the image represent Rome as its power is continued under the papacy, for it is a fact that for a thousand years ecclesiastical Rome exercised as much power over Europe as did the pagan Caesars. In the iron and clay of the feet and toes we have the nominal, almost pagan, church of Rome wedded to the state or the kingdoms of this world. Thus Daniel says, "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." **Dan. 2:43** This great evil had its beginning about 316 A.D. when Christianity became the state religion of Rome and the church was treated to the obnoxious sight of Roman emperors presiding over church councils. Constantine made munificent grants to churches and even exercised the authority of the law in the propagation of Christianity. To his administration of state and civil affairs was added the control and management of the church. Instead of rebuking the emperor for his meddling, they welcomed him as the Bishop of bishops. Thus Christianity had embraced the protection of a semi-heathen state, and Christianity had suffered its greatest possible degradation in the patronage of a worldly potentate. Thus began the period of the iron mingled with clay and it continues to this day.

It is generally known by all informed persons that for centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire the Roman popes ruled over the kings of Europe, setting up what kings they would and putting down whom they would, casting into prison and putting to death all who opposed them, and exalting whom they would. This evil condition continues with variations to this day. It is an exasperating but undeniable fact that we in our day see the President of Protestant United States, the Prime Minister of Canada, the heads of European governments, even high authorities from communist Russia, and saddest of all, the Queen of England, making their journey to Rome to visit and receive the blessing of the Roman pope. Thank God, the hour is near when the little stone will smite the feet of the image and it will become as dust and be no more.

The vision of the four beasts, described in Daniel, chapter 7, is an enlargement on the vision of the image. You will notice that, while the first three beasts are likened to a lion, a bear, and a leopard, the fourth is not likened to any beast, but described thus: "Behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it: and it had ten horns." **Dan. 7:7** The ten horns would represent the nations over which Rome held power, and among them rose up a little horn, which had eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. Dan. 7:8. This is undoubtedly papal Rome. Martin Luther was not wrong when he declared the Pope, or little horn, to be antichrist. Many great and blasphemous things have been spoken by the mouth of this "little horn". Among the blasphemous assertions of this little horn was the claim that the Pope was equal to God and the representative of Christ on earth. Please compare this statement with 2 Thess. 2:3,4. Vatican City, a sovereign state of one hundred eight point seven acres and a population of one thousand, includes the Vatican and St. Peter's Cathedral. Surely this tiny state, exercising authority that has engulfed a large portion of the world, is rightly described as a "little horn" whose mouth speaks great things.

The ancient kingdom of Israel is the only kingdom since the fall of Adam that God recognized as being His kingdom. All others are the kingdoms of this world, and except for the over-ruling authority of God, the kingdoms of this world are controlled by the prince of this world. See Luke 4:5-7. But their time is fixed and limited and will end at the time appointed by the Father. Evil as these kingdoms are and have been, they are permitted by God. As Paul has said, "The powers that be are ordained of God." **Rom. 13:1** Imperfection, inequity, mis-rule and the exceeding sinfulness of sin are part of the lesson man must suffer and learn as he comes to the knowledge of good and evil. Man's inability to establish a perfect government is due to his own weakness and carnality. No matter how good and noble his intentions may be he will always succumb to the dreadful authority of Babylon's head of gold.

Satan, taking advantage of man's ignorance of the knowledge of good and evil, has always succeeded in making good appear to be evil and evil appear to be good. He has misrepresented and maligned God's glorious mind and character and blinded men completely to His eternal purpose. Our fallen, broken, and blinded creation has for centuries plodded its weary way, ever trying by human effort to attain something great, but always falling helplessly and painfully from the cliff it was trying to scale. In man's hope for a better day even his best endeavors have proved fruitless, and the golden age of which he dreamed is farther away now than ever it was. The groaning creation appears to be generally unaware that the stone Daniel saw cut from the mountain without hands is soon to make a sudden end of all the kingdoms of this world. Smitten by the smiting stone, they will become as the dust of the summer threshing floor and the wind, which represents the Spirit of God, will disperse and drive them all away. Then will that stone, which is Christ, together with the en-Christed, fill the whole earth with His glory and His reign; for thus the vision declares, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:44,45) See also Dan. 7:9-14.

No book in the entire Bible sheds more light on the progress of the kingdoms of this world than does the book of Daniel. Gradually the mysteries surrounding the prophecies begin to clear up as we see them being fulfilled. Divine wisdom and understanding have purposely concealed truth under its mysterious veils of types and shadows, but time unfolds the mysteries and, as the shadows flee away, we find ourselves beholding face to face the glory of revelation. The kingdoms of this world that in God's purpose were given their transient power over the earth are passing swiftly away. We have reached the hour in time when the whole system of Babylon is disintegrating. Even the blindest man can see the truth of this. The feet of the image, composed of iron mingled with miry clay, are crumbling rapidly. Their final collapse and destruction awaits only a slight tap on the clay feet and the entire Babylon structure will crash and crumble and become as the fine dust of the summer threshing floor, and it shall be no more forever. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," for strong is the Lord who judges her!

The account of the final collapse of Babylon or the kingdoms of this world is distinctly portrayed in Revelation, chapter 18. In it we vividly behold the utter corruption of the entire religio-political system. The call of God to

His saints is heard, bidding them to separate themselves from it and all that pertains to it. The weeping and wailing of the people who have made themselves rich through the abundance of her delicacies is foremost and the final rejoicing of the saints is heard, praising God that at last an enemy of God and mistress of all confusion and iniquity has been thoroughly and eternally overthrown.

"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her. My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come! And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

"And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate.

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." **Rev. 18**

Thus with violence end the kingdoms of this world and great Mystery Babylon, that golden head, which for centuries has ruled all nations, bringing under her dominion all religious systems, binding the professing church with the chains of tradition and bringing into slavish subjection all who are unaware of her whoredoms. She is the mystery of iniquity. She is the mystery of lawlessness. She is the mystery of confusion. She is the author of every war and she is the author of every religious denomination and the root cause of every division. She is horrible darkness and unspeakable confusion.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that He will give the Spirit of understanding to all who read these lines. For twenty years I have prayed that God would open the eyes of His saints to see by the Spirit what Babylon really is. Times without number I have sought to show God's dear people the cunning mystery of ecclesiastical

Babylon, warning continually of the danger of remaining in her fold. Oh that God's people would awaken and obey the Father's call, "Come out of her, My people," that God may be their Father and they may be His sons and daughters. I solemnly warn and admonish the people of God that it is not possible to attain to sonship or a life that is controlled by the Spirit as long as their lives are under the influence of this Satanic system, which is doomed to such utter and complete destruction. Not only are the kingdoms of the world doomed to desolation, but the whole church system, identified as it is with the world system, is also doomed to irreparable dissolution and ruin. If you obey God and come out of it, you will be spared her woes; but if you remain in it, you will be condemned with it. For what other reason does the Lord call to His people, saying, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues?"

In Revelation, chapter 17, we have the shameful picture of a drunken harlot seated upon a scarlet colored beast. One of the seven angels talked with John, saying, "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

The representation here depicted is that of the entire body of the organized church of our day and all preceding days, whether Greek, Roman, or Protestant. In Bible symbolism God's people have always been represented as a woman. Israel was also represented as a woman. For examples of this we may compare Ezekiel, chapter 6, and Ephesians 5:22-32. The woman of Revelation is seen riding a beast. A beast is the symbol of world power as we have already seen from Daniel, chapter 7. What else, then, can a woman, seated on a beast, symbolize but a church supported and carried by world powers? Is not this the true picture of every organized, state church in the world, whether Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Protestant? And is the same thing not largely true among all denominations? Are they not all "incorporated" and their ministers registered with the government of the world? Even if they are not, their lives are still tied to the beast system, which controls their understanding, their beliefs and their lives. We must be blind, indeed, if we cannot see that the whole church system is apostate and that the church as an outward, visible human system is a wretched failure. She is Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. God has an elect people on the earth. He always has had; they are like the seven thousand elect saints who in the days of Elijah had not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so the elect today do not bow the knee to Babylon.

It is well said that this Babylon woman is drunken with the blood of the saints. The blood of saints is the life of saints. She has sapped and sucked their spiritual life away and left them in abject poverty. Have you never wondered why it is your preacher seldom, if ever, tells you anything that you have not already heard a hundred times or more? He may use different texts, but always the same old sermons. Well, it is because the harlot system has sapped away his spiritual life and the poor fellow has nothing to offer. This evil harlot in her past has not only become intoxicated with the blood of the saints, but she has also martyred millions in the past and in many countries she martyrs them still, some by death and others by excommunication and disgrace. I am not wrong, but speak forth words of truth and soberness, when I tell you that the church system of the twentieth century, even as in times past, is part of the world system and is one with the kingdoms of this world. Here is the iron mingled with the clay.

The great final act in the drama of Nebuchadnezzar's vision was seen to be a stone cut from the mountain without hands, which smote the image of this world's systems. It smote the image, not on the golden head nor on its silver shoulders, its brazen thighs nor its iron legs, but on the rotten, eroding feet of iron and clay. A building is no better than its foundation even if its turret is pure gold. The towering image of the political and ecclesiastical kingdoms of this world is standing on unsubstantial, eroding feet. It is not founded on a rock, but on a rope of sand, a house of cards, that will tremble and break when the test comes. They have mingled themselves with the seed of men. It is a union that cannot abide and was never intended to last. Therefore in the great vision Daniel explained, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the

silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." **Dan. 2:34, 35** Thus with violence shall Babylon be thrown down and come to its end. The whole Babylon system will end whether it be political or ecclesiastical. Never will it exist again. Therefore, "Come out of her, My people, that ye receive not of her plagues."

The mighty Medes their battle flags unfurled
To find a place of glory in the sun,
And proudly trampled 'neath their marching feet
The crumpled might of once great Babylon!
The tidal wave of Greece rolled out the west
And, as the waters of its rage recede,
It carried back with fate's relentlessness
The smashed and broken empire of the Mede. '
Til by the side of Tiber's winding banks
A sleepy giant girded for the fray.
And Caesars laughed, and scoffed at heaven's Christ,
While legions thundered down the Appian Way!
And Roman eagles screamed defiantly
And tore to shreds the vaunted might of Greece,
Then turned again with blood drenched hands to war
Against disciples of the Prince of Peace.
The heavens trembled; and the ocean tide
Of human waves rolled once again in rage.
And buried in the shifting sands of time
The proudest, mightiest empire of the age.
So perished Rome; her forum voices stilled;
She met her doom in God's appointed hour.
Oh, Christ, can man distort Thy purposes
And take to self Thy glory and Thy power?
And so throughout the march of ages past
The tide of empire flows — then ebbs away.
The pomp and grandeur of its yesteryear
Are buried in its shifting sands today.
But strong and firm throughout the passing years
I see a rock that stands out on the shore,
A Rock of ages, cleft for you and me;
A Rock that will endure for evermore!
Oh, Christ, our life, our strength, our Rock divine.
Before Thy might the oceans stand in awe.
No decrease Thine; for this increasing stone
Was chiseled from the mountain Daniel saw.
The raging, tumbling seas of time may roll
'Til earth's proud empires crumble and decay
And Thou alone shall triumph, Prince of Peace,
When all the storms of life have rolled away.
Charles S. Price.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

At the time of the complete destruction of the kingdoms of this world the long awaited kingdom of God will be set up and established in the entire earth. In the vision we have been discussing we are given a brief but dramatic description of the setting up of the kingdom of God. Thus Daniel's interpretation continues: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." **Dan. 2:44**

Now the stone cut from the mountain without hands, that smote the feet of the image, is Christ. He is the stone that the builders rejected. The builders of the nations and the builders of the kingdoms of this earth have rejected Christ's headship, and to an incredible degree He has been rejected of the church system as well. Do we not find Him 'outside' the church of Laodicea? Do we not hear Him knocking and saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him"? He is, indeed, the stone that has been set at naught by all the builders of all time, and He is the stone which in the end of this age will destroy all the kingdoms and systems of this world.

It will not be our place to elaborate now, but all true saints must be aware of this sacred secret - that God's blessed Christ must include both the Head and the body, Jesus Christ the Head and all the sons of God His body. This Christ in completeness is the stone, which will smite the feet of the dark kingdoms of this world, and the saints will take the kingdom and reign with Christ forever and ever. (Dan. 7:22)

The vision of the great image in Daniel, chapter 2, and the vision of the four beasts of Daniel, chapter 7, complement each other. The latter is a further explanation of the former. In both of these visions Daniel saw the casting down of the kingdoms of this world and the setting up of the kingdom of God. Therefore we have these words in **Dan. 7:9**: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Then again the vision continues: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man (compare Rev. 1:3) came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." **Dan. 7:13, 14**

"And the kingdom, the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heavens shall he given to the people of the saints of the most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey them. This was the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly upset me and my face changed color; but I kept the matter in my mind." **Dan. 7:27, 28** (Goodspeed)

"I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, **I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last**.. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me. **Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**" **Rev. 1:9-18**

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hands. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." **Rev. 19:1-3**

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies, which were in heaven, followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it

heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. Thou shall bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it," **Isa. 25:3-8**

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." **1 Cor. 15:51, 52**

"Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." **Isa. 26:19**

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall bloom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." **Isa. 35:1-10**

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." **Isa. 40:4** "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it." **Isa. 41:19**

"Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." **Isa. 42:1-4**

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth into Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord; and the pots of the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take them, and see the therein; and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Zech. 14:9-21. "And in that day shall thou say, O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." **Isa. 12**

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself with fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander of the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud. that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I have sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." **Isa. 55**

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen." **Matt. 6:9-13**

In the light of such a profound array of scriptures as those we have just considered, I am at a complete loss to understand how anyone who knows God at all could fail to grasp the living hope that a radiant age of splendor, in which the Son of God Himself will reign supreme on an illustrious, exalted throne here on earth, is coming. In that blessed age of righteousness and peace the sons of God will reign with Him for a thousand years of blessedness. Enlightening as is this array of scriptures, they are but a small fraction of the kingdom promises contained in Holy Writ.

The hope of an age of dignification and grandeur in which Christ Himself will reign supreme with His saints is woven into the warp and woof of Holy Scripture. Abraham, we are told in Genesis, looked for it and saw it afar off. To Judah the promise was given: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah. nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." **Gen. 49:10** To David this promise was given: "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." **Psa. 132:11** The kingdom of Christ was

the theme of the prophets, as we have seen from the above scriptures. When Jesus Christ the King appeared in person. His sermons. His miracles, and every detail of His marvelous life were a living prophecy, a prophetic parable of the glory of the kingdom age to come. When His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. He said, "When ye pray, say... Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven... For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

The entire dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:2) has been set aside, not in the vain hope of the conversion of the world, as the preachers are always imagining, but for the distinct purpose of "calling out a people for His name." **Acts 15:13-18** These called out and elect saints, who have been in preparation for two thousand years, are the body of Christ, the sons of God, whom God has chosen and ordained to sit with Him in His throne. They are the fullness and completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.

In the blindness of church tradition, the preachers have taught the people that the hope of creation is to die and go to heaven or go to glory by the medium of the rapture, but anyone studying God's word with care will find that heaven is not the theme of the Old Testament and it is not the theme of the New Testament. In fact there is a noticeable absence of any teaching on the subject. The theme of both the Old and New Testaments is the kingdom of God, a kingdom as literal as that of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, or Caesar. The difference will be that those men were merely mortal men, possessed with carnal minds, but the glory that excels in the kingdom of God will be that the King will not be carnal, but spiritual; not mortal, but immortal; not passing, but permanent; not of time, but of eternity. His sharp, two-edged sword will not be stained with the blood of His enemies. It is instead that same sharp, two-edged sword which is the word of God. With it and by its transforming power He will smite the nations, not in the bloody conflict and seething hate of war, but as he smote the people at Pentecost, bringing them to repentance and the joy of salvation. He will pierce the conscience of the people and cause them to cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He will prick them as Saul of Tarsus was pricked and He will save them as he was saved. His coming will be the time of the latter rain and the whole earth will feel the glory and power of Christ and His brethren, the sons of God. The lame will leap as the hart. The deaf will hear the music of redemption. The tongue of the dumb shall sing the praises of the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne. The wolf will lie down with the lamb in peace and friendship. The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth and the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick," Nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

No one who ever lived can be compared to our incomparable Christ, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Mohammed is dead - dead as a door nail. Buddha is dead - dead as a stone. Confucius is dead, as are all the others who for a little moment held captive the minds of their followers. But not so with our Christ! He is alive forevermore, by many infallible proofs. He holds the keys of death and Hades. At the sound of His voice with the trumpet of God all who are in the graves, even the false christs themselves will arise to stand before Him. He ever liveth. He only hath immortality. He only is eternal. In Him is life. He is the light. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. There never was a birth like His. There never was a life like His. Others have died on crosses even as He, but He died for all the world and everything in it. In that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. None had a resurrection such as He nor an ascension such as His, nor will any return to earth with such majesty as He. When He comes, His throne will be waiting for Him, and, when He reigns, all the world of all ages will know that there never was such a kingdom as His. He shall reign from sea to sea and all nations shall serve and obey Him.

How glorious is the theme! I would not miss it for a million worlds such as the one in which we now live. It is no wonder to me that Jesus refused the paltry kingdoms of this world when Satan offered them to Him. Knowing as I do the hope that lies before us, I would refuse earth's kingdoms even as He did, and so would you.

Dearly beloved brethren, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us and, forsaking all else, cleave only to Him. Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven! Amen and Amen and Amen!

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 3
THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND OUR UNION WITH HIM

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-4

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CHAPTER ONE
HOW REVELATION UNFOLDS THE MYSTERIES

In the hearts of millions of people in this hour there is an inward knowledge that the world is now seeing the final impressive moments of the great drama that has occupied earth's vast theatre for the past six thousand years. It is my earnest longing and continual prayer to God that all who read the lines which follow may feel their spirits arrested and awakened by the wisdom and power of that great omniscient Person of whom our Lord Jesus fervently spoke, saying, "*When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.*" **John 16: 13, 14** If God's people could but see the limitless store of wisdom and knowledge offered to us here, they would quickly abandon the vanities of earth and religion, cleanse their temple, and become the continual abiding place of this heavenly person-age.

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep until that hour of which it is written, "*The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" Then God said, "*Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good.*" **Gen. 1: 2-4** The same mysterious pattern followed by our God in creation is followed in the regeneration of every man. In the **unregenerated** and unconverted state our lives, our hearts, our spirits, our souls, and our minds are all without form and void, and darkness, gross darkness, outer darkness that can be felt, shrouds our beings as a thick cloud until the day comes in the grace and wisdom of God that the Holy Spirit moves like a breath from heaven upon us, dispelling the covering clouds of darkness and causing the Sun (Son) of righteousness to shine into the vain, void wilderness of our hopeless hearts.

What man **knoweth** the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Well did Jesus know all our human limitations. Well did He know that our understanding could not possibly ascend beyond the things of man. He did not leave us thus comfortless and confined, but promised in words that cannot fail, "*When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.*" And yet again, "*When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.*" **John 15:26**

It is the Spirit that **quickeneth** (**maketh** alive); the flesh (with all its learning and natural understanding) **profiteth** nothing. John 6: 63 As a brilliant light dispels the darkness of a dank and gloomy cave, so the light of the Holy Spirit, shining in the sullen darkness of the human heart, obliterates the gloom of death and breaks the chains of darkness that saints may joyfully proclaim, "*The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*" **Rev. 21: 23** "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" **1 Cor. 4:6** Be merciful unto us, O God, and bless us, and *cause Thy face to shine upon us*, "that Thy way may be known upon the earth, Thy saving health among all the nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." **Psa. 67**

I solemnly tell every person who reads these lines that where the things of God are concerned human knowledge is insufficient. The institutions of learning devised by the cleverness and art of men can never point a man to life. They are capable only of partaking of the tree of human knowledge, which is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Scientists and educators vainly imagine that, given sufficient knowledge, every evil can be abolished from the earth, but their darkened minds will not let them see that the more man partakes of human knowledge the deeper he sinks into the sea of corruption and violence. He does not know that the death-dealing pollution of the land, the sea, and the air, with all its attendant train of sickness and disease, stems from the noxious fertility of his own corrupt and polluted mind, which with gluttonous and voracious appetite has feasted long upon the tree of human wisdom and carnal understanding. The more men eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the more the jaws of death take hold upon us until at last, if man were allowed to continue, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect the days of man's ravenous appetite for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil shall be shortened.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" **John 3:1-3** I know what Jesus meant when He made the significant and all important statement, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", and many people now reading these lines know from personal experience the mystery of the truth He spoke. But you who now understand the mystery of the new birth will readily concede that you did not understand it until its truth became experience in your heart. Furthermore, you will have found that even now it is quite beyond your power to explain this blessed experience to **unregenerate** men. You may tell them of the necessity of being born again. You may patiently explain the wonderful work accomplished by the Holy Spirit in your life when you believed on Christ, but for each man the *understanding* of the new birth must await the hour when he himself is touched by that kingdom of God from above.

Have you ever listened to a man preach or heard him teach on a subject that was beyond his personal experience? It is pitiful to listen while **unregenerate** men try to explain the new birth, but in their blindness they try, and even the unregenerate listener can discern that the speaker does not have the experience he is trying to explain, or should I say, explain away. Not long after I had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I heard a minister preach on the subject. He had not gone very far in his explanation before I and many others knew that he had never received the experience at all. He was trying desperately to make the word of God confirm his experience rather than seeking an experience that conformed to the word of God.

It is completely impossible to see the kingdom until its new life has touched you from above. It is Jesus Christ and He alone who opens the eyes of men who are *blind* from birth. It is God's only begotten Son who gives the life of the ages to men dead in trespasses and sins. The new birth defies all explanation in the natural realm. Every son of Adam, born as he is in trespasses and sins, is hermetically sealed in the realm and kingdom of death until he is touched by the life of the resurrected Son of God. *In Him* is life, and the *life* is the *light* of men. Just think of that beautiful truth! "**In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.**" **John 1:4**. Everything everywhere outside of Him belongs to the realm of death and, because it belongs to the realm of death, it likewise belongs to the realm of darkness. It was into this realm of outer darkness and death that Adam went when he partook of that strange tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God, his Father, had already told him which trees were good and which were evil, but man is never satisfied to believe God. He must always reach out his inquisitive hand to prove for himself whether or not God is speaking the truth. Hence, when he partook of that which God had said was evil, then he died, as God had spoken, and we all died in him. Thus death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. Has mankind not fully proved throughout the centuries that he is in truth the son of Adam? Which of all God's commandments have we not broken, justifying ourselves in having done so even as Adam seemed to do.

"**The dead know not anything.**" **Eccles. 9: 5**. Furthermore, the dead see not anything, nor do they hear or feel anything. How then can a natural man who is *dead* in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) hope to see or understand the things that belong to the wonderful realm of life, since death has closed his eyes to them? It is Christ and Christ alone who raises the dead. It matters not to Him nor to His resurrection power whether those dead be corpses buried in the earth or whether they be men walking on top of the ground, dead while they live.

"Let the dead bury their dead," said Jesus, because He understood the mystery I seek now to explain. Well did the Son of God know that outside of Him both the man who was being buried and the men who cast the earth into his grave belonged to the realm of death and were alike dead.

In Him is life! *In Him is life*, and, when He comes into our hearts, then His life becomes the *life of men*. John: 4, 5. It is when that life from above, which is Jesus Christ, touches us in the *deadness* and death of our walking tomb that we are *born from above*. We are born again. We receive again the life that was in Adam before he partook of the tree of death. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," said Jesus. And again, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall *never thirst*: but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." **John 4:14** Amid the unbelief of a sinful world, the doubt and fear, the bigotry and hate of the religious multitudes of His day, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, rose to His feet at the great feast of tabernacles and cried with a loud voice that all the world might hear, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living water*. This spake He of the *Spirit*, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7: 37-39**

Ah, sweet mystery of the ages, that a man dead in sins, his soul covered with darkness as a thick cloud, should be lighted with the light which Jesus Christ is and be touched with His life, which knows no death! Who can but marvel that we should be thus *born from above*, born anew with the life of the Son of God? Surely the scripture is doubly true when it boldly affirms, "When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." To men now dead in trespasses and sins He calls, "I am the bread of life... This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." **John 6: 48, 50, 51**

For many months my spirit has longed with a God-given desire to help men see that there is *only one life* in the universe, and that one life is *Jesus Christ*. *In Him* is life, and *outside* of Him even that which men call life is *death*. Many millions of God's people have stumbled over the scripture we have quoted above. "If any man eat this bread, he shall live forever." **John 6:51**. The Jews stumbled over it and argued and fought about it. "Abraham," they said, "is dead and the prophets are dead, and Thou *sayest*, If a man keep My sayings, he shall never see death." The mistake the Jews were making sprang from their faulty understanding of what *life* is. They thought, as Christians also do, that this living and breathing that we now enjoy is *life*. They, as men today, were content to believe that all men not in their graves had life and only those beneath the ground were dead. But this is not the truth, and Jesus more than all others knew it was not so. He knew, as Paul also forcefully stated, that "she that *liveth* in pleasure is dead *while she liveth*," and taught the same when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." Everything *outside of Christ* is death. May God make this truth real to your hearts! Not only is the spirit dead in trespasses and sins, but the body, too, is "the body of this death". Rom. 7: 24 Furthermore, I must testify, as the scripture also bears record, that even unto those whose spirits have been reborn, *never to die again*, the apostle Paul distinctly said, "The *body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive (life) because of righteousness*." **Rom. 8:10** When Jesus taught that those who partook of Him would never die (John 6: 50), He was *not* saying that they would never go *into the grave*; otherwise He would not later have said, "I will raise him up at the last day." **John 6:54** But He was saying that, once a man receives the *life of Christ*, that *life* will never depart from him. The grave does not and *cannot* separate a man from the life that Jesus gives. His life is the only life there is anywhere.

The only life you *have* and the only life you *ever will have* is the life that *Jesus gave you* when you believed on Him. "I give unto them *eternal life (the life of the ages)*, and they shall *never perish*." **John 10:28** May God, the giver of all light and understanding, open our minds to see that the life which Jesus is and the life which Jesus gives has nothing in common with that frail, flickering candle of which James spoke, saying, "What is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." **Jas. 4:14** "All flesh," said Peter, "is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." **1 Pet. 1:24** Surely this misty shadow that men call life is not one and the same thing with that life which Jesus spoke of as enduring forever! No! It is not this vanishing flower, this withering grass, this flickering candle, that Jesus said would live *forever*." The life that never ends, the life of the ages, is the life that He gives to you and me when we believe. When we believe on Him, He gives us Himself. He comes within to *be our life*.

"He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The tomb to me holds no terror at all. Christians who lie buried in the grave are no more in death than they were when they walked on the earth, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth.

To every saint of God there must come a time when the truth that Christ is all in all dawns as the morning on the meadows of His soul. He *is* the truth. He *is* the light. He *is* the way. He *is* the life. He *is* the resurrection. He *is* wisdom. He *is* understanding. He *is* goodness. He *is* righteousness. He *is* the Alpha and the Omega. He *is* the A and the Z. He *is* the beginning and the end. It is *He* who liveth and was dead and, behold, is alive **forevermore**. All truth must come to the heart of mankind by revelation from above. To incorporate these truths into your theories and doctrines will not do. Christ and all He is and does must come as a light shining in the darkness, a living revelation and reality from on high. **"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."** **John 6: 63**

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Jesus once enquired of His disciples; and their reply showed clearly how varied and useless are the deductions of the natural mind. **"Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias: and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."** **"But whom say ye that I am?"** He asked. To this Peter replied with great conviction, **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."** **Matt. 16:13-16** What a world of difference there is between the theories and conclusions of men and the heavenly revelation of the Holy Spirit as it shines into our hearts, bringing the knowledge of the glory of God from the very face of Jesus Christ! And Jesus, hearing Peter's words, joyfully exulted, **"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."** **Matt. 16:17** At this moment Jesus gave forth a revelation of His own. It was a revelation from God concerning the ministry of this lowly man. **Turning to Peter, He said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** **Matt. 16:18** Thus you will see that even a God-given ministry cannot be recognized except by revelation from on high. Thousands of men today are claiming to be great ministries, exalting self with many high-sounding names as they point to their spectacular programs, but it just may be that Christ does not know them in spite of all their great works. It is unto all such as these that He will say, "I never knew you," (Matt. 7:23), but Peter He knew by the Holy Spirit.

We stated above that there must come a time when the truth is revealed to us from heaven that *Christ is all and in all*; and for that heaven sent understanding we beseech Thee, O, Lord! Open our eyes as the eyes of **Gehazi** were opened when **Elisha** prayed. (2 Kings 6:17) Enlighten our understanding as you did when Jesus opened their understanding that they might understand the scripture. (Luke 24:45) Remember again the prayer of Paul, who prayed, **"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."** **Eph. 1:18** Open our eyes and send the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus Christ that we, with those who stood in the holy mount, may see no man but Jesus only. (Matt. 17:8) Take us, O Lord, beyond the realm of the natural mind. Deliver us from man's way of looking at things. Remember again Thy promise, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth", that He may abide in our hearts of whom it is written, **"He will receive of Mine and shall show it unto you."** **John 16:14**

It would be very simple to fill this book with instance after instance from Holy Scripture, which loudly and beautifully proclaim the glory of eternal things as the Holy Spirit opens and reveals them to our hearts. Search where you will in the Old Testament or the New and you will find ever increasing evidence of the transforming power of spiritual revelation. "No man can see God and live," the Word declares; but may I ask this solemn question: Have you ever known of a man who, upon seeing God, dropped dead? As it is faithfully true that no man can see God and live, it is also equally certain that no man can see God and die. And, because this statement is true, we must search in greater depth for a right understanding of this wonderful fact. The truth is that, the moment God in any form is revealed to man, right there and then that man is completely changed. Old things pass away and die; all things become living and new. The old life and the old loves, together with old theories and all human understanding, shrivel up and pass away, but from the **deadness** and outer darkness of their tomb shines forth a life in the image of Him who revealed Himself. Old things have passed away; behold, all things are new! Is not this Paul's experience when he said, **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."** **Gal. 2: 20**

No man hath seen God at any time. How is it then that Moses saw God, Job saw God, and Isaiah saw God? Again we must conclude that the real truth of the statement lies beneath the surface. No man hath seen God at any time nor is it possible for a natural man with natural eyes to see God at any time. Our physical eyes are restricted to the natural realm. But, when the blessed Christ, who opened the eyes of the man blind from birth, passes our way, then our eyes, being touched from above, behold that which is invisible, our ears are made to hear that which is inaudible, and the tongue of the dumb is loosed to give glory to God in the speech of men and angels.

Job was a good man. By the testimony of the Lord he was a perfect man and upright, one who feared God and kept clear of all evil. But let it be known that the goodness he possessed was on the level of men; the perfection he had was the perfection of the natural man; the awe, the respect, the reverence he had for God was that of a good-living, God-fearing man, righteous in excess of any about him. But, when the day came that God revealed Himself, spoke to him out of the whirlwind, then all his righteousness fell apart as rotten and filthy rags. His long cherished goodness languished in the dust and ashes of nothingness. Every argument he had presented before God and men to support and bolster his self-righteous claim made him the more ashamed and ready to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs; and, when at last he found the courage to open his mouth, the words he uttered sprang from the heart of a *new man*. The old Job with his personal righteousness had passed away. The old high-minded Job had died, and from the ashes of his dead self a new man came forth in resurrection in the image and likeness of the Lord who had revealed Himself. "I know that Thou canst do everything," he wept in his adoration, "and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel *without* knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I *understood not*; things too wonderful for me, which I *knew not*. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand (ask) of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but *now mine eye seeth Thee*. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42: 2-6**

No man can see God and live. No man can remain as he used to be. The revelation of the Almighty in whatsoever form it may be given will *kill the beast* of your old self to make way for the new man in the image of Jesus Christ. "*Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.*" **Prov. 9: 1, 2** The killing of the *beast of self* is the one thing above all else always accomplished by the revelation of God to our hearts. "*For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*" **Rom. 7:18** It is wrong, very, very wrong and very *unscriptural*, for any man to pray to God for ability to *do better*, and, because this oft repeated prayer is wrong, *foundationally* and fundamentally wrong, it can *never be answered* by the God of righteousness. Oh how often in the past I have prayed that I might be a *better man*; And oh how often it seemed that instead of being better I was worse! How often I have promised myself that I would *do better* in the future only to find that there was no ability in me to *do better* or to *be better*! God open our minds that we may clearly see that goodness cannot spring from corruption nor can righteousness rise from unrighteousness. Can a bitter fountain send forth sweet waters, or a corrupt tree bear good fruit? Righteousness that grows on the tree of unrighteousness is that self-righteousness of which the Lord has said, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Can we satisfy God with filthy rags? Can that which is crooked be made straight? Can that which is old be made new, or that which is wanting be numbered? God is not interested in our *being better* or *doing better* or in our improving ourselves. All these things are the righteousness of the beast of self. God hates it all and will not accept it. There is but one righteousness. Christ is our righteousness and God has faith in Him.

That God has faith in the righteousness of His Son Paul plainly stated when he wrote to the Romans, saying, "*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" **Rom. 3:21-26** When Paul says here, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood," he means that God *Himself had* faith in the blood of His Son as sufficient to propitiate *man* (not God) and reconcile man to God. Propitiate means to appease or dispose to kindness one who is offended. Nowhere in

scripture do we ever find that God is offended or that God needs to be reconciled to man. It is man who is offended, man who is estranged, and man who must be reconciled.

Our failure to see the *purpose of the fall* leads us into all manner of error and misunderstanding. There is a divine purpose in the fall of man and unimaginable blessings for future ages will devolve from it. God our Father has never once blamed man for the fall, but takes the responsibility for it Himself when He says, "The creature was made subject to vanity, *not willingly*, but by reason of *Him who hath subjected the same in hope!*" There is *no blame* attached to the fall. It is not a matter of blame either to God or man. It is a matter of understanding the infinite purpose of God. With what profound words of inspiration the poet wrote:

I sorrow if I shock you, for I seek
To comfort and inspire. I see around
A silent company of doubting souls;
But I may challenge any one of them
To quote the meanest blessing of his life,
And prove that evil did not make the gift,
Or bear it from the Giver's hand.

Because man above all God's creatures has suffered in this divine process of *making man in God's image*, the perfection of Christ is offered as a perfect satisfaction to him (man), a satisfaction in which the Father has perfect confidence to propitiate him and reconcile him to God. Thus it is that Jesus Christ is God's propitiation toward man. This is the grace of God and He, the Father, has faith in the blood of His Son to accomplish the good and perfect act of reconciling man to Himself, giving men the righteousness of God as they receive His only begotten Son.

Again I say that all such vital truth as this lies as dead and dormant as the natural mind itself until that moment sublime in which the glory light of revelation shines into our hearts and we understand and comprehend in the revealing light of the Lord. We cannot overcome the flesh because we *are* flesh, and the flesh cannot overcome or conquer itself. Stop trying to *be* better or *do* better or to become more like Jesus. It simply *cannot be done*. That which is born of the flesh *is flesh* and always will be. That which is born of the Spirit *is spirit* and always will be. Marvel not that Jesus said, "Ye must be born again."

Year after year the millions of earth celebrate Christmas, but Christ to the vast majority of men is nothing more than an historic babe. The day of His birth is naught but a convenient occasion for drunken revelry and much feasting of the flesh. And why, you ask, is this the case? Simply because the natural man can never see beyond the veil of the flesh. His eyes can never look into the world of the Spirit. But, when the Holy Spirit, who moved upon the waters in Gen. 1, reveals to our hearts that Christ is God's Son, by whom and for whom all things were created and made, then our eyes are opened as the eyes of Jacob were opened on that famous night when from his pillow of stone a ladder reached from the lowly earth to the vaulted heavens while angels ascended and descended on that stairway to the skies. And when fearful, trembling Jacob awakened from his dreaming, the words of revelation started from his stammering lips, "Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not." **Gen. 28:16**

"How is it that Thou, being a Jew, **askest** drink of me who am a woman of **Samaria?**" demanded the careworn woman who drew her water from Jacob's well. "If thou **knewest** the gift of God, and who it is that **saith** to thee, Give me to drink; thou **wouldst** have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water," replied the Lord. Back and forth the conversation went of Jacob and the fathers, of wells and waters until the Wisdom of God said to the woman, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." "I have no husband," protested the woman, to which the Savior in grace replied, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that **saidst** thou truly." I have always loved Christ for this statement of kindness, gentleness and truth, but it came as such a shock to the spirit of the woman that she immediately knew that this kindly man with whom she spoke was something much more than a tactful gentleman, but one in whom was the knowledge of God. It was with unconcealed astonishment that she ventured the words, "Sir, *I perceive* that Thou art a prophet." Understanding was beginning to dawn upon her darkened mind. The light of the Son of righteousness was dispelling the thick clouds of the outer darkness

in which she long had dwelt. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," she confidently affirmed, "but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." "Woman, believe Me," He answered, "the hour **cometh** when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye *know not what*: we know what we worship, for salvation is *of the Jews*. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. *God is a Spirit*: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "I know that Messias cometh, which is called the Christ," ventured the woman, "and when He is come, He will tell us all things." "I that speak unto thee am He," was Christ's revealing reply. And she, who moments before had said in the darkness of her heart,

"How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a woman of Samaria," now ran off with the message on her trembling lips, "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did: *is not this the Christ?*" Revelation from God opens the mind to the realm of the Spirit that weary men on the pillows of stone may receive the message of God from an open heaven, and the eyes of women benighted by sin may behold in the dusty traveler the Savior of all mankind.

For centuries now men have studied the doctrine of the resurrection. Theologians (if there be such a thing) have filled pages and books with the arguments pro and con to prove that Christ did or did not arise from the dead. Many of their arguments are sensible and undeniable, but it is one thing to prove that nineteen hundred years ago a man called Jesus rose from the dead, and it is another thing entirely when the truth that *He is alive forevermore* comes flooding into the darkness of the soul from the glory world on high. Thomas had heard the promise of the resurrection from the lips of Jesus Himself, but he like all the others wondered what the rising from the dead could mean. Mark 9:10. Peter saw with his own eyes that the body of Jesus was missing from the tomb, yet he departed, *wondering in himself*. Luke 24:12. Sweet and gentle Mary, who perhaps had heard more about the resurrection than any other, seeing a man who she thought was the gardener, mournfully sobbed out this plaintive request, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." With one word and one only the Lord addressed her, "*Mary*" But that one word dispelled all darkness and misunderstanding from her troubled soul, and she knew, even as angels knew, that He was *alive*. I am sure, had all the silver tongued orators of earth been present to describe the wonders of that moment, their speeches would have been as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal compared to her one triumphant word of revelation, "*Rabboni*." (John 20:16)

0 Rabboni! Rabboni! Thou Son of the living God! Thou art the resurrection and the life. Thou wast alive; Thou wast dead; and, behold, Thou art alive forevermore and in Thy nail-pierced hand dost hold in triumph the keys of hell and death. 0 death, where is thy sting? 0 grave, where is thy victory? 0 gates of hell, thou shalt not prevail, for the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world holds in His triumphant hand thy key. "**Lift up your heads, 0 ye gates: and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, 0 ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.**" **Psa. 24:7-10**

And Thomas, too, poor doubting man, who was not with them when Jesus came, could not drive his doubts away nor calm his awful fears though his dearest friends told him with great assurance that Jesus was not only alive, but had appeared to them all. "Except I see in His hands the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will *not believe*" he despondently moaned. And Jesus eight days later, standing in the midst though the doors were locked and the windows barred, said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." But Thomas, the light of revelation streaming from heaven into his doubting heart, no longer needing any of these things, cried out with the eloquence of heaven,

"*My Lord and my God!*" (John 20:28) That awe-filled statement, *my Lord and my God*, is more, far more, than an acceptance of the fact of the resurrection. This, I am sure, was the first time in his life that he had known by the Spirit that Jesus was *both Lord and God*. For three years he had seen indisputable evidence that Jesus was the Son of God. This bold man would no doubt have willingly given his life for Jesus and the truth He preached, but, 0 friend, it is one thing to be convinced of a truth with the *intellect*. It is another thing to have it

revealed by the Spirit of God. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen," said Paul, "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." **Gal. 1:15, 16**

Dear man of God; dear woman of God; dear friend and brother of mine! Is your Jesus, even though He be Jesus of Nazareth, only an historic Jesus who, men and even devils admit, was the Son of God? Or has your raptured soul in the glory light of revelation cried out with Mary, "Rabboni!" Or with Thomas, whom men call *doubting*, breathed the eternal words of revelation, "*My Lord and my God!*" There is such a world of difference between the letter and the Spirit! There is such a contrast between the cold, dead acceptance of a fact and the warm pulsating vitality of the living reality which comes when the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and shows them unto us!

Two men looked through prison bars;
One saw mud; the other saw stars.

It is ever thus, and what we see and know and clearly understand will depend upon our relationship with that wonderful Holy Spirit sent forth by Jesus Christ to guide us into *all truth*. I think the poem by John Whittier, which we will quote here, though needing careful reading and concentration, shows very clearly the difference between those who rejoice in the letter with its outward show and those who dwell in the reality of the Spirit and the light of heaven.

THE MYSTIC CHRISTMAS

"All hail!" the bells of Christmas rang;
"All hail!" the monks at Christmas sang;
The merry monks who kept with cheer
The gladdest day of all their year.
But still apart unmoved thereat
A pious elder brother sat
Silent in his accustomed place,
With God's sweet peace upon his face.

"Why sitt'st thou thus?" his brethren cried.
"It is the blessed Christmas-tide;
The Christmas lights are all aglow;
The sacred lilies bud and blow.

"Above our heads the joy-bells ring,
Without the happy children sing,
And all God's creatures hail the morn,
On which the holy Christ was born.

"Rejoice with us; no more rebuke
Our gladness with thy quiet look."
The gray monk answered: "Keep, I pray,
Even as ye list the Lord's birthday.

"Let heathen Yule fires flicker red
Where thronged refectory feasts are spread;
With mystery-play and mask and mime
And wait-song speed the holy time.

"The blindest faith may haply save;
The Lord accepts the things we have,

And reverence howsoe'er it strays
May find at last the shining ways.

"They needs must grope who cannot see;
The blade before the ear must be;
As ye are feeling, I have felt,
And where ye dwell I too have dwelt.

"But now, beyond the things of sense,
Beyond occasions and events,
I know, through God's exceeding grace,
Release from form and time and place.

"I listen, from no mortal tongue,
To hear the song the angels sung;
And wait within myself to know
The Christmas lilies bud and blow.

"The outward symbols disappear
From him whose inward sight is clear;
And small must be the choice of days
To him who fills them all with praise!

"Keep while you need it, brothers mine,
With honest zeal your Christmas sign;
But judge not him who every morn
Feels in his heart the Christ, new-born."

I am afraid I am becoming a little impatient with the multiplicity of words and sentences. There must come a time when men *enter in*. I grow a little weary of hearing people talk about the *sonship message*. Sonship is much more than a message. It is a relationship. It is the relationship of a son to his Father. It is the spirit of adoption that in adoring contemplation causes the spirit to recite again and again, "Thou are my *Father* and I am Thy son. Thou knewest me and lovedst me before the foundation of the ages. What wilt Thou have me to do, O heavenly Father, for I do *only those things that please Thee*" As the months pass swiftly by, my spirit has been made urgently aware of an extreme need among the people of God. The greatest need Christians have is to hear the truth unfolded by the Spirit, and, having heard it by the Spirit, to embrace it with understanding and to enter in to it in experience. Many centuries ago Jesus taught us that the *key of knowledge* was to *enter in*. This He taught when He said, "**Woe unto you, lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.**" **Luke 11:52** Would you not say then that the *key of knowledge* is to *enter in*? God's people *stand still* and progress not at all century after century, because they hear and re-hear the truth but fail to *enter in* to partake of the feast that is spread before them. Publicans and harlots come and enter in to the kingdom of God by faith while those who have the promises waste their time dissecting and deciphering instead of believing and receiving.

The way to sonship is not *doing*, but dying. It is not a spirit of pride that speculates covetously of the personal glories to be attained as a manifested Son of God, but a broken and a contrite heart that the Lord will not despise. If perchance you wonder at the statement I have made above, I must tell you with great sadness of spirit that I have observed a multitude both of men and women whose only interest in sonship was their hope of *personal* exaltation. Sonship, to them, is something to be attained because they imagine it will produce in their lives all manner of spectacular things. *They* will then heal all the sick. *They* will see *signs and wonders*. *They* will be admired and honored of all men and nothing will be beyond *their* power. They are not unlike the seventy who returned from their ministry among the lost ten tribes of the house of Israel. Back they came from far and distant places, rejoicing greatly that *even* the demons were subject to them through Christ's name. And Jesus said, "**Rejoice not that the demons are subject to you, but that your names are written in heaven.**" This is truth hidden from wise and prudent men, but revealed to us who are babes by our Lord. See also **Luke 10:17-**

20 We should, I think, care not a straw for *doing* or for any sort of accomplishment. Our care and concern should be for *being* and that *being* a Son of God. The moment the light dawns upon your spirit that *God our Father* is working *all things* according to the counsel of His will, then your soul will respond with the words of that first begotten Son, "I do *only* the things that please the Father." What other work is of any possible value, seeing that He is the architect and builder of an eternal temple from which He will govern the universe throughout unending ages?

If you will cease from your frantic rushing here and there, working, as you think, *for the Lord*, if you will cease for a few weeks from your *church activity*, from your *do-gooding*, your almsgiving, and from a thousand other things that have caught Christians up in this end time whirlwind of religious excitement and *pseudo* devotion, and if in the place of all this you will seek the face of Christ with fasting and prayer, if you desire of Him that He will give you a broken spirit and a heart that is obedient to His hidden will, then understanding will begin to possess you and bring light from heaven to your heart. Furthermore you will see why it was that Jesus warned men like you and me, saying, "*Many will come to Me in that day, saying, 'Lord! Lord! Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works!' Then I will profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.*" **Matt. 7:22, 23**

Christians are always saying, "But how could Christ say to people who have cast out devils and healed sick and done great works, "I never knew you?" Well, the answer is very simple. God, the author and finisher of our faith, does not thank men for doing that which He did not instruct them to do. It is rebellion for one to attempt to build into His temple that which is not on the *divine blue print*. Iniquity, wherever the word is found in scripture, means not sin, but rebellion. Search and you will see that this is so. Preachers and evangelists of the twentieth century are foremost in this iniquity. Preachers and miracle workers above all others fit the description Jesus faithfully gave in the scripture we have quoted. Those who diligently seek the face of Christ will soon find themselves drifting away from the carnality of modern religious activity. By their fruits you shall know them, and, if you will dismount from their band-wagon long enough to take a prayerful look, you will soon conclude that, if all the people were being healed who they say are being healed, there would be few sick left in the nation; but the truth is that there is more sickness and disease than ever in history. Something is wrong somewhere. If the multitudes were being saved in such numbers as they claim, whole cities would be rejoicing in the love of Christ; but, instead, evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. The thing that men now term *revival* is not the work of the Holy Spirit, but the work of their own hands. There are many who will say, "In Thy name we have cast out demons, and in Thy name done many wonderful works." Blind and foolish is the man who, being so obviously warned by Christ, yet falls prey to the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

We are living in the end of the age. This is the age of Laodicea. These are the final hours of that lukewarm age. Have you not heard the message of the hour? It is a message that singles out the *individual*, a message peculiar only to this age and different from that of any other age. The message is to "*any man*", a message that abandons the multitude to their religious play, to their church creeds and their church Christs, a message that says, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.*" **Rev. 3:20-23** The church of the last day is the church of the *individual*. It is the individual believer with a *personal relationship* to Christ. For the man who will forsake *all else* and sup with Christ this is an age of glory, an hour of preparation such as we have never known. This is a time when the Spirit of God is speaking *to you as an individual*. He seeks to sup and dine and feast with you apart from all the confusion about us. It is a glorious day when we see the promise that is ours in this hour. As I have prepared the pages of this little book, I have frequently felt the melting presence of the Holy Spirit urging God's people to enter in to the glories that lie just beyond the veil of their own flesh.

Enoch was the seventh from Adam. As you and I are citizens of the kingdom of God, we, too, are therefore the seventh from Adam and should, I believe, have many things in common with that man Enoch, of whom so little is spoken in the Bible, but of whom a world of truth and **revelation is unfolded in this one sentence: "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."** **Gen. 22:24** The long lost Book of Jasher, twice mentioned in the pages of Holy Scripture (2 Sam. 1:18 and Josh. 10:13), bears valuable historical record of some of the marvelous events in the life of Enoch. I undertake here to quote the story as it is recorded in this book, fervently hoping that those who read will reverently behold the awesome estate for which God is

preparing those who may truly be called the seventh from Adam. The following record I quote from the Book of Jasher.

"And Enoch lived sixty-five years and he begat Methuselah; and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah, and he served the Lord, and despised the evil ways of men. And the soul of Enoch was wrapped up in the instruction of the Lord, in knowledge and in understanding; and he wisely retired from the sons of men, and secreted himself from them for many days. And it was at the expiration of many years, whilst he was serving the Lord, and praying before Him in his house, that an angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and he said, Here am I. And he said, Rise, go forth from thy house and from the place where thou dost hide thyself, and appear to the sons of men in order that thou mayest teach them the way in which they should go, and the work that they must accomplish to enter in the ways of God.

"And Enoch rose up according to the word of the Lord, and went forth from his house, from his place and from the chamber in which he was concealed; and he went to the sons of men and taught them the ways of the Lord, and at that time assembled the sons of men and acquainted them with the instruction of the Lord. And he ordered it to be proclaimed in all the places where the sons of men dwelt, saying. Where is the man who wishes to know the ways of the Lord and good works? Let him come to Enoch. And all the sons of men then assembled to him, for all who desired this thing went to Enoch and Enoch reigned over the sons of men according to the word of the Lord, and they came and bowed to him and they heard his word. And the Spirit of God was upon Enoch, and he taught all his men the Wisdom of God and His ways, and the sons of men served the Lord all the days of Enoch, and they came to hear his wisdom.

"And all the kings of the sons of men, both first and last, together with their princes and judges, came to Enoch when they heard of his wisdom, and they bowed down to him, and they also required of Enoch to reign over them, to which he consented. And they assembled in all one hundred and thirty kings and princes, and they made Enoch king over them, and they were all under his power and command. And Enoch taught them wisdom, knowledge, and the ways of the Lord; and he made peace amongst them, and peace was throughout the earth during the life of Enoch. And Enoch reigned over the sons of men two hundred and forty-three years, and he did justice and righteousness with all his people, and he led them in the ways of the Lord.

"And these are the generations of Enoch: Methuselah, Elisha, and Elimelech, three sons; and their sisters were Meica and Nahmah; and Methuselah lived eighty-seven years and he begat Lamech. And it was in the fifty-sixth year of the life of Lamech when Adam died; nine hundred and thirty years old was he at his death, and his two sons, with Enoch and Methuselah his son, buried him with great pomp as at the burial of kings, in the cave which God had told him. And in that place all the sons of men made a great mourning and weeping on account of Adam; it has therefore become a custom among the sons of men to this day. And Adam died because he ate of the tree of knowledge; he and his children after him, as the Lord God had spoken. And it was in the year of Adam's death which was the two hundred and forty-third year of the reign of Enoch, in that time Enoch resolved to separate himself from the sons of men and to secrete himself as at first in order to serve the Lord.

"And Enoch did so, but did not entirely secrete himself from them, but kept away from the sons of men three days and then went to them for one day. And during the three days that he was in his chamber, he prayed to, and praised the Lord his God, and the day on which he went and appeared to his subjects he taught them the ways of the Lord, and all they asked him about the Lord he told them. And he did in this manner for many years, and he afterward concealed himself for six days, and appeared to his people one day in seven; and after that once in a month, and then once a year, until all the kings and princes and sons of men sought for him, and desired again to see the face of Enoch, and to hear his word; but they could not, as all the sons of men were greatly afraid of Enoch, and they feared to approach him on account of the Godlike awe that was seated upon his countenance; therefore no man could look at him, fearing he might be punished and die.

"And all the kings and princes resolved to assemble the sons of men, and to come to Enoch, thinking that they might all speak to him at the time when he should come forth amongst them, and they did so. And the day came when Enoch went forth and they all assembled and came to him, and Enoch spoke to them the words of the Lord and he taught them wisdom and knowledge, and they bowed down before him and they said, May the

king live, may the king live! And in some time after, when the kings and princes and sons of men were speaking to Enoch, and Enoch was teaching them the ways of God behold, an angel of the Lord then called unto Enoch from heaven, and wished to bring him up to heaven to make him reign there over the sons of God, as he had reigned over the sons of men on earth.

"When at that time Enoch heard this, he went and assembled all the inhabitants of the earth, and taught them wisdom and knowledge and gave them divine instructions, and he said to them, I have been required to ascend into heaven; I therefore do not know the day of my going. And now therefore I will teach you wisdom and knowledge and will give you instruction before I leave you, how to act upon earth whereby you may live; and he did so. And he taught them wisdom and knowledge, and gave them instruction, and he reprov'd them, and he placed before them statutes and judgments to do upon earth, and he made peace among them, and he taught them everlasting life, and dwelt with them some time teaching them these things. And at that time the sons of men were with Enoch, and Enoch was speaking to them, and they lifted up their eyes and the likeness of a great horse descending from heaven, and the horse paced the air. And they told Enoch what they had seen, and Enoch said to them. **On** my account does this horse descend upon the earth; the time is come when I must go from you and I shall no more be seen by you. And the horse descended at that time and stood before Enoch, and all the sons of men that were with Enoch saw him. And Enoch then again ordered a voice to be proclaimed, saying, Where is the man who delighteth to know the ways of the Lord his God, let him come this day to Enoch before he is taken from us. And all the sons of men assembled and came to Enoch that day; and all the kings of the earth with their princes and counselors remained with him that day; and Enoch then taught the sons of men wisdom and knowledge, and gave them divine instruction; and he bade them serve the Lord and walk in His ways all the days of their lives, and he continued to make peace among them.

"And it was after this that he rose up and rode upon the horse; and he went forth and all the sons of men went after him, about eight hundred thousand men; and they went with him one day's journey. And the second day he said to them, Return home to your tents, why will ye go? Perhaps you may die. And some of them went from him, and those that remained went with him six day's journey; and Enoch said to them every day, Return to your tents, lest ye die; but they were not willing to return, and they went with him. And on the sixth day some of the men remained and clung to him, and they said to him, We will go with thee to the place where thou **goest**: as the Lord **liveth**, only death shall separate us. And they urged him so much to go with him that he ceased speaking to them; and they went after him and would not return.

"And when the kings returned, they caused a census to be taken in order to know the number of the remaining men that went with Enoch; and it was upon the seventh day that Enoch ascended into heaven in a whirlwind, with horses and chariots of fire. And on the eighth day all the kings that had been with Enoch sent to bring back the number of men that were with Enoch, in that place from which he ascended to heaven. And all those kings went to the place and they found the earth there filled with snow, and upon the snow were large stones of snow, and one said to the other. Come, let us break through this snow and see; perhaps the men that remained with Enoch are dead, and are now under the stones of snow. And they searched but could not find him, for he had ascended into heaven."26

CHAPTER TWO

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH HIM

The sacred mysteries of God are revealed by the Holy Spirit only to devout and humble souls who seek His face in truth. Our exalted heavenly Father, full of grace and truth, will not consent to walk with the proud and the scornful; neither will He be found in the presence of careless, irreverent, impious or hypocritical men. If in your heart you have a passion to know God and become acquainted with His glorious purpose, you must first above all else learn reverence and godly fear. Remove the shoes from off your feet when you tread upon His holy ground. Walk softly and with deep respect when you desire to come into the presence of Him before whom holy angels cover their faces. I recently read a tract in which the writer lightly and irreverently referred to God the Father as "the big wig" and made reference to the Holy Spirit as "that other guy." Oh, my brother or sister never allow such terms of impiety, lightness, and sacrilege to soil your lips or your heart. The God who is your Father is the creator of the universe and all things therein. Angelic beings, glorious in power, strength and holiness, cover their faces and their feet with their wings as they bow in His presence, crying their sacred

message to one another and to all mankind, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." The prophet Isaiah, that holy man from whose lips had poured forth mighty utterance of prophetic truth, upon beholding the glory of the Lord, cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." **Isa. 6:5**

The *fear of the Lord* is the beginning of wisdom. Psa. III:10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Prov. 1:7. The fear of the Lord is to *hate evil*. Prov. 8: 3. The fear of the Lord is a *fountain of life*, to depart from the snares of death. Prov. 14:27. The fear of the Lord is *strong confidence*. Prov. 14:26. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom. Prov. 15:33. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. Prov. 16:6. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil. Prov. 19:23.

If then the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the beginning of knowledge, and the beginning of strength; if it is a fountain of life and the way by which we depart from the realm of death; if such reverence and respect for God brings strong confidence, the instruction of wisdom and understanding, and by it saints abide satisfied and free from fear of evil, then the fear of God, the elements of which are reverence and deep respect, must become first and foremost in all our understanding of Him. All God's people must surely have noticed that holy men, even in the presence of angels, fall down in fear, but in the presence of God even angels, glorious in wisdom and power, cover their faces before His matchless glory and holiness. There is a tragic abundance of lightness among professing Christians, which should never be. Therefore much of Babylon's mis-named worship is abomination to the Lord. I believe firmly in the Pentecostal experience. It is as old as the church age. Yet the lightness and frivolity that has developed among these people through the changing years is indeed incredible.

The fear of the Lord brings wisdom and knowledge and the increase of these attributes multiplies the fear of the Lord. Every true revelation will mightily increase respect for our all-glorious heavenly Father. Even to consider His attributes fills the saints with reverence and godly fear. To learn that God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies causes men to bow in awe before Him. Such characteristics do not abide naturally in us and they do not exist apart from Him. Wonderful as these divine perfections are, they are only the beginning of wisdom, but when our spiritual eyes behold and our spiritual minds begin to grasp things which in other ages were not revealed to men, but which are now being unfolded to those who walk in humility before Him, then our love and respect for our exalted heavenly Father grows exceedingly. Then even the slightest lightness or thought of disrespect toward Him appalls our souls, causing us to cringe in spirit. Let our ransomed beings be like unto those mighty cherubim, glorious in strength and power, who cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Let wicked men who know Him not wag their idle tongues to curse and blaspheme that holy name which is above every name, but let no word of lightness or disrespect soil our lips or bring dishonor to Him before whom all creation will one day bow to confess on bended knee that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The nature of blasphemy is not generally understood among the children of God. The common conception of blasphemy seems to be that it is merely using profane language in which the name of God or of Christ is involved. This is indeed a form of blasphemy, but by no means its fullest extent. Blasphemy comprises "any attempt to lessen reverence for the name of Jehovah." (Funk and Wagnall) It consists of any irreverent act or any irreverent word. The woman who recently threw the Bible on the floor and stamped on it is guilty of blasphemy. The craze that is sweeping Italy for wearing "Jesus jeans" is blasphemy and gross irreverence. The following paragraph is a quotation from the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, Dec. 3, 1974: "Jesus jeans started things with its advertisements containing Biblical quotations such as, '*If you love me, follow me,*' next to almost nude starlets." This is blasphemy and is a dire warning to us all that sooner than we think the wrath of God in final judgment will fall upon all who involve themselves in such things. Well did the apostle Jude describe them in the eighth verse of his epistle. "*Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities... Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are... raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*" **Jude 8-13.**

Many religious groups of the present hour show great disrespect and irreverence in the names they have adopted for themselves. Such names as *The God Squad*, *Jesus Freaks*, and others of like mien are an affront to God and in my opinion are names of blasphemy. However well-meaning a person may be, it is blasphemy to write scripture texts on the walls of latrines amid all the filthy poetry and prose that appears there. "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." **Titus 1:15**

The world is getting worse while the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are *only evil continually*. Even while we wonder if there is any further depth of iniquity to which men can go, some greater evil crops up to spread its noxious seed all over the world. The pit from which such evils come is bottomless. It is called in scripture *the bottomless pit*. Therefore there can be no end to the vile smoke of corruption that ascends from it. John saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (Rev. 16:13) I shall not make any attempt to interpret the meaning of this verse, because I do not know its full meaning, but even a blind man can see that uncleanness in all its aspects is being poured out upon the world. Man is not content to defile his own flesh and destroy his own soul, but he adds sin to sin and evil to evil by delighting to blaspheme that worthy name which is above every name and before which all knees will one day bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth.

I write these things, holy brethren, because God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. I Thess. 4:7. Anna Jameson wrote, "Blessed is the memory of those who have kept themselves unspotted from the world - yea, more blessed and more dear the memory of those who have kept themselves unspotted *in* the world." Reverence is a sign of strength; irreverence is the surest sign of weakness. No man will rise high who jeers at sacred things. The fine loyalties of life must be revered or they will be foresworn in the day of trial. I write these things, holy brethren, because of the subject of this message. No man may hope to be a partaker of the mystery of Christ unless and until he has cast the shoes from off his feet to tread the way of holiness that leads wayfaring men to their place in Christ. "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called *the way of holiness*; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." **Isa. 35:8**

Holy! Holy! Holy! All the saints adore Thee!
Casting down their golden crowns beside the glassy sea.
Cherubim and seraphim, falling down before Thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shalt be.
Holy! Holy! Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see.
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love and purity.

Learn to look away from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. Who is Paul and who is *Apollos* but ministers by whom we have believed? Hold no man's person in admiration. Look beyond men to Christ, from the glory of whose presence the eternal light glistens, sending its rays to gladden every humble heart. Yea, look to Him whose light is brighter than a thousand suns. When you behold Him transfigured before you, even such eminent men as Moses and Elijah will depart and your wondering eyes will see *no man* but *Jesus only*. Matt. 17:1-8. When He walks with you, your heart will burn within you as He talks to you by the way and opens to your spirit the mysteries kept secret and hidden since the world began.

Only faintly now do our eyes behold the splendor of the realm we are approaching, but if we approach softly with reverence and godly fear, not disrespectfully and thoughtlessly as nosey children prying into some sacred thing, then the Lord of glory will meet us and will be a Father unto us and we shall be sons of God unto whom the Father will reveal the secrets we need to know. Thus shall we come into *that same image* and be sharers with Christ of the glory laid up in store for us before the world began.

The mystery of Christ! What could be more solemn or sacred than that? Wonderful is the revelation of Jesus Christ, the son of God, to the hearts of sinful men, but to the saint of God there is a revelation of Christ that is

greater far than this — an understanding so tremendous in its aspects that those who grasp it will be thought by some to be presumptuous blasphemers. Unworthy is man to open the book and break the seven seals thereof, and my own soul weeps much because my lips are unworthy to proclaim the high and exalted things that are clearly written for us to see and believe. I do not say they are written for **all** men to see, but they are there for the elect to see and, once having seen them, we may partake of them by the faith that is given them of God.

The *Christ theme*, my beloved friends, did not begin with the manger of Bethlehem nor yet with the annunciation of the angel Gabriel, who came to announce the birth of God's Christ. Long centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem, the prophets foretold the coming of Him who was to be the Redeemer of Israel and the Savior of the world. "Behold My servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." **Isa. 42:1-4**. With many such prophecies did the Spirit speak of the coming of the Just One, who was to redeem His people from their sin and make so great an atonement before God that all the world would be reconciled unto Him.

It is not our place here to search out or unfold the many ways the Old Testament spoke of the coming of God's Christ, but an earnest searcher may find Him in practically every chapter of the Old Testament if we look for Him in type, prefigure, allegory or prophesy. So sure is this truth that many generations of Israel earnestly looked for the coming of the Messiah. When Herod questioned them as to where the Christ-child should be born, they replied without the slightest hesitation that He should be born in Bethlehem of **Judea**, and were quick to note the prophecy of Micah, "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel." **Matt. 2:6**. We stated that the Christ theme did not begin at Bethlehem. The Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Just One can be numbered in the hundreds and I would say, without attempting a count, that the types and allegories foreshadowing the coming of Christ far outnumbered the prophecies. Many and varied as were the prophecies that foretold the coming of the Just One, it is true that all prophecies which concerned His coming as the despised and rejected Savior were fulfilled to the letter when He came the first time. Other Old Testament prophecies concerning the glory of His coming kingdom must await that wonderful day when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. 2 Thess. 1:10.

Having settled in our minds that the Christ theme did not begin at Bethlehem, I propose to show that *it did not end there either*. The *completeness* of God's glorious Christ must of necessity be the central theme of the whole Bible and the hope of all creation, for it is *in Him* that *all fullness* must eventually dwell. By God's Christ peace has been made through the blood which was shed upon the cross, as Paul clearly stated: "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile *all things* unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime *alienated* and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the *body of His flesh* through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight." **Col. 1:20-22**.

As the writings of the New Testament progress, we see a theme unfold before our wondering eyes, which in the strictest sense can only be a *New Testament* truth. That blessed theme, which angels desire to look into, is the truth concerning a *mystical body*, which God is now forming. The sacred scriptures bear witness that this mystical body is *the body of Christ*. *The true church* is the *ecclesia*. The *ecclesia* consists of the *called out ones*. These holy saints are those whom Christ has called *out* of sin, *out* of the world, *out* of the world's church systems, and completely *out of Babylon*. They stand before God in the end of the age as a mystical company that has not only been called *out* of the world, but called *unto* Christ. The true church (not the false one) is the mystical body of Christ. Scripture after scripture unfolds, adds to and builds up that sacred truth. Thus Paul distinctly writes, "By (in) *one Spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*." We do not make our entrance into this glorious realm by signing a membership card or by a handshake at the end of an evangelistic meeting. We come through the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." If we do not come in by this door, we do not come in at all. Many tens of thousands of so-called conversions are nothing more than human reformations. There has been no repentance before God and no faith toward Jesus Christ and there has been

no entrance of the Holy Spirit to implant the *Christ seed* within. I greatly fear that a large portion of the revivals today are revivals only in name. The main theme is not repentance toward God and faith toward Christ, but how much more money is needed to carry on the ministry of the exalted preacher in the midst.

CHRIST IN THE BELIEVER

When a man repents and turns to God, the Spirit of Christ comes into that man. *Christ in you* is the hope of glory. With all the holy awe, the reverence and fear that I feel in my soul, I aver that, when anyone comes to Christ in repentance, *the Christ seed* is as truly planted within his spirit as the Christ seed was implanted within the womb of the blessed virgin in the long ago. If Christ be in you, then, though the body is still dead because of original sin, the *spirit* has become alive because of righteousness, that is, the righteousness of Christ. And the day will come, when the work is complete, that the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead will also make alive your mortal body, even as it is written: "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15:53-54.**

How wonderful it is that these tremendous and almost incredible statements concerning Christ and His body were made by men like Paul and are not doctrines that originated with me! I am convinced that it took grace on the part of Paul to unfold the unspeakable things which man is not worthy to utter. Things, which cannot be grasped by the natural mind, must be revealed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore Paul, unfolding them plainly, states, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." **Rom. 12:3.** He said that, my friends, because he knew the profound statements that were to follow and he knew that, unless there was a spirit of humility and reverence, the hearers would never understand.

Paul then continued: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." **Rom. 12:4, 5.** There is no passage in the New Testament more powerful than this as it concerns God's Christ, for in this passage it is shown beyond doubt that just as the human body is a body of many members so also God's Christ is a body of many members. But the enormous significance of these words is magnified when we grasp the truth that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God, born in the manger, crucified, risen and ascended to heaven, is Himself the head of the Christ body. **Col. 1:18.**

All natural things have spiritual counterparts and spiritual meanings. Everything God does follows a distinct pattern and every natural pattern has a corresponding spiritual one. Thus we plainly observe that every man consists of two things in particular - a head and a body. If one had only a head, he would be incomplete and could not endure. If he had only a body and no head, he would be incomplete and useless. Therefore to make a complete man there must be both the head and the body and the two must be joined inseparably together into one glorious being. Now when a child is born, the head is born first. Then follows the body with all its many members — the shoulders, the arms, the torso, the legs, and finally the feet. The feet are born last and also the quickest and easiest, but there is neither fullness nor completeness until the head and the body stand complete and entire as one.

Take the shoes from off your feet, O saint of God, for the ground on which we stand is holy. Put away all lightness and foolishness that with heads bowed down and hearts uplifted in worship God's Holy Spirit may reveal how the *head*, which came forth from the womb almost two thousand years ago, and the *body*, which has been in preparation ever since the day of Pentecost, is indeed but *one Christ*. Without that blessed body which through the ages He has been preparing in secret in the lowest parts of the earth (**Psa. 139:15**), God's Christ would be incomplete. This was clearly shown by Paul when he said, "(God) hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head overall things to the church, which is His body, the fullness (completeness) of Him that filleth all in all:" **Eph. 1:22, 23.**

The translation of this passage by **Weymouth** is even more enlightening. It reads as follows: "God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and *supreme Head of the church, which is His body,*

the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." Thus Paul definitely shows that the *body of Christ is the completeness of God's Christ*. For this reason I said above that the Christ theme did not end at Bethlehem. There the revelation of the head was given, but the body of that same Christ has been developing throughout the entire church age that God's glorious Christ may stand complete at the end of this age, not as Christ and the Bride as so many suppose, but as Christ the head and Christ the body, the male, *the man*, Jesus the head, with all His many brethren, the body. Jesus was *the first born of many brethren* (Rom. 8:29), or as Weymouth puts it, "the first born of a *vast family of sons*," the sons of God, the joint heirs with Christ. It is Christ the head and Christ the body that forms the completeness of Christ, the fullness of Him that *filleth* all in all. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Such was the heavenly spectacle that John beheld when he was on lonely *Patmos* and the heavens were opened to him.

We miss so much vital truth by our careless scanning of the Bible. It may be beneficial at times to read the scripture as a narrative, but there are times when we must search out its hidden meaning by the help of that blessed Holy Spirit who has been sent by the Father to guide us into all truth. No book ever written even remotely compares to the Bible. Its burning message of truth reaches and arrests men on whatsoever level they dwell. As our understanding rises, so rises its message of truth. The things concerning the outer court are understood by those who dwell therein. The wonderful communion of the holy place is enjoyed by those who dwell within its holy place and they desire no more to walk without. But the supernal glories of the holy of holies belongs to him who in garments of glory and beauty treads its holy sanctuary. The *"unspeakable things"* that belong to the third heaven cannot be uttered or expressed to those who dwell in a lower realm. For this reason Paul said, "*I knew a man in Christ (please note, in Christ) above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man . . . how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*" **2 Cor. 12:2-4.**

You have possibly noticed that, when Peter, James and John were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, they, too, saw unspeakable things, which were *unlawful to* be uttered. That is evidently the reason Jesus warned them never to mention the experience until He was risen from the dead. No man can receive the message of the transfiguration until he is first risen with Christ in regeneration, and even then his understanding is very limited. The natural man *receiveth* not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*. When the Holy Spirit was sent into the world to fill the hearts and lives of all who believe, the heavenly promise was given, "**He will guide you into all truth.**" **John 16:13.** And again, "**He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.**" **John 16:14.**

To the natural man the Bible is a foolish book, the reason being that the book is spiritual while he is carnal. The carnal man cannot understand the things of the Spirit. Much less can he receive them. We must carry this point a step farther, however, for the same principle that applies to the carnal man applies also to the carnal Christian who has been willing to accept as final truth the ideas taught him from the beginning, but who has been unwilling to ask the Lord to reveal the *unsearchable riches of Christ*. Let us pay heed to the word *unsearchable*. It should be clear that, if these riches are unsearchable, then there remains no possibility of our discovering them by study, by schools of learning, by preaching or any other way. Our only hope of discovering them is to come before God as an empty, undone vessel, a literal know-nothing, seeking that the Holy Spirit *would receive of Christ and show them unto us*. John 16:14. He who comes to God in such a manner as this will sooner or later find heaven opening to him, perhaps only a tiny break in the clouds at first, but as light is received and walked in, the murky clouds race off in crowds, the sun shines ever more brightly from his sea of glory and the path of the just becomes as the shining light that shineth more and more until the day is full.

Ah, my brother and my sister, if you would know God and see the glory He has prepared for those that love Him, you must void yourself of earthly learning. You will find yourself unlearning a thousand things you once were sure you knew. Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up, for "we know nothing yet as we ought to know, but if any man *love God*, the same is known *of Him*"

With these thoughts filling our hearts perhaps we can approach with unshod feet the heavenly wonders John saw that day on lonely *Patmos*, where he had been exiled for preaching things which carnal men can never understand. He begins his narrative by saying, "*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.*" **Rev. 1:10.** I may be

wrong, but I do not think John was referring to Saturday or Sunday when he spoke of the Lord's day. Though the vision probably occurred on one of those days, it matters little, but John was in the Spirit, and in spirit he was carried beyond the day of grace to the day of the Lord. There he saw God's plan unfolding as no saint had ever seen before. In spirit he stood at the end of this age of grace to see with wondering eyes the *mystery of Christ in completeness*. His inspired vision beheld the fulfillment of the words, "**Behold I and the children which God hath given Me.**" **Heb. 2:13**. For two thousand years of grace the purpose of God had gone irresistibly forward. The temple "not made with hands" had been rising to form an habitation for God in the Spirit. Through the crucible of suffering and the scourging which every son receiveth God had prepared Himself a vast family of sons that the scripture might be fulfilled which is written, "**That He might be the first born among many brethren.**" **Rom. 8:29**. That is to say, that Jesus, the first born and oldest Son of God, might be the head of that vast family of younger sons who were to be revealed in the extremity of the age as the body of God's Son. Christ the head and Christ the body form one glorious Christ, "**for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.**" **Cor. 12:12**. "**For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**" **Rom. 12:4, 5**. Hallelujah, my brethren! Is he not teaching us that God's Christ does not consist of *one member, but many!* The Spirit is revealing that the *fullness and completeness* of Christ can only be seen when the head and the body are together, for it is written, "**In one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.**" **1 Cor. 12:13**. We stated before that the Christ theme did not begin in Bethlehem, No! No! The revelation of the coming Christ was given in the Old Testament scriptures, the head of the body appeared at Bethlehem, but the *fullness of Christ* - I mean the head with the body - does not appear until the end of this age, and surely a blind man can see that the end of this age is upon us. At this very moment the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the adoption - that is, the sonship - and this will be complete at the time of the resurrection, which will make the redemption of the body complete.

When John on the great day of revelation heard the awe inspiring words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," he turned to see who was speaking and, being turned, he saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks one *like unto the Son of man*. **Rev. 1:13**. How inadequate and unworthy I feel to even attempt to explain such a scene as this, much less to expound the awesome words, "I am the first and the last." John did not say he saw *the Son of man*, the Jesus with whom he was so familiar and upon whose bosom he had leaned, but he said, "I saw one *like unto the Son of man*." You have surely read these words: "**We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**" **John 3:2**. The voice of the glorious Alpha and Omega was to John the sound of many waters. Waters in scripture signify people and tongues and nations. **Rev. 17:15**. The sound as of many waters indicates beyond doubt that *the one like unto the Son of man* was not *one*, but *many*. It was one in the sense that the body was one. It was many in the sense that the body has many members, for *as the body is one but has many members, so also is Christ*. **1 Cor. 12:12**. John was seeing both the Alpha, who appeared as the head two thousand years ago, and the Omega, the body that appears at the end of the age. The Alpha and the Omega are one even as the many letters of the alphabet form *one* alphabet or as the many members of the body form *one* body. The appearance of that body, now joined to the head, is *one like unto the Son of man*.

Words are helpless, hopeless and inadequate when necessity demands that we explain the things of the Spirit. In spirit we see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and understand the incomprehensible. What man knoweth the things of God save the Spirit of God that is in him? How therefore can we hope to explain with human words what we see in the Spirit? But blessed are your eyes, *for they see*, and your ears, *for they hear*.

My brethren, I see the fullness of Christ, not as He appeared at Bethlehem, nor even as He appeared at the resurrection, but the fullness of Christ as He appears at the end of the age when the body is resurrected and Christ the head and Christ the body stand together, filling *all things*, the head as white as wool, the eyes a flame of fire, the body clothed with a garment down to the foot, a golden girdle about the breast, and the feet - the glorious feet which we the saints of the twentieth century are - the last to be born, appearing as brass that is burned and purified in a furnace of fire. Never before had any man seen the things John saw as he was in the Spirit that day. It was the fullness of God's Christ which he beheld, the wonder which centuries before holy angels had desired to look into. It was the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself, the head and the body together, the fullness of God's wonderful Christ.

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit doth rejoice in God, my Savior, and my voice is lifted up on high to sing with David, the prophet of the Lord, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."

Psa. 8:3-6. And Paul the apostle, taking up the theme centuries later when the Christ vision was more nearly complete, continued: "It is not to angels that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of which we speak. But, as we know, a psalmist has exclaimed, How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him, and set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put *everything* in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him. But *we do see Him* who was made for a little while lower than the angels - even Jesus - because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace He might taste death for every man. For it is fitting that He for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing *many sons to glory*: should perfect by suffering the Prince Leader of their salvation. For both He who sanctifies and those whom He is sanctifying have *all one Father*; and for this reason He is not ashamed to speak of them as *His brothers*; as when He says: 'I will proclaim Thy name to my brothers; In the midst of the congregation I will hymn Thy praises' (**Psa. 22:22**); and again, 'I will be one whose trust reposes in God' (Psa. 18: 2; Isa. 12:2); and again, 'Here am I, and here are the children (sons) God has given Me' (**Isa. 8:18**);" Heb. 2: 5-13. Weymouth.

I exhort all who hear these truths to earnestly look to God for wisdom, light, and understanding. What I have spoken is beyond the scope of the natural mind. How can human mind comprehend the truth that "Christ is in you?" To the natural mind such truth may even sound childish and silly, yet the Holy Spirit will reveal its depths to those who ask Him, diligently searching out the truth and awaiting His instruction. But we shall go much farther than this by saying that, great as is the truth of "*Christ in you*" and glorious beyond the scope of all but the spiritual mind, the truth that *you are "in Christ"* is fathomless in its depths and lofty beyond the highest eminence. If "*Christ in man*" is the *hope* of glory, as the scripture says it is (Col. 1:27), then *man in Christ* must certainly be the *glory*. In Christ! In Christ! Think of the glory of the expression! "God was *in Christ*" the word declares. And now - mystery of mysteries - He is saying that His people are also *in Christ*. Then we are told, "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,*" and now "*if any man be in Christ he is a new creation.*" **2 Cor. 5:17**. Certainly he must be a new creation, for he has entered the realm where God dwells. No longer is he of the earth earthy, but one spirit with the Lord from heaven. Herein is the prayer of Jesus fulfilled, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." John 17:23. This oneness is no unity of doctrine or belief as the church system would have us think, but individual members baptized into one body and that body *the body of Christ*.

In the beginning of the present age God manifested *His first Son*, the oldest and most illustrious son and head of His glorious Christ. But in the extremity of the age, when the dead *in Christ* shall rise, He will manifest the fullness of His Christ, the illustrious head and the glorious body together. This is the temple of the Lord, the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is no wonder that John, when he beheld this wonderful sight, fell down as a dead man. Even the thought of its glory slays us. The old creation dies within. The **Adamic** nature is reckoned as dead and the carnal mind is recognized as an enemy of God. The spirit takes wings to join in the voice that is as the sound of many waters. To the listening ears of the beloved John the voice of the one like unto the Son of man was as the voice of many, and had his eyes been able to penetrate the more excellent glory that surrounded the heavenly scene, I am sure he would have observed that this was not *one Son of man*, but a vast multitude of sons. The body is one, *but has many members*, and all the members of that body, being *many*, are *one body*; so also is *Christ*. Elect of God, can you not see it? Not Adam as he was at the *first*, but Adam as he is at *last*. Not the Son of man as He was at *first*, but the Son of man as He is at *last*. For thus **saith** the Lord, "I am the first and the last; I am the beginning and the end; I am the Alpha and the Omega." This is God's glorious Christ. This is the bridegroom for whom the bride will be prepared in the millennial age.

This is He who must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet and who, when *all things* are subdued under Him, will Himself deliver up the kingdom to God, the Father, that *God* may be all and in all.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive but every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." **1 Cor. 15:22-25.**

Christ filleth all in all. Eph. 1:23. He filleth the universe with Himself. (Weymouth). If our eyes could now be opened to see the glory of the fullness of God's Christ, I believe we would see a form like unto the Son of man, reaching from earth to heaven, and should we come near to look more closely, we would see that every cell in that enormous body is an individual in-Christed saint - many members of one body and one Christ, for as the body is one and has many members, so also is Christ. It is with trepidation and awe that I use the word in-Christed, but use it I must, for we have become members of God's Christ, of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

A WORD TO THE WISE

Paul the apostle taught us to suffer the word of exhortation. Heb. 13: 22. None of us, it seems, ever attains the place where we no longer need to be exhorted. We are all *creatures of habit*, so much so that we are inclined to tread and retread our familiar paths, journeying from year to year and decade-to-decade in the ever deepening ruts of our tradition, wearing them ever deeper as the years go by. But the path of the just is *not a rut*; neither is it a well-paved highway over which millions pass day by day on their journey heavenward. The path of the just is not a road at all, but a path that leads out into territory where few feet have ever trod. The path of the just is a path over which most Christians refuse to walk. They much prefer the well-traveled roads of traditional religion. They feel secure where the crowd is and they enjoy the friendship and excitement that goes on all about them. Century after century Christians have walked in traditional paths, never venturing to go beyond the fringes of their realm or to cross the boundaries that have been set for them by others. They love to feel that there is a fence around them and they feel sure that, if they abide within its perimeter, they will be safe and all will be well.

While this type of traditionalism may seem well and good to the majority of believers, I think even the most cautious individual will agree that the scripture plainly speaks of realms which "eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, neither have entered the heart of man." Over and over God's word sets forth *mysteries* that must be explored. The kingdom of God is a foremost mystery. The more its mystery is brought into the light of prayer and the word of God, the more glorious it appears, but one of our first discoveries will be that the kingdom of God is an *unfolding mystery*, - and we must affirm here and now that *all mysteries* are mysteries that *unfold* gradually, carefully and wonderfully as the days and years go by. So it is with the mystery of Christ, the mystery of Christ in you, the mystery of the resurrection, the mystery of the body of Christ, the mystery of the bride. At first sight they are like hard little seeds, lying hard and dry before the planting, perhaps the seed of a flower, a vegetable, a fruit tree, a mighty oak, or a noxious weed. We hold the tiny seed of a flower in our hand. It may be the seed of a rose, a pansy, or any one of a thousand exotic flowers, but we do not know what manner of plant will come forth from this tiny brown thing that lies so dry and dead before our eyes. We cannot see its magnificent beauty nor can we touch its fragile petals or smell the fragrance of its perfume, but they are there. All their glorious splendor will unfold as the days or years pass by.

The hard little seed must first be planted in the ground. It must undergo a form of death and resurrection. It must be softened by the moisture, warmed by the sun, and nourished by the husbandman until it appears a thing of beauty and fragrance upon the earth. Surely one unlearned would be inclined to say that this flower of such great beauty could not have sprung from a thing so insignificant as a seed. But spring from a seed it did, and if you will look closely, you will now see that it, too, has borne seed, ready to reproduce itself in another plant in another day. How hard it is to understand that the lifeless little brown acorn contains in itself all the glory of the towering oak tree! Yet this is a thing of truth and fact. Not one element of that mighty tree which towers toward the sky was missing in the little seed that fell into the ground and died.

Not only is this true in the realm of trees and plants; it is also true that the microscopic seed of man contains in itself all the elements of the man that shall be, even to the coloring of the eyes and the shade of the skin. These things are all great mysteries and no scientific mind on earth can understand them. Some will make a feeble attempt to *explain* them, but *understand* them they cannot.

If the mystery of natural things can be so great, how much greater must be the mystery of spiritual things! Jesus once said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" The mystery of Christ, the mystery of the kingdom, the mystery of *Christ in you* and *you in Christ*, and the mystery of godliness — these are all *heavenly things*. No man can understand them by the vain prying of the natural mind, because the natural mind is an *earthly thing*. The scripture teaches us that all spiritual knowledge must come by *revelation*, "for the things of God knoweth *no man*, but God hath revealed them to us *by His Spirit*, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Now, dear saints of God, this brings us to an important thought. I must confess that I have often been distressed by the lack of *understanding* among the people of God. Somehow so many seem to "*miss the point*." At times I have sought God with fasting and prayer for help to make the message as plain as possible, but have found that, while a few people grasp the truth by the Spirit, the majority read the message, lay it aside, and think they know it. In fact they have failed to grasp its truth or to have entered into its precincts. For this reason I exhort you not to throw these messages away, but after you have read them, *lay them aside* and reread them later on. If you reread them six months or year from now, you will be amazed to see how the truth has grown in your heart. You will see and understand many things you did not notice at your first reading. These little *Page* booklets are circulated for no other reason than to bring God's people into a more vital union with Himself and His eternal purpose. Every one is filled with truth and truth that can be grasped and entered into if we wait on God and look for inspiration.

May I exhort all to reread and reconsider the message entitled *The Meaning of the Cross*, March, 1968. This message describes vividly how, before the world began, God the Father took all *mankind* and placed them in Christ Jesus, His Son and, having done this, *He crucified Him*. The message goes on to show from this foundation the experience of the believer the moment *he sees by faith what God has done*, and the moment he *sees* that he is *crucified with Christ*, because God placed *him* in Christ and then crucified *Him*, then he reckons himself *dead to sin* and *alive unto God*.

I make a special point of this because it has been a distress to me to find people still indulging in the old fruitless war of trying to overcome the carnal nature, trying to get the victory over the *old man*, trying to *suppress* carnality. My brethren, the moment you see by faith that our old man *is crucified with Him*, your battles are over. "*Knowing this*," Paul wrote, "*that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" **Rom. 6:6**. I long to see God's people living in this victorious realm, for why need you struggle to crucify that which has already hung on the cross of Christ? I exhort you to *reread* this special number. If you do not have it in your possession, we can supply it free of charge.

I trust from month to month to be able to give a few words of exhortation concerning the writings. Even the subject of this present number, which points out our identification with Christ, is so easy to miss and fail to grasp. God's people must learn to *live and act in vital union with Christ*, because God has made us members of Him. Let us not live as the world lives or even as ordinary Christians live, but let us *grow up into Christ, who is the head* and "from whom the whole body, fitly framed together, *groweth* up to an holy temple in the Lord." We are not to live in chambering and *wantonness*, or in envy, or in strife, or in pride and foolishness. We are not to promote the Babylon system or rejoice in its works, but let us *consider Him and follow Him*. Let us *lay aside* every weight and the sins that so easily beset us and let us *run with patience* the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Let us endure the cross and despise the shame that we, too, may sit with Him in His glory. Let us deliberately "*lay aside every weight*" while we diligently "*lay hold on life*", our eternal joy and crown.

CHAPTER THREE THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM

"What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11.** It would be impossible for the creatures of the animal world to comprehend the things of the human world because these two realms are separated the one from the other by an impassable gulf over which neither creation can pass. Even so the things of God can no man know because the realm of God is as high above the human realm as heaven is high above the earth. Though we are so stranded and limited in our understanding of Him, and a great gulf lies between us, that gulf is only impassable to those who desire to live in the realm of the flesh and of the carnal mind. The gulf is not impassable to those who seek to live in the realm of the Spirit, for "*we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God:*" **1 Cor. 2:12.**

Again it is written, "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*" **1 Cor. 2:9, 10** Our faith must never stand on the *wisdom of men*. If we allow ourselves to stand upon such an unsure foundation as that, then we have no faith at all, or what we have is groundless and fruitless. The wisdom, which we speak, is not the wisdom of men. Faith cannot be built upon that. The wisdom, which we speak is the wisdom of God, a wisdom which none of the princes of this world ever knew. It is God's intention to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Therefore, He asks, "*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*" **1 Cor. 1:19, 20.**

When we endeavor to receive the revelation of infinite truth, we are often brought into conflict with that element of human wisdom, which asserts itself within us. It is then above all other times that unbelief raises its ugly head to shout aloud that these things cannot be. The wisdom of this world questions in unbelief, "How can man be one with man? How can saints be joined together in one body? How can they be knit together and bonded together in one?" "It is impossible," the flesh declares in unbelief. "Such a thing is contrary to reason and contrary to nature and opposed to all wisdom." Since, then, they cannot believe that man can be joined together in perfect unity, how much less can their minds believe that God Himself can become one with man and men become members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, of His Spirit, and of His mind! How can man, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, be made to drink of the Spirit of God and live by Him? "The Bible sounds foolish," unbelievers have told me, and so it does to some, but has not the Lord Himself declared this very fact to be so when He says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they *axe foolishness unto him*; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Then again it is stated for all of us to hear that "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God." David, pondering the wisdom of God, wrote, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." No, indeed! We cannot attain, for man himself is incapable of finding the way. Better far that we quickly abandon our human efforts lest we sink into the mire of unbelief.

It is when we reach the place where we willingly abandon all our human struggles, human efforts, and human dependencies, casting ourselves upon Jesus Christ who is the truth, the light, and the way, that we hear the Master saying, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but He shall receive of Mine, and show them unto you." That is the method by which the Father of lights reveals the hidden things of God to the human heart. That is how the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen by spiritual men, and secrets kept hidden from ages and generations are revealed unto us by the Holy Ghost.

No man who ever lived has fully grasped the completeness and the greatness of the work of reconciliation which God wrought in Christ when He made peace between man and God and brought us nigh by the blood that was shed on the cross. By the shedding of that blood He has reconciled *all things* unto Himself, whether they be things in heaven, or things in earth, and you who were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds, yet now has He reconciled and brought you nigh unto God. See Col. 1:20-22.

Faith is manifest in utter confidence in that which God has accomplished. Faith is not the product of the human heart, for it is written: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*" **Eph. 2:8.** Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. When the spirit hears what God says, then

faith grasps the lifeline that is anchored in Him who is within the veil, and we are lifted up into His realm. Only by revelation can we know Him and grasp the things He has to say. When the light of the Holy Spirit shines in, the mists that long have hung like a cloud over our minds, obscuring the glory of the celestial hills, are cleared away. Then the things, which were once unseen become clearly visible and the mysteries, which in time past baffled the mind, are unfolded and made plain. That which once was seen through a glass darkly is now seen face to face, and that which once was known only in part is now known as we are known.

Many times during my life I have had the joy of driving through the magnificent Canadian Rockies. The sight of their rugged, immovable grandeur has filled my soul with reverence, awe and wonder until I have marveled at the omnipotence and wisdom of God and wondered what power could have placed them there. On one of these occasions I was accompanied by a brother who had never driven through the mountains before and to my great disappointment almost the whole drive was shrouded in rain and mist. Mile after mile we journeyed and nothing could be seen except the black surface of the road upon which we drove, but the brother by my side drove merrily along, completely oblivious to the magnificence of the shrouded glory all about him, never dreaming that the mists were hiding some of the grandest scenery in all the world. As we drove along, he noticed I had grown quite quiet and, turning to me with a puzzled look, he said, "You don't enjoy this, do you?" "Well, no," I replied, "I don't, because those mists are hiding such beautiful scenery from us." Mankind in his unbelief goes along through life just like that, happy and content to hear the humming wheels on the hard surface of the road, never knowing at all that the mists of the natural mind are obscuring glories such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. Once the Spirit of God has parted the veil and the spiritual eye has beheld that which lies within, there can be no turning back. Neither can our eyes ever be content with the vain visions of earth, nor our ears satisfied with the discordant note of its songs.

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy.
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy.
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair;
Sorrow and death may not enter there.
Time hath not breathed on its fadeless bloom;
Far beyond the cloud and beyond the tomb,
It is there, my child, it is there."

Beautiful are these sacred words my mother sang to me when I was too small to fully grasp the beauty of their meaning, but since the Holy Spirit has come, I have found that even in this present world it is possible to stand on some spiritual **Pisgah** as Moses did and view the glory of the promised land from Gilead unto the palm trees of **Zoar**, or stand on some mount of transfiguration with Christ, as the disciples did, to behold in miniature the glory of the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

"There is a wisdom that may only be uttered among the mature - a wisdom, however, not deriving from the present age nor from the powers who are in control of this age, though their days are numbered. **We** speak God's wisdom *in a mystery* - that hidden wisdom which, before the world began, God purposed for our glory; a wisdom which not one of the powers who control the present age have learned, for if they had learned it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." **1 Cor. 2:6-8** (Weymouth). "As therefore you have received Christ, even Jesus our Lord, *live and act in vital union with him*; having the roots of your being firmly planted in Him, and continually building yourselves up in Him, and always being increasingly confirmed in the faith as you were taught it, and abounding in it with thanksgiving." **Col. 2:6, 7**. Weymouth.

My great concern as I unfold these truths is that readers and believers will fail to grasp them by the living faith of God. I am concerned and afraid that many who read will lay the book down or throw it away and forget to walk in the light that has been shed upon their path even as a man looks at his face in a mirror and walks away, forgetting what manner of man he is. The truth concerning the Christ body and our identity with Him is not one to be read with a sigh and then laid aside while we watch a football game, a sex scene, or a murder on the boob tube, but if we want to make heavenly treasures our eternal prize, we must cast our earthly garments from us and *run with patience* the race that is set before us. We must *lay aside every weight* and *every besetting sin*. We must *put off* all filthy communication, together with anger, wrath, envy, and every form of

irreverence and blasphemy, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him set us an example in that He *endured the cross, despised the shame*, and is now set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. We have no time to play church or play religion and we have no time to lose. Great tribulation has already settled down upon the earth, and I shall be surprised indeed if this decade passes away before the kingdom of God will come. The recession we are in will probably develop into a depression. The depression will bring a war, which will end with the battle of Armageddon, and that battle will end with the coming of Christ with His saints to put down all rule and authority. "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even forever and ever." **Dan. 7:18.** "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that saints possessed the kingdom. . . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." **Dan. 7:22, 27.**

I exhort, therefore, that prayers, intercessions, fastings, readings be made in our devotion toward God and that in all fastings and prayers the *mind of Christ* should be earnestly coveted and sought. We have no need to be ignorant concerning the things that are coming upon the earth, but we remain in ignorance if we continue as so many do - seeking God in our spare time while devoting our time and energy to the golden god of this age, which golden god men earnestly seek because gold alone of all gods will purchase things that can be consumed upon our flesh.

The more I read the book of Colossians, the more enthralled I become with its message. It is so far reaching in that it clearly shows that "God *hath reconciled all things* unto Himself." The inspired writer then goes on to show how we can be delivered here and now from the flesh and every evil work, pointing out in so many remarkable ways our *total identification* with the Lord Jesus Christ. It tells us how to *set our affections* on things above and not on things of the earth and how we can identify ourselves with Christ in *death*, in *resurrection* and *ascension*. If Christians would *lay aside* their seeking of earthly gain, would lay aside their gossip and foolishness, would throw their televisions to the moles and the bats, turn their eyes away from the vile scenes of earth and begin looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, they would not know themselves in a year's time. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved and, being saved by His grace, will be pointed to a cross - his own - which he must take up to follow Christ, joining in heart and spirit that great generation of crucified men who follow the footsteps of their Lord.

I walked one day along a country road,
And there a stranger journeyed, too,
Bent low beneath the burden of His load.
It was a cross, a cross, I knew.

I cried, "Lord Jesus," and He spoke my name;
I saw His hands all bruised and torn.
I stooped to kiss away the marks of shame,
The shame for me that He had borne.

"Take up thy cross and follow me,"
I heard the blessed Saviour call.
How can I make a lesser sacrifice,
When Jesus gave His all?

My cross I'll carry till the crown appears;
The way I journey soon will end,
And God Himself shall wipe away all tears
And friend hold fellowship with friend.

Paul in Colossians explained that peace has been made through *the blood of His cross*, that men who were enemies and aliens have been reconciled to God and to each other that all may be presented *faultless* before

His majesty with exceeding joy. In this book we are told that men who once were enemies have been knit together (Col. 2: 2), or as Weymouth says, *welded together* - welded together into one body and *one Christ*. The knowledge of it makes my ransomed soul sing for joy:

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lord upon His throne!
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own.
Arise, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee;
And crown Him as thy matchless King
For all eternity.

We stated above that every one who has come into Christ is commanded to live and act in *vital union with Him*. Col. 2:6, 7. I remind you that we are speaking specifically to those people who above all others become vitally interested and fully absorbed in every aspect of this glorious mystery. To demonstrate our relationship to the Christ body the apostle seems to exhaust every means at his disposal that the fact of our holy union with Christ might be made clear. Thus, after telling us to walk in *vital communion* with Him, he then exhorts us to become *rooted and built up* in Him (Col. 2:7), and in yet another verse to be *grounded and settled* (1:23). David in one of his psalms sang that he was *like a tree* planted by the rivers of water, whose root would not wither, and therefore he would never be moved. It seems to me to be a very wonderful thing to be on a journey where we *stand* by faith, *walk* by faith, and *run* with patience while at the same time we are being *rooted and grounded* and not moved away from the hope of our calling. Only God Himself could devise such a blessed mystery as that! Wouldn't you agree?

Now this state of being rooted and grounded in Christ and not moved away is a most wonderful thing. On beautiful Vancouver Island in Cathedral Grove there stands a mighty fir tree. It is much more than a thousand years old. It was a flourishing young tree when Alfred the Great reigned on the English throne in A.D. 871. It was still standing there when the Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066. Its roots were becoming more grounded and settled when the Magna Carta was signed in 1215. In 1492 when Columbus was on his way to America, it was stretching its mighty arms to heaven, and if it could have heard the news in 1815, it would have heard of the Battle of Waterloo. It was rooted there while the armies of the North and the South were locked in battle in 1860-65, and today its mighty arms, nourished and built up because it is rooted and grounded, are lifted up to heaven while the rustle of its boughs murmur a ceaseless praise to God on high.

Love sought its shade at eventide
To breathe its earliest vows,
And age was pleased at height of noon
To rest beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs;
The birds sweet music bore.
It stood a glory in itself,
A blessing evermore.

Thus shall they be who as members of Christ's body are *rooted and grounded in Him*. From Him we draw our life as roots draw their food and sustenance from the earth, and it is by the life of Him that we are built up and grow to be a holy temple in the Lord, an habitation for God through the Spirit. The necessity, the benefit and the blessing of thus being rooted and grounded in *the Christ* is beyond estimation or any word of expression. There must come a time in your life, dear saint of God, when you stand rooted and grounded *in Him* even though every other tree in the forest has fallen and been uprooted by the withering storms that beat furiously about you. You must have noticed at times how some of the mightiest trees are actually standing upon great immovable rocks. Here before our eyes a lesson is given whereby we see the saint rooted and grounded firmly to the Rock of Ages, and, being rooted and grounded in Him, we are forever settled, never to be carried away by the winds of doctrine, storms of fate, or whirlwinds of testing. My saintly friend, if you depend on man, you receive only what man can give. If you wait for man to feed you, you forget that he also must be fed. When you

ask others to pray for you, you forget that they, too, have need of prayer, but the man who is grounded and settled and built up in Christ will find the life of God flowing in his own spirit, his soul, and his body, which in truth belong to God.

We are at the hour in history when we will no longer be able to depend upon ourselves, much less on others, for our strength and sustenance. The hour has come when tribulation is sweeping away every refuge of lies. Its turbulent floods are eroding the sandy foundations from beneath our feet. The old dependencies of meetings, forms and ceremonies are at their end. If you have trusted in men for your strength, they will be taken away from you. If you have depended on others for your spiritual bread, they will be removed far from you; and all this will be that through the fires and floods of tribulation the badly soiled garments of the Laodicean age will be cleansed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

The tribulations, which are now gripping the entire earth, are the birth pangs of the kingdom of God. God is calling upon the in-Christed saints to become more firmly rooted and grounded in Him so that amid the coming floods they will not be moved away from the hope of His calling. Long ago David, the man who through the dreadful tempests of life had learned to trust only in God to sustain him, wrote these wonderful words: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." **Psa. 46:1, 2.** Wonderful were the words he spoke and wonderful was the deliverance God gave him, but God has reserved for you and me to see that day when the earth will be removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea. These are the things that are now coming in fury upon the world, and when it is over, every man who has become rooted and grounded in Christ will be standing unmoved - not moved away from the hope of his calling.

Strong and firm through the passing years
I see a rock that stands out on the shore,
A rock of ages, cleft for you and me,
A rock that will endure forevermore.
The raging, tumbling seas of time may roll
Till earth's proud empires crumble and decay,
And Thou alone shalt triumph, Prince of Peace,
When all the storms of life have rolled away.
C.S.P.

It would be of utmost profit for any of us to diligently study the oft repeated scriptural term "*in Christ*" and "*in Him*". The mists and darkness of the age have obscured the meaning of those beautiful phrases from all but a few, but those words - *in Christ* and *in Him* - my saintly friend, have reference to a very special class of people, and that special people are the *in Christ* people. They are the people who are members in *particular* of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We will take a little space here to refresh our minds concerning some of these beautiful statements where the term "*in Christ*" is involved and then we will see that those who bear the designation "*in Christ*" are by no means the ordinary rank and file of believers.

One of the most outstanding texts in which the expression "*in Christ*" is used is **2 Cor. 5:17.** "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The church system has become accustomed to noticing a particular text of scripture without regard to what is taught either before the text or after it. By this careless method men can make the Bible say anything they wish it to say. Many a preacher in our day stands up before a congregation to read a text of scripture, or perhaps half a text, or even one word, then closes his Bible, puts an elastic band around it, and begins to preach his sermon. The truth of the matter is that all he is really doing is using a particular text as a diving board or a launching pad from which to launch his sermon. Preaching from a text is in my opinion the poorest and most juvenile type of preaching that can be imagined.

With this thought in mind we might notice some of the words that precede this text, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Through the whole of the previous four chapters Paul has been building up to a point of

experience which he here calls the *in Christ* experience. In chapter one he begins telling about the trials of the Christian way, showing how through them we are always caused to triumph in Christ. In chapter three he proceeds to talk about the law that ministered death to those who heard it and the coming of the Spirit who changed the **unregenerate** heart which the law could only condemn. He tells how the face of Moses shone when he received the law, which could only minister death, and from this fact he shows how much more glorious the ministration of the Spirit of life must be. He ends the chapter with these profound words of truth: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is (or, where the Spirit is Lord) there is liberty. But we all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Then, speaking of the trials of the way in chapter four, trials which are ordained by God to bring about the fullness of the *in Christ* position, he goes on to say, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Verse 7. From there he speaks of the living faith in these saints, who now know that, if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That house not made with hands, my friends, is really "*My Father's house*," the mystical body of Christ, which is the habitation of God through the Spirit.

It seems to me that the book of 2 Corinthians is a highly spiritual book, pointing us to our goal *in Christ*. In chapter five many things are told us about walking *by faith* rather than by sight, even showing how it is possible for one to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord. It is with all this promise of higher and more exalted experience that he comes to this *in Christ* verse, saying, "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature (creation)." I sincerely believe that the term "*in Christ*" must be applied on different levels of meaning. There is a small sense in which a new believer may be spoken of as in Christ, but he will have years of trial before he will come into the realm of which Paul is speaking here. To me, to be in Christ means much more than to be a mere believer, wonderful as that may be. That Jesus Christ should come into the heart of a repentant and believing sinner is a thing too wonderful to explain. It is something that has to be believed and experienced, but to explain such a heavenly wonder is beyond the ability of teacher, sage, apostle or prophet. An aura of mystery surrounds our being begotten of God, and because it is divine, it is totally beyond human expression. Wonderful as is this regenerating power of the Spirit of Christ within, we must ever remember that this blessed experience is only *the hope* of glory. When Jesus Christ comes into our hearts, this is *not* the end of the matter or the fullness of the *in Christ* experience. It is really only the beginning, as it is written, "**As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.**" **John 1:12.** Our justification before God, our knowledge of sins forgiven, is little more than a blessed *hope* of glory to come. When I speak of the *glory to come*, I do not speak of heaven or even of the kingdom, but the real glory that is to come is our place in *the temple, which is His body*. The sons of God are the body of Christ, the *sonship company*, which is the *body of Christ*.

Christ the head and Christ the body together compose *the fullness of Christ*. Therefore "*Christ in you*", the repentant sinner's experience, is the hope of a greater glory which will be ours if we are refined by much chastening and scourging which every mature son must receive that we may be included in the Christ body. That, to me, is the true meaning of the phrase "*in Christ*". *Christ in us* is the *hope* of glory, but *we in Christ* is the glory, that the excellency of the power may be of Christ and not of us.

I do not wish to appear to be "splitting hairs" nor do I wish to invent doctrines, but to me it is increasingly significant that our Lord began His ministry as Jesus of Nazareth, then He is known to many as Jesus Christ or Jesus, the Christ, but Paul often favors the title, Christ Jesus. "Thou **shalt** call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins," but to see Him as *the Christ* is to see Him as God's anointed, the One tested and prepared to take the government of the kingdom and to reign. There appears to be a progression here, does there not, from Jesus to Jesus Christ to Christ Jesus? And I think the same progression is ordained to take place in the life of every believer from "*Christ in you*", the hope of glory, to that perfect state of "*you in Christ*", which is the glory.

My thought is that we should never use the term "*in Christ*" with lightness as though it were some simple means of salutation, but we should understand rather that to be *in Christ* is the ultimate goal of every Christian. It is the true glory for which we hoped. To be included *in Christ*, to be a true member of *His body*, the *Christ body*, is without doubt the great mystery, the hope and the prize of this present age. The body of Christ is the

temple of the Lord. 1 Cor. 6:19. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2:20-23. It is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is the Father's house of many mansions. *Every member* of the body of Christ is an individual abiding place for God. Each individual member is a mansion in "My Father's house." The body of Christ is a spiritual house, *not made with hands*. It is a spiritual, heavenly creation, *eternal in the heavens*.

I greatly fear that my explanation of the Christ body is very weak and perhaps tends more to mar the glory and beauty of that heavenly mansion than to succeed in describing and displaying it. Nevertheless, the spiritual man will grasp the significance of our position *in Christ* and will discern that to be a member of that holy temple is the prize of the age of grace. Notice Paul's great desire and longing to be in Christ as he wrote these words to the **Philippians**: 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of *Christ Jesus* my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may *win Christ* and be found *in Him* (that is, *in Christ*), not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." **Phil. 3:7-9**. Then, after having expressed his burning desire to be associated with Christ in death and resurrection, he concludes the thought with these significant words: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the *high calling* of God in *Christ Jesus*." **Verse 14**.

To be *in Christ Jesus* is *the high calling of God*. If the Lord has any higher calling than this for the believer, then He has not as yet revealed it. It seems reasonable to believe that if a man of Paul's age and Christian experience was still laying aside every earthly weight and pressing toward the mark, which he speaks of as *in Christ Jesus*, then it must indeed be a very high mark and a very high calling. Because of the gravity of the calling he exhorts us all with these significant words: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." **Verse 15**. The *term perfect* here means *mature*. As many as be mature be thus minded. By *thus minded* he means that we should have the same mind as he had and the same fervent desire to reach the goal in Christ, that we should count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, the Lord, and count every earthly thing as dung that we may win Christ and be found *in Him*... that is, *in Christ*.

We are very near the end of the age. The multitudes who will be saved and cleansed during the great tribulation, which even now casts its shadow all about us, will not be included in the *in Christ* company. The *in Christ* company are those who have in their foreheads the Father's name, but the multitude who will be saved during the great tribulation now developing on the earth will be those who stand before the throne with palms in their hands, a multitude which no man can number of every kindred and tribe and nation who have come out of great tribulation and made their garments white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 7:9-15.

I exhort the saints therefore to lay aside every weight and the sin, which so easily besets them. Begin to reckon the things of this present realm as vile refuse, for this world's fading glory is nothing more than that. Do not set your heart on any prize but this - to be found in Him (in Christ). This attitude of heart demands prayer and fasting. It demands the laying aside of every weight that we, being stripped of all impediments, may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high, henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

No passage of scripture in the New Testament is more capable of revealing our position *in Christ* than the wonderful prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth chapter of John. Notice how in the very heart of His intercession Jesus said, "Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee ..." **John 17:21**. It is one thing for the Father to be *in Him*; it is a thing of greater glory still for Jesus to be *in the Father*. It is the hope of glory that Christ should be *in me*, but it is the glory itself that *I should be in Him*. Jesus considered that for Himself to be in God the Father was *the glory*, the greatest of all glories. This He makes plain in **verses 22, 23** by saying, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; . . . Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." **Verse 24**. And where was that? Why it was *in the Father*, of course. "That they may behold *My glory*, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

To further develop this theme let us notice a few more places where this term is used and see the significance of what is said. First, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are *in Christ Jesus* ... For the law of

the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus* hath made me free from the law of sin and death." **Rom. 8:1, 2.** The book of Romans is a progressive book. In chapter one the Gentile world is condemned. In chapter two the Israelitish world is condemned. In chapter three, justification by faith is introduced, and in chapter four, grace is shown to be entirely without human effort. In chapter five the believer is justified by faith in Christ and in chapter six he is shown his personal identity with Christ in death and resurrection. In chapter seven the justified man makes the distressing discovery that he is possessed of a carnal nature - a nature so contrary to God that it besets and hinders his every effort to walk with God; and though I hesitate to say so, I must confess that the vast majority of Christians, even those who were baptized with the Spirit, stop in the seventh chapter of Romans and never get any farther than that realm where they are continually at war with their carnal nature. To their amazement and chagrin they find that when they would do good, evil is present with them. These are the people who are always trying to overcome their carnality, but never succeed because "trying to overcome" is not God's way of victory over the flesh. So Paul leaves the seventh chapter of Romans with these words: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" With the beginning of chapter eight the revelation of the new life in Christ Jesus is given to the apostle. Therefore he says, "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them who are *in Christ Jesus*... for the law of the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus* has made me free from the law of sin and death."

We are forced to the conclusion, then, that those blessed believers who through faith and identification with Christ in death and resurrection have reached the realm where their lives are continually ordered by the Spirit and have died to self as Christ died to self have reached the *in Christ* realm, and God Himself recognizes them as *in Christ Jesus*. Christ was in Paul long before Paul came to the blessedness of the Rom. 8:1 experience. It is certainly true that as many as are led by the *Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God. *In Christ Jesus* is the realm of *no condemnation*. *In Christ Jesus* is the prize of the *high calling*.

Now secondly, to be *in Christ* signifies that we have reached a place where *carnal divisions* are at an end. *In Christ there are no sects and no denominations*, no Jew, no Gentile, no bond, no free. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in *Christ Jesus*. For as many of you as have been baptized *into Christ* have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in *Christ Jesus*. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." **Gal. 3:26-29.** People who cling to sectarianism miss so much. "I am of Paul, I am of Appolos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ," is the very spirit of sectarianism. To be in bondage to that spirit is to be kept in spiritual infancy. Paul distinctly said, "... For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" **1 Cor. 3:3, 4.** For a Christian to remain in denominations and sects where there is division and strife continually is to condemn himself to spiritual infancy and to render himself quite incapable of partaking of anything stronger than milk. Paul knew this when he said, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." **1 Cor. 3:1.**

Due to the lateness of the hour there is no time to lose. It is time to come out of spiritual Babylon. It is time to come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing that God may be a Father unto us and we may be His sons and daughters. Therefore we must conclude that all who are *in Christ* live in a spiritual realm without and beyond the sects and divisions of our time.

Thirdly, it is the *in Christ* company who are partakers of the first part of the resurrection. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead *in Christ* shall rise first." **1 Thess. 4: 15, 16.** It will not be long now before this greatest event of all ages takes place — the resurrection of the *mystical body of Christ*. The dead *in Christ* shall rise first. The resurrection will certainly include all mankind eventually, "for the hour will come when all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of (aionian) life; and they that have done evil unto (aionian) damnation (destruction)." **John 5: 28, 29.** No event of the past will equal the first resurrection. It was of this resurrection Paul spoke, saying, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised

incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15: 51-53.**

The time of the first resurrection is at the sounding of the *last trumpet*. The sounding of the last trumpet is recorded in **Rev. 11:15**. The sounding of the last trumpet indicates the end of the great tribulation, for at the sounding of this trumpet great voices were heard in heaven saying, "**The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.**" Personally, I do not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. There is every evidence to believe that the tribulation has already begun. There will be a resurrection and the saints, when He comes, will rise from their graves and be caught up to meet Him in the air. They will go out to meet Him and usher Him in in all His glory, that when He comes all the saints may come with Him. The last trumpet is at the end of the tribulation and at its sounding the dead *in Christ* arise.

In Christ the fullness of God's nature dwells embodied, and *in Him* we are made complete. Col. 2:9. Weymouth. Circumcision signifies the *cutting away of the flesh*, and *in Him* we are circumcised. Col. 2:11. Weymouth. *In Him* we are crucified. *In Him* we are buried. *In Him* we are raised from the dead to become a member of Him in resurrection.

"And to you - dead as you once were in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your natural state - He has nevertheless given you life with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions. The bond, with its requirements, which was in force against us and hostile to us, He cancelled and cleared it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And the hostile princes and rulers He stripped off from Himself, and boldly displayed them as His conquests, when by the cross He triumphed over them. Therefore suffer no one to sit in judgment on you as to eating or drinking or with regard to a festival, a new moon, or a Sabbath. These were a shadow of things that were to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." Col. 2:13-17. Weymouth.

The mystery of Christ is the greatest mystery of all the ages, but we are soon to see it unfold. It must surely have been at the sounding of the seventh trumpet that John heard a voice "as a trumpet" talking and the heavenly voices saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." When John turned to see who it was that spoke, he saw one like the Son of man, whose voice was as the sound of many waters. Many waters signify many people, many sons. He fell as a dead man from the glory of what he saw, for this was the fullness of the man Christ Jesus. It was the Christ as He will appear at the end of this age, *Christ the head* and *Christ the body* forming *one Christ*, the Christ of God. Then shall we hear the Savior say, "Here am I and the sons which Thou hast given Me." Amen.

CHAPTER FOUR THE CHRIST BODY . . . SUPREME MYSTERY OF THE AGES

The original purpose of Almighty God, so clearly set forth in the words of **Gen. 1: 26**, "**Let us make man in our image and after our likeness,**" was an intention as immutable and unwavering as the God who spoke it. The truth that God is immutable and with Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17), is not merely a doctrine of scripture but a truth that should be so thoroughly embraced by every child of God that the reality of it grips his spiritual being, enlightening the eyes and giving understanding to the heart. The very fact that God is immutable (unchanging) in all His ways and purposes is just as important as the knowledge that He is *almighty*, or that He is *all wise*, or that He is *omnipresent*. What hope or trust would be lent the believer in times when sorrow and tribulation like sea billows rolled over him, besetting his way with doubt and fear, if he could not look up into the face of a God of love and say from the depths of his troubled being, "Thou art the God of light; with Thee there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Thou changes! not; Thy compassions they fail not. As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be?" The ways of mankind may be as changeable as the moon, but the purposes of God are as constant as the stars. Centuries after the Almighty had made His immutable promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses stood trembling before the burning bush with head bowed in awe. He heard the voice of the Lord proclaiming, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place **whereon** thou **standest** is holy ground." What new revelation could Moses now expect from the lips of the Almighty? We will never guess what this old man of fourscore years must have

wondered in that dreadful but wonderful moment, but if he were expecting something new, he was to be disappointed, because the word that flowed from the lips divine was the now familiar utterance, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." **Exod. 3:5, 6.**

Those words must have been awesome, perhaps even troublesome, because we poor human beings are so changeable in all our ways that we are inclined to forget that He who is immutable never changes. Long years of waiting often make us forget that the Lord never deviates from His original intentions. Man may be tempted to think that God has forgotten His ancient promises, that they are all hopelessly washed up and of no future value, but this is never so. Through decades, through centuries and **millenniums** of time, the voice of God comes ringing like a trumpet in the soul of the believer, "I am the Lord; I change not." *All things* are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the "*the called*", according to His purpose. Moses was a man of like frailties as ourselves, and, apart from the smoking flax of his faith, this bruised reed of a man must have had as good reason as any other man to imagine with sorrow that God had forgotten His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here they were centuries later a great nation of many people, all descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but far removed from the land God had promised them, and, instead of being the heirs of the promised blessing, they were naught but groveling slaves to a cruel nation that oppressed and hated them, day after day performing menial tasks with hard and bitter labor for a people who were enemies of God and strangers to His covenants. Gone were the promises of greatness and glory, and the hope that in their seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed seemed to mock them as idle tales, meet for the ribald songs of the drunken and the taunts of unbelieving taskmasters.

What now would be the message of this dreadful voice in the wilderness, the voice of God, who spoke from the burning bush? What new purpose would be His intention now? Methinks this old man in shepherd's garb did not expect to hear Him say, "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob," but, if he thought the immutable God could forget His promise, he was now awakened to his error. God suffers long and is kind, but He never forgets, and His saints will always find that the dreary wilderness of lingering days and nights that lie between the giving of a promise and the fulfillment thereof are part of the process of fulfilling the promise in the inscrutable way He had planned. Oh, how often I have heard men say "God is through with Israel. They failed, and so God cast them off and started something new." Yet I hear the voice of Paul come ringing o'er the hills of time, crying, "*Hath God cast away His people? God forbid... God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew.*" **Rom. 11:1,2.** Then later in the passage he says, "*If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?*" **Rom. 11:15.** Again in similar words we ask today, "Has God changed His original intention? Have His words divine fallen to the ground to be trampled under the feet of unbelief? Did the immutable One, the almighty Maker of the universe, propose that which He had no power to fulfill when in infinite wisdom His word proclaimed, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion?" Nay, nay, a million times nay! As no jot or tittle shall fail of the law till all is fulfilled, so shall no jot or tittle fail from the promise of Him who is immutable until all is fulfilled.

Open our eyes, O Lord unchanging, that Thy saints may behold as Thou dost behold. Let them stand with Thee in faith atop the lofty mountain of Thine exalted vision that they may ponder the limitless years of Thy unfolding purpose. Let their eyes behold the corn of wheat that fell into the ground to die. Let them understand that, as day comes forth out of darkness, so life springs forth from the realms of death, first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full corn in the ear. Open the eyes of our understanding to see clearly that, before the *full corn* in the ear appears, there must be a seed to fall into the ground and die, for, if it die not, there can be no blade, there can be no ear, nor can the full corn of all mankind be in the ear.

Oh, that saints today would stand with God, who is our light, that through His eyes they might see the ever maturing progress of His unalterable fiat, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness!" Then would they behold the glorious end God had in view and stand no more to weep as mourners do at the grave of a creation whose first appointed step on the path to the image of God was to fall into the ground and die. Too long, too long have men walked in darkness, knowing not that the apparent calamities of Eden were in fact and truth well devised steps proceeding from the mind that is *infinite* that man through the valley of the shadow of death might come to the moment of resurrection when death is swallowed up in life, corruption puts on **incorruption**, and mortality betakes of immortality, - well devised steps, I say, for thus saith the Lord God

omniscient and immutable, "The creature *was made subject* to vanity, *not willingly*, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the *creature itself* also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into *the glorious liberty* of the children of God." Rom. 8:20, 21. Therefore with Paul all who have understanding "reckon that the sufferings of this *present time* are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed, for the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

Look up from thy weeping then and see no more the fast closed tomb of all the sons of the first Adam, a creation that God intended should fall into the ground and die. Yonder, near to Calvary's hill, there is an open tomb from which the *last man Adam* has risen in victory, having forever *abolished death*, bringing to light both light and immortality. 2 Tim. 1:10. He is risen to become *the first fruits of all who slept*. To err is human, and I may be wrong, but deep within me I believe the place where the first man Adam died and was buried is the self same place from which the last man Adam arose from the dead to become *the first fruits* of them that slept.

Four thousand years had passed away ere God in triumph that Deity alone can know proclaimed in a voice of thunder, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Four thousand years with its suffering and death had come and gone, but now at last the *first man* is presented complete *in God's image and after His likeness*. The first man of millions more to follow, as numerous as the stars above, was presented perfect and entire in God's image when the voice of the Father proclaimed the word, "*In Him I am well pleased*." It *pleased the Father* that *in Him* should all fullness dwell, and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to *reconcile all things to Himself*, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

And what shall we say of the dominion God had promised to men in His own image? Had not His lips declared, "Let us give them dominion?" Hear the words of this blessed first Son of God as He in triumph proclaims, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," and with these words He declared that all who would believe on Him should be saved. Men are always talking about *what they were saved "from."* I am inclined to think that Jesus Christ our Lord and God our heavenly Father are more concerned about *what we are saved "to."* Hear then the words of inspiration that fell from the lips of Paul, that man who was pressing forward to obtain the prize of the high calling of God *in Christ Jesus*, and what could that be but sonship?

"In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the *sons of God* coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in *God's purpose* it has been so limited - yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of *created life* will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the *children of God!* It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our *full sonship* in Him. We were saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience." **Rom. 8:18-25.** Phillips Translation.

"In the face of all this, what is there left to say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that did not hesitate to spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all - can we not trust such a God to give us, *with Him*, everything else that we need? Who would dare to accuse us, whom God has chosen? *The judge Himself* has declared us free from sin. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us! Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain or persecution? Can lack of clothes and food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms? Indeed some of us know the truth of that ancient text: For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all things we win an overwhelming victory through Him who has proved His love for us. I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today or what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God's whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord!" **Rom. 8:31-39.** Phillips Translation

THE MYSTERY OF GOD — CHRIST

We love to speak of Jesus Christ the Lord, but, oh, there is so much to be said, and who among us has power to unfold the glorious mystery of Christ? As the great plan of God - "Let us make man in our image" - unfolds, it must unfold in God's own order, first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full corn in the ear. Oh, that God would reveal to every seeking heart this *greatest mystery of all mysteries, the mystery of Christ!* In the long, long process of bringing all creation into the image of God it is God's intention first of all to bring to the fullness of perfection that anointed one, for the anointed one is *the Christ*. Heavenly Father, Thou **knowest** that I speak with reverence almost infinite when I consider that Thy Christ, through whom all the universe will be reconciled, consists of many more than He who was at first proclaimed Thine only begotten Son. Thou hast proclaimed Him to be both *Lord and Christ*, the supreme and lordly head of the body, but unto us who are now coming into "that same image" and likeness Thou hast said, "*Ye are the body of Christ. Ye are members of the Christ, yea, members in particular.*" **1 Cor. 12:27**. Yea, Thou hast said, "*Ye are the fullness, 'the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.'*" **Eph. 1: 23**. Weymouth.

Let us then with a reverence born of the Spirit of God begin to explore these celestial fields, the eyes of our understanding being so enlightened that we may begin to see the extent of the glorious fullness of God's Christ. God's Christ is the *greatest mystery of all the ages*, and *no man can see its sacred glory until God in mercy reveals it unto him*. All education and learning will fail us. Sermons of men will sell us short. Only by the Holy Ghost can the eyes of our understanding behold the mystery and only by that same Spirit of God can we become a part of it.

Christ is the visible representation of the *invisible God*, the first-born of all creation, for in Him was created the universe of things in heaven and on earth, things seen and unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers - all were created and exist through Him. He is before all things, and in and through Him the universe is one harmonious whole. Moreover, He is the *Head of His body, the church*. He is the beginning, *firstborn* from among the dead, in order that He Himself may in all things occupy the foremost place, for it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him. And God purposed through Him to *reconcile the universe* to Himself, making peace through His blood, which was shed upon the cross, to reconcile to Himself through Him, I say, things on earth and things *in heaven*. As the wonderful pattern begins to unfold before the eyes of our understanding, we see with a light that only His Spirit can give that *God's Christ*, when seen in His glorious completeness, consists of both the head and the body together. That first glorious Son, who four thousand years after Adam was owned by the Father as "*My beloved Son* in whom I am well pleased," *is the head*, but that vast family of sons, who through the centuries have been coming into "*that same image*", these are the *body* of that same Christ. God has proclaimed them to be members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones and has made them all to drink into *one Spirit*. Paul has distinctly taught us through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that *by* (in) *one Spirit* are we all baptized into *one body* (the Christ body), for the body is not *one member*, but *many* (1 Cor. 12:13, 14), whether we be Jew or Gentile, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into *one Spirit*; for, as the body is one and has *many members*, and all the members of that *one body*, being many, are *one body*, so also is *Christ*.

There are tremendous depths here, my brethren, for this is the mystery above all mysteries. Our God in these last days is speaking to His elect sons, revealing to them that they are members of *His Christ*, yea, that they are *enchristed*. This is the *mystery* that exceeds all the mysteries of the ages. So great is this mystery that men will accuse me of blasphemy because I proclaim it. Yet it was of this very truth that Paul wrote when He said, "*I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles (nations); which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" **Col. 1: 25-27**.

I pray that you may pause here to request the mercies of heaven that God would give you the spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Him that you may see what glory such a calling entails. For far too long we have lightly used the expression "*in Christ*." We have formed the childish habit of signing our letters "*Yours in Christ*," never realizing what *in Christ* really means. My beloved, to be in Christ means much more than

simply being a Christian. *In Christ*, as used in the Holy Scripture, refers to our being vitally joined to that first born Son, whom God hath made both *Lord and Christ*. As our bodies are joined to our heads, so the enchristed are one with the Christ, because they with Jesus ARE GOD'S CHRIST. The term *in Christ* is used many times in God's word, but the term *Christ in you* is used many times also. Let us think of the depth of the meaning it conveys and no more pass it by as nothing more than a pretty expression. What does it mean to you when the scripture says, "God was *in Christ*?" Why, the fact that God dwelt in Him was what made Him God's Christ! What then are we to conclude since God has said *Christ is in you*? Is it not this indwelling that makes you a member of God's Christ, making you one with the anointed? He is the firstborn of many brethren and those many brethren constitute *the fullness of Christ*. Jesus, the oldest brother, is the head; the *many brethren are the body*, and they (the head and the body) together form *God's Christ*. Indeed it is a great *mystery*. No wonder Paul said it was the greatest of all mysteries! Nor is it any marvel that the all-wise God hid it from ages and generations of men that He might make it known in the last days. Now the mystery is being made manifest to *His saints*, for to them alone God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ in you*. The mystery *Christ in you* is the hope of glory. It is an unspeakable glory for those who are called and chosen and faithful, and upon its certainty rests the hope of the entire creation of things in heaven and things on earth.

Once more we must review the scripture to make sure that we comprehend, at least in part, the import of its truth. It is clear from Paul's words to the Colossians that he feels the tremendous depth of his own teaching. Therefore, with the clearest possible emphasis he declares that the mystery, *Christ in you*, has been completely hidden from all ages and generations of the past and was only in his day beginning to be made manifest to *the saints*. Col. 1:26. This mystery, *Christ in you*, is the beginning of the mystery, *you in Christ*. So profound is this mystery that, though it be understood by the Spirit within, words fail to speak its truth to the mind. The truth that has been hidden for ages and dispensations is this: God is still in this age forming and preparing His Christ. We cannot overemphasize the importance of this truth, "because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by *that man whom He hath ordained...*" **Acts 17:31**. Dare we wonder, then that He with infinite care through ages of time prepares His *Christ* in secret and in *fullness* for the boundless work of the ages to come?

It is with the utmost reverence and with great humility of mind, looking to Jesus Christ with adoring adulation, that I endeavor to make known to God's *elect* that God's *glorious Christ* is not *one*, but *many*. The *fullness of Christ* does not consist of Jesus of Nazareth and Him alone, but of Jesus together with a multitude of *elect sons*, who by His grace are coming into *that same image*. 2 Cor. 3: 18. We have read the scripture, which plainly states that "*as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*" **1 Cor. 12:12**. The apostle here is plainly showing that the individual members of God's *Christ*, though many, form but *one Christ*. This *many membered Christ* is "*that man*" whom God hath chosen and by whom He will *govern* the world in righteousness. Acts 17:31.

It is not uncommon to find that the Lord *speaks* of a multitude as *one*. For example, in **Hosea 11:1** He says, "*When Israel was a child (singular), I loved him (singular), and called My son (Israel) out of Egypt.*" I am aware that this last reference to *My son* is also prophetic and has a definite reference to Jesus Christ, but it also definitely refers to Israel as a nation, whom God here calls *My son*, as the verse following plainly shows. In exactly the same way that we speak of a nation as *one* or of the *church* as *one*, so also is God's Christ, *many membered, yet one Christ* and one body. God would not make mention of *the body of Christ* if the many membered body did not constitute the fullness of His Christ. The human body, which we now possess, is the greatest possible type and picture of *that spiritual organism* which is the *body of Christ*. In this the scripture is very plain, saying with the greatest possible clarity, "*As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*"

That the physical body has many members while it is but one body we may clearly see from the following scientific statement. "Man's body has nine hundred muscles, one thousand miles of blood vessels, three hundred fifty main arteries, one million five hundred thousand sweat glands. The lungs are composed of seven million, seven hundred thousand cells. At seventy years of age the heart has lifted by its throbs five hundred thousand tons of blood. The nervous system has three trillion nerve cells. The blood has thirty million white corpuscles and one hundred million red ones. Each minute in every man's body some one hundred fifty million

radio-active carbon atoms go pop, releasing a total energy of twenty-one million electron volts. The heart beats seventy times per minute, four thousand times per day, thirty-seven million times per year, and two billion times in sixty-five years. It is estimated that, could man build a computer that could do the work of the human brain, a space as large as Rockefeller center would be needed. It would take three lifetimes to wire it, three-quarters of the electrical power of New York City to drive it, and the Hudson River to cool it. Man's brain is most impressive and extremely complex. It contains many more nerve lines than all the telephone lines in the world put together. The electrical signals from two hundred thousand living thermometer cells, a half million pressure sensing cells, three or four million pain sensing cells, plus the signals from the eyes, nose and ears, as well as the areas sensitive to taste and touch, are all routed to the brain. An amazing example of miniaturization, the brain sorts, stores, and acts upon these myriad impulses. Who built this fantastic computer? The answer is *God*:

From the foregoing trivial example, which touches only the minutest function of the many membered, many organed human body and displays in some tiny detail the harmonious workings of the whole, perhaps our hearts can be enlightened to catch a glimpse of the *wonders of that Christ*, whom God through the ages has been bringing to completion. First to be born was Jesus of Nazareth *the Head*, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of wisdom and knowledge of God, and *we*. *God's blessed sons*, born in the extremity of the age and coming into that same image, are the many members, *the body of Christ*. These, *the Head and the body* together, are *God's Christ*.

The things I am saying are hard to write and difficult to utter, because church tradition has dulled our ears that we cannot hear. It has blinded our eyes to truth so that we cannot see with our eyes, nor hear with our ears, nor understand with our hearts, but should one live a thousand years twice told, he could never comprehend these mysteries with the mind, for *great* is the mystery of godliness.

There is but *one body*, and *one Spirit*, and *one hope* of our calling, even as there is *one Lord*, *one faith*, *one baptism*, and *one God* and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in us all. For this reason Jesus, when He ascended up on high, led captivity captive and *gave gifts to men*. He gave apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the building up and edifying of the *Christ body* until we all come to the knowledge of *the Son of God*, unto a perfect man, unto the measure and stature of *the fullness of Christ*. Please read Eph. 4:4-13.

The *fullness of Christ!* What does it mean? What can it mean but that which we are saying - that God through these ages is forming and bringing His Christ to fullness? The Head He completed two thousand years ago when *Christ Jesus* was raised from the dead and exalted to His throne, but the *body*, which is the completeness of Him who filleth all in all, has been coming forth member by member through these ages of time to be declared at last, as Jesus was at first, "*My beloved sons*, in whom I am well pleased."

God's people are greatly hindered from seeing this truth in any fullness because they continually confuse the harlot church system with the *true and mystical* church, which is Christ's body. One need only to mention the word *church* and all eyes immediately turn toward *the system* with all its abominable enormities, its denominations, its sects, its false ministries, its pseudo-gifts and its multitudinous divisions, but, if you will turn your eyes away from this, you will discover *one like the Son of man*, rising from the present disorder, standing tall and glorious in the image of Christ. This is the mystical and elect church in which there has never been a division or a schism. This is the building of God, the *true church*, the *true body*, the house not made with hands. This is the habitation in which God dwells, even as your spirit dwells in you. "*You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit.*" **Eph. 2:20-22.** Weymouth. "*God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.*" **Eph. 1:23.** Weymouth.

You will have noticed that the scripture quoted above is definitely saying that the *body of Christ* is the *completeness of Him*, who fills the universe with Himself. Surely these are ponderous words of truth, clearly

showing that it is the Father's intention to *fill the universe* with His mighty body, which He is now forming, and not only fill it, but rule it as well. When Paul was speaking of these sacred things, he said, "For this reason we also, from the day we first received these tidings, have never ceased to pray for you and to entreat that you may be filled with a clear knowledge of His will, accompanied by thorough *wisdom* and *discernment in spiritual things*; so that your lives may be worthy of the Lord and perfectly pleasing to Him, while you bear fruit in every good work, and increase in the *knowledge of God*. Since His power is so glorious, may you be strengthened with strength of every kind, and be prepared for cheerfully enduring all things with fortitude and patience; and may you give thanks to the Father who has made us fit to receive our share of the *inheritance of the saints in light*." Col. 1: 9-12. Weymouth.

JESUS THE CHRIST

Christ means *the anointed*, and I think it will help us to grasp the depths of this mystery when we understand that *Christ* is not a *name*, but a *title*. The word *Lord* is not a name; it also is a *title*. We are continually concerned with many titles. We speak of *His Worship* the Mayor, *His Lordship* the Judge, Mr. President, Her Majesty the Queen, the Emperor of Japan, General Patton, Field-Marshal Montgomery. These prefixes are not names. They are *titles* and very expressive ones at that. They signify the extent of the office held by the person referred to. Christ is the anointed one. The Greek word *Christos* means *anointed*. The Hebrew word was Messiah, the expected King and Deliverer of the Jews. The title *the Christ* is used eighteen times in the New Testament. These passages are most significant because of the use of the definite article *the* Christ, demonstrating clearly that *Christ* is, indeed, a title, which signifies a special office and ministry in God's great plan. Perhaps the most familiar passage is found in Matt. 16:13-20, in which Jesus asked His disciples, "**Whom do men say that I the Son of man am**, And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art *the Christ*, the Son of the living God." "Thou art *the Christ*," said Peter, and Jesus quickly affirmed that such a revelation of truth could not possibly come by the way of flesh and blood, but only by the inspiration of God. "**Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in heaven.**"

There were many people associated with Jesus during all His life on earth who saw naught in Him but the son of Joseph and Mary. Even some of His disciples did not recognize Him as *the Christ*. Certainly Thomas did not appear to have this knowledge until that night of revelation when Jesus revealed Himself to him, and Thomas, standing aghast at the revelation, cried out in amazement, "**My Lord and my God!**" "**Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ**" Matt. 16:20. Jesus is His name; Christ is His title. The natural man cannot receive any spiritual thing unless that truth is revealed to him by God's Spirit; otherwise it will be trampled underfoot as worthless as readily as swine trample precious gems beneath their feet.

When Jesus was questioned before the high priest, He was asked, "**Art Thou *the Christ*, the Son of the blessed?**" Mark 14:61. Jesus replied, "**I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.**" Verse 62. It will be perfectly clear that, had the question been, "Art Thou Jesus," and He had replied in the affirmative, there would have been no uproar or dissent at all. But the question was not "Art Thou Jesus," but, "Art Thou *Christ*," and the moment Jesus answered in the affirmative He was accused of blasphemy, because the title *Christ* declares that He is the anointed, the Messiah, the Deliverer of Israel and the Savior of the whole world. The high priest was not ignorant of the fact that long ago David prophesied, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies thy footstool," and no doubt he immediately connected the prophecy of David with the words of Jesus, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This statement, though perfectly true in the case of this despised man, would have been blasphemy had it been uttered by anyone else, and the high priest, chained by the darkness of his own carnal mind, could see nothing beyond the outer veil. He saw Jesus only as a man, not as *the Christ* as Peter had seen or as "**my Lord and my God**" as Thomas had done. He, poor blind soul, was doomed to see only as a natural man. It was for this very reason that Jesus in love had prayed for him, together with the others, saying, "Father, forgive them for they *know not* what they do."

Since, then, *the Christ* is a title, signifying His exalted office, we may conclude that the importance of that office is greatly magnified when the appellation *Jesus Christ*, wherein the name *Jesus* is placed before the office, is reversed to read *Christ Jesus*, wherein the title is placed before the name. This occurs at least forty times in the New Testament. Jesus, *the Christ*, the Messiah, the Lord, who Himself on so many occasions preferred the title, *Son of man*, was the first man to come into the image and likeness of God. He is the beginning of the fulfillment of God's earliest declaration, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." **Gen. 1:26**. Furthermore, He who now sits on the right hand of power is the first to fulfill God's decree, "Let us give them dominion." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," Jesus said. **Matt. 28:18**. He is *the beginning*, the first born from among the dead, or, from among the dead ones. Ponder the significance of that statement. "He is the beginning." **Col. 1:18**. Does not a *beginning* definitely tell us that there is much more yet to come? Do not the words *the first born* signify that *all* the dead are to be raised to life through Him to be brought into *that same imaged* "He brightly reflects God's glory and is the exact representation of His being, and upholds the universe by His all-powerful word. After securing man's purification from sin, He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as far superior to the angels as the name He possesses by inheritance is more excellent than theirs." **Heb. 1:3, 4**. Weymouth.

If God's people could comprehend some of the fathomless depths of the first chapter of the book of Hebrews, they would find themselves well on the road to understanding the magnificent glories, which God is preparing for those who love Him. We would see that this Jesus, whom God hath made *both Lord and Christ*, was indeed the *beginning* and *only* the beginning of the fulfillment of the fiat of **Gen. 1:26**, "Let us make man in our image." Jesus is both the *first born* from the dead and He is the first born of all who sleep. He is the first born of *many brothers* who are to share His glory and His image. These even now in their imperfect and insignificant condition He speaks of as the body of Christ and members in particular. 1 Cor. 21: 27. These are the Christ body. He is the head of the body and in all things He shall have the preeminence, yet these are the body of which He is the Head. God through John declared, "As He is, so are we in this world." **1 John 4:17**. "All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons. You did not receive the spirit of slavery again, inspiring terror; but you did receive the spirit of adopted sons - in which spirit we cry 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs too - heirs of God and *coheirs* with Christ; if indeed we share Christ's sufferings in order to share also His glory. Why, the sufferings of the present I deem not worth considering compared with the glory soon to be disclosed to us. All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to futility, not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set free from the thralldom of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation is moaning in the pangs of childbirth until this hour.

And more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste of bliss, yet we ourselves inwardly moan as we wait for *full sonship* in the redemption of our bodies." **Rom. 8:14-23**, Weymouth." "Now we know that for those who love God He makes all things work together for good, for those who are called according to the *divine purpose*. Those whom He has foreknown He has also predestined to *share the likeness of His Son*, that He might be the Eldest in a *vast family* of brothers; and those whom He has predestined He has also called; and those whom He has called He has also acquitted; and those whom He has acquitted He has also glorified." **Rom. 8:28-30**. Weymouth.

These inspired statements become crystal clear once we have apprehended God's true purpose. Nothing can separate us from the love of God and no power in heaven or in earth can let or hinder the eternal will of Him whose intention was in the beginning not only to make man, but to make him *in the image of God*. The steps are very clear - foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and final *glorification, members of His body, the Christ body, members of His flesh and of His bones*. These chosen people have drunk deeply of His Spirit, for it is in *one Spirit* that all the members are united with the body. They are baptized into His body. They are members in particular of *God's Christ*, God's anointed, God's Messiah, by whom God filleth all in all, or, as Weymouth puts it, "God hath appointed Him universal and supreme head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:23**.

We mentioned above how good it would be if God's elect people could comprehend the depths of the first chapter of Hebrews, for if they could but see to what honor and glory God has promoted His first perfected

Son, then they would see to some extent what honor He is preparing to bestow on those other sons who through the centuries have been coming into *that same image* of Christ. Those other sons are members of *His body*, yea, members of that body of which *He is the Head*. The Holy Spirit wishes us to see in the statements of Hebrews, chapter one, that, by displaying the greatness of the first Son, Christ Jesus, He is actually revealing the magnificent glory God has in store for us. If this had not been the case, there would have been no point in Paul's commencing chapter two with the warning, "*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?...*" The *great salvation* he speaks of here is the *hope of sonship* spoken of in chapter one. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation" is not a text for sinners, but a sobering question directed to men and women who have heard the call to sonship and have seen their predestined end in Christ and who are now being called to a *faithfulness far removed from neglect, as it is written: ". . . and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."* **Rev. 17:14.**

Paul further attests to the greatness of our calling to sonship and consequently our call as members of the *Christ body* when in the words of David he asks, "*What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?*" **Heb. 2:6.** "*Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him! and hast set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him (man). But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels - even Jesus - because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace He might taste death for every man.*" **Heb. 2:6-9.** Weymouth.

Why did Paul say we do not as yet see the universe subject to him (man), but we do see *Jesus*? Simply because Jesus Christ is the forerunner, the pioneer, the apostle, the *first Son, the beginning, and the first born* from the dead. He is the first Son to be exalted through the terrible sufferings of the realm of death and, seeing Him, we know that the promise to all others is certain, for it was not of Adam alone of whom God spoke, saying, "*Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give them dominion,*" but the promise was to *all* the sons of men, of whom the first Son, Jesus Christ, is now exalted and has taken His seat at the right hand of power. *We see Jesus* and by seeing Him we know the glory God has in store for those who follow Him just as the first flower of spring is the herald of millions to follow.

To write such things as these often fills my heart with dread. Everywhere and at all times there are foolish persons who seem to be void of any sense of reverence. They do not realize how terrible are the words, "The place whereon thou standest is *holy ground.*" They have not learned that, should any one of us come into the presence of God, we like John would fall down at His feet as dead men. Everywhere I find men and women who seem to brag about the "sonship message." They do not talk in humble tones nor stand in awe and the fear of the Lord, but in a spirit of boasting and pride they toy with the truth of sonship as children toy with things of play. My heart always sinks to the lowest depths when I hear glib talk of "*sonship groups.*" People who talk like that have never yet seen how high a calling sonship is. Some of these little groups even go so far as to speak of themselves as *manifested sons*. They do not know of what they speak nor whereof they affirm. Other presumptuous people have gone so far as to offer courses purporting to teach how to become a manifested Son of God. Let us turn our eyes and our hearts away from all such presumptuous ignorance and pride and with the spirit of humility start *looking unto Jesus who alone is the author and finisher of our faith.*

Let no one believe that the filthy or unclean have any part in any of these things. People who are laden with sex sins, who are unholy and defiled, who are partakers with the world and who fit in with the untoward spirit of the times - all such must come to repentance before they need speak of the things which God has reserved for them that love Him. These are the last days. *Perilous times* encompass the world and fall heavy upon us all. Men are lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful and unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. *From all such we must turn away and have no part with them.*

There are thousands today who are *playing church*, who even profess to be speaking in tongues and to have certain gifts of the Spirit, who profess that they know God, but *in works* they deny Him, being abominable and

disobedient and unto every good work reprobate. The thing above all else that is so sadly lacking in these perilous times is *godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation* not to be repented of. The sorrow of the world only works death. Those who are being cleansed by Christ and made ready for that glorious sonship in Him must separate themselves from the world and all its tinsel glamour as did the first Son, of whom it is written that He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens. Heb. 7:26. Philistines have no place in the house of God; neither has Mammon, the god of wealth, any place in the hearts of God's people. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy into heaviness. Then you will draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.

It should never be forgotten that we, though called, are yet exhorted to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. 2 Pet. 1:10. Let no man rest on his oars, thinking that he can merrily float with the current of the world right into the glory of reigning with Christ. We have a promise to reign with Him, but the promise is, "If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will deny us," that is to say, if we deny Him and refuse to suffer with Him, there will be no place for us to reign. He will deny that to us.

Paul, writing to the Romans, gave five progressive steps, which lead to glorification. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate; ...whom He did predestinate, them He also called; whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29, 30.** These are the five steps - foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. It seems to me that any man can fail at any one of these points. Otherwise why would the Lord have said, "Many are called, but few are chosen?" And why would it be written in Rev. 17:14, "They that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful?"

There is only one sure way to gain an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. Peter tells us of it in his **second epistle, Chapter 1:3-11.** "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the *divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving *all diligence, add to your faith* virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, *give diligence to make your calling and election sure:* for if ye do these things, *ye shall never fall:* for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." With these few words we are exhorted to walk in harmony with Christ Jesus our Lord and to turn aside from the spirit of this evil age in which money has become the god of this world. Money is the god which men worship and adore and which they trust to supply all their needs. Let us who seek first the kingdom of God go on to perfection in Him. Let us strip for this spiritual race and run it with much patience, for it is through faith, patience and endurance that the prize is at last attained.

The appellation, *the Christ*, is used eighteen times in the New Testament. The definite article *the* distinguishes Him as God's anointed and separates Him from all that is false and from those deceivers who will come saying, "I am Christ," by whom many will be deceived. Jesus, who loved the title Son of man, was the first man to come in the image of God. He whom men crucified was He whom God raised from the dead and proclaimed to be *both Lord and Christ.* Acts 2: 36. "He brightly reflects God's glory and is the express image of His person, and, when He had purged us of our sin, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the visible representation of the invisible God." **Col. 1:15.** Weymouth. The whole of divine perfections dwell *in Him.* Col. 1: 20. And He is the head of the true and mystical church, which is in truth the *Christ body*, for the body is not one member, but many. The body is also one with the Head. Neither Head nor body can exist or function the one without the other. While the mind has its home in the head, the heart has its home in the body. The Head and the body together constitute *the fullness of Christ* (Eph. 4:13), even the completeness of Him who in the end will *fill the universe with Himself.* And we are complete in Him, from whom the whole body by joints and bands is knit together to become the habitation of God through the Spirit. The true body of Christ has been rising through millenniums of time without a schism and without a division. It has been rising upon the sure

foundation of the apostles and prophets and, when it is completed at the now imminent first resurrection, that true body will be *the temple of the Lord*, a fixed abode for God through the Spirit.

When the word of God speaks of Christ Jesus as being the *head stone* of the corner (Psa. 118:22, 1 Pet. 2: 7), it is not speaking of a stone in the lower corner of the foundation. It is speaking of the *capstone* or the head stone as the capstone would appear at the pinnacle of a pyramid. The capstone is of necessity the last stone to be placed in the building and, when that is done, the building is complete. So also it will be that, when the body of living stones, even *the body of Christ*, is complete, then Jesus Christ *the Head* will take His place as the *head stone* and this complete body of *the Christ* will form the everlasting habitation of God through the Spirit. This will be "*My Father's house*" of many mansions, each mansion a believer, each believer a living stone, each living stone a member of the Christ body. This is the house *not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. 2 Cor. 5: 1. *This is the holy temple of the Lord* (Eph. 2:21), the completeness of Him who will fill the universe with Himself and govern the universe in the timelessness that is to be.

It was God's will and purpose that through His Christ He would reconcile the world to Himself. It is certain that God did reconcile the world to Himself when Jesus, *the Christ*, died, for Paul wrote with great assurance, "*And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*" Col. 1:20. We must point out, however, that, though the reconciliation is complete, fully paid for and forever settled, yet the *carrying out* of its universal message awaits the complete ness and the fullness of the Christ body. This, if I err not, is certain, because Paul by the Spirit has definitely said that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, but it is *unto us* (the members of the Christ body) that He has committed the *word of reconciliation* (2 Cor. 5:19), and we, knowing the completeness of His work, pray men in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God." Verse 20. Multitudes of God's saints would be greatly enlightened could their hearts embrace God's plan for the ages. God's dear people are thrown into dreadful turmoil and they attempt to accomplish all manner of presumptuous things because they do not know God's plan for the ages. The harlot church has filled their minds with the crude notion that *all who are saved must be saved in this age* or be lost forever. So often we hear men say, "*The day of grace is almost ended.*" This error is quoted as though it were a scripture text, yet nothing contains less truth than this idle statement. The truth is that God's grace has only *appeared to men* (Titus 3:11), but it is not until *the ages to come, the kingdom age* and the dispensation of the fullness of times, that God will begin to manifest *the fullness* of His grace. This is why Paul prayed earnestly that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened - so that we might see that "*in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*" Eph. 2:7. And for this reason he was also able to say that *in the dispensation of the fullness of times* He might gather together in one *all things in Christ*. Eph. 1:10.

It should be very evident to all who read that before the Lord can complete the work of reconciliation, He must first bring to completeness His glorious *Christ, both the Head and the body* as one together. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this truth, because God Himself has spoken, saying that the body is *the fullness of Him* (or the *completeness* of Him) who is to fill all in all. See Eph. 1:22, 23. Therefore God must bring about this fullness, this completeness of His Christ, both the Head and the body in one Christ, before the work of reconciliation accomplished by Christ Jesus can be carried out to its universal fulfillment. Much is the labor of God the Father in bringing His sons to perfection, even to the image of Jesus Christ. Thus it will be seen that the first work to be accomplished in the reconciling of the universe must be to fully reconcile those elect persons who were foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified in Him. Before the broader work of reconciliation begins, the implements of His work must be fully prepared and, since it is by God's *Christ* that the world will be reconciled, then it is *the Christ* who must be first brought to perfection and fullness.

To these things the word of the Lord bears faithful witness, showing clearly that the first ones to be reconciled were the members of the body of Christ, for saith Paul, "*All things are of God, who hath (first) reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and (secondly) hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation.*" 2 Cor. 5:18. It is clear therefore that, after we, the members of the *body of Christ*, have been reconciled and made complete *in Him*, a completeness that comes with the redemption of our bodies at *the first resurrection* (Rom. 8: 23), then the work of the reconciliation of all the rest of creation will begin in earnest, "*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you BY US: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" 2 Cor. 5:19, 20.

This is the fellowship of the mystery (Eph. 3:9, 10), which from the beginning hath been *hid in God*, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the church* (the true church, which is His body) the manifold *wisdom of God*. Weymouth, translating this passage, appears to add much to its force clearly showing that *by the church*, which is the true body of Christ, the Lord will show to principalities and powers and rulers in the heavenlies the endless aspects of His own wisdom. "To me who am less than the least of all the saints has this work been graciously entrusted - to proclaim to the Gentiles the gospel of the exhaustless wealth of Christ, and to show all men in a clear light what my stewardship is. It is the stewardship of the truth which from all the ages *lay concealed* in the mind of God, the Creator of all things - concealed in order that the church *might now be used* to display to the powers and authorities in the heavenly realms the innumerable aspects of God's wisdom. Such was the eternal purpose, which He had formed in *Christ Jesus our Lord*, in whom we have this bold and confident access through our faith in Him." **Eph. 3:8-12.** Weymouth. In the book of Hebrews, chapter ten and verse five, we have this remarkable statement: "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a *body* hast Thou prepared me." Then, after saying, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure," he shows that *this one* who is coming *in a body*, first the *earthly* body of Jesus of Nazareth and then the glorious fullness of the *body of Christ*, is coming, not to offer sacrifice and offering, but to "*do Thy will, O God*" (**Verse 9**), by the which will we are sanctified in the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The moment this one has come and is revealed who offers no meaningless sacrifice, but who does God's will, then all former things are done away, for, "*He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.*" **Verse 9.** Then Christ Jesus becomes the high priest of good things to come by a greater and *more per feet tabernacle* not made with hands. Heb. 9: 11. The greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands is *the body of Christ*, which is the fullness and the completion of Him who fills the universe with Himself.

Jesus, the Son of God, is the *Head* of the Christ body. Col. 2:18. In birth *the head is born first*, so the appearance of Jesus, the Head, at the beginning of the age was perfect assurance that *the body of Christ*, which is His fullness, would during this age come forth from the womb to stand complete in Him on Mt. Zion to govern the world in righteousness through ages to come. Triumphant are the words of Him who is the first born of many brethren (Rom. 8:29) as He stands in the end of the age, saying, "Here am I and the children (sons) which Thou hast given Me," each blessed son having come to the *measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*. Many saints in ages past have beheld scenes of extreme glory in the realm of the Spirit. So glorious were the visions of Daniel that he fell as one dead in the heavenly presence and remained as one sick certain days. Paul described the scenes of the third heaven as *unspeakable things*, which it was not lawful for a man to utter. But to John was revealed the magnificent glory of seeing *the fullness of Christ* as He will stand in completeness on the Lord's day. John saw not the lonely man of Galilee, but "*one like the Son of man*," whose voice was as the sound of *many waters*. Waters signify peoples, and in this case the type is abundantly accurate, signifying that the body of Christ is not *one member*, but many; yet it is but *one body* - a spiritual organism through which flows the harmony of God. To endeavor to enlarge on this supernal mystery of the ages, which John was privileged to behold, would only detract from its glory. Therefore we shall quote the words from Holy Writ and leave its lesson to be revealed to all who read and understand.

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, that is, he was transported in the Spirit beyond the age of grace right over to the end of the age. In spirit he heard a mighty voice as the sound of a trumpet speaking and saying, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia; ...And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was head; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*" **Rev. 2:10-18.**

Frail and paltry, yes, even demeaning, are the efforts of men to describe a glory which eye hath not seen or ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, but which can only be revealed by His Spirit, who searcheth out even the deep things of God. Nevertheless, this is the mystery, which has been hidden from ages and generations, now to be revealed to God's saints: The mystery, *Christ in you*, the hope of glory and the hope of all creation.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 4
THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND ITS ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

Almighty Lord, in whom **dwelleth** the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, flood Thou my soul with understanding from above. Open now my eyes that I may plainly behold secrets of truth long hidden in Thee. Remove the darkling veil from my heart that light divine may shine upon me, and grant to my spirit the breath of inspiration that I may understand the truths that are written here. Amen!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. *In Him* was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." **John 1:1-5**. These inspired words of truth must be the most sublime statement to ever proceed from the mind of God, to be written by the pen of any scribe, or to be spoken by the inspired lips of any prophet. The unshakable, indisputable knowledge that before all things was God almighty, *all wise*, unchanging and eternal, is knowledge so assuring that it dispels every uncertainty of life and the dismal confusion of mind that hangs like a **smoggy** pall over the hearts of all those unhappy people who are not thus assured. The first statement of truth ever **vouch-safed** to man was the simple word of assurance, "*In the beginning God*". Upon this truth hangs the eternal hope of the billions of mankind who have inhabited this earth. Remove God from the eternal portrait and nothing remains but a formless void with clouds and darkness upon the face of all the deep. Take God out of the Genesis of all things **and purposelessness crowns** our lives with confusion and unbelief, making life's highway a slippery slope, every harbor a whirlpool, and our rocks but sinking sand.

See with what holy assurance the heart is filled when it casts its anchor in such a certain rock as this: "*For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and/or Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.*" **Col. 1:16-17**. Your whole outlook on life will change from one of confusion and dread to one of blessed assurance and confidence with the entrance of the divine understanding that *all things* are vassals of His power, His dominion, and His control. Nothing exists without His consent. None acts without His permission or prospers without His blessing. In His omnipotent hand the nations of the earth in all their vaunted might and power are but dust upon the balances, soon to be dusted off the scales that the final reckoning might proceed as planned. You will not spend sleepless nights worrying about Communism when your heart rests assured that God, for hidden purposes comprehended only by infinite wisdom, has raised its godless head for a little moment to purge the filth and corruption from the sons of **Zion**. He who has raised it up will cast it down and break it to shivers beneath His feet when His purpose in it has been fulfilled. Then shall it, as Babylon, be as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, trodden **neath** the foot of man and driven by the wind away.

In my opinion the most sinister thing in the earth today is the nearly universal desire of the church system, which is Mystery Babylon, to sit beneath the abominable shadow of one great earthly head. The day is drawing ever nearer when possibly all the religious systems of earth will come under the control of the Pope of Rome and all the kings and rulers of the earth will give their power and authority to the Beast. Nothing any man can do by work, or prayer, or battle can let or hinder this device because divine wisdom has decreed that thus it

must certainly be. What assurance fills the heart of the faithful as they rejoice in the wonder of God's plan! Abiding in the eternal rock, they fearlessly await the fiery trials soon to fall upon the whole earth in the assurance that the *true church* shall be purified and made white in preparation for the reign of Christ that will encompass the whole earth to cure its every disease when the curse has finished its evil day.

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S PURPOSE

Before the ages began or ever the world was. God almighty, omniscient, and immutable, charted the course of *all things*. The ages in their ever ascending and majestic purposes were all planned by Him. The increasing light and revelation of each one was planned with infinite care to display its own part in the spectrum of eternal truth that heaven and earth and things under the earth might rejoice together in the *ends of the ages because of the everlasting fullness of Him* who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.

With God nothing has been left to chance. Absolutely nothing. Omniscient wisdom, omnipotent power, infinite love, and boundless grace can leave nothing, *nothing*, I say, to chance, nor can such power, wisdom, and grace leave anything to the bungling minds of carnal men. Men sometimes ask me whether or not I believe in a *second* chance for sinners. My answer is always the same. "No, I do not believe in a *second* chance, and neither do I believe in a *first* chance, for God leaves *nothing to chance*." Men come to God when God calls them. As Jesus said, "**No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him:**" **John 6:44**. And again: "**All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.**" **John 6:37**. Just as the draft of a nation calls its young men to military service when their turn comes, so also God calls men when their turn comes, and when He calls or draws them, none can dodge the draft. They have naught to do but respond.

The day of your birth was arranged before the worlds began. The reins of your life are as certainly in the divine hand as were those in Pharaoh, Moses, or Paul. The day of your death is even now appointed and all the pills and skills of man will fail to lengthen your days. Your downittings and uprisings are all known to Him and your thoughts afar off. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. How much more, then, are the days of your life?

THE CERTAINTY OF THE FALL AND THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

The fall of man in the Garden of Eden was part of God's eternal plan. By it God set in motion the mighty edict of Gen. 1:26, - "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion." Such blessed understanding gives credence to the apostle's revelation; "**For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.**" **Rom. 8:19,20**. To consider this blessed fact further would be beyond the scope of our present writing and would in itself take much time and space. Nevertheless, let every man on earth assuredly know that the fall of man and all the dire consequences that have followed did not fall unexpectedly upon an unsuspecting God, but every detail of it from beginning to end was foreknown by the infinite mind of Him who inspired Paul to say, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment is *working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*." And again, through that same inspired man, it was written, "*all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*." Let us with utmost confidence rest assured then that our almighty Lord knows what He is doing. He who is the First and the Last must of necessity be all intermediate things as well, and He who is the Alpha and the Omega must include all the other letters as well.

There is not the slightest uncertainty about anything that God has to say concerning the entrance of sin into the world. His all-inclusive statement is this: "**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.**" **Rom. 3:23**. And "**there is none righteous, no, not one.**" **Rom. 3:10**. In the first chapter of Romans all the world is proven guilty before God. In the second and third chapters all Israel is proven guilty before God, for by the law shall no flesh be justified. In the fourth and fifth chapters works of any kind are excluded from God's plan of salvation *and faith in Christ* is exalted and proven to be God's plan for the salvation of the whole world.

It is of utmost importance in our relationship to God that we see all things *as He sees them* and not as men understand them with their natural minds. Always remember that the "**natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually**

discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14.** Let every man know that divine revelation does not reach us through the classrooms of college or university. Greek and Hebrew, the languages of the Bible, will help us but little, for man can never comprehend the purposes of God until God moves upon the face of the deep and the breath of inspiration from above floods his heart with the truth and the knowledge of the Lord.

Because God is God, all the wisdom and understanding of the universe dwells in Him. We must expect Him to say many things and state many facts that the human mind cannot comprehend nor pry into. It is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding. The wayfaring man, though a fool, can comprehend any of the things of God in that moment when the divine light from above shines upon them. Paul prayed that spiritual revelation would be given to the people, saying, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling ..." **Eph. 1:17,18.**

And again, "... that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." **Col. 1:9.** "Open mine eyes," said David, "that I may behold wonderful things out of Thy law." So, you see, spiritual understanding is not given to the learned and lettered of this age, but to those blessed ones upon whom God has breathed the spirit of understanding from on high. How often we discover that God's way of reasoning does not make sense to our thinking! At all such times we should steadfastly remember how He said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:8,9. Even the saintly Peter once wrote of our brother Paul in these words: "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." **2 Pet. 3:15,16.**

One of the many hard things of which Paul wrote may be found in **Heb. 7:9,10**, but, before quoting it, I must point out that the understanding of this one statement will prove vital to the understanding of all else that shall be said in this writing. This is what he wrote: "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he (Levi) was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him." You will readily remember that Abraham was Levi's great grandfather and that, at the time when Abraham met Melchisedec and paid tithes to him (Gen. 14:17-20) even Isaac, Abraham's son, was not yet born. Yet Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, clearly states that Levi, the great grandson of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchisedec, because he (Levi) was in the loins of his father (Abraham) when Melchisedec met him. This is certainly not human reasoning. Human reasoning, I think, would scoff at such a notion. Yet this is the reasoning of God, for it is God and God alone who understands the generations of man, comprehending with all knowledge how life is passed in succession from one generation to another. Such secrets, delivered to us by the disposition of angels, (Acts 7:53); are to be believed in the Spirit and need not to be pried into by the carnal mind, which is God's enemy. They are the secret truths of the Almighty, we adore them and despise them not by our own vain processes of human reasoning.

Now since we have seen by divine wisdom that Levi, the great grandson, was in fact in the loins of Abraham, his great grandfather, a hundred years or more before his birth, it should become easier for us to grasp the significance of a statement vastly more important to all mankind. In **1 Cor. 15:22** Paul wrote, saying, "In Adam all die." In exactly the same manner that Levi, though yet unborn, was present in his grandfather Abraham's loins when he paid tithes to Melchisedec, so you and I, yea, and all the world besides, were there in our father Adam's loins when he sinned in the garden of Eden. With him and in him we sinned, yea, and with him and in him we partook of the penalty of sin, for it is written, "Death passed upon all men for that all had sinned." **Rom. 5:12.** When was it that all men sinned?

The truth is that they sinned while yet in the loins of their father Adam on that day when he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *In A dam* all die, for God had said to Adam, "In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die." And because of this death passed upon all men, *for all have sinned*. Thus death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Rom. 5:14. "Sin is the transgression of the law, but it is not necessary to prove that a man is a lawbreaker to prove he is a

sinner. All who sinned in Adam were born with the sentence of death already upon them and the death process had begun its work in them before ever they came forth from the womb. The indubitable fact that we are the children of Adam is proof enough of our need of a Savior, for "*in Adam* all die, but *in Christ* shall all be made alive." And we may say with confidence that *all* in the second phrase is as all-inclusive as the *all* in the first phrase.

The many people who read these lines have on many occasions seen the traits of a mother or father manifested in a son or a daughter, and we may confidently say that just as frequently we have seen grandfathers and grandmothers manifested in their grandchildren unto many generations. Times without number we have heard the expression, "I can see your grandmother in you," or "You are just like your father." My son does not walk as I walk. He walks like his grandfather. My daughter looks like her mother and acts like her father. We have become accustomed to seeing parents manifest in their children, but God saw the reverse. He saw *children in their parents*, not as a fleeting likeness but as a divine reality, so that when He formed Adam of the dust of the ground, He placed in his paternal loins the seed of the entire human race. Thus it is truly written, "*in Adam all die.*"

It will not be difficult for any man to see that, had Adam been slain in the Garden of Eden before ever a child was begotten by him, all the billions of his posterity would also have died when he died, neither could they ever have seen the light of day. Let our minds then grasp the simple truth that *when he sinned* in the Garden of Eden, all his posterity sinned *in him* and the same death that passed upon him because of his sin passed likewise upon us all, even to the last man of Adam's race, for *all have sinned*. A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Of a thorn men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

There is always an element of eternal mystery wherever the mind and wisdom of God is concerned. Each succeeding generation spends lifetime after lifetime probing the hidden depths of the many branches of science. Men of learning in each age pass their knowledge on to the generation to come, but each in his order reaches the end of his days knowing that he has done little more than brush the surface of knowledge. Beyond him still lie the hidden depths that only omniscience can unlock. Since then natural things in a natural world defy our finite understanding, how much more do things of the Spirit defy all natural understanding. God's thoughts being so far above our thoughts and His ways above our ways! For thus saith the Lord, "As heaven is higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." Beautiful, indeed, is the revelation that follows the above truth. "*As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, ...so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth...*" **Isa. 55:10,11**. It is when the spirit of revelation from above falls like rain upon the baked earth of human understanding that the light of God dawns in our hearts and the barren clods burst forth with a harvest of eternal truth. Let us never try to understand truths by the understanding of our natural minds, but let us rather pray, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Then will the rain of revelation fill the open vessels of the spirit. God will say, "*let there be light*" and light divine there will be.

Can the natural mind ever fathom the depths of the eternal truth that God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto Himself? 2 Cor. 5:19. Can we grasp the significance of the words of Jesus, "*That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee; that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou has sent me*"? **John 17:21**. If now by God's Spirit we can understand even in part how God was *in His Son*, how the Son was *in the Father*, or how we the children of God are *in the Father* and *in His Son*, then that same spirit of understanding will show us how Levi was in Abraham's loins when Melchisedec met him, and how you and I were *in Adam*, our father, when he sinned, causing death and carnality to pass upon us all, for that all have sinned. Oh, the depth of the wisdom and understanding of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

THE LAST ADAM

It is written, "*The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (life-giving) spirit.*" **1 Cor. 15:45**. There is a deep and hidden mystery in the strange words, *the last Adam*. The natural mind would

conclude that, if there were two Adams coming four thousand years apart, the first of these being *the first Adam*, it would of necessity follow that the next Adam would be the *second Adam* as is the case in 1 Cor. 15:47. Our Lord Jesus Christ is here called *the last Adam*. This simple statement, which on the surface seems almost irrelevant and scarcely worthy of our notice, is in fact pregnant with meaning, full of wisdom and understanding. It portrays as nothing else can the wonders of Christ's redemption, the marvels of the cross, and the completeness of the work that God by His Son has done for a world of sinful men, bringing by His cross abounding life and freedom from carnality to the millions of Christians who see in Him the end of Adam's race.

By way of illustration I shall now try to point out in what way our Lord Jesus Christ was *the last Adam*. In my father's family there were three sons and two daughters. Of the three sons the second died as a young man, the youngest married but begat no children, and of my father's marriage were born two daughters and four sons. Had it been, however, that my father had also died childless as did the other members of his family, then we, his sons, would not have been born and he would have been the *last Hawtin*. He would have been the last of the line.

There could have been no other. Now God has declared that our Lord Jesus Christ should be *the last Adam*. I cannot explain how divine power can accomplish such wonders, but God has decreed that *all men of all ages* should be included *in Him*. God has gathered up all the members of Adam's sinful race out of the past, out of the present, and out of the future and included them *all* in Christ, the last Adam. Death passed upon *all men*, for *all men* sinned in the first Adam. Therefore by one divine and omnipotent stroke God has included *all men* in His Son, declaring Him to be the *last Adam*, *the end of the fallen Adamic creation*, and, having included all men in Christ, the last Adam. He crucified Him. He nailed Him to the accursed tree that it may now be literally and truthfully proclaimed by all men of Adam's race, "*I am crucified with Christ*". *I am* crucified with Christ, and nothing I can do or say will ever alter such an historic fact. God Himself, without my knowledge and before I ever saw the light of day, included me in Christ, the *last Adam*, even as He included me in *the first Adam*, and, having included me in the last Adam, He crucified Him and me in Him. Behold, then, upon what glorious foundation our faith rests. Christ has indeed become the *Savior of all men*, *especially* of those who believe, because all who believe shall find both here and now that every benefit of the cross has become operative in their lives. Not only will they find forgiveness of sin in their present walk but they will be delivered from all the power of carnality as we shall presently show.

In moments of meditation I thought upon the cross of Christ and wondered why it was that God should have placed such emphasis and significance in *the cross*. Why should He include *all men* in His Son and, having done so, declare that *this* was the *last Adam*, the end of the old creation? And, having included all the old and fallen creation in Him, God hung Him upon a cross until His life was gone out of Him and all the world was dead *in Him*. So in spirit I beheld that the cross of Christ was the great ex (X) that crosses and cancels out all things that belong to the *old* creation, declaring their demise in the three most significant words ever spoken, "*it is finished*". Thus by the cross of Christ God declares the finish of the old creation in which all men live in carnality and end in death, and, having done so. He declares the *last Adam* of the old creation to be the author and *first fruit* of an entirely new creation, *the first fruit* of them that slept.

THE NEW CREATION

When Christ, the *last Adam*, died and all the old creation died in Him, the creation to follow must of necessity be a *new creation*, and for this certain reason it is written, "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a *new creation*; old things have passed away and, behold, all things are become new. For in that He died He died unto sin *once*, but in that He liveth He liveth unto God."

I am perfectly aware that these profound truths will be misunderstood by many and some will wrest them to their own destruction in their carnal and wicked endeavor to abrogate repentance of sin and annul all holiness of life, as some men in their zeal to display the grace of God have done, living in sin and turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. Jude 4. These gracious truths are not now written to men of corrupt minds who have no desire to walk in the truth, but to all who walk in love, serving God because they love Him and not in fear of some dreadful judgment that hangs like an awesome terror before their eyes. It is not to such as this that we

now write, but to those children of the most high God who, seeing their infinite identity with Christ, are able to say in all truth and righteousness, "As He is, so are we in this world." **1 John 4:17.**

Those who read these lines with the revelation and understanding of the Almighty upon their minds will discover a new experience taking place in their hearts - as definite and spiritual an experience as they have ever had, yes, as definite as their conversion and the peace that came when they believed that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleansed their hearts from *all sin*. Let us never read these truths and lightly cast them aside, but while reading them earnestly pray that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance *in the saints*, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ Jesus when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. See Eph. 1:17-20.

Wonderful as it is to know that with Him we died, it is of surpassing wonder to know that *in Him* we were buried, *in Him* we have already risen from the dead, *in Him* we ascended, and *in Him* we are seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. You will surely say of me that I hold little respect for the vast mass of church tradition, but we must surely agree that, like the Pharisees and scribes of old, we have "made the truth of God of none effect by our tradition." Therefore, the sooner we abandon tradition and lift our hearts to heaven for inspiration the sooner we will come to know and experience all that God has promised in Christ, and, knowing what He has promised, shall enter here and now the grace that has been so freely proffered to all mankind.

THE IMMORTAL PROMISE

We said above that God almighty and all wise leaves nothing to chance. By His divine power He has made all things certain, leaving the work of His Christ as an historic fact and foundation for our faith, and we, having believed the work He has fully accomplished, become partakers with Him in whom we died and rose again. God's people manifest their unbelief by the things they preach and say and sing. How often I have sung with the multitude, "I can, I will, I do believe that Jesus died for me". You might as well sing, "I can, I will, I do believe that Caesar Augustus reigned in Rome". The real truth is that these are historic, indisputable facts. Jesus *did die* for me just as surely as Moses led Israel out of Egypt. There is no need to try to whip up faith at all in such a truth as this. Faith does not rest on *make-believe*, as the preachers erroneously imagine. Faith rests upon the certain foundation of what God immutable has said.

Faith cometh by hearing the word of God, or, as Weymouth so purely translates it, "**Faith, then, comes from a message heard and that message from the lips of Christ.**" **Rom. 10-17.** I think the general idea of faith today is commensurate with that of the four hundred prophets of Baal, who vainly imagined that by loud and united shouting and jumping up and down upon the altar they could whip up enough faith to make the fire fall on the sacrifice. How different was the prayer of Elijah! He knew the fire would fall because his faith rested, not on *make-believe*, but upon *what God had said* to him beforehand. Listen to him again as he prays,. "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that *I have done* all these things at *Thy word.*" 1 Kings 18:36. That last statement was the true basis of the faith of Elijah. God had told him beforehand what to do, what to say, and what the result would be, and so no doubt clouded his mind as he stood before the crowd. "Faith, then, comes from a message heard, and that message from the lips of Christ." We do ourselves great harm by imagining that Elijah was a man bursting with such miracle working faith that anything he asked would be immediately done. That is a deceptive lie. The truth is that his faith, as yours and mine, rested only upon the sure foundation of the message of God from heaven. Faith and God's will go hand in hand. They are never separate; neither is there any separation between faith and God's word. Therefore, it is written, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Elijah did no jumping on the altar nor singing, "I can, I will, I do believe," to conjure up enough faith to bring the fire of God down. Well did he know that every move he made was ordained of the Lord and that *each thing he did* was done at God's bidding and according to His word. I cannot do what Elijah did before the prophets of Baal nor work the wonders of Moses in Egypt and at the sea, for God has not bidden me so, but whatever God bids me do I can accomplish with triumph, even to the crossing of a thousand seas or the calling down of fiercer fire.

"... God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things (God's promise and God's oath), in which it was impossible for God to

lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." **Heb. 6:17-19.** "That within the veil" is Jesus Christ Himself. Upon such a certain foundation we now stand, holding an immovable anchor steadfastly cast in the mighty rock, Christ Jesus, who even now within the *inner veil* is seated at God's right hand. Having these immutable promises let us with faith lay hold on the promise God has set before us.

I AM CRUCIFIED

Let us consider further the work of the cross and of the Christ who died upon it that our minds may be enlarged and we might better understand how this *last Adam* included *in Himself* every person and everything that belonged to the *old* creation, putting it all out of the way, nailing it to His cross. In thus crucifying the whole world in His Son, He robbed principalities and powers and all rulers of darkness of the fearful power they held over us by reason of the fall. By His death He blotted out and made ineffective every ordinance that was against us, because laws are not made for dead men nor do they apply to men of the new creation who, with Him, have risen to newness of life, but to those only who still live as members of the old creation. Please read Col. 2:9-17.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, he wrote to a people who had begun to live a wonderful life in the Spirit but who, through false teaching by certain Judaizers, had reverted to ordinances of the old creation. They who were identified with Christ and His new creation were now trying to bring about perfection by the do's and don'ts of a law. So Paul with severe rebuke wrote, "*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*" **Gal. 3:1.** Weymouth in his original translation uses this eloquent expression. "You foolish Galatians! Whose sophistry has bewitched you, - you to whom Jesus Christ has been vividly portrayed as *on the cross*? Answer me this one thing. Is it on the ground of your obedience to the law that you received the Spirit, or is it because *when you heard you believed?*"

Did you notice that Paul said here, "You to whom Christ has been vividly portrayed as *on the cross*? The message of the crucified life had been taught to these Galatians and they, having believed it, received the Holy Spirit and walked in newness of life as a new creation, but they, like the wretched tradition-ridden church system of today, lost hold of the truth of their true position *in Christ* to fuss and bother with a law that was made for men who belonged to the *old creation* and lived their lives on the other side of the cross. The apostle by the wisdom imparted to him prefaced the above statement with his own testimony as to the work of the cross in his life saying, "*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*" Gal. 2:20. Paul was not living the crucified life and reckoning his old self *dead* because of his titanic efforts to make himself believe that he was crucified, but he stood in this holy state by the faith of the Son of God, or shall we say because he had perfect faith, as I too now have, that, when God put His only begotten Son on the cross. He also put *all the world on the cross in Him and with Him*, and that, when He placed Him in the tomb, He buried the *last Adam*, and every man who belonged to that creation He buried with Him. Thus when Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ," his faith was resting not on an experience he attained at some altar of prayer, but upon *what God had done for him* and for us all long before any of us knew that Jesus was the Christ.

It is upon such a certain foundation that our faith now rests - not upon what we experienced at an altar service, but upon *what God did* in His Son Jesus Christ when He wrapped up all the old creation in Him and nailed Him to the accursed tree. Ah, wonder of wonders! No marvel it is that Paul in exultation shouted a fiat that will echo on and on through eternal ages: "*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.*" **Gal. 6:14.**

I was crucified with Christ long, long before I saw the light of day or breathed my first breath in this world. Men on yonder street who have never read a page of God's holy truth were included there in the *last Adam*. In Him they were nailed with all their carnality to the cross. In that moment when God's truth floods like a ray of dawn into my heart, revealing what God actually accomplished in His cross, and teaching me that I myself *was there* in Him, then all my struggling with the old nature is at an end, and in amazement before that heavenly

revelation I repeat and repeat with rapture, "*I am crucified.*" I am *crucified* simply because I *was* crucified when God omnipotent and omniscient included me in His Son when He nailed Him and all the world in Him to the cross. A new day dawns upon our weary spirits in this certain knowledge that the *old* things have passed away and the glory of a new creation bursts upon us. If any man be *in Christ*, he is a *new creation*. He has to be. He cannot help but be because for him the old passed away when he with Christ was nailed to the accursed tree, and all the signs that the old still exists are neither reality nor truth, but darkness and error that hide themselves in unbelief.

Meditate at great length upon this statement of Paul until the revelation of the Almighty gives understanding: "*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" **Gal. 2:20**. Paul's crucifixion *with Christ* was an accomplished fact. Naught was there to do but believe it. Yet he said, "I live, (or, I am alive,) but it is not I, but Christ." It was the *old self*, the *old nature*, the *old Adam* that was crucified and died, but it is the *new creation* that comes forth from the tomb in resurrection. The apostle in the glory and wonder of the truth that was revealed to him scarcely knew how to put in words the marvel of his own revelation. "Nevertheless I live," he says, "*yet not I, but Christ; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" As the glory and wonder of the truth bursts upon our spirits, we find ourselves repeating in awe, "*It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.*" **1 Cor. 15:42-44**. For the first man Adam was made a living soul, but the last Adam a *life-giving* spirit.

Let all who now read these lines assuredly know that, when Jesus Christ was crucified, *you were crucified* in Him. Nothing that belonged to the old creation was omitted. Even its laws and ordinances were nailed to the cross, for they were given to govern the *old* creation. Therefore, He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, *nailing it to his cross*. Col. 2:14. For centuries faithful men and women have longed for the assurance that their old carnal self was done away that they might walk in newness of life. Well, the good news we now bring is that the crucifixion has taken place and need never occur again. God in admiration looks upon it as already accomplished and the realization of the truth of it, as rays of dawn, bursts upon our liberated spirits while the heavenly choirs sing within the mansions of our new created being. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, *but Christ*," - Christ the anointed, Christ the end of the old creation, and Christ the beginning of the new.

THE OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED

Our old man is simply we ourselves as we were under the old Adam creation. When Adam was made, he was made in the image of God, and according to the scripture only "*a little lower than the angels.*" **Heb. 2:7**. He lived and walked after the Spirit with little or no dependence at all upon natural or physical things. But once he sinned, all this changed and he who began with the nature of God and was but a little lower than the angels now found himself but little higher than the beasts with the predominant part of his nature more in accord with the beasts of the field than with the God who created him. Nebuchadnezzar typified this very condition when for *seven times* (representing the seven dispensations) he lived with the beasts of the field, ate straw like an ox, slept outside on the wet grass, and his fingernails grew like claws and the hair of his head like bird feathers until seven times passed over him. See Daniel, chapter 4. Can we say anything better of the Sodom in which we now live where every device is connived and invented to give satisfaction to the realm of the flesh whether it be sex, strong drink, marijuana, L.S.D., tobacco, or a thousand other evils. Sodomites and adulterers have dared to invade the pulpits in our day, pretending to speak of heavenly things while manifesting the nature of beasts and sporting themselves with their own deceivings. 2 Pet. 2:12-14. Ah, sinful generation! How shall you escape the damnation of hell?

All the corruption in the world is the manifestation of the nature of the fallen *first Adam*. He is the *old Adam*. None of his wretchedness can pass beyond the cross. None of his corruption can be carried over into the new creation. None can walk in newness of life until the cross of Christ has ended the old. There never can be a *new man* until the cross of Christ has taken the life of the *old man*. It is not until *old things* pass away that *all things* become new. You cannot know the joy of being a new creation while the *old creation* still persists. The

cross of Christ must be the giant "X" that marks out the old forever. The tomb must be the burial place of the old man. Even his grave clothes must remain in the tomb. Without the cross there can be no resurrection. It is impossible. Can you not see? It is the cross that takes the life of the old. It is the resurrection that brings forth the new. Those who die in Him to end the old rise with Him to begin the new. Thus it is written: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new." **2 Cor. 5:17.**

In the scripture where Paul states that our *old man* is crucified with Him he uses this definite expression: "*knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*" **Rom. 6:6,7.** We must take time here to consider these two important words, '*knowing this.*' The indisputable fact is that very, very few Christians do *know this* - that their old man is crucified. The real truth is that they *do not* know it. They neither know nor understand that two thousand years ago God took us, our old nature, our *old man*, and everything that belonged to the old creation and putting it all in Jesus Christ, crucified Him. He put Him to death. He *executed* Him, for crucifixion is execution as certainly as is the guillotine, the electric chair, the gas chamber, or the hangman's noose. The wages of sin is death and every man of Adam's race died the death *in Him* when He was nailed to the accursed tree, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree."

Know this, then: our old man *is crucified* with Him. It is not something to be done in the future. It *is* done. It was done on that day when the sun withdrew his shining at noon and horrible darkness gripped the world in awesome dread until Jesus in agony cried, "My God, My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And then, as though to write finis to all that was of the old, the earth quaked and reeled like a drunkard. The mighty immovable rocks rent and split. The veil of the temple, so strong that six yoke of oxen could not pull it apart, which in type represented *the flesh*, was struck by a hand divine that tore it apart from top to bottom. "It is finished," cried the *last Adam*; and it *was* finished. The old creation was finished, the old man was finished, the flesh was finished, the law was finished, and the ordinances were finished. All was to be forever buried that from the tomb a new creation would spring up. "And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it, the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the *whole creation* to find its one head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one head *in Him.*" **Eph. 1:9,10.** (Weymouth). *Knowing this! Knowing this!!* That our old man *is* crucified with Him! Do you know it, my friend? Do you know it? Do you know that God accomplished it for you before you were born? Your faith this moment in that long accomplished fact sets the bells of the *new creation* ringing in your heart. *Knowing this, knowing this*, that our *old man* *is* crucified with Him!

Many who now read will find a question arising in their hearts. You will be saying to me, "If it is true that I am crucified and my *old man* *is* crucified, why is it that I yet see evidences of carnality remaining in my heart and spoiling my walk every day that I live? Why am I so often beset with anger, impatience, and lusts of many kinds, all of which seem to deny that *my old man* *is* crucified? Because of carnal symptoms everywhere I am loath to believe and I cannot say, 'I know my old nature is crucified.'" Let all the faithful forever know that it is God's word that is the truth. The symptoms therefore are but lies. All that is not of the truth is a lie, and no lie is of the truth.

Many years ago a trifling incident occurred in my life that for some reason made an indelible impression upon my mind. Consequently I never forgot it. As a boy I lived in the great wheat belt of Saskatchewan. The part of the province where we farmed was commonly known as the *bald-headed prairie*. No trees grew there at all except where a farmer had planted a shelter belt around his yard. As a result I grew up with no knowledge of trees whatever. At about twenty years of age it was my pleasure to spend a summer in the forest to the northeast, where trees abounded everywhere. It was early spring when I arrived and the million trees stood leafless and dead. One day for no reason that I can remember I took my axe and cut down a little tree and, picking it up, I dragged it into the yard, leaving it lying dead upon the ground. It is not necessary that I present arguments here to convince you that, the moment my axe had cut through the trunk of that tree, its life was ended forever. It was dead and no power on earth could ever restore its life. But spring was beginning to bustle about and the sound of her mystic garments could be heard in all the land. Happy little crocuses awoke from their sleep and, smiling up at every passerby, invited all to admire their pretty dress. All the trees on all the hills began to open their thousand leaves and waved a welcome to the returning songbirds who rejoiced with

myriad voices that spring had come. But what of the tree whose life I had ended with a blow from my axe? You will perhaps be as surprised as I was when, walking across the yard, I saw it lying there on the ground bursting out in full leaf just like all the living trees standing in the forest. Is it possible that this tree was not really dead? Had I not severed it fully? What strange phenomenon was this that brought the leaves out on the branches to convince me that it was still alive? The explanation, of course, is simple. The tree had been cut down just as the sap was beginning to run up its trunk, causing the leaves to burst forth and flourish as long as any sap remained.

As I considered this strange phenomenon, I knew beyond any doubt that the tree *was dead*. It had been dead from the moment it had been severed from its root. But there were the symptoms, the buds and the leaves, telling me that it was *not dead* after all, but just as much alive as any standing tree. Now the truth is that the tree was cut down. No one could deny that. It *was dead*; that was also certain. The lie was the symptoms, the flourishing leaves that insisted that it was still alive. In spite of every sign of life, however, I knew and you know that it was dead, *knowing this*, that days before I had cut it down with my axe. And sure enough, in a very few days the leaves dried up and no sign of life remained. It is this lying wonder that the believer often sees long after he believes that our old man is crucified.

That flash of anger that rose in you yesterday, that passion that lifted its ugly head today, told you the lie that the *old man*, the carnal nature, was still alive, but the truth is that your old man *was crucified*. He was cut down. He was nailed to the cross. He was executed. Every symptom that insists that he still lives is a lie that must be reckoned dead. *Knowing this*, Paul said, that our old man *is* crucified, and I think it is in this truth that our hearts should rejoice rather than in the lying wonders of the old nature whose symptoms would love to make God to be a liar.

RECKONING

We are told by the Lord to reckon ourselves dead to sin but alive unto God. Rom. 6:11. Reckoning is something that is done with figures, and in all parts of the world it is the same. Two plus two equals four and three times four is twelve in any country. It is also true that that which is executed is dead. That which was crucified no longer lives. This, I believe, is cardinal truth. It must never be passed over lightly. It is when the symptoms declare that the *old man* lives and when we ourselves contemplate the inconsistencies, the incongruities, and the carnality that still persists in our own lives that we are to begin our *reckoning*. We are not to point to those flourishing leaves and insist that the tree of the old nature is not dead after all, but we are to point *to the cross* and reckon that there the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and it is dead no matter what evidence may be produced to the contrary. It is because *we know* that the old man *was crucified* with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed that we are now able to do our reckoning - reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.

To enrich our understanding we here quote four paragraphs from the deeply spiritual teaching of our Chinese brother, Watchman Nee, concerning the truth of *reckoning*. Quote: "What does reckoning mean? 'Reckoning' in Greek means doing accounts, bookkeeping. Accounting is the only thing in the world we humans can do correctly. An artist paints a landscape. Can he do it with perfect accuracy? Can the historian vouch for the absolute accuracy of any record, or the map-maker for the perfect correctness of any map? They can make, at best, fair approximations. Even in every day speech, when we try to tell some incident with the best intention to be honest and truthful, we cannot speak with complete accuracy. It is mostly a case of exaggeration or understatement, of one word too much or too little. What then can a man do that is utterly reliable? Arithmetic! There is no scope for error there. One chair plus one chair equals two chairs. That is true in London and it is true in Cape Town. If you travel west to New York or east to Singapore it is still the same. All the world over and for all time, one plus one equals two. One plus one is two in heaven and earth and hell.

Why does God say we are to reckon ourselves dead? Because we *are* dead. Let us keep to the analogy of accounting. Suppose I have fifteen shillings in my pocket, what do I enter in my account-book? Can I enter fourteen shillings and sixpence or fifteen shillings and sixpence? No, I must enter in my account-book that which is in fact in my pocket. Accounting is the reckoning of facts, not fancies. Even so, it is because I am really dead that God tells me to account it so. God could not ask me to put down in my account-book what was

not true. He could not ask me to reckon that I am dead if I am still alive. For such mental gymnastics the word 'reckoning' would be inappropriate; we might rather speak of 'misreckoning'!

"Reckoning is not a form of make-believe. It does not mean that, having found that I have only twelve shillings in my pocket, I hope that by entering fifteen shillings incorrectly in my account-book such 'reckoning' will somehow remedy the deficiency. It won't. If I have only twelve shillings, yet try to reckon to myself: 'I have fifteen shillings; I have fifteen shillings; I have fifteen shillings,' do you think that the mental effort involved will in any way affect the sum that is in my pocket? Not a bit of it! Reckoning will not make twelve shillings into fifteen shillings, nor will it make what is untrue true. But if, on the other hand, it is a fact that I have fifteen shillings in my pocket, then with great ease and assurance I can enter fifteen shillings in my account-book. God tells us to reckon ourselves dead, not that by the process of reckoning we may become dead, but because we are dead. He never told us to reckon what was not a fact.

"Having said, then, that revelation leads spontaneously to reckoning, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are presented with a command: 'Reckon ye...' There is a definite attitude to be taken. God asks us to do the account, to put down 'I have died' and then to abide by it. Why? Because it is a fact. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, I was there in Him. Therefore I reckon it to be true. I reckon and declare that I have died in Him. Paul said, "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God." How is this possible? "In Christ Jesus." Never forget that it is always and only true *in Christ*. If you look at yourself you will think death is not there, but it is a question of faith not in yourself but in Him. You look to the Lord, and know what He has done. "Lord, I believe *in Thee*. I reckon upon the fact *in Thee!* Stand there all the day." End of quote. From the book *The Normal Christian Life*.

You will not have to reckon too often before you find that any besetting carnality is falling off and losing its hold upon you. Why, it seems to me that the truth that *with him I died* should now deliver me even from any fear of death, for why should I fear that which has already been accomplished? Those who die by faith with Him have accomplished the first *death*. Upon all such the *second* death hath no power. I am brought to believe that even death itself is for us but a lie, and this, forsooth, may be the reason that both Paul and Jesus often use the term 'sleep' instead of 'death.' Paul said, "If we believe that *Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.*" **1 Thess. 4:14**. And again: "*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake...*" **Dan. 12:2**. And yet again: "*...We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*" **1 Cor. 15:51**. Death is for those who fail to identify themselves with the cross of Christ; sleep is for those who do. Carnality, debauchery, and sin persist in those who cannot see that the cross ended the old creation. Newness of life and sonship are for those who can.

When Satan points you to the evidence of carnality in your life, you must look at the cross and *reckon* that it was there death was accomplished and your old man, your old nature, your flesh, your carnality, was crucified with Him and in Him. The evidence of carnality that now presents itself is a lying wonder that must be reckoned dead and forever abolished. It is here that our understanding is enlightened by Paul's words to the Galatians, who, instead of reckoning themselves dead, were trying to regulate their carnal ways by the restrictions of the law. But this cannot and must not be. "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*" **Gal. 5:24**. They reckon the work accomplished. This is the only way to deal with the flesh. Rules and regulations may seem to inhibit the flesh, but actually they only cater to it. Touch not, taste not, handle not may seem to be wise instruction, but a whole lifetime of such inhibition leaves the flesh, the old nature, and the old man as much alive as ever. *Crucifixion alone destroys the power of the old nature*. So, when Paul says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," he is teaching that all such people do believe the truth that the old nature was crucified with Christ. They reckon it so; they believe it so; and because they believe this truth, the very truth itself operates in their lives. Carnality is *on the cross* and the life they now live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, a living explicit faith in what Christ accomplished when He included all the old creation in Himself on the cross, a faith that brings the long awaited victory over all sin and carnality and lifts us to the mountain peak of overcoming.

Every mention of the cross brings us face to face with the resurrection. Our knowledge that old things have passed away at the cross turns our eyes to the glory of new things. What good would it be to have the old pass away if there were nothing new to replace it? Therefore we greatly rejoice in the knowledge that, just as surely as old things pass away, behold, all things become new. If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creation because

the old creation died on the cross. "I am crucified unto the world," Paul said, "and the world is crucified unto me." Both the world and I were on the cross at the same time, so a double crucifixion has been accomplished here. I am crucified to everything that belongs to the old realm that I may make my entrance into the new realm. The world likewise was crucified that it might be divested of any power over me.

The further we go with this thought the clearer our understanding becomes. Our minds can now readily grasp this sacred thought: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." **Col. 3:1-4**. Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness, idolatry, adultery (Col. 3:5), and all such things are powerless in the presence of dead men. Therefore reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God. Mortify (put to death) these things, not by fighting them, not to striving to inhibit them, but by reckoning them to be where they actually belong - not corrupting your life, but *on the cross*. This is the way to victory; this is the way of the Spirit and the way of faith. For this reason it is written, "This I say then; Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." **Gal. 5:16**.

THE FLESH IS CRUCIFIED

In the book, *Two Realms*, we have taken much care to describe the flesh, showing what it is, how it operates, and in what way the whole world with everything in it depends upon the five senses of the flesh for its very existence. We have seen that all who live after the flesh find death to be their only reward. But now the truth is made plain before us that *the flesh* with all its affections and lusts was nailed to the cross with our Lord Jesus Christ when He died so long ago. Just as certainly as the death of Christ is an historic fact, so also it is an historic fact that I died with Him, my old nature died with Him, and my flesh with all its affections and lusts was nailed to the cross with Him then. In realization of this indisputable fact I stand in utter amazement as I behold the vain efforts of millions of Christians who for centuries have vainly tried to somehow muster enough faith to nail the flesh with all its works to the cross and be rid of carnality forever. But this we cannot do. Why try to do what God has already done? Why should I try to attain what God attained for me when He included me, together with my flesh and all my fleshy nature and all the world besides in His son, and, having done so. He crucified Him and all sin and carnality with Him?

If I put a thousand dollars in the pocket of my coat and someone throws the coat into the fire, will I ever have that thousand dollars again? Never! It is gone irretrievably and I will see it no more. And is it not just as true that, when God placed the world in His Son, together with the flesh, the old man, and my very self, He crucified Him? Dare we in unbelief tempt God by saying that all that was included in Him did not die with Him? I tell you, nay! When the Son of God was crucified, I was crucified; my old man (Adamic nature) was crucified; my flesh was crucified; and even the laws that governed me under the old realm were nailed to His cross. Col. 2:14. It is by faith and confidence in what God has done for us that the victory is ours. It is when our hearts are assured that God did this great work at the cross that we begin our *reckoning* that we are *dead* indeed *to sin*, but alive unto God.

THE OPERATION OF GOD

There is a beautiful statement made in **Col. 2:12**: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the *operation of God*, who raised Him from the dead." Crucifixion, burial, and resurrection are all the operation of God and it is in the *operation* of God that we are asked to place our confidence. We are to have confidence in what *God did*, not in what we do or what we can accomplish by what we imagine to be faith. God Himself has done this mighty work. It was His operation at the cross of Christ. Our confidence in what God did, the operation of God, is the very foundation stone of our faith. Here our reckoning begins. Upon this rock we stand to proclaim to ourselves, to God, and if need be to principalities and powers, "I am crucified with Christ." I *am* crucified because I *was* crucified. My old nature *is* crucified because it *was* crucified at Calvary. My flesh *is* crucified because it *was* crucified when He was crucified.

Henceforth our whole outlook becomes new. If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creation*. Old things *have* passed away, and, behold, all things have become new.

It is the cross that *writes finis* to the old. It is the resurrection that opens wide the gates to the new. Nothing of the old can possibly pass by the cross nor enter into the realm where all things are become new. Identification with His death spells the end to all that is old. Identification with His resurrection proclaims the beginning of all that is new. No man can live the crucified life until he reckons with absolute assurance that, when Christ died, he died with Him in Him. No man can live the resurrected life until he reckons with absolute assurance that, when Christ rose, he rose *in him* and *with him*. Henceforth, if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creation*. Old things are passed away and, behold, all things are become new.

BORN OF THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED

When Nicodemus spoke with our Lord Jesus Christ on that memorable night when he came to inquire the way that leads to the kingdom of God, he was given a statement so revolutionary that he was stunned into awkward questioning by the daring truth of it. He was not told of a life that had to be made over or of efforts that had to be made on his part that he might attain the kingdom of God and be found worthy to enter it; he was told of a completely *new life*, a completely new generation. Except a man be born again, he could not see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was a realm he had not heard of before. Men born of flesh and blood could not enter it, but only men born of the Spirit. Except a man be born *of the spirit*, he could not see the kingdom nor understand it, much less enter into it. All men are the seed of Adam. *The first* Adam was given power to generate a whole race *after the flesh*, the level of death unto which he had fallen. The *last* Adam was given power to generate a new race, a new creation, *after the Spirit*. Two dreadful statements are made concerning the first Adam and all his generation after the flesh: First, 'in Adam all die', and second, 'if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die'. But of the *last* Adam, Jesus Christ, the Head of the new creation, it is said, "*in Christ* shall all be made alive." And again, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Your birth in the flesh as a child of Adam fitted you only to live as a dying man in a corruptible and dying creation, for in Adam all die; but the birth from heaven is a spiritual birth of which the last Adam, Jesus Christ, is the eternal Author and Finisher. *In Christ* shall all be made alive.

In that marvelous fiat at the opening of John's gospel - "In the beginning was *the Word*, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" - much more is involved than that which meets the casual eye. *The Word* here is in the Greek *the Logos*. In the beginning was the Logos. We do not have a word in English that is the direct equivalent of Logos. In fact, it is well nigh impossible to express its meaning by even the use of a sentence or a paragraph. The *Logos* is the *Word spoken*, but it is more than that. It is the *living spoken Word*, and yet more than that it is a living person speaking a living word. Dr. Adam dark says it should remain untranslated. It was *the Logos* who spoke the words, "Let there be light," and there was light. It was *the Logos* who before the tomb of Lazarus said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he came forth.

Peter in his epistle used the word *Logos* when he said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word (Logos)* of God, which *liveth* and *abideth* forever." The corruptible seed is the seed of Adam by which we are born after the flesh. The incorruptible seed is the *Logos*, the living, speaking Word, by which we are born from above, a new creation after the Spirit. "*All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord (the Logos), endureth forever. And this is the word {Logos} which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" **1 Pet. 1:23-25.**

Identification with Christ in the cross ends all that belongs to the Adam generation. Identification with Him in the resurrection is the beginning of the new creation. We will need revelation to grasp it, but the *new birth* is actually the beginning of the resurrection. By it we are raised to newness of life. Through the operation of God we become a new creation, born not after the flesh but after the Spirit, born of the incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever. Reckon yourselves dead to the old creation after the flesh but alive as members of the new creation after the Spirit. As everything about the Adamic creation savored of the flesh and ended in death, so now everything of the new creation savors of the Spirit and is a river of eternal life. It is not wisdom or patience or holiness or faith that you need. It is Christ. From henceforth, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God; and behold the greatness of the Father's good pleasure that, in that place where once Adam's fallen creation, born after the flesh, lay dying, now should reign the many brethren of the new creation, born of the eternal *Logos*, a race of in-Christed men.

CHAPTER TWO THE CROSS AND THE DEATH OF SELF

The moment any man identifies himself with the cross of Christ, he enters into an entirely new realm. He has passed from death *across to life*. He has renounced his citizenship in this present evil world and all his allegiance to it to become a citizen of the eternal realm. Because in Christ he died, he has become part of the eternal and can never more die. He has seen the precious promises of God in Christ our Lord and, having embraced them, he has become a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth, for "they who say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." **Heb. 11:14-16.**

Until we are identified with the cross of Christ, we are citizens of this present evil age. This is the world and this is the country to which we belong. We are citizens of it; we feel at home in it. We speak its language; we covet its ways; and perhaps it is not strange that we desire to remain as we are. But, when the eye of faith has caught sight of that better country, we become restless until we partake of our new and heavenly citizenship, God's heavenly country, a realm whose inhabitants are part of the eternal and cannot die. Borne from the perfume of earth's drooping lilies to the realm where flowers never fade, we become citizens of a better country, a heavenly sphere, a place where old things pass away and, behold, all things become new. It is here at the great divide of the cross that the saints of God learn the full force of the message. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake (by identifying himself with Christ) shall find it." Here at the cross the corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, and, in dying, it brings forth fruit to life eternal. He who remains on earth's side of the cross of Christ will find his life to be a fading leaf that in the autumn time will wither and pass away with all the fashion of this age. In saving his life, he has lost it. It is not the seed that is preserved in the bin that brings forth fruit unto life eternal, but the seed that falls into the ground and dies. The man who embraces the cross of Christ is the man who, by losing his life, has saved it. In giving his life away, he has kept it unto life eternal. In the natural world that which is kept is saved and that which is given away is lost; but in the realm of God that which is kept is lost and that which is yielded up is saved.

O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to hide from thee:
I lay in dust life's glory dead
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall *endless be*.

How well the apostle John wrote, "*The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*" **1 John 2:17.** And how splendidly did the translator, Philips, render the passage in these words: "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time. For the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is *part of the permanent* and cannot die."

The permanent is the *eternal*. And God is the *eternal*. The man who has reckoned himself crucified with Christ has shared in His death; and he who has shared in His death is in like manner a partaker here and now of the life that raised Jesus from the dead, a sharer and a partaker of His resurrection. I call all heaven and earth to witness the truth of these words: He who has shared in Christ's death and shared in His resurrection has shared in Him as well. He has become a member of the *in Christ* company. He has become bone of His resurrected bone, flesh of His resurrected flesh, spirit of His resurrected spirit. Being one with Christ, he has become part of and one with His mystical and eternal body. So one with Christ has he become that he no

longer considers himself in any way apart from Christ. In holy awe he embraces the solemn but wonderful truth, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live: *yet not I*, but Christ, liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Who can frustrate such marvelous grace of God? How can that which is formed say to Him that formed it, "Why hast thou made me thus?" This is God's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

He who writes these lines testifies to those who read them that it is eternally settled in heaven that all who by faith have died with Christ have now become *part of the eternal*. Neither can they die any more. Their bodies may sleep in the dust as they wait for the morning, but death with its sting has passed away, and victory has been snatched from the yawning jaws of the tomb. Death's cruel proboscis, filled with the deadly venom of sin, can sting us never more. "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." **John 5:24**. Moffatt in his translation of this vital passage of truth uses these illuminating words: "Truly, truly I tell you, he who listens to My word and believes Him that sent Me has eternal life; he will incur no sentence of judgment; he has *already passed from death across to life*." He has passed from death *across to life*! My God, My God!

What words are these that Thou hast left us to believe? Since, then, we have passed from death *across to life*. is it any wonder that we should discover ourselves to be citizens of the true and eternal realm? By the cross of Christ we have "crossed over". We have passed from the realm where all is death to the realm where all is life. Our citizenship in this present age has been cancelled and we have taken out a new citizenship in the eternal and undying realm. For this reason Paul wrote, saying, "Your conversation is in heaven"; and again, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Many people who read these lines were once citizens of another country. Many of you have put a borderline or an ocean between the land of your birth and the land of your adoption. Many of you were of different speech and different custom, but you crossed over. You changed your citizenship and your allegiance from one country to another. You renounced your former citizenship in favor of the new one you were embracing. This by way of illustration is what we have done in the spiritual realm when by the cross of Christ we cancelled our allegiance to this present world system, its customs and its conversation, to become partakers of a new and heavenly citizenship, speakers of its new language, revelators of the beauty of its customs, the justice of its laws, the wonders of its truth, and the glory of its endless life. It is the cross of Christ that makes the difference. The cross is forever the dividing line between all that is old and all that is new, separating the old life from the new, the old citizenship from the new, and the old allegiance from the new. It is the cross of Christ that divides between the old nature and the new. It separates the life that is after the flesh from the life that is after the Spirit. There the old life dies and the new life in Christ begins. There we bid adieu to the flesh, the world, and the devil to live after the Spirit, the New World, and Jesus Christ. There and there alone old things pass away and *all things* become new. The way of the cross leads home.

It would be impossible to enumerate the eternal benefits vouchsafed to those who with painstaking and prayer consider the worth of their heavenly citizenship. Whenever a man entertains the thought of changing his citizenship, he must spend hours or days or even years in consideration of it. Could a Belgian, a German, or an Englishman lightly become a citizen of China or India without much thought, or could a Chinese become an American without consideration of the vast changes in culture and language?

Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself has said,
This is my home, my native land?
Whose heart has ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he has turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?

Yet there must be no divided allegiance when our citizenship is transferred from one nation of earth to another. The story is told that Emperor William of Germany once refused to give audience to a prominent American citizen who presented himself as a German-American. Refusing the audience, he said, "I know Americans; I

know Germans; but *German-Americans* I =do not know." Do not pass that statement off as the haughty words of some stuffy old drone. There is much more truth in them than we imagine. I am speaking neither lies nor fiction when I declare that the vast multitude of professing Christians today are *Adam-Christ* Christians. While they are claiming to be crucified with Christ and citizens of His realm, they insist on maintaining their connections with the realm of Adam. They are like the seven sons of Sceva who tried to cast out a demon by saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches to come out of him." To this the evil spirit replied, "Paul I know, and Jesus I know, but who are you?" That is indeed a very good question. Who are you? What is a German-American, a Chinese-Indian, or a French-Canadian? There is no such thing though we are forever using the term. With great sadness of heart I am convinced that the whole church system with all its profession, its exaltation of gifts, its claims of revelation and authority with God, manifests continually that Adam-Christ relationship. God knows Adam and all his citizens. God knows Christ and all His citizens. But who, pray tell, are you?

The hour has come in this the end of the age when we must declare ourselves citizens of one realm or the other. God Himself is dividing the tractable sheep from the ornery goats. We must belong to Christ or belong to Adam. We must dwell either on earth's side of the cross or on heaven's side. We cannot serve God and Mammon (the god of riches). We cannot love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind while dancing around the golden calf, shouting, "These be thy gods, O Israel."

How easy it is for people to deny their Christian profession by the things they do! We are neither saved by the good we do nor lost by the bad we have done, but, if salvation is anything at all, it will vitally affect all that we do henceforth. Otherwise we have gained nothing whatsoever. We do not become crucified with Christ because of the evil we suddenly stop or deny ourselves, but, once a man is truly identified with Christ in His cross, there will be a vast change in everything that concerns his daily life. Otherwise how could it possibly be said that *old things* pass away and all things become new? Those who possess the understanding of the natural mind can never differentiate between the uselessness of a life filled with do's and don'ts and the beauty of a life whose joy it is to please the Father because of the indwelling Christ. Christianity is not an imitation of Christ; it is the life of Christ in me. It is the *not I but Christ* life. This is the place of victory and this the only life that is pleasing to God. Centuries ago David, the king of Israel, said, "*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*" **Psa. 101:3**. He refused to look at evil things, not to attain a crucified life, but because he had attained it.

Can there be found in all the universe a more possessive, blinding, or deceiving devil than the devil of self? Our Lord Jesus Christ once called the people and His disciples together to press home to their needy hearts a truth so profound that I greatly fear it has been lost, misunderstood, and overlooked from the beginning of time unto this very hour. This is the truth He told them on that day: "*Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny Himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*" **Mark 8:34**. "Let him deny himself!" Let him deny *self*. It is self, self, always *self that* stands between you and true discipleship. It is the friendly hand of *self that* holds you back from your cross and refuses to let you take it up daily to follow Christ. My brother, have you ever listened to the mocking crowd who stood at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ? Then listen for a moment to their vain and blasphemous clamor as they cry, "He saved others; *Himself* He cannot save." With great solemnity of heart and mind we must now aver that never before nor since have the heckling voices of a blind and senseless rabble spoken greater truth than this. "He saved others; *Himself* He could not save." You cannot save others and save yourself as well. Would God that those who preach the gospel of Christ would learn this divine secret: that it is the *self-life* that stands between them and the full manifestation of the purpose of God in their lives. It is *self* that stands between men and the *will of God*. It is *self that* stands between them and the cross, between them and God, and, if such a contradiction of terms is possible, we may now say your *self is the* greatest enemy of yourself.

The first law in all the world is self-preservation. Tiny insects almost too small to be seen scurry off into hiding to protect and save themselves. The instinct of every animal of the field and every bird of the air is to save and protect itself, and in man, too, perhaps above all other, is the ever present instinct to protect and preserve himself. This preservation of life and limb is a God-given instinct in all creatures great and small, but in man, alas, it does not end with the simple preservation of life and limb, but with miserly covetousness it struggles to preserve all evil tendencies as well, which must be consigned to the cross of Christ if we would be His disciples in truth.

In his remarkable book, *Born Crucified*, the author, L. E. Maxwell, makes the following potent observation: Quote: Even though the believer has emerged from the muddle and mixedness of Romans 7 through Paul's command, 'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin', the fact remains that he will discover many ways in which *self* seeks satisfaction through the as yet unredeemed spheres of his being. The flesh, the body, all our mortal coil, is evidently still present in Romans 8. That chapter presents many ways in which mortification must set in. The victorious believer will become aware of many forms of *self*, which must yet be dealt with. We shall discover in our service for Christ, self-confidence and self-esteem; in the slightest suffering, self-saving and self-pity; in the least misunderstanding, self-defense and self-vindication; in our station in life, self-seeking and self-centeredness; in the smallest trials, self-inspection and self-accusation; in the daily routine, self-pleasing and self-choosing; in our relationships, self-assertiveness and self-respect; in our education, self-boasting and self-expression; in our desires, self-indulgence and self-satisfaction; in our successes, self-admiration and self-congratulation; in our failures, self-excusing and self-justification; in our spiritual attainments, self-righteousness and self-complacency; in our public ministry, self-reflection and self-glory; in life as a whole, self-love and selfishness. *The flesh is an "I" specialist*. These are but a few of the multiplied forms of the flesh to be discovered and taken to the cross. In the palace of Wurtzung hangs a hall of glass. It is called the hall of a thousand mirrors. You enter. A thousand hands are stretched out to meet you, a thousand smiles greet your smile, a thousand eyes will weep when you weep; but they are all your hands, your smiles, your tears. What a picture of selfish man! Self all around, self-multiplied, and self-deceived. End quote.

Centuries ago Paul, by the divine wisdom given unto him, wrote these words of truth: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please *ourselves*. — For even Christ *pleased not Himself*; but, as it is written. The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. — Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God..." **Rom. 15: 1, 3, 5, 6**. Think diligently of what the apostle has told us here in speaking thus: "Even Christ pleased not *Him-Self*; as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Oh, how I hate to be reproached for that of which I am not guilty, and how quickly either you or I will spring to *self-defense* to declare our justification and our righteousness! But our blessed Lord did not so. He permitted Himself to be reproached and maligned with the guilt and sin of the whole world, and He, bearing it upon His own innocent head, was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Yet, while all these reproaches, which rightly belonged to you and me, were falling upon Him, He raised not His voice in *self-defense* nor did He please *Hun-self* by proving His innocence and our guilt.

May God almighty grant henceforth that, when on occasion we would valiantly spring to the defense of self, we would remember instead the *meaning of the cross* and cherish the day when self was marched down the via dolorosa to be crucified with Christ and rendered dead to all the ailments of the Adamic creation. It is when the diseases of the Adamic nature would descend from the cross to beset our souls and defile our spirits that the hour of reckoning begins. Here the words of Paul flood our beings with victory, "Reckon ye also *yow-selves* dead to sin, but alive unto God." "If Thou be the Son of God," the rabble shouted, "*come down from the cross.*" **Matt. 27:40**. That, oh saint of the Lord, is the world's vain reasoning. These are the words of men who have their portion only in this life. But unto you, oh sons of God, let the message be given, yea, let it echo eternally in your heart, that, if you are a *son of God*, your *self* must remain upon the cross and come not down at all; for, if you would have your part in Christ, all that is *self* must die. Yea, verily, it is as true with you as it was with Him that, if you would save others, your *self* cannot be saved. From this very setting of *self upon* the cross, as clear as a vesper bell ringing throughout the ages comes the apostles' victorious testimony, "*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*" **Gal. 2:20**. Oh, God! What wealth of truth lies hidden here, that he who spares not *self but* nails him to the accursed tree shall find life abundant and eternal from out the tomb! That which thou sowest is not quickened *except it die*. And thou sowest not that body that shall be, for that which is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption, that which is sown in dishonor is raised in glory, and that which is sown in weakness is raised in power. It is not I, *but Christ*. My ugly serpent *self was* crucified with Christ and from the cross it fell with Him into the ground that that which was sown in dishonor

might be raised in His glory and likeness, "for thou sowest not the body which shall be, but bare grain, but God giveth it a body as it has pleased Him." **1 Cor. 15:37, 38.** Let every son of God herald the message, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; *yet not I, but Christ.*"

It is God and God alone who can point out the wretchedness of self. Self, weak, feeble, selfish self, will never condemn itself. Even the most useless of men are often full of self-esteem. The most dissolute and unbelieving of men exult in many forms of self-righteousness. The most criminal of men is full of self-vindication. And how disgusting are those vain-glorious preachers who leave their listeners more enamored with *themselves* than with the Lord they profess to proclaim! We will not have to search long to find any number of men and women who, while loudly proclaiming their complete dedication to God, are found at close range to be full of self and self-ambition. Times without number have preachers and people alike come crying, "We want God, brother, we want God. We want God at any cost." But when you tell them the way they must take - always the way of the cross - they go away in our day as the rich young ruler did in his, because the way of the cross runs completely counter to the riches they love so dearly. Sonship they want, but the cross they shun. In the outward cross where Jesus died they glory, but in the cross where their *self* would die they glory not at all. They hear the words, "If Thou be the Son of God, save *Thy self* and come down from the cross," but in attempting this they shun the cross and forfeit their sonship. It is he who loses his life that saves it and keeps it unto life eternal.

It is easy enough to sing, "I'll go with Him through the garden," but do those lusty singers bestir themselves from their comfortable beds at two or three a.m. when the Spirit whispers, "Wait on Me?" I greatly fear the Spirit's voice has been so often drowned by their sleepiness and love of self that His call has grown faint and dim and is heard no more. Time there is for friends, for visiting, for pleasure, for tickling their ears with endless frothy sermons, time to absorb the wind of rot and filth, madness, lies, hate, violence, unbelief, and make-believe that daily and nightly with phantom figure fill their parlor with the insanity of the carnal mind, thence to issue forth upon the world as a whirlwind of violence, assassination, unbelief, and immorality such as the world has never known. Shame on them that the Spirit's voice became so dim that they could lightly build again the thing which they once destroyed to make themselves transgressors. (Gal. 2:18) Shame on them that they have *come down* from the cross and brought these evils down with them.

But no man can be a Son of God and save *him-self*. That is impossible. Well do I know that some who read these truths will cast them aside and possibly cast me aside for teaching them, but, if this be my cross, I shall not descend from it to grasp their hand. "Now is the judgment of this world: *Now, now, now, shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be crucified (lifted up from the earth), will draw all men unto me.*" **John 12:31, 32.** Oh foolish man, believest thou that the judgment is reserved for some far off day when Christ has said, "Wow is the judgment of the world; *now* shall the prince of this world be cast out?" The time has come for the "I" to be lifted up and crucified, even in this day when above all days the ambition of every man is ever to save *him-self* from the cross. Sons of God they would hope to be, but *self they* are determined to save.

When the hour of the crucifixion of our Lord drew near, Jesus began "to show unto His disciples how that He must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*" **Matt. 16:21-24.** Both self and Satan dread and hate the cross. They will run to the right hand or to the left to avoid it. They will turn their backs upon it or try to climb over it, but never will they embrace it. The cross is the death knell of self, and self is the arch enemy of the cross. The cross is the eternal undoing of the self-life but from it the Christ-life is born. The cross is death to the "I", but it is the beginning of the "*not I, but Christ.*"

When our Lord began to show His disciples that He would soon go to the cross to suffer and be killed, Peter began to rebuke Him. Where did He find the senseless courage that would dare to *rebuke* the Lord? Well, the answer seems dreadfully and awfully evident - far, far too clear to be a comfort to any of us. He got his courage as well as his thoughts from Satan himself. Well does this enemy of God, this adversary of redemption and of all mankind, know that, in that sacred and holy hour when the "I" is crucified and nailed to the cross, all his power and all his authority and sway in that life is broken forever. His hope is thwarted and his work destroyed

in every life that has been identified with Christ in His cross. Once a man has become identified with the cross of Christ and the "I" of self has been reckoned in death with Him, then shall it be even as our Lord in omniscient wisdom has declared: "The prince of this world cometh and findeth *nothing in me.*" Satan has no power at all when *self is* gone. Then he has no more power in your life or mine than he had in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the "I" is crucified with Christ, from then on it is *not I, but Christ.*

How unspeakably wonderful the hour for any man when Satan, coming to tempt and destroy him, shall find *nothing* in him upon which he can lay hold, for all that is of the world has been crucified with Christ! Every evil with which he tempted him in times past has been reckoned dead with Christ. The lust of the flesh is mortified. The lust of the eye is dead. The pride of life is nailed to the cross. What then can Satan ever find in the man who has thus been identified with his Lord? Upon what can he lay hold to tempt and destroy since all things of Adam have been crucified with Christ?

Is it any wonder, then, that the friendly hand of self, yea, the friendly hand of Satan, was so quickly extended to withhold our Lord from the cross? "This shall not be done unto Thee," said Peter. "You must not talk that way, Lord. You must save yourself from the cross. Don't go to Jerusalem. Don't let them take you. Let us fight against it with the sword, if necessary, or call twelve legions of angels to save yourself from the cross." Save yourself, save *your-self is* the eternal cry! Escape the cross! Turn aside! Turn back! You are far too good to die! "Thou savorest not the things which be of God, but those things which be of men," was the reply of the Master. Think of it, man of God! Think of it, sister in Christ! The friendly voice of your best friends, the affectionate exhortations of your closest relatives, the kindly advice of your trusted pastor, the experienced word of those who are older and wiser would all seek to turn you aside from the cross and bid you save *self.* You may seek to save others, *but yourself you* cannot save. If you would be a Son of God, you cannot and must not "come down from the cross." How simple it would be in hunger to turn the stones into bread! How delightful, when your sonship is challenged, to prove it by casting yourself unharmed from the temple's pinnacle! How easy to gain the whole world by simply bowing down to the wishes of the devil to satisfy the pitiful cry of *self's* remorseless ambition! Simon Peter was not one to learn his lessons easily. Even the biting sharpness of the Lord's rebuke failed to sink deeply into his spirit. So intent was he upon saving the Lord from the cross that, when the rabble came to arrest the Savior, the disciples asked, "**Shall we smite with the sword?**" **Luke 22:49.** And Peter, filled with impatience and wrath, disdainful to await a reply, drew his sword and manfully began to defend the Lord from His cross. What infinite loss would we all have suffered had he succeeded or had twelve legions of angels descended to deliver Him on that day!

It can be neither human imagination nor the wisdom of the carnal mind that now warns with no uncertain sound that we are at this moment in the closing hours of the age. In the history of the world there have been many days of transcending importance and eternal significance, each in order bringing forth from the womb of itself the tender bud of a new era in the plan of God. Of unspeakable significance were the events of Eden. The impact of the days of Noah and of the flood that destroyed the sordid earth cannot be weighed in the scales of human understanding. The significance of the call of Abraham cannot be measured by the yard stick of human thought, nor yet the giving of the law by the natural mind. How much less, then, can mortal man with mortal mind understand the wisdom of the Father in giving Christ, the Son of God, to die for sin that all who believe should be justified in his sight and that His blood should cleanse us from our sins, (for without the shedding of blood there is *no remission* of sins)! And "**if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**" **Heb. 9:13, 14.** No man born of woman in any age, regardless of his knowledge or inspiration in these eternal things, can comprehend or encompass the fathomless depths of the Father's wisdom.

But now the loose *ends* of the ages (see 1 Cor. 10:11, "ends of the ages" [world]) are being drawn into one cord of divine wisdom and revelation and the most significant event and climacteric act of God is about to transpire. The age in which we have lived for two thousand years is about to terminate in a sudden flash of calamity and judgment just as all preceding ages have done and from the struggles of its convulsive travail will come forth the long-awaited kingdom of God. From the tumult and upheaval that is encompassing the whole world in this present hour will come forth the order of the kingdom. From man's reign of sin and inequity will come forth the righteousness and equity of the sons of God. From the ashes of the rule of the carnal mind will arise the justice of the mind of Christ. Instead of the government of selfish politicians, ever intent on satisfying

their own ends and seeking their own benefits, will come the selfless reign of the sons of God, filling the earth with justice and equity that nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

Jesus Christ is coming again, and with Him will come all the sons of God who by His grace have come into His image throughout the ages. These sons are the body of the Son of God. This is the in *Christ* company. This is the fullness of Christ. This body is not the bride as so many have supposed. The bride has not yet been formed. She will be formed after the last Adam is complete, for Adam was *first* formed, *then* Eve. The body of the bridegroom, *which is Jesus Christ with all his brothers*, must first come to completeness in this age. Afterward shall the bride be formed that at the marriage supper of the Lamb *she* may become the body and they, the sons, the head. Every bachelor has his own head and also his own body, but when he takes a bride, then *he* becomes the *head* and *she* becomes *the body*. How wonderful are Thy works. Oh God, and Thy ways past finding out!

Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory of the age which is to come. To reign with Christ and with Him to usher in the magnificence of an age that has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the purpose of God, and the earnest longing and expectation of *all creation* is a prize for which we willingly lay down our lives. Yea, it is a reward so precious that for its sake all who see its glory will gladly abandon every influence that would deter them from the cross, and brush aside every friendly hand that would restrain them from death to self and life age-lasting in Him. Words fail me, people of God, to lay before you the truth of all these things. I am in a strait to explain how dire is our need to strip off the grave clothes of self, how urgent our need to consign self to the cross - self with all its earthly bondage, with every earthly weight and every sin that doth so easily beset us. The patience of God is needed to run the race that is set before us as we without ceasing look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was *set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

The darkness of church tradition has blinded the minds of the people of God, causing them to lose their way and come, staggering in blindness, to the end of the age, totally unprepared and unmindful of the true plan of the ages. Would God that the Holy Spirit would impress upon the minds of all who read these things that earth and heaven, men and angels, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl are waiting in the shadows for the unfolding of God's kingdom which He has promised since the world began. But far beyond this, would God that every man who speaks of sonship having fixed his hope in Christ, might now be gripped by the almost incredible truth that Christ's kingdom will be ushered in by the *sons of God*, joint heirs with Christ, men and women who have been changed into His likeness, people who have cast off the works of the flesh, received His mind, delighted in His purpose, and, having slain the fearful Goliath of self and consigned him forever to the cross, have delivered themselves from this evil age that they might reign with Him in that age which is next to come.

The dreadful events that are happening in the world day after day herald with unmistakable voices the certain truth that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Violence is so frequent, and so common has become its dread dereliction that it is being accepted by many as a *way of life* that is scarcely worthy of further concern. Men's hearts have become so hardened to it that they are matter-of-fact about it. Scarcely a newscast is read without the use of the word *violence*. No day passes without some new terror dismaying the hearts of the people. In God's word you have certainly read, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day when the Son of man cometh." No man familiar with the scripture needs to be reminded that in the days of Noah the earth was *filled with violence*. Gen. 6:11. The end of the age is rushing in upon us.

The signs of earth and the heralds of heaven proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand. But the sons of God are a different breed. They are not of this world; neither do they belong to this age. They are in the world, but they are not of it. They are citizens of another realm temporarily stranded here. Their citizenship is in the heavenlies. Their hopes and aspirations are in the age to come, for here they have no continuing city. They are strangers and pilgrims, dwelling in tents and tabernacles, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, for God hath prepared for them a kingdom.

During the pioneer days on the western prairies many of the early settlers had homesteaded on land that was not suitable for farming. After many fruitless years great tracts of land were taken over by the government to be fenced in for community pastures. Whenever a settler, whose land lay within this fenced area, did not wish to sell his land, another fence was erected around his farm to keep the ranging animals from damaging his farm

or crops, so that while he *was fenced in* the great pasture, he was also *fenced out* of it. I think that is the way we are in this present world. We *fenced in*, and here for a while within the confines of this world system we must remain. We have no control over that; but we are also *fenced out* by virtue of the blood of Christ, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and, finally and irrevocably, by our identification with Christ in His cross.

Of course you are busy! Certainly you have to earn your living! You do, indeed, have to pay your taxes and send your children to school! But let me assure you that here and now in this present evil age there is a life hidden with Christ in God that makes your citizenship in the heavenly realm a certainty. There is a realm in Him at your right hand, yea, nearer than hands or feet, where you can live and move and order your life according to the everlasting laws of the kingdom of God to which you have come and to which you belong.

The apostle Paul taught us that we are *ambassadors*. 2 Cor. 5:20. Now an ambassador is a man sent from one country to another. He is *never* a citizen of the country where he dwells. The Japanese ambassador to London is not British; he is Japanese. Furthermore he has diplomatic immunity from the laws of the country where he resides. He cannot be searched, arrested, nor taken into custody. We, therefore, as ambassadors of heaven live for a time in this age and in this world, but our allegiance and our citizenship are in the eternal world. Our Lord Himself was fully aware of this when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The word *world* in scripture usually means *age*. His kingdom did not belong to the age of law nor did it belong to the age of grace, but the coming age is the age of the kingdom of God. That will be *His age* and the Sabbath of rest.

What, you ask, has this fact to do with the teaching of the cross? What has it to do with the crucifixion of the self-life and the abundant fullness of the kingdom of God? The answer must surely be that they have everything in common, nor can they in any wise be separated. Think, oh man of God, upon this divine and indisputable fact. God, omniscient and almighty, does nothing without reason and purpose. All His works are in wisdom; all His ways are full of understanding. If you will now earnestly consider the purpose of God for the age to come, your spiritual mind will be flooded with the understanding of the Almighty and you will see in the clearest light why it is that the Father in heaven is preparing a people who are in truth the living representation of Jesus Christ, God's first begotten Son. Before the all-wise God ever formed a man or breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, He spoke to His Son whom He had begotten before the ages began, saying, "*Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, and let him have dominion ...*" That man should have dominion over all the earth and all things in the earth was the purpose of God before ever the world began. That divine purpose has never been changed nor will it ever be, for it is as immutable as the God who made it.

God, in whom dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, knew beforehand that the man He would make and place in the garden would fall into sin and become a slave to himself, his physical flesh, and his carnal mind. Was it not of this very bondage to his own corruption that Paul wrote, saying, "*The creature was made subject to vanity (futility and uselessness), not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children (sons) of God.*" **Rom. 8:20, 21**

Let no man vainly think that the past six thousand years in which the world and all mankind have been enslaved by carnality and ruled by the god of self has no place or purpose in the plan of God. Such purposeless vanity as this has no part in the heart of the God of all purpose. I am sure I speak the truth when I say that our heavenly Father in His love and wisdom has for six thousand years been teaching us by His word, by design, and by life-long experience that *self and selfishness* are the root and branches of every evil in life. *Self* is the destruction of kings and presidents, of empires and nations, of fathers and mothers, children and homes. Well did Paul say, "The love of money is the root of all evil." And why are men and women so madly in love with money? Because with it they hope to bestow upon *self* everything that the carnal mind can conceive or desire. Because of the love and lust for money men err from the truth and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. The wealth that self has lusted after as the fulfillment of all its joys has turned to rend them and destroy their hope of sonship in ages to come.

The past six dispensations have been filled with the fruitlessness of the self-life. But the seventh dispensation is God's Sabbath of rest. It is the dispensation of the kingdom of God. In that blessed age the sons of God will reign with Christ over the entire world. No corner of earth will be out of their jurisdiction. No mighty king or

dictator will reign in defiance, and no iron curtains will bar the progress of the King of kings and Lord of lords. No selfishness, greed, or inequity will exist in all Christ's vast dominions. There will be no war and no curse, and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Hear Oh man of God, and give earnest heed, ye sons! It is now in this dreadful age of greed and selfishness, violence and spoil, that the Father all-glorious is finding a people who has nailed *self* and *selfishness* to the cross of Christ. He is picking them out one by one, setting them apart as sheep are set apart from goats and as wheat is separated from the tares. These are being prepared to reign with Him in that kingdom of *self-lessness*, even the kingdom of God. The self and greed that has reigned in the earth for six thousand years will not exist in that wonderful day of the kingdom of God, the seventh dispensation, the day when God and all His creation will rest from the labor and travail of the past. Make no mistake about this: should one carnal mind be among the sons of God in that day, the earth would be brought to the same curse as it is now. But such cannot be, for all who will reign with Him have passed by the way of the cross, delivered forever from self. "Not I, but Christ" is their eternal theme. *The way of the cross has led us home.*

CHAPTER THREE THE INTRINSIC POWER OF THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS

All Bible truth is great and precious. No costly gem of earth can compare its value to the priceless worth of truth. Truth and love are two of the greatest powers in the world and, while they walk hand in hand, they can neither be refuted nor overcome. Truth without love is sometimes intolerant and can be oppressive and even persecuting as may be seen in those scripture quoting Jews who in malice and envy brought an adulterous woman to Jesus (John 8:2-11), but truth and love together as was manifested there in Jesus are wiser than a serpent and harmless as a dove. Where mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other, truth springs out of the earth and righteousness looks down from heaven. Then the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before us and shall set us in the way of His steps.

Truth is much more than a blessed virtue. Truth is a person and that person is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "***I am the way, the truth, and the life,***" Jesus said (**John 14:6**), and no man who ever lived has been able to gainsay that claim. Falsehood and error arise in their momentary impermanence only to vanish as a shadow away, but truth, like love, *never faileth* and will abide as a mighty rock when heaven and earth have passed away and time shall be no more. It was Goethe who said, "It is easier to perceive error than to find truth, for the former lies on the surface and is easily seen while the latter lies in the depths where few are willing to search for it."

In the vast gamut of truth embraced by the Holy Scriptures no part nor phase thereof is in any way more outstanding or dominant than the truth concerning the precious blood of Jesus Christ. This great and eternal verity shines with ever increasing brilliance, blazing as an imperishable sun of righteousness from Eden's perfumed gardens of the long ago to the jasper walls of the New Jerusalem soon to come, from Adam's covering of skin and Abel's humble sacrifice of the firstfruits of his flock to the very throne of God itself where living creatures, glorious in power and might, announce the presence of the Lamb that was slain, who is worthy to take the book and open the seven seals thereof. Before Him heavenly beings fall in worship, singing the everlasting song so old and yet so new, "***Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,***" **Rev. 5:9,10**. This glad song of joy they hymned before the feet of their Creator because through the *blood of the Lamb* and the word of their testimony Satan, their foe, was defeated and forever cast down. **Rev. 12:11**.

In a manner peculiar to God all truth is clothed in mystery. The greater and more important the truth the greater the mystery it unfolds. Even in this natural realm blood is undoubtedly among the most profound mysteries of the universe. Its hidden secrets are so great that I know not how anyone could ponder its composition and life-giving ministry and yet fail to see the mastermind of an omniscient creator. In one simple statement of truth the word of God clearly shows that *the blood is the life* of all flesh. "***But the flesh with the life thereof, which is the***

blood thereof, shall ye not eat." **Gen. 9:4.** This profound statement is confirmed by the miracle of modern science in the following pronouncement: "Blood is the *life stream* of the human body. No part of the body can live without this red fluid. Blood carries oxygen and food to every part of the body. It carries carbon dioxide away from the lungs and waste products away from other body organs. It also fights disease germs that enter the body."

An adult of one hundred sixty pounds has about five quarts of blood. A child of eighty pounds has about half that amount. This life-giving fluid is divided into four main parts - red blood cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. The plasma is a straw-colored liquid making up about fifty-five percent of the blood volume. The other parts of the blood float in the plasma. The blood contains thirty million white cells or corpuscles and one hundred trillion red corpuscles. The blood of the human body flows through an estimated one thousand miles of main arteries, and it is estimated that, if all the blood vessels were laid end to end, they would total one hundred thousand miles in length. The blood, flowing through this vast network of arteries and blood vessels, carries food and life to every part of the body. The liver and kidneys then purify the blood of its wastes and the lungs remove the carbon dioxide and replenish the oxygen. After this purifying process is complete, the blood proceeds again on its life-giving mission to every part of the body.

The heart is the great central pumping station for the blood. It beats seventy times per minute, forty-two hundred times an hour, one hundred thousand times a day, and thirty-seven million times each year. At the age of sixty-five the heart has beat two billion times and at the age of seventy it has lifted by its throbs five hundred thousand tons of blood. A train of tank cars forty miles long would be needed to contain this vast quantity of blood. The complete story of the blood is much too great to be considered further here, but as we contemplate such marvels of God's creation, it is not difficult for us to understand why the Lord has stated so plainly that "the life is in the blood." Nor should we in view of this fact be at a loss to understand the prominence given to the blood throughout the entire plan of God.

Wonderful as is the work and composition of human blood, it is my hope here to direct our thoughts to much higher realms that we may understand at least as well as mortals may how the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purges our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. It has been my blessing of late to have had made real to my heart truth which serves to lift the precious blood of Christ far above a merely natural realm into the realm of the eternal Spirit.

Vast and ever prominent are the teachings of scripture concerning the blood, each in turn pointing to the Lamb of God, whose blood removes the sin of the world. "*Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission.*" **Heb. 9:22.** This important statement shines a ray of heavenly light on every sacrifice of the Old Testament from the humble offering of Abel, who brought the firstlings of his flock to God, to the literal rivers of blood shed in the offerings of Solomon at the dedication of the temple of the Lord. His was an offering so vast and incredible that, except our understanding be lifted completely out of the natural realm, the sheer enormity of the procedure would seem to be insanity. Of the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple, which in all its scintillating glory was no more than a feeble type of that spiritual temple, the body of Christ, that for all eternity will be the habitation of God through the Spirit, it is written: "*And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord. The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord: for there he offered burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings.*" **1 Kings 8:62-64.** Here in this grand dedication of the temple incredible thousands of clean animals were sacrificed and the blood of those beasts of atonement must have flowed in crimson rivers of life.

All the Old Testament's covenants were sealed with blood. When in Eden the Lord made a covenant with fallen Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:14-19), he sealed the covenant by presenting those hapless transgressors with coats of skin (verse 21) to cover their nakedness. This covering robe was a foreshadow of the righteousness of Christ which was to come through His blood, but before such covering could be given them, the life blood of the sacrifice had to be shed that such a garment might be theirs.

In like manner the covenant with Noah was sealed with blood, for Noah, upon coming forth from the ark, built an altar unto the Lord, and "took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." **Gen. 8:20-22.**

The covenant with Abraham was likewise sealed with blood, as was God's covenant with Moses and Israel the night of the Passover. But greatest and most important of all was the covenant of grace, which God made with all the world, sealing the everlasting covenant with *better blood*, even the *precious blood of our Lord and Savior*.

Let it be understood that all the Old Testament ordinances, important as they undoubtedly are, were little more than types and shadows of things, which were to come. 1 Cor. 10:11. The blood of sacrifices which flowed so freely on Israel's altars throughout the Old Testament era were frail, shadowy suggestions of the *better blood* of Christ which was to come, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins. "For the law having a *shadow of good things to come*, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is remembrance made again of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." **Heb. 10:1-4.** Because these sacrifices could not remove sin, it follows therefore that all Old Testament sacrifices of blood were merely *shadows of better things to come*. See also Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5.

Naught of the blood beasts
On Israel's alters slain
Could give the guilty sinner peace
Or wash away his stain.
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler strain
And better blood than they.

The many laws and ordinances such as the washing of pots and cups, the keeping of new moons and Sabbaths, were also shadows of things to come, and because they were only shadows and types, they were done away when Christ the anti-type came to fulfill them, purifying the true vessels of His house, which spiritual vessels we believers are. Col. 2:4-23. Note especially Col. 2:17. Even the priests of the Old Testament, decked in all their marvelous regalia of glory and beauty, were themselves dimly perceptible types and shadows of that greater High Priest who was to come. The priests, who offered gifts and sacrifices according to the law, served unto the *example* and *shadow* of heavenly things. Heb. 8:4,5. They were the shadows. Christ is the body whose reflection they are.

As it is impossible to completely unfold the reams of truth concerning the blood and its ever increasing, ever maturing prominence throughout holy scripture, we will turn aside from that enormous task to concentrate instead on those things that concern the theme of our message - *the precious blood*.

The apostle summed up in one concise statement the things which concern the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament when he left these inspired words for our edification: "The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: *which was a figure for the time then present*, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, *that could not make him that did the service perfect*, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of *good things to come*, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle (the body of Christ), not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of bulls and calves, but *by His own blood* He entered in *once into the holy place*, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling

the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* And for this cause He is the mediator of the *New Testament* (covenant), that *by means of death*, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive *the promise of eternal inheritance.*" **Heb. 9:8-15.**

This passage forcefully exalts the power of the blood of Christ by contrasting it with the powerless blood of Old Testament animal sacrifices. While it was *not possible* for the blood of bulls and of goats to *take away sins* (Heb. 10:4), these sacrifices were offered in faith for the time then being by faithful worshippers looking far into the future to the day when Christ would come and by His precious blood completely remove sin from the universe. Therefore the apostle, reverently writing of these sacrifices, made this blessed observation: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*"

It was impossible for the blood of Old Testament sacrifices to *take away sin* because that blood was *dead blood*. There was no power of life in it; nevertheless because of the faith of the worshippers in that *better blood* which was to come, those animal sacrifices were accepted by God for the time *then present* or for the *time being*, and the worshippers were thus sanctified (Heb. 9:13) because of their faith, and being thus set apart unto God. they patiently awaited the day when the *better blood of God's Son*, in which was life eternal, would not only remove their sin, *but purge their consciences* as well by the *washing of regeneration* and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He has shed on us believers abundantly.

If our spiritual minds can grasp the fact that those Old Testament sacrifices served only to sanctify the worshippers by faith, that is, set them aside unto God, but did not take their sins away because only the blood of Jesus Christ *cleanses* from sin, then we should be able to understand Heb. 9:15, which tells us that Christ is the mediator of the new testament (covenant) and by means of His death the transgressions or *transgressors* of the Old Testament are redeemed. Therefore Christ, *once in the end of the age*, hath appeared to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. Heb. 9:26. What a marvelous climax this is to all sacrifice and offering in that His better blood has put away sin!

Concerning the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ, no greater statement of truth was ever made than that given by Paul in Rom. 3:20-26. It needs much more exposition than I have time here to give it, but we catch the force of his message with one brief explanation and search out its hidden depths more extensively as the Holy Spirit reveals its secrets to our hearts. This is his declaration: "*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*" The deeds of the law with its sacrifices and ordinances could not by themselves justify anyone. The fact is that the law was really given to magnify the knowledge of sin in the world, and in this it did a great and useful work. "*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*" (Both the law and the prophets foretold the coming of the Just One, who would do what the law with its sacraments could never do. That is why Jesus said, "*If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he spoke of Me.*") Now by the next verse, **verse 22**, we are told how this righteousness is received by us. "*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" Verse 22 shows us that the righteousness of God reaches us not by our own faith or the faith of any *man*, but *by the faith of Jesus Christ*. To emphasize this fact Paul said, "*By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*" **Eph. 2:8.** Nothing in God's economy is ever left to chance, for these are most sweeping statements concerning justification and righteousness through His blood.

Notice the inspired words that now follow. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in *Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth* to be a propitiation *through faith in His blood*, to declare His (Christ's) righteousness for the remission of sins *that are past* through the forbearance of God." This twenty-fourth verse tells us that we are *justified* freely through the grace that is in Christ Jesus. By His blood we have been cleansed from our sins; by His grace we have been forgiven, our conscience purged, and now we stand

redeemed and justified in His sight, and this is *"that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Christ."*

Now **verse 24**, speaking of Christ Jesus, says, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.*" To propitiate means, "to cause to be *favorably disposed.*" Jesus Christ was set forth or *sent forth by God* as a propitiation to the world. Let us reverently seek to understand this mystery, for right here lies one of the most glaring mistakes of the entire church system and almost every preacher in it. The church all down through the ages, including all evangelicals of the past and present, have taught that Jesus Christ came to *propitiate God* and to endeavor to dispose Him to be kind toward His fallen race. If you search in a thousand places, I doubt that you will find one man who does not make this incorrect assertion. How often I have listened to preachers describe Jesus Christ as a lawyer who stands up before God to plead our cause and beg for our lives on the grounds that He, being innocent, died for us and God is propitiated by Him and we are forgiven. This gross misunderstanding of the truth of propitiation is everywhere evident in sermons, in writing and in hymns. Notice how this error is brought out in the words of the hymn:

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary.
They pour effectual prayers;
They strongly *plead* for me.
Forgive him, *O forgive*, they cry,
Nor let the ransomed sinner die!
The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son.
My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear.

This is church tradition, but it is not the truth. Nowhere in all scripture are we ever taught that *God has to be reconciled to the world or to man.* God never ever became an enemy of man nor does He need to be reconciled to man. The exact opposite is the truth and always the teaching of scripture. Man is an enemy of God and *man* must be reconciled *to God.* Oh that sinners would be told that it was God the Father who gave His Son, not to appease or reconcile Himself, but to appease and reconcile man! Therefore the scripture loudly proclaims, "We beseech you in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God.*"

This is the message that I bring,
A message angels feign would sing:
O be ye reconciled!
Thus saith my Lord and King,
O be ye reconciled to God.

Oh, the wonder of it all just to know that God the Father has sent Christ to be His propitiation toward us and that *God was in Christ*, reconciling *the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. 5:19), and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation!

So then, when the great apostle says that God hath sent Christ as a propitiation, he means that He sent Christ to propitiate *us* and dispose *us* to kindness and repentance before God and to reconcile *us* to Himself. The Father did not send Christ to propitiate Himself, though that is the way the church has always erroneously taught propitiation. The truth is that Christ came to propitiate you and me that we might repent of our rebellion and iniquity against Him, believe and be reconciled to God, who has always loved us and been our friend and not our enemy. We might also take notice that in referring to the scripture, "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man *Christ Jesus*," the preachers have also turned this backwards and made Christ to be our mediator with the Father, but that is not what Paul said. He said that the mediator was between *God and man*, not between man and God. So Christ was sent as a propitiation, a propitiator, or one sent by God the Father to dispose man to repentance and kindness, love and faith toward God.

And now may I shock you further by saying that this text plainly says of Christ, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith in His blood*, to declare His righteousness for sins that are past." Let us now ask ourselves this question: *Who was it that had this great faith in the blood of Christ? Was it man or God? It was God* the Father who had this abounding faith in the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. It was not man. Indeed, man may have faith, but in *this* text it was not man, but *God, who had this boundless faith in the blood of His Son*. So complete and astounding was the Father's faith in the blood of His Son that He openly declared that *His righteousness* was sufficient to cancel *all the sins of the past*. Therefore it is plainly stated, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*" **Verse 26.**

The sins of the past, referred to here, are the sins of all past ages, covered with the sacrificial blood, but never removed. It was to this unspeakable marvel of God's grace that the old covenant pointed when the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9:13) until such time as Christ should come and by the shedding of His better blood, in which was eternal life, thus declare the remission of all the sins of the past, which lesser blood could never cleanse. It was God who had faith in the "*life blood*" of His Son and because of this He gave Him to be the propitiation for our sins. Thus "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, *not imputing* their trespasses unto them."

With these precious jewels of God's eternal grace and wisdom in our minds let us with humble reverence consider that *better blood* of Christ, the *life blood* which Peter devoutly exalts as *precious blood*. "*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*" **1 Pet. 1:18-20.** The secret of this truth lies in the words of scripture, which clearly teaches that the life is in the blood. We have no record of man's ever having eaten the flesh of animals until after the great flood. Then in these words man was given permission to eat flesh: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

That permission was followed by this definite command: "*But the flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.*" **Gen. 9:3-5.** This text most surely shows that the *life* of man is *in his blood*. The truth is further elaborated in God's instructions to Israel. "*And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it (the blood) is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof:.. for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof*" **Lev. 17:13, 14.** That the life is *in the blood* and that the life of all flesh is *in the blood* thereof is a truth that cannot possibly be disputed, for not only does the scripture declare it to be so, but nature itself has taught us all too well that as the blood ebbs from the body of him that is wounded, so also ebbs the life. Without blood there is no life.

The story of creation is far too intricate and wonderful for my little mind to fully grasp, but the scripture, speaking of the creation of Adam and Eve, tells us, "*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*" **Gen. 2:25.** I understand this to mean that they were naked insofar as any kind of apparel or covering or dress is concerned. They wore no clothing or covering as we know clothing and in this respect and this alone they were naked. *Their covering* was a glorious covering of *heavenly light*. It was in truth the light of life promised by our Lord Jesus in **John 8:12.** "*He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" While they remained in their glorious estate, they needed not earth's shabby coverings of cloth and skin. Light as the brightness and glory of the sun enfolded their beings. Why, a covering of cloth or skin would have been to them a mockery, if not an impossibility. They were made in the *image of God*, of whom it is written in **Psa. 104:2,** "*Who covereth Thyself with light as with a garment.*" That covering of light and glory that shone from their hallowed beings was nothing less than the light of God, for the *life was the light of men*. John 1:4. It *surrounded* them as a halo of glory. It *shone* from their faces. It *sparkled* from their presence. It *glistened* from their beings. It *dwelt within* them. Their eyes were as *lamps of fire* and their *glory*

were such that no mortal could have stood before them. They were in the *image of God*, upon which mortality cannot look and live. In body, soul and spirit they were *in His likeness* and like their Maker *they covered themselves with light as with a garment*. Psa. 104:2.

Should you find difficulty in perceiving this necessary point of truth, may I direct your attention to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the time of His mortality wore a seamless robe, which some hand of love had woven for Him. When He died, Roman soldiers cast lots for His vesture and one of them took it away. His naked, mortal body was then wrapped in linen cloths, which the Bible speaks of as grave clothes, and thus wrapped in cloth He was laid away in the tomb. But wonder of wonders, when upon the glorious resurrection morning Peter and John went into the tomb, *they found not the body* of the Lord Jesus, but the grave clothes, His only covering, were found lying in the exact position He had lain while in the realm of death. John 20:6, 7. The body cloths lay by themselves and the head wrapping lay by itself just as though our Lord had vanished out of them, for this is what He did. Special mention is made by

John that the cloths were not lying together as they might have been had He arisen and disrobed, but the grave clothes lay as though their occupant had vanished out of them, for that is exactly what He did. This one fact is in itself indisputable proof of His resurrection. It permits no possibility of theft or deception. Such innocent, guileless facts speak truth more eloquently than the blast of a trumpet. If Jesus, then, had no seamless robe, for the soldiers had taken it away, and even His grave clothes were left behind Him in the tomb, what garment was it that covered the glorious, incorruptible body of His resurrection? Could we possibly be wrong in saying that His covering was nothing less than that *glorious light which is eternal life*? Which was Adam's covering before his transgression? Even though Mary, upon seeing Him, thought Him to be the gardener, it only appeared to be so. From that moment on the resurrected, incorruptible Christ, clothed with the light of life, appeared in any form He wished as was clearly stated by Mark (Mark 16:2),

"After this He appeared *in another form* unto two of them." Many other times the Lord appeared after His resurrection, and there is certainly no hint that He was naked, though it is certain He wore no earthly garment. He was clothed upon in resurrection with the glorious light of life. In this glorious covering Paul saw Him in his Damascus vision, a light brighter than the sun (Acts 26:13-14), and in this way John saw Him in the wonder of his Patmos vision. Rev. 1:16. This, my dearly beloved, is the garment of light. It is the robe of incorruption. It is the garment the saints will wear in their resurrection and incorruption.

You have heard of the light of a candle. You have heard of the light of the stars. You have heard of the light of the moon. You have heard of the light of the sun. But this is the light of life. When men speak of the light of the sun, we understand. When they speak of the light of the moon, we understand. May we not now understand the truth of Christ's words: *the light of life*? I doubt not that my next sentence will be a disturbing jolt to the understanding of many, but the truth as I see it is simply this: Life and light and blood are one and the same thing, manifest on different levels just as vapor and water and ice are one and the same thing on different levels. I am well aware that what I am saying is entirely new and must come as a shock to many. Therefore we will look a little deeper into this important truth, because a proper understanding of it will assist us to grasp the greatness of that prominent Bible theme, the *precious blood of Christ*. Not only will we better grasp its meaning, but we will know why that precious blood of Christ is *the life of all the world*. I see no way that we can avoid the conclusion that His *life blood* is in fact *resurrection* itself. It redeems from sin, because *sin* found man in life and brought him to death, but the *blood of Christ*, which is eternal life, finding man in death, *brought life*, and that is what redemption is.

Hear now what Paul has to say concerning this glorious covering of light, which we have been considering. Notice particularly his use of the words *clothed, unclothed and naked*. Note how he shows that our *house, which is from heaven*, is in fact and truth *the life of God*. He clearly demonstrates the manner in which our mortality, hitherto clothed with garments of skin and cloth, is in resurrection clothed with incorruption, which is nothing less than *life, the life of God, the light of God*, eternal life. Thus in 2 Cor. 5:1-4 Paul unfolds the marvelous truth of our true covering, which he calls our house from heaven. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were *dissolved*, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For *in this* we groan, earnestly desiring to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven: If so be that *being clothed* we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this tabernacle* do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be *unclothed*, but *clothed upon*, that *mortality* might be *swallowed up of life*."

By way of explanation we will notice as follows: *Our earthly house* is this corruptible, mortal tabernacle, the body in which we now dwell. But, when it is dissolved by death, then in resurrection we will have a *building of God*, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Not a mansion in the sky, as the preachers are always erroneously telling us, but a new body, a new tabernacle, a body of light, a body of incorruption, a body of immortality. Then Paul states that, after this body of life has been received, *we will not be found naked* as we are now. We will be no more naked than Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration when His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light. The glory in which Christ was seen at His transfiguration is an actual revelation of *our house, which is from heaven*, the covering of light, the *light of life*. This light of life is the clothing that will cover our nakedness and it is of this very thing that the apostle is speaking when he says. "If so being clothed, *we shall not be found naked.*" **1 Cor. 5:1-4.** Paul then goes on to say, "In this we groan, being burdened." How awfully true that is! God help us to bear the groanings of all the world because of the pains, the pangs and disease that ever beset this body of death, this corruptible tabernacle of our mortality and flesh! What a heavy, burdensome load it is to bear! But, says he, we groan, not that we might be unclothed, (the truth is we are already unclothed), but that we might be *clothed upon with our house which is from heaven*, verse 2, if so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found *naked* as Adam was and as we are. We groan that the nakedness of our *mortality* might be *swallowed up of life*, verse 4, enshrouded in the *light of life*.

Can we not now see from this what Adam's covering was before his transgression and death? Can we not see from this that his covering was a covering of life and light? Was it not that glorious mantle of the *light of life* of which Jesus spoke? Was this light of life not a *house from heaven* as Paul here teaches? Was his body unlike that of the Son of man in His kingdom as we saw plainly manifested at His transfiguration? No! Adam was not naked before his transgression as we know nakedness. He was clothed with light. He was in the image of God and *not ashamed*. But, when the transgression came, he died, and the departure of his wonderful garment of light was what his death really was. No human tongue could possibly describe the awful nightmare that must have scared his soul when he awoke naked, unclothed, nude, undraped, disrobed and bare. The light of life with which he once shone as an angel had departed from him. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down which did weaken the nations! ...that made the world a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners."

It would be amiss to leave this part of the dissertation without quoting 2 Cor. 5:1-4 from Moffatt's beautiful translation. "I know that if this *earthly tent of mine is taken down, I get a home from God, made by no human hands, eternal in the heavens. It makes me sigh, indeed, this yearning to be under cover of my heavenly habitation, since I am sure that once so covered I shall not be naked at the hour of death. I do sigh within this tent of mine with heavy anxiety - not that I want to be stripped, no, but to be under cover of the other, to have my mortal element absorbed by life. I am prepared for this change by God, who has given me the Spirit as its pledge and installment*" **2 Cor. 5:1-5.** Moffatt.

When our heavenly Father placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, permission was granted him to eat of all the trees of the garden. The only fruit forbidden him was that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Concerning this tree divine instruction had forewarned, "Thou mayest not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The story of the transgression is too well known to need repeating here. How indelibly in our minds is the vivid fact written that both Adam and Eve his wife partook of the fruit God had forbidden them to touch, and just as sure as God's word is true the pains and penalties of death seized upon them. Death is the absence of life. Death in itself is nothing at all. Darkness is the absence of light.

Darkness itself is a non-entity. Thus, when they partook of the forbidden tree, the light of life, the life that hitherto had been their covering, departed from them, and they, standing in the outer darkness of death, were naked, stark naked and terribly ashamed. The *light of life* that hitherto had been their glorious garment had vanished away and all the *life* that now remained to them was that tiny, flickering candle of mortality, which now flowed as blood through the veins of their bodies, giving them some small semblance of mortal and physical life while they were still permitted to walk about in death upon the earth.

It is my firm conviction that, when our first parents sinned, they actually died just as God had told them. The light of life departed from them and they were left naked and ashamed, both dead and in outer darkness. They did not *begin to die*, as so many would have us believe. They actually died. We are wrong in believing that a

man is not dead until he goes to the grave. The Bible is very clear in its teaching that the unregenerate man who still walks and breathes is dead in trespasses and sins, even as the woman who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. Even the regenerate man, who is born again of the Spirit, though alive in spirit, is still said to be physically dead. What could be more definite than Paul's statement in **Romans 8:10**, where he says, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead (still dead) because of sin; but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness." But, thank God, He does not leave us here, for he goes on to explain that, "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell I you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

There is no way of avoiding the fact that man at the time of the fall actually died both spiritually and physically. This present existence outside of Christ which men call *life* is not life at all. It is *death*. Man is born *dead*. He lives in the shadow of death and *he is dead*. He is naked, in outer darkness and ashamed until Christ comes to *give* him life. In Christ is life and everything outside of Him is death. The grave is nothing more than the final phase of the death experience. Was not this the thought in the mind of our Lord when He said to the young man, "Follow me, and let the *dead bury their dead?*" Was Jesus not telling us that the men who were carrying the coffin were just as dead as the man who was lying in it, the only difference being that they were not yet lying down?

I am sure that all are aware that water can take on at least three different forms. Its highest form is an invisible vapor, but when the vapor cools, it changes its form and becomes a liquid which we call water. Then, when water cools and reaches the zero point, it changes its form again and becomes a solid which we call ice. Here before our eyes we see three different forms of the same substance.

With reverence and godly respect I now tell you that thus it was with the *light of life* that once covered Adam as a garment. He lived and moved in eternal life. He himself was light. He, being in God's image, was not unlike the *last Adam*, of whom it is written, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." **John 1:1,2**. How glorious a being he must have been is beyond my feeble power of description. We can only have some understanding of it as we follow our Lord to the glory of the mount of transfiguration, where three of His disciples became eyewitnesses of what incorruptible man will be in the glory and power of the kingdom of God. "There be some standing here," Jesus said, "who shall not taste of death till they have seen the Son of man coming in His Kingdom." There in the holy mount of transfiguration they beheld Him in the glory of the *light of life*. This was resurrection life, kingdom life, and incorruptible life. His face did shine as the sun and His garments were white as the light. This beautiful picture tells us what our resurrection garments will be, the glistering *life of life* that Christ Himself actually is.

The first Adam was created in God's image, and because this is indisputably true, we cannot but believe that he, too, shared much of this same glory. His covering was also that scintillating garment of the *light of life*, but when the transgression came, the mantle of light forsook him and all that was left of life to him was that flickering flame of mortality sullenly flowing in the blood stream of his body.

Dr. Langmuir, one of Britain's men of science, who, I understand, had part in the invention of the fluorescent light, made this very remarkable statement: "Blood plasma is congealed *light*." Now, if this be so, then science has discovered in the test tube what I believe the Lord has revealed to me by the Spirit, that is, that the *light of life*, that covered Adam in his first glorious state, turned inward after his transgression and became a liquid tissue, which we call blood, running in the veins of his body. For this reason the scripture states, "*The life is in the blood*." Just as invisible vapor congeals and becomes water, even so the life-giving blood is congealed or crystallized light. Since Jesus Christ is the *light of life* (John 8:12) I see not how there can be any difference between the *light* which He is and the *life* which He is.

It must needs follow, therefore, that, when Adam transgressed, the light of life, which was his covering, his true house from heaven, disappeared from him and all that was left was that mortal something which flowed as blood in the veins of his body. This seems to me to be more in the nature of animal life than the life of God, for, when the glorious covering of life departed from him, he was in truth both naked and ashamed. According to 1 Cor. 15:45 Adam was made a *living soul*. From Greek the statement reads, "The first man Adam was made a *zoe psuche* (living soul)." *Zoe* is the life of God. *Psuche* is natural soul life. This life, *zoe*, is the life Jesus

promised to give to man when He said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," and this, I believe, is the light of life that departed from Adam when he transgressed, leaving him naked, ashamed, and dead. From these assertions it should be clear why the scripture states, "*The life is in the blood.*" But our blood, being devoid of eternal (*zoe*) life, is in reality dead blood and capable of sustaining only physical (*psuche*) life until man returns to the dust from whence he came. It is not without significance that, when the bodies of men are to be embalmed, the first act is to remove the corruptible blood that the dead body may be better preserved.

"The wages of sin is death," the scripture states in a simple, understandable statement of fact. There is no gainsaying this truth. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," the Lord warned Adam. But eat of it he did, and, just as surely as one will die who eats poison, so Adam died in his transgression. The glory of life departed from him. The magnificent covering of light and life was gone and to his consternation and horror he discovered himself naked, and with the discovery of his nakedness came the shame and despair of his defiled condition. In his desperation he hid himself among the trees of the garden while he attempted to sew fig leaves together that he might in some pitiful manner cover his abhorrent nakedness. The glory of the light of life had departed from him and the despair of the darkness of death had seized upon him.

O man, how far thou hast fallen in thy disobedience, thou who wast clothed with the light of God and, being clothed in His garment of light, thou wast likewise clothed with His life! In disobedience thou didst stretch forth thy hand to partake of that which God had told thee not, and thou didst feel the fearful result of thy sin in that light vanished from thee and gross darkness settled upon thee. The life of God vanished as thy covering and the horrors of death seized upon thee, that thou shouldst henceforth walk in death until God's breath should leave thee and thou shouldst return to the dust from whence thy body came. Henceforth no life at all shall be thine until He doth come who is the *Son of God*, He in whose veins shall flow the blood of God which is the *life of God* — not the flickering light of mortality, but the radiance of immortality, *eternal life*. And through the shedding of that blood, blood better than the blood of Abel because it is sinless and divine, and blood most precious because it is the blood given for the *life of the world*, all who believe Him will receive eternal life. The life is in the blood and the life that is in His blood is *eternal life*. By sin death entered into the world. The result of our sin cannot be cancelled nor we delivered from the pains of death until life can once more be given us. The life, eternal life, is in Christ's blood. It is no wonder, therefore, that *without the shedding of blood* there is *no remission of sins*. With the shedding of His precious blood, the blood of life, the blood of the everlasting covenant, Christ has brought to light both life and immortality.

"The life is in the blood." Therefore without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. What words could possibly tell us more clearly the absolute necessity of the shedding of the blood of Christ that the world through Him might have life? Sinful man has no grain of eternal life in his blood. Every son of Adam is under condemnation, even those who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Rom. 5:14. What then is man to do, since he is dead in trespasses and sins? How will it become possible for him to receive life and live forever?

Fallen man cannot save himself from his dire predicament. He has no life of his own and it is not possible for the blood of bulls and calves to take away his sin. Lord and Christ, to whom can we look but to Thee, for Thou only hast the word of life eternal? In Thee is life and the life is the light of men, and Thou, O Lord, wast manifest in these last times for us that all who believe in Thee should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Centuries ago at the time of the fall mother Eve was given the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." This is not only the first promise of Christ, but it is also the first promise of the *virgin birth of Christ*. Whatever opinions men may have concerning the virgin birth of Christ, the truth remains that only by a virgin birth could that precious blood better than the blood of Abel be given. If the Savior was no more than *the son of a man*, that is, the son of Joseph, then His blood possessed no more eternal life than the blood of any other man, but if He was in truth the Son of God, then His blood is the blood of eternal life. It is precious blood and better than the blood of Abel.

Medical science has taught us the remarkable fact that no drop of mother's blood ever enters the veins of the fetus. The blood that flows in your veins is your father's blood, and not that of your mother. This mystery can spring from no other source than from the miraculous hand of God. Before ever the world began, the

omniscient Father had prepared the way whereby the Son of God should be born as no other son of man had ever been born. The prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before the birth of the seed of the woman, proclaimed that more sure word of prophecy, saying, "*Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*" **Isa. 7:14.** Hundreds of years later in fulfillment of this prophecy the angel Gabriel was sent to a virgin in Israel, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph. "*And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*" **Luke 1:30-35.***

This is evidence indisputable that Jesus was born of a virgin. He was both the seed of the woman and the Son of God. The blood that flowed in His veins and which was later shed for the remission of sins was the life blood of God. It was therefore better than the blood of Abel, being the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot, by which sin is remitted and eternal life regained for the believer. Once we grasp the truth that blood is both *light* and *life* and that the blood of Christ is far better than the blood of Abel, because it is the perfect life of God, eternal life, then for the first time we can comprehend the indisputable necessity for the shedding of the blood of Christ. Then we can understand why the apostle said, "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.*" **Heb. 9:22.**

While our Lord Jesus Christ walked upon the earth, He *alone* had eternal life. That eternal life was in His blood and that blood was confined to Himself. Nowhere in scripture do we have any evidence or record that Jesus Christ ever imparted eternal life to any man before His blood was shed. That, it seems to me, would have been impossible "*I have a baptism to be baptized with,*" our Lord had said, "*And how am I straitened until it be accomplished.*" **Luke 12:50.** Well did our Savior know that, as long as His life-blood still flowed in the veins of His own body, all the rest of humanity must remain dead in trespasses and sins. Well did He know that, until He was baptized with the baptism of death and His life-blood was shed, there could be *no resurrection* and no life given to the world. When the disciples mourned at the thought of His departure and death, He told them plainly, "*It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.*" **John 16:7.** It is the Spirit that quickeneth or make alive. John 6:63. But the Spirit of life could not be given until the blood was shed and the Spirit sent to give life to man. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, and after He brake it. He said, "*Take, eat; this is My body,*" and taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, "*Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" **Matt. 26, 28:29.**

This new covenant of eternal life was literally confirmed hours later on the cross when our Lord and Savior bowed His head and with the words, "It is finished," on His lips, He gave up the ghost, and when one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, blood and water flowed out. With the shedding of that precious blood the life of God flowed forth, even life eternal, shed forth freely that all might receive it. "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.*" **John 3:16,17.**

Hitherto the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, had not been given to men. The Son of man was not yet glorified. This absence of the Spirit of life in man is made very clear by the fact that Peter himself, in spite of his calling and his ministry, was not a born again Christian nor could he receive the Spirit of life until after the precious life-blood was shed. With great significance Jesus had said to Peter, "*Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*" **Luke 22:31,32.** Simon Peter, though called, had not yet received the spirit of regeneration; neither had any man among them received eternal life, nor could they until the life blood had been shed, the condemnation of death cancelled, and remission of sin thus guaranteed. It was in the evening of the day of the resurrection that Jesus appeared to His disciples. Through the fast locked doors He came and stood in the midst of them. "Peace be unto you," He announced, and as He spoke. *He breathed on them* and said, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*" These awe-struck, fearful men were the first people

in the history of the world to receive the New Testament experience of conversion. There and then at that very moment the Holy Spirit of life quickened and renewed them in Christ. There and then they received that eternal life freely given to all by the releasing of His life-blood.

When our Lord Jesus rose from the dead, He arose *without blood in His veins*, but He did not arise *without life*. The precious blood that had drained from His body three days earlier when it was shed on the cross was now manifest as the light of life. That eternal life, which a few days before had been confined to the blood of His body, now, being loosed by death, was *shed abroad* to become available as eternal life to all who believe. By the shedding of His blood life was given. By the receiving of His life *death was cancelled*. In the light of life darkness flees away. The wages of sin is death. Life cancels death and remits all sin, for the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And *suddenly* there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues (languages), as the Spirit gave them utterance." **Acts 2:1-4**. Never had such a phenomenon been known as had now appeared. This mighty gushing forth of the Holy Ghost was in truth *the shedding abroad of the life of God*. This Miraculous marvel was the direct result of the shedding of the *life-blood of God's Son*. Peter in his sermon proclaimed, "*Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you. as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it... This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*" **Acts 2:22-24,32-33**.

There is marvelous significance in those three words "*shed forth this*." It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. No life eternal could be *shed abroad* until the life blood of Christ was shed because the life was in His blood. Wonderful as it is to be saved and to feel the quickening power of the life of God's Son moving upon us, making us new creatures in Him, a greater day is coming in which not only will the spirit feel the power of His life, but the body also will partake of His resurrection. "*Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory (or in life).*" **1 Cor. 15:51-54**. Then shall we all be changed, transformed, transfigured. Our clothing shall no longer be garments of wool or cotton or skin, but we shall be clothed upon with the light of life, for said Christ, "*He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" **John 8:12**. Then shall our garments be white and glistening. "*For we know that if the mere tent, which is our earthly house, is taken down, we have in heaven a building from God, a house not made by human hands, but eternal. In this one, indeed, we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from heaven — sure that, when we have put it on, we shall not be found unclothed. Yes, we who are in this tent do sigh under our burdens, not that we wish to lay aside our tent, but rather to put the other over it, so that our mortality may be absorbed in life. And He who formed us for this purpose is God, who has given us His Spirit as guarantee.*" **2 Cor. 5:1-5**. (Weymouth)

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:* and His name is called *The Word of God*. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." **Rev. 19:11-14**. Fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

In the vastnesses of the Rocky Mountains those who look will see mighty glaciers, and fields of ice and snow. Hundreds of feet thick and sometimes many miles across, these giant expanses of ice lie cradled in the lap of

towering mountains or nestled high up on their hoary peaks. In awe and wonder I have gazed upon them, pondering the omnipotent power that placed them there and the eternal wisdom that designed their function. These interminable fields of ice and snow seem in themselves to be devoid of usefulness as they spread confined among the everlasting hills, but if you will look closer you will see that they are not as idle as they appear, for from their endless resources of ice and snow, warmed by the sun and the wind, little streams of water are bursting forth to cascade merrily down the mountainside. Then, joining hands with other little brooks, they become a torrent of precious water which, when joined to many rivulets becomes a river flowing majestically across the endless plains.

Upon its banks great cities lay their foundations, thirsty for its life-giving power. In every house the water flows to quench the thirst, to bathe the body, to cleanse the wounds and make joyful the heart of every man. Across its water course men build immovable dams and the uncomplaining water, racing through the mighty turbines, gives light and power to the people, while other floods, gushing through irrigation systems, fill the land with abundant store and spread our tables with the luxuries of earth, and vapor, rising from its watery bosom, becomes a blessing to all mankind.

In the body of this article on the precious blood I have endeavored to show that ice, water and vapor are in reality one and the same thing. They are a triad, appearing in different forms under varied conditions. It is with respect bordering on fear and trembling that I now suggest that as ice, water and vapor are one and the same thing, appearing in different forms under different conditions, so blood, life and light are also one. Water in the form of ice and snow was confined to the mountain alone, but when it was loosed from its icy grip to flow forth in a different form, all the land was blessed and blessed again. This, I humbly suggest, was the meaning Jesus conveyed when He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." Well did our Savior know that, while *eternal life* was confined to His body in the form of blood, its life-giving power could not become available to all the billions of earth. Thus with steadfast face He hastened to the cross and in the garden agony He prayed that He might through death be delivered from the realm of death, and thus through the pouring out of His blood *shed abroad* eternal light and eternal life to all the world. On the morning of the resurrection He arose without blood in His veins, but not without life and not without light, for His blood is in truth the light of life. How unutterably true are Peter's words, "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

It is easy to grasp the fact that ice and water and vapor are one, because they belong to the natural realm. It is not so easy to understand that blood and light and life are one, because they belong to the spiritual realm. But if you will ask the Holy Spirit to help you, you will see that just as blood (I speak only of the blood of Christ), life and light are one, each progressing to a higher form, so mortality, incorruption and immortality are one, each progressing one step higher than the other. Our blessed Lord walked this earth as a mortal in the "*form of man*," but when He arose from the dead. He arose without life-blood in His veins, but *clothed upon with life*. He arose incorruptible, never again to die or be touched by death in any form. He had flesh and bones, and He even ate before them, for said He, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." Thus for forty days He was seen of men. But then came another experience even more glorious than His marvelous resurrection when in the sight of His loved and own He ascended into the realm of eternal light, of whom Paul wrote, "*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto...*" **1 Tim. 6:16.**

We, too, shall know these glories, for "*this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory.*" **1 Cor. 15:53-54.** We will reign in incorruption with Christ in the glory of His resurrection during the one thousand years of the kingdom of God. After this will come the glory of the ascension and immortality. "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" **2 Cor. 3:18.** Is it any wonder the scripture has said, "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.*" **Heb. 9:22.**

On Calvary's hill of sorrow
Where sins demands were paid,

And rays of hope for tomorrow
Across my path were laid,
I see a crimson steam of blood;
It flows from Calvary.
Its waves, which reach the throne of God,
Are sweeping over me.

CHAPTER FOUR THE CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION

The Word of God frequently uses such meaningful terms as these; children of light, children of darkness, children of Israel, children of Abraham, children of the devil, children of God. Each of these terms has its origin in the omniscience of the divine mind and consequently is full of truth and meaning. Books without number could, I suppose, be written about any one of them. The beautiful designation, *children of light*, describes God's redeemed and blood-bought children in such a way that they themselves would instinctively flee from all darkness and, as lights set upon a hill, dispel its gloom by their presence. Children of light will certainly be those who walk in that light which is Jesus Christ Himself. "He that followeth Me," said the Savior, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

As for me, my one ambition for men is that they might become followers of that one true light that Jesus Christ Himself might walk not only with them and beside them, but *in them*. It is by beholding the light which He is that we are changed from glory to glory into the image of Christ, each degree of glory superseding the glory that shone before it as the glory of the sun, shining in his strength, supersedes the glory of the stars or the moon. My heart is always filled with pain when I see religious books filled with pictures of smiling preachers who are proclaimed, usually by themselves, as notable men, great healers, eloquent preachers, ready writers, superior organizers, - in short. God's men of the hour. We need a little more of the spirit of the beloved Paul who said, "We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh*. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, Yea doubtless, and I count *all things but loss* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." **Phil. 3:3-9**. Let not the shining light reflect me! Let no spot light hold you in its dazzling glare! Let Christ be *all and in all that men may never be constrained to say*, "How great a man is this! How eloquent! How striking! How godly! How learned! What a wonderful ministry!" Rather far that men, seeing the light which He is, should fall down at His feet with tear-stained faces and cry in adoration, "How great Thou art! How great Thou art!"

Anything anywhere, whether it be person or sermon, talent, gift, ability, or song, that fails to leave men overawed with the presence and glory of Christ belongs not to the realm of the spirit, but to the realm of the natural, the sordid realm of the flesh. What an abomination this make believe church system is in the eyes of God, so full of false advertising and the exalting of men and women as great and notable ones whose appeal we find, after we have seen and heard them, is not to our spirit but to the dimness of our natural mind. How abominable before God is a system so full of pride and boastfulness, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, loving pleasure more than God, dispensing human philosophy instead of truth, and denying not only the blood that bought them but the Christ who shed His blood for them. Church history records that during the dark ages it was doubtful whether in all the world there could be found a congregation gathered together on truly scriptural grounds, and, though my feeble voice will sound as one who mocks or as one crying in a desolate wilderness, it is most doubtful whether in our day there is in all the world any congregation meeting upon truly scriptural grounds. Do not their ministers minister for hire? Are their elders separated unto the Lord and by the Lord? Does the love of God prevail among them? Does the Holy Spirit guide them? No, verily, it is not so. "They err in vision; they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." **Isa. 28:7-8**.

The hour has come when all who are children of *light* must become *one with the light*. All the teaching the world can produce will utterly fail to bring us to the likeness of Christ. Our only hope is in beholding Him. In Israel's ancient wilderness tabernacle a great veil hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The heavenly light of God's presence, the Shekinah or the glory light of God presence, always filled the Holy of Holies, but that glory light was hidden from the priests who ministered in the Holy Place. The veil represents the flesh. No man dared to pass by it except the High Priest, and that but once a year, but when Jesus Christ died upon the cross of Calvary, and you and I died there in Him - at that awful moment when His flesh was rent and His blood was shed - a great miracle occurred in the temple. The *veil was rent* in twain from top to bottom, opening the way for us all into the Holy of Holies itself, that we might see His face, behold His glory, and by His Spirit be changed into the very light which He is. See Heb. 10:19-22. "Seeing then we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament: which veil is *done away* in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face (unveiled face), beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:12-18.**

In chapter one we pointed out, as best we could, how *all inclusive* was the work that was finished when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died upon the cross of Calvary. Here God gave His only begotten Son and received His blood as a remission of sins for the whole world. On that memorable day of the cross Jesus Christ did not die alone. My old man was crucified with Him; my flesh was crucified with Him; the world was crucified with Him. The law was nailed to the cross with Him, and I, with you, Oh beloved, was crucified with Christ. There are those now reading these lines who have begun to discover the almost incomprehensible change that began to transform their lives when the full force of the *meaning of the cross* shone like an eternal ray of truth into their souls. The carnal thing you struggled with yesterday you discover today has already been crucified, yes, crucified with Christ before you were born or saw the light of day, and the new life that has now begun, though you are yet in the body, is lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you. No more shall I be intimidated or brought into bondage by that which was smitten a mortal blow when God nailed my old carnal self with His Christ to the cross of Calvary.

Henceforth the life we now live in the flesh shall not be lived to the lusts of men but lived as God lives *in the Spirit*. May it please God that all who read these truths shall receive from Him wisdom, light and understanding that they being *children of light* might also walk in the light of the truth which *He is*. Let our understandings, darkened as they have been through the centuries of human tradition and the doctrines of men, now be enlightened that we may behold what goodness and mercy was bestowed upon us when God having included all men in the *last Adam*, nailed Him to the tree and, having offered in sacrifice His priceless Son, He *wrote finis* to everything that pertains to the old creation. Tearing asunder the dividing veil (Matt. 27:50-53), He opened wide the door that we might live in His presence, and, beholding His face, be changed into that same image from glory to glory. 2 Cor. 3:18.

CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION

There was a day when the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection or angel or spirit, came to Jesus, saying, "Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he died without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? For seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them. The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the *CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION*." **Luke 20:27-38.**

It is a mistake to tell men about sin, but fail to tell them about the Savior. It is wrong to bring men under condemnation while withholding from them the blessedness of a realm where there is no condemnation. Rom. 8:1. It is folly to magnify the evils of a life after the flesh while failing to portray the glories of a life lived after the Spirit; and it is equally useless, if not hopeless, to preach the crucified life to Christians if we succeed only in hanging them on the cross or leaving them lying dead in the tomb. Let heaven and earth be called to witness that the *Via Doloroso* (the way of the cross) is also the way of the resurrection. If there had been no cross, there would have been no burial, and, if there had been no burial, there would have been no resurrection.

The things I now write are of such infinite importance that our failure to see them as a revelation from God will bar our progress to those sublime and eternal peaks of spiritual experience, leaving us in the doldrums of the tomb or, worse still, trudging the weary pathway of the uncrucified flesh, hopelessly striving against the dictates of the carnal mind and the old Adam nature. May the divine Spirit of the omniscient God send His rays of revelation into the darkened recesses of our hearts to reveal to each of us what it really means to be *in Him*. Let the light of God clearly show that all who sinned in the first Adam paid the penalty of death for their sin as they died in the last Adam, Jesus Christ our Lord. Let them also remember that He in whom we died was taken down from His cross and buried in Joseph's new tomb, and we are buried there with Him. Furthermore, let our hearts rejoice in this magnificent confidence; that we who died in Him and were buried in Him also *rose in Him* triumphant over death, triumphant over the world (age), over the flesh and over the devil, having become, indeed, the *children of the resurrection*. Hallelujah!

We cannot speak too forcefully, too carefully, or with too great humility concerning our identification with Him. When God says I am *in Him*, then *I am* in Him, and no reasoning of the carnal mind will ever alter such an eternal fact. It is good for God's children to be able to give an answer for the hope that dwelleth in them with meekness and fear, but always remember that you do not owe an *explanation* to any man. Can I ever explain to a carnal mind that I died with Christ? Never! Can I satisfy the reasoning of the Sadducees by explaining to them that, when Christ arose from the dead, I arose from the dead with Him and *in Him*? I do not owe them an explanation for my hope in Him, and neither will I attempt to give one except I see a heart that is open and longing for the truth.

Our association with church systems means *less than nothing*; our association with Christ means everything. Our identification with groups, denominations and sects is nothing but a faith destroying fraud; our identification with Jesus Christ is life from the dead. "It is *in Him*, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of *restoring the whole creation* to find its one Head *in Christ*; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head *in Him*." Eph. 1:7-10. (Weymouth)

Can we not see by the Holy Spirit how great is God's plan in Christ and how great is His merciful purpose for all those who dwell in Him through faith in the eternal Logos, that we should abide in Him and He in us? This vain world with all its dreadful violence, its iniquitous taxation, its inequity, its greedy unjust wars, its filthiness after the flesh, its sickness, sorrow, heartache, disease, and death, is soon to lose all its carnal governors and rulers, for the resurrected Christ, together with those blessed *children of the resurrection*, will reign in splendor over all the earth. This is our inheritance and the beginning of our glory in Him.

Behold further how great a crown of glory divine inspiration has placed upon the heads of all who, identifying themselves with Him, dwell securely *in Him*, "*In Him, too, we have been made heirs having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ. And in Him you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having believed in Him - were sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit; That Spirit being a pledge and foretaste of our inheritance, in anticipation of its full redemption - the inheritance which He has purchased to be specially His for the extolling of His glory.*" Eph. 1:11-14. (Weymouth) "I always beseech the God of our Lord Jesus Christ - the Father most glorious - to give you a spirit of wisdom and of insight into mysteries through

knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened so that you may know what is the hope which His call to you inspires, what the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power in us believers as seen in the working of His infinite might when He displayed it in Christ by raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavenly realms, high above all other government and authority and power and dominion, and every title of sovereignty used either in this age or in the age to come. God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His Body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:17-23.** (Weymouth)

No wonder Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." How little of His plan He could then reveal to His disciples who had not yet received the Spirit! But unto the *children of the resurrection* He now reveals some of the things concerning that new world, that kingdom age, when a new creation of men with resurrected spirits, resurrected minds and resurrected bodies will reign in splendor with Christ, the first begotten from the dead, for they are the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.

"O Lord, Thou has searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses! my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it ... My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, *yet being unperfect*; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" **Psa. 139:1-6, 15-17.** The children of the resurrection are the *completeness* of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. They are the people who are fearfully and wonderfully made into the mystical body of Christ, whose substance was not hid from God when He made them in secret and curiously wrought them in the *lowest parts* of the earth. These are the people who were written in God's book while they were unperfect and who were fashioned according to God's liking when as yet there was none of them. How can we help but weep with David as we repeat his words of worship, "How precious are Thy thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

Identification with Christ in His cross means death in all its completeness to all that is old. There in His cross, as nowhere else, *old things* pass away. Now that we have come to the end of the church age, we shall have to include among the *old things* all our Babylonish church system, every ist and ism, every sect and denomination of whatever name it may be. We, the children of the resurrection, must walk out and forsake them all, counting them all as *old things* that belong to a dying age. The trumpet of God is sounding the blast that proclaims, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! ...Go ye out to meet Him." You dear people who are fervently proclaiming that before the coming of the Lord the church system must be restored as it was at Pentecost are figuratively battering your heads against a stone wall. You are as far behind the times as the Judaizers who proclaimed that believers must be circumcised and keep the law before they could be saved. You are like the fervent Apollos who, knowing the baptism of John, preached it and made many disciples, but did not know that twenty years earlier Jesus had died and the Holy Spirit had been poured out at Pentecost. Acts 18:24-28. Your great trouble is that *you do not know* what the church is. When you speak of the churches (plural), you refer to the church system with all its divisions. The truth is that *this wretched thing is not the Church*, but the harlot. It is not the Ecclesia of God, but Mystery Babylon. You are clutching the oyster instead of the pearl of great price. You are polishing the mud instead of the diamond. You are cultivating the weeds and not the wheat. The thing you are nurturing is always in trouble and confusion, falsehood and make-believe, because it is the product of the carnal mind.

The church, on the other hand, is something different altogether. It is the mystical body of Christ. It is mystical because no man can point to it and say *there it is*. It is mystical because God alone knows its members. It is mystical because neither the world system nor the church system assimilates it. It is mystical because it does not belong to this age and, like Noah's dove, can find no rest on earth's turbulent waves and floating filth. The church system with its massive edifices and towering spires is the Ishmael, born after the flesh and the carnal mind. Ishmael, indeed, was to be a great nation, but "*In Isaac shall they seed be called*."

Instead of embracing the impossible task of perfecting the harlot system, instead of trying to convert the world in this age, you would do good to yourself, to the world, and to God if you would lay aside all such vain efforts and come instead with fasting and consecration before God, having *no request* of your own, but with open heart and ear listening to the voice of the Logos, the living, speaking Word, that He might instruct you concerning your need and acquaint you with His wonderful purpose for the ages and His purpose for you personally. Why are Christians obsessed with the notion that they must always be *doing* something? God is not interested in your much *doing*. Do what He bids you and nothing more. The earth with all its works will soon be burned up. It is he that doeth the *will of God* that abideth forever, not he that is "up and doing".

Wherever did Christians get the idea that God wants to bring everyone in the world to the knowledge of salvation here and now? What makes them imagine that God ever intended to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth *in this age*? Such belief is not and never has been God's plan. Give ear to the inspired words of the apostle James as He places the plan of God for man's redemption in a veritable nut shell. "Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to *take out* of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, *after this* I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the *residue of men* might seek after the Lord, and *all the Gentiles* upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. *Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.* **ACTS 15:14-18.**

The church system as we see it today with all its confusion, pomp and pride, riches and increase of goods coupled with abject spiritual poverty, is the counterpart of the dispensation of law in the days of John the Baptist and Jesus. *It is old and ready to vanish away.* There was only one message for the Jew of John's day. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand", and for this decadent, earthly-minded church system, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, (Rev. 3:17), there is but one message: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." "Come out of her. My people" should be the watch cry of every true saint of God, but instead of this there is an almost fanatical frenzy to build up the church system. There is no more hope of building up the church system than there is of restoring the present world order. Both are integral parts of Babylon and both shall be destroyed and not restored.

Long centuries ago Paul wrote, "He who now letteth (hindereth) will let until he be taken *out* of the way. Then shall *that wicked be revealed.*" Who is it that has hindered the work of *that wicked one* throughout the entire church age? It was not the church system; but it was the *elect children of God* who were scattered in it, those who dwelt in it as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego dwelt in Babylon. During the last few years God has begun to remove His elect from the confusion of this multi-headed monstrosity that dares to masquerade as the church. The result has been that iniquity has burst forth both in the Babylon of the world's political systems and in the Babylon of the church system. Corruption of doctrine and truth has fallen into a bottomless pit and sunken to such degradation of ideas that it is a shame of face even to mention them. There is but one message for those elect children who reign with Christ and share His glory. "*Come out* from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

Thus the cross is the end of all that is old. It is the end of the flesh to all who believe its marvelous message. It is the end of the carnal mind, the end of fleshly striving for perfection, the end for us of Babylon's abominable confusion. Yea, even our earthly citizenship comes to an end in the cross. Here we begin to find ourselves increasingly alienated and ostracized from all the ways and the doings of earth. Even its business and politics become a passing show and a mist that the wind driveth away.

This loss of interest in this present age comes as a direct result of the knowledge that *old things* are indeed passing away. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 13:14. The continuing city, which we seek, is that holy and heavenly Jerusalem, which *we ourselves are*. The gold of that city includes all that is divine. The silver of that city is redemption. The precious stones are its inhabitants, the living stones, chosen of God and precious. The light of that city is not the light of a candle nor yet the light of the moon or the sun, for the Lord Himself is the light thereof, and *all nations* shall walk in the light of it.

Let the saints of God arise to the stark but positive reality that the cross has ended all that is old, *has ended*, I say - not *will* end. At this very moment every man who now believes in his heart that by the cross of Christ God dealt with and abolished everything pertaining to the old creation shall find deliverance and freedom from all that is old and passing away because of the certain knowledge that God on Golgotha nailed to the accursed tree everything that belonged to Adam's fallen creation. Henceforth all who truly identify themselves with the cross and the last Adam, who died upon it, shall be free indeed from all corrupting things that have hurt and defiled their spirits, bringing them into lifelong bondage. With such wonderful knowledge in our hearts how can we help but proclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." By the cross I am crucified. The old Adamic "I" is crucified. In the cross the *old man* was crucified, the flesh was crucified, and the world was crucified. It is executed. It is dead. The executioner's axe has cut off its head. The hangman's noose has broken its neck. The cross has taken its life away, and it shall be no more.

That which immediately follows the cross is not the resurrection, but the burial. It was not enough in the sight of God that the old "I" should be crucified. It did not satisfy him that my flesh was crucified and the world was crucified as well, but, having put an end to it by nailing it to His cross. He wrapped it in grave clothes and buried it in the tomb, putting it out of the way, putting it out of His sight, identifying it with the deadness of the earth from which it sprang. Oh, thou man of God, wherein lies thy faith? Do you not now see that God has in truth caused old things to pass away and that He has by one omnipotent stroke nailed to the cross every crafty enemy of your soul? And since the law has no power over *men that are dead*. He placed you in Christ and in Him He nailed you to the cross.

Thus, making the law powerless and ineffective. He robbed every principality and evil spirit of the power they held over you, and the law itself with its ordinances, now rendered powerless by reason of your death with Christ, was taken out of the way, being also nailed to the cross. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." **Col. 2:14-17.** "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And *ye are complete in Him*, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." **Col. 2:8-13.**

Wonderful as is the indisputable fact that old things have passed away forever in His cross, it is in the resurrection that the transcending glory of *all new things* begin. Without the cross there could be no resurrection, for "that which thou sowest is not quickened (made alive) except it die." **1 Cor. 15:36.** "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam *all die*, even so *in Christ shall all be made alive.*" **1 Cor. 15:20-22.**

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that we who have seen our identification with Christ in His cross and burial may now also see our identification with Him in His resurrection. The moment divine revelation shows us that everything belonging to the old Adam died with Christ and has in very truth passed away, then in that moment we experience deliverance from every ancient bondage of the old creation. But let us learn here and now that death does not end all, for if there be no resurrection, the Christ died in vain. But Christ *is risen* from the dead to become the first fruits of the resurrection. Thus it follows, not in theory but in fact, not in doctrine but by faith, that we who have identified ourselves with Him in His cross and burial are just as certainly identifying ourselves at this moment with His resurrection. We who saw *old things* pass away in our death with Him now behold *all things new* in our resurrection with Him. Just as certainly as Jesus rose from the dead, I now stand risen in Him, a *child of the resurrection*. However sickly and weak my understanding may be, however frail my faith, however wobbly my spiritual legs, I rose with Him, and the devil himself shall not rob my

soul of that faith that here and now teaches me that I am a child of the resurrection. Henceforth we look out upon a world that is swiftly passing away, an age that is in the throes of death, an hour that holds no passing interest. The thought of restoring the transient things of the old creation is madness and the efforts of the zealot to do so are a sorrow and sickness to the heart. How earthly and bound by this age were the minds of the Sadducees who hoped to annul the truth of the resurrection by speaking of a woman who had in consecutive order married seven brothers, ending their supposed case with the words, "Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be, for the seven had her." When Jesus replied to their cunning question. He showed the two great reasons for the million errors that cluster like demons over the minds of men, robbing them of faith and destroying their understanding. "Ye do err," He said, "(1) not knowing the scriptures, nor (2) the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." **Matt. 23-33.** What a soul destroyer is the natural mind that dares to question the authority of scripture, imagining by its unbelief to make God devoid of power!

At this point in our message one could easily digress into a prolonged analysis of the resurrection. It would be simple to go from scripture to scripture offering proof after indisputable proof that Jesus really did rise from the dead, but however valuable such an exegesis may be to some, it usually has the unfortunate effect of leaving men full of theory but empty of experience. Far too often the resurrection is portrayed as an event of the past or left to be a hope of the distant future far beyond the reach of men in this hour of our greatest need. In the detailed story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, recorded in the eleventh chapter of John's gospel, the conversation of Jesus and Martha is of foremost interest. "Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" **John 11:20-26.**

The words spoken by Martha are typical of the faith of us all. She believed in a resurrection as an event in the distant future even as we also believe. But the great fundamental fact that must engulf our spirits, enlightening our pure minds with revelation from heaven is this: The resurrection is above all else a *person* and that person is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who died, who was buried, and who rose again. It is not our belief in the resurrection as an event either past or future that makes us *children of the resurrection*. It is our identity with Him that makes us one with that resurrection which He both here and now is. What else but this was Jesus daring to teach when He staggered the mind of that humble woman with these words: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die?" Would you not say that such daring belief identifies you with the risen Christ? Who is it, anyway, of whom He spoke, saying, "Whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"? Dare we venture to say that he who has identified himself with Christ's death is not, in fact, dead? Verily I say unto you that such a man has died even as He died. He is crucified with Christ. His old man is crucified. His flesh is crucified. It was the faith of such a man that brought him into the likeness of Christ's death, and it is like precious faith that now identifies him with the resurrected Christ. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." **Rom. 6:5.** Therefore Jesus our Lord said, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." But He went much further to say of this same believing person, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

There is a possibility that the day may soon come when devout men will put my body in a coffin and bury me under the ground, but I cannot believe that such an event can be called death to any man who has identified himself with Christ in His death and resurrection. At most and at worst the grave to such a one can be but a sleep, and I think this is the faith Paul embraced when he spoke of that blessed "*in Christ*" company, saying, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed." **1 Cor. 15:51.** Again, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." **1 Thess. 4:14.** And yet again, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep." **1 Thess. 4:15.** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. Upon such the *second death* hath no power. It would not be possible to say that those believers who through faith have identified themselves with His

resurrection were not partakers of the first resurrection. Such reasoning would make the truth void and faith of no effect.

But what shall we say of the second part of Christ's statement to Martha? "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die". There is coming a day and that right soon when God will demonstrate to every creature in the universe that this long misunderstood statement is literally true. The hour is at hand when a blood-washed company of people will be swept into immortality without even knowing sleep in the dust of the earth. For thus saith the Lord, "The dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are *alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air..." It is abundantly clear, therefore, that *we shall not all sleep*. Certainly we shall not and cannot die.

The mighty, eternal, all-embracing events that concern Calvary and the Christ, who died, was buried, and rose again, are the very center and pivot of the whole universe. Each literal event of those dread hours of agony and glory bears symbolic reference to identical experiences that take place in the lives of the blood-bought saints who now through the spirit of revelation identify themselves with the eternal Logos in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection, in His ascension, and in His seat at God's right hand. The revelation of the divine fact of our death *with Him* and *in Him* is so real to all who can embrace the truth of it that a definite and wonderful change begins to transform their very life and existence. "I am crucified with Christ," the heart believes. "Nevertheless, I *live yet not I*, but Christ, liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." The "I" that I once was is dead; the "I" that now lives is Jesus Christ. No wonder John in rapture exclaimed, "*As He is, so are we in this world,*" **1 John 4:17.**

The divine revelation of our burial with Him becomes so real to those who can receive it that their spirits are enlightened by the wonderful discovery that their old Adamic past with all its obnoxious incongruities has in truth remained in the burial tomb along with the grave clothes that clothed it while it lived. Remember then, oh son of God, that it was not your striving or effort, your weeping or your prayer, that buried all that belonged to the old creation in the tomb, but it was *in Christ* you died, it was *in Christ* you were buried, and all that belonged to your old self, all that was crucified with Him was likewise buried with Him forever. Oh, blissful thought! Oh glad and glorious dawning! How could it otherwise be said that, if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creation*, since old things have so thoroughly passed away, clearing the path and preparing the way whereby all things should become new?

Glorious, indeed, and wonderful beyond human description was the cross of Christ and all that was accomplished there. Sacred and holy beyond the words of the most eloquent tongue was the burial wherein all our Adamic past was buried with Him in the dust from which it sprang, but now I know that the most exciting event of all history, whether it be past, present, or future, was the glory and wonder of the *resurrection*.

Death could not keep her prey;
Jesus, my Savior.
He tore the bars away;
Jesus, my Lord.
Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

The resurrection is the difference between gloomy, dark, and dreadful death and life incorruptible and eternal. The fact that He who died and was buried is forevermore alive is the most transforming reality in all the annals of God. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" asked the wise and mighty angel. "He is not here. *He is risen*. Behold the place where they laid Him." "*He is risen*," echoed the women as they wept with indescribable joy. "*Did not our hearts burn* within us as He spake with us by the way," rejoiced the men who only moments before were heartsick with bitterness and dread. "*He is alive*, and hath appeared to Simon," said the eleven who were gathered together. "*My Lord and My God*," murmured Thomas as his unbelief departed from him.

Wonderful, wonderful beyond description is that historic event, an event proven by more facts than perhaps any other event of history including the crucifixion. However, it is not the historicalness of the event nor the multiplicity of indisputable proofs with which we are principally interested now, but let heaven rejoice and angels and demons and men bear witness that all who by faith have identified themselves with His death and burial are now risen with Him by that same faith to walk in newness of life. At this very moment it is true **"that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."** **Rom. 6:4.**

That you by faith in Him have become a *child of the resurrection* is no idle theory. It is not that insipid talk of wordy old theologians who love to drown truth in the murky seas of tradition and theory. This is truth that flows from the infinite mind of the eternal Logos. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." So true and transforming is the fact of our resurrection in Him that men of faith are brought here and now into the realm of reality. To them *old things* are without doubt passing away and new things are being born. The blessed discovery is soon made that things, which once held them in their iron grip, are losing their power over them. Their business and their bank accounts are losing their significance in the light of the fact that they are no longer children of death *in Adam* but children of the resurrection *in Christ*. They understand as never before the significance of the words of Jesus. **"If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight; ...but now My kingdom is not from hence."** **John 18:36.** Our lives in Adam have always been filled with striving and war in a vain effort to preserve our kingdom of death, but now henceforth God's kingdom is our kingdom. I have no interest in preserving this present realm that for 6000 years has been beset by death and futility. Loose your grip upon it, oh man, that you may fully partake of that *new creation* that even now has begun within the children of the resurrection.

With our entrance into this new creation begins the blossoming of the new mind, even the mind of Christ; and with the coming of the *new mind* physical transformations appear, for the Lord by the mouth of Paul has said, **"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."** **Rom. 12:2.** This physical renewing will appear first *in death* to many old lusts that held sway in your body. That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. Fleshly desires fall away and any effort to revive them will bring spiritual pain. Natural things such as church systems become a heaviness of heart and a weariness of spirit as in the eternal light they appear to be what they really are - the product of the Adamic mind. "My kingdom is not of this world", and, since it is not, then I may no longer think of myself as a citizen of earth, but a citizen of the new realm. Surely men will say, "Thou art beside thyself as did Festus when Paul spoke to him of the resurrection. Acts 26:24. But well might we say, **"If I be beside myself, it is to God."** **2 Cor. 5:13.**

In the hour in which we now live there is no fact more sobering than the knowledge that the end of the age is upon us. Evil forces are mustering on every hand for the dreadful hour of Armageddon. Fearful sights hitherto unknown will presently alarm and terrify the world as blood and fire and vapor of smoke drench the earth in torment and terror. Acts 2:19. Stars like burning mountains shall soon fall from the sky, setting off earthquakes of a violence never before known. Rev. 8:7-10. Waters will turn to blood and over half of mankind will die by war and famine and plagues. Cf. Rev. 6:8 with Rev. 9:18. Then will come the blissful moment of the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet when the *in Christ* ones, the *children of the resurrection*, joined by the dead in Christ, shall be caught up to meet the Lord for the beginning of the long awaited kingdom of God. **"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and forever."** **Rev. 11:15.**

CHAPTER FIVE HE IS RISEN

"The course of bad men lies through darkness dim; they cannot see what makes them stumble: the course of good men, like a ray of dawn, shines on and on to the full light of day." **Prov. 4:18,19.** (Moffatt)

At the beginning of our walk with God we see through a glass darkly, but for all those who walk faithfully there will come a time when the murky dimness of the dark glass will be taken away and the clear light will shine. No

more the darkling veil will obscure, but we shall see face to face, and, beholding the face of the Lord, we are changed into *that same image* from one glory to the next even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3:18.

It is the plan of God that all things with life should grow. It matters not whether the form of life be intricate or simple. The seed of whatsoever sort it be, cast into the ground, springs forth in newness of *life*, *first* the blade, *then* the ear, *after that* the full corn in the ear. Mark 4:28. The delightful baby given to adoring parents who could love his fresh innocence forever is not destined to remain a tiny infant, but with what delight do parents announce the gaining of a few ounces in weight, the first efforts at crawling, the appearance of a tooth, the first halting step in walking, the first garbled words, the beginning of school, until with joy and sadness blending they see the final adulthood and departure from home. But what apprehension appalls where stalks the sudden fear that their child who had such a beautiful beginning is growing sickly and weak, that faculties are not developing and disease that will stunt the growth and weaken the mind is closing the gates of day!

Since God has ordained that all things should grow and mature and we, His offspring, love to have it so, why is it that the vast multitude of God's dear children are never expected to pass from infancy to manhood, going from light to light and from experience to experience? Why should it be thought strange that development and change should take place in their lives as with the passing years, new wisdom and understanding of eternal things fill their spiritual minds? Has not God ordained that His offspring should mature from the infancy of little children to the strength and virility of young men and thence to the wisdom and understanding, the love and ripeness of *fathers*? Is this not the meaning of the beautiful text, "I write unto you, *little children*, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. I write unto you, *young men*, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, *fathers*, because[^] have known Him that is from the beginning." 1 John 2:12-14. The path of the just must be *as the shining light* that shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day. Prov. 4:18. If therefore there is no more light in you today and no more bright shining than there was at the beginning, then your light is going out, and somewhere you have chosen your own sweet paths, having forsaken the right way and gone astray. 2 Pet. 2:15.

It is thought to be a bad sign should one change his mind about anything, which was held as truth. But we know *nothing yet* as we ought to know and, whereas what little we do know we know only *in part*, we should expect that, as we walk in the light, which is Jesus Christ, and the more brightly it shines upon our pathway, the more the misty clouds will flee from our understanding, the darkness will be dispelled from its secret hiding place, the shadows will shorten and disappear, and the mountain peaks long hidden from our searching eyes will lay aside their misty mantles to beckon us to their lofty heights, "for when that which is perfect is come, then that which is *in part* shall be done away." 1 Cor. 13:10. Pity the man who resists all change, for such a one never matures beyond the infant years. He seeks to firmly establish himself in the first principles of doctrine and live out the rest of his monotonous days on nothing but the *milk of the word*. Cf. Heb. 6:1-3. He has never learned that there is strong meat for men of full age. He knows nothing about the honey in the rock, the bread of life of which if a man eat he shall live forever, or the *water of life* of which if a man drink he shall never die. Contenting himself in defending his juvenile position, he robs himself of spiritual growth, rusting in the fortress of his own building until he dies. He resembles the legendary frog that lived in a well that, thinking he possessed *all the water in the world*, believed not when others told him that outside his gloomy hole there were mighty rivers, vast lakes and boundless oceans. To believe such things that frog would have had to change his mind and broaden his understanding, but, like many Christians, this he refused to do.

THE SIGN SON

At the time of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. "And the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law, then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things, which were spoken of Him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and/or a *sign that shall be spoken against.*" Luke 2:25-34.

For a sign which shall be spoken against! What strange words are these, that our Lord Jesus should be a sign! But how well did the words of Simeon concur with the words of the prophet Isaiah when he by the Holy Ghost said, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall *give you a sign*; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." **Isa. 7:14**. It was not the *virgin birth* that was to be the sign, but it was the *Son who was born of the virgin*. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, was in truth the *sign Son*. This only begotten Son of God was a sign of *many more* sons who through God's grace should come into sonship, for He was but *the firstborn of a vast family of sons* who will come into His exact image and likeness. For we, being born of the Holy Ghost, are born of incorruptible seed by the *word of God (Jesus Christ)*, who liveth and abideth forever; having all *one Father* and one Spirit, we are brethren, heirs of God and *joint heirs* with our elder brother, Jesus Christ.

The life of Jesus Christ from its beginning on earth to His ascension into heaven was a sign. The miracles He performed both individually and collectively bear this testimony of things to come and manifest forth *in sign* the glory of a coming age. His life, His death. His burial. His resurrection and ascension display with certainty the path which we, too, must follow and over which we have already traversed farther than we think.

The gospel preached by the apostle Paul was the gospel of the grace of God. It was especially given to him for this age. This he affirms in these words: "For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the *dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward*: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." **Eph. 3:1-5-8**. The gospel preached by Jesus was not the gospel of grace but the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is the gospel which *will fill the whole earth* in the dispensation which is even now at our doors. It will grip the hearts and minds of all men and fill the entire earth with the literal realities of the Sermon on the Mount. The wonders He wrought during His ministry on earth were only the things, which *He began* to do and to teach, as we are told by Luke when he wrote, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up*." **Acts. 1:1**. Jesus Christ *did not complete* His ministry; He only *began it*, but the fullness of the gospel of the kingdom will spread over *the whole earth* through the ministry of the *sons in His likeness* when the Law shall go forth from Zion and the *word of the Lord* from Jerusalem. Micah 4:2. There is coming a day when the knowledge of the Lord shall *fill the whole earth* as the waters now fill the seas. In that day *no man* will say, *know the Lord*, for *all shall know Him from the least to the greatest*.

The gospel of the grace of God which has been preached for almost two thousand years was given *not because* the Jews rejected Christ, but as a dispensation planned before of God in which he would call and prepare a special company of sons to reign in His kingdom. This mystery was not known in previous ages, but was revealed to the apostles by the Spirit! See Eph. 3:1-6. Though the grace of God will never end, the period we call *the dispensation of grace* is almost complete. The elect and chosen sons, the *in Christ* company, prepared of God through the fires of the past twenty centuries, are now due to come forth from their graves to join the *in Christ company* that *lives and remains* unto the coming of the Lord. 1 Thess. 4:14-18. *Not all Christians will reign with Christ*. That is reserved for the *in Christ company*. *The vast majority of Christians are saved so as by fire*.

They have built upon the foundation with naught but *wood, hay, and stubble*, and when the fire of God tries the work of every Christian, as *try* it surely will, their works will be burned up, and they will stand naked and empty before Him. But those whose works are as gold, silver, and precious stones will not be hurt by the fire that tries every man. Therefore, if any man's work *abide*, he shall receive a reward; but if any man's work *shall be burned*, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; *yet so as by fire*. 1 Cor. 3:12-15. People saved *so as by fire* are not material for sonship nor for reigning in the kingdom of God, for those who are with Him are called and chosen and *faithful*. Rev. 17:14.

My spirit has been stirred with a knowledge that great changes are taking place in God's faithful people. To those who *follow Christ* are the promises given and not to those who follow *afar off*. "For everyone that *hath forsaken* houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." **Matt. 19:29**.

As God's dear people behold the fearful things that are happening, they have reason for great concern. Nations gird themselves for a struggle that will dwarf all previous conflicts. Morals collapse, right is crucified, and wrong sits on every throne. The church systems embrace with affection the *mother of harlots*, placing in her hand the golden cup that overflows with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. Mighty nations seek a savior to deliver them from their problems and are being made ready to shout hosanna to the Antichrist beast, for He who came in His Father's name they have rejected, but he who comes in his own name they will receive.

Though your eyes behold all these things, *let not your heart be troubled*, for God is never a whit behind in any of His purposes. Even now He is preparing His people for a wonderful change. Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God; therefore; *this corruptible* must put on incorruption and *this mortal* must put on immortality. When the sevenfold heat of the burning fiery furnace of tribulation is upon the world, the Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abed-negos will be ready, for He who hath wrought the selfsame thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

The magnificent wonders portrayed in the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke are about to burst into reality among us. If you will follow the story through with me; you will see what hour it is, for the *early morning* of the resurrection day is upon us.

Our blessed Lord had been crucified and His blood, all powerful to redeem an *entire universe* from sin, had been vicariously shed. Men had not taken His life from Him, but He had laid it down as His Father had showed Him. "Into Thy hands I commit My Spirit," He cried, and so saying He yielded up the Spirit to God. With a spear the soldier pierced His side as the scripture had foretold, and from the wound flowed out blood - blood *better* than the blood of bulls and goats, blood *better* far than blood of Abel, the blood of the eternal Son of God shed in His death for the life of all the world, blood not only to atone for all sin of all ages and of all people, but blood that by its very nature would *purge the consciences* of all mankind in the end. and the consciences of all who would believe even now while we yet live. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the *blood of Christ*, who through the *eternal Spirit* offered Himself without spot to God, *purse your conscience* from dead works to serve the living God. Heb 9:13-15.

Yea, further. He who was crucified has taught us by His Holy Spirit that we should be crucified that we no more live after the world, but after Him who died and rose again for us. "I am crucified with Christ," said Paul. "Nevertheless I live, yet *not I but Christ* liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." All who bear within their breasts the hope of resurrection unto eternal life must face with resolve and hope the cross of crucifixion that all who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.

A great evil among Christians in our day is that they want to live lives *that please themselves*. They rebel against the chastening rod and squirm beneath the weight of their afflictions. They sing, "There's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for me," but they do all in their power to rid themselves of it and cast it aside. A cross is of little value in your life *if you hate it* and see not the power it holds over your old animal life. It is of no value when you spend your days in self-pity, feeling only the pain and the ache, but seeing not the joy that is set before you. Have we so soon forgotten that "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment and who shall declare His generation, for He was cut off out of the land of the living?"

Child of God, destined to sonship, when will we learn that it is only the flesh with its affections and lusts that must be crucified? The old *beast nature* inherited from our father Adam when he chose to be after the image of beasts rather than after the image of God is the nature that must *go to the cross*. If you would be possessor of the *seven spirits of sonship*, then heed this: "*Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts.*" **Prov. 9:1-2**. The seven pillars are the seven spirits. The beasts killed in sacrifice are the beast nature that *must die* before the seven Spirits of sonship can be manifest in your life.

How our hearts often ache as we see God's people staggering beneath a cross. Fain would we reach forth our hand and lift it from them. We weep in our helplessness, because God has placed their deliverance just beyond our power that the cross may fulfill its work in their lives unhindered by our lack of understanding. Long ago the apostle Paul exulted, "God forbid that I should glory *save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" **Gal. 6:14.** But I wonder what cross Paul was talking about? Was it the wooden cross upon which our Savior hung on the skull-shaped hill? No! The cross in which he gloried was the cross the Savior had laid upon him and now in love lays upon you and me. The wooden cross was taken down and cast away lest men should glory in it, as millions now in ignorance do who wear it on chains about their necks but whose weight upon their shoulders they have never borne. It is the cross that Christ in wisdom *lays upon us* that kills our beast nature and makes us shout in hope with Paul, "*Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong.*" **1 Cor. 12:9-10.**

How sickening it is to hear God's people complain of little discomforts whose lives are loaded with benefits and multiplied blessings are at their fingertips, whose house abound with comfort and convenience and whose bodies are well clad and abundantly nourished - complain that things are not as they want them or not as good as their neighbors. The Spirit of sonship *is not in such people* and sonship in the coming age will be denied them, for they have not borne the cross that Christ would lay upon them, but have concocted their own cross through their carnal whining and discontent. Cursed and disobedient children are these who forsake the right way and run greedily after the error of Balaam. The cross is much easier to those who *bear it* than to those who despondently *drag it along*.

Down from the rugged cross they had taken our Lord and tenderly laid Him in Joseph's new tomb to await the passing of the Sabbath that they might come and embalm His body and with their sad and bitter memories, their dashed and blighted hopes, leave Him embalmed forever in the tomb. Thus, the Sabbath being now past, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, very early in the morning before the sun was up, faithful women came with loving hearts and tender hands bringing spices and ointments and many feet of cloth to embalm His body, for He was dead, and who could escape the power of death? What better then could they do than to show their love with this final act? They would embalm the body and thus preserve it in death as long as possible.

The thoughts here are very real, for I am sure we must realize that all who have followed Him in crucifixion have likewise followed Him in death - death to the carnal mind, death to the natural world, death to the lusts of the flesh. While our crucifixion and death is an act of faith, it is none the less real. The results of faith are in the end as real as a literal cross or a literal tomb where the wicked cease their troubling and the weary are at rest.

There is, however, *another form of death* into which God's people have been brought. It is the awful bondage and cruel slavery in which countless thousands of God's people now find themselves. They are bound with the grave cloths of form and ceremony, tied and throttled in their spirits by the religious systems of men. The liberty they think they have has become a dreadful bondage as they like slaves bow down to the idol of human systems and grovel in the chains of organized religion. This whole system of Babylon is not only a *slave camp*; it is a dank and musty tomb. Everywhere there is the abominable smell of death. Even the sermons preached by the ministers are in most cases *death unto death* instead of life unto life, for while they promise them liberty and freedom, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whatsoever a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage. The whole system of Babylon has become a habitation of devils and of every unclean and hateful bird. Rev. 18:3. Its house is full of doleful creatures; the owls dwell there and the satyrs dance there. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall any dwell there from generation to generation. Cf. Isa. 13:19-22. *It is a grave into which God's people have/alien* and in which they have been held in captivity, bound hand and foot as Lazarus was with grave cloths.

So it was that the dear women came with the loving intention to embalm the body of the Savior, wrap it in grave cloths and leave it there forever. But to their amazement the great stone that had been laid against the door of the tomb *was rolled away* and the tomb stood open before them. They entered in *but found not the*

body of the Lord Jesus. Much perplexed and in great fear they looked about to find what had become of *the body*, and Mary stood weeping over the dreadful loss. John 20:11-16.

As the Spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds, we are left without question as to the meaning of all this. It was *the body of Jesus* they sought within the confining walls of the tomb. Thus the picture as it concerns us today becomes very clear. Did not Paul say, "*Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular?*" **1 Cor. 12:27**. A strange and unexplainable thing had happened in the tomb. The body was not found where it was thought to be. Suddenly it had gone. The grave cloths lay unruffled upon the floor as though the body had suddenly melted from them, but *they found not the body of the Lord Jesus*.

My brother and sister, there is a strange thing happening today, for *the body of Christ* is mysteriously leaving the old tomb in which it has been confined for many centuries. All through the church system all over the religious world good and well-meaning people are perplexed as to why it is *that you have suddenly and strangely been taken from their midst*. Why is your pew empty now whereas in time past you were always in it? Even you yourself are at a loss to explain what is happening to you, for some unseen power of life from God is forcing you out of the old paths and out of your old ways. The grave cloths are falling from you and you are vanishing, leaving them in the tomb. People write me in their perplexity, wondering what is happening to them. Some even ask if they did right in leaving the old grave of church organization with its stale sameness, its dead programs, and its lifeless sermons. Ah, my friend, return not thither again into death, for the Spirit of life from above has touched you and changed you and given you a longing to be *exactly like Him*. A resurrection is taking place and men are arising from the dead in preparation for the change. For, behold, I show you a mystery; *we shall not all die*, but we shall all be changed, and God is now preparing us for that change which will certainly come and none can hinder it.

The God of all comfort who brought our Lord Jesus from the dead will soon comfort your hearts as He did these women, for His two shining messengers, the Spirit and *the word*, declare that the long night is ending. It is *very early* in the resurrection morning and a new day is at hand. "Why seek ye the living among the dead," they asked. And how shall we answer that question? I know that many who read these lines are now doing that very thing, but you will not find them there, for God is calling them forth.

Have we not done as they to seek the living *among the dead!*" Have we not returned time and again to those dead sects and dead denominations to see if we could somehow *find the living*? Yes, indeed, we have time and time again. We are insistent that there is still life there, persisting that the dead who remain there are still the body of the Lord. We insist that *this* is the church and that it will be perfected by the operation of the ministries. But it will not! Just as Jesus called, "Lazarus, *come forth*," so God, our Father, has called to His own body, "*Come out of her, My people*," and they are coming forth. Many as Lazarus are *still bound hand and foot* with grave cloths which must be stripped from them, but others, like Jesus, have come forth, leaving the grave cloths in the dark and dreadful tomb that they might walk in newness of life with Him. Why, oh, why do you insist on seeking the living among the dead? Do now as Jesus commanded. *Let the dead bury their dead*, but follow thou Me!

HE IS NOT HERE

It is hard to convince men of truth when for years their minds have been convinced in an opposite direction. Even the angels who spoke to the women in the tomb could not easily dispel the darkness that hung like a pall over their minds. The stone was rolled away; that was strange. The tomb was open; there could be no mistaking that. The cloths in which the body had been wrapped lay unruffled where His body had been as though He had faded as a mist from their many folds; that was unexplainable. The body was gone; that was certain. And the appearance of the angels in the tomb made them afraid and bow down their heads in fear. But for all this they were not convinced. Even Peter, having looked with amazement upon the scene, departed, *wondering in himself*. Luke 24:12. "*He is not here*," the angels assured them, but still they could not believe. It was too strange, too wonderful, too far beyond their grasp. They had come to embalm a *dead body* but heard instead that *He was living*. They had come to the *only place on earth* where the body could certainly be found, but the angels smiled, "*He is not here*:"

He is *not* here. He is not *here*. *He* is not here. It is hard to pierce the darkness of men's minds. It was hard for them then to believe that the body *was not* in the tomb. It is hard for you now to believe that the *true body of Christ* has been *called out* from the death and darkness of *the tomb of organized religion*. It is well nigh impossible for many to believe that it will never be found there any more. Neither will it be found in that hodge-podge mass of *unorganized religion*, for the life from the dead that is taking place is beyond the reach and power of the conniving minds of men.

He is not here; yet, as a man who has lost a priceless jewel returns *again and again* to look and search where he has searched before lest in some way he has overlooked it, even so do we, for we believe not that God is doing a work of a magnitude never before known in that He is calling the body of His elect from the tomb and the ears of all who hear it will tingle.

Would God that Christians could be awakened to see what a cursed age we dwell in, to what depths of iniquity we have fallen in our self-seeking and pride, supposing that gain is godliness; and having ears that itch for sensation, we have added teachers who tickle them for us, ungodly men ordained of old unto condemnation.

Disorder and confusion so reign in the hearts of men that our world has become a literal Babel. Nations are in confusion from the president to the peasant and from the throne to the dungeon. The priest and the prophet have erred through the wine of their fornication, and through strong drink are they turned out of the way. They err in vision. They stumble in judgment. All tables are full of vomit and filthiness so that there is no place clean. They are together turned out of the way and there is none righteous, no, not one. The *world system* and the *church system* have become so wed that there is no distinction between them, but one is made to complement the other. The hour of wrath is at hand. The four horsemen of the Apocalypse are riding far and wide. The vials of the wrath of God are being placed in the hands of the mighty angels to be poured without dilution upon the earth. The seals are being opened and the trumpets given to the angels to sound. The time of the dead has come and the time for the coming forth from the tomb. Just as there is a *crucifixion* by faith and a *burial* by faith, so also there is a *rising from the dead* by faith. I have no hesitation in saying that our God is calling His people *out of the tomb*, and all who insist on searching there for the *body of Christ* will hear these words: "He is not here."

HE IS RISEN

He is risen! He is alive! What staggering words these must have been to the sorrowing women! Were the angels mocking their sorrow to make their grief more terrible to bear? Or was there a ray of hope that this unheard of thing could possibly be true? Behold with what patience the angels exhorted them, saying, "Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and *the third day rise again*." And they remembered His words and returned from the sepulchre and told all things unto the eleven.

There is nothing on earth that will increase your faith and add to your confidence like *remembering the word of the Lord*. Those who see by the plan of God that all things are working according to His purpose will never be amazed. They will not flounder nor be alarmed. Has not God spoken long ago that all these things must be? Has He not taught us that the leaven would work in the meal until *all is leavened*? Has He not pictured a condition at the end of the age in which God would spue out of His mouth a people rich and increased in goods and needing nothing, who know not that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked? Have we not been told long ago of a harlot system, drunken with the blood of saints and the martyrs of Jesus Christ, and of a time when men could neither buy nor sell except they have the mark of the beast? Why then be amazed? *Remember ye not that He told us all these things*? Remember ye not that John heard the angelic voices proclaiming, "*Come out of her. My peopled* Why then should we be amazed that even now thousands of people in all walks of life are hearing that call in their inmost spirits and are *going forth* from the graves in which they have been buried, going forth *unto Him without the camp* to a *new kind of life* and a *new kind of relationship* with Him which they have not known hitherto.

You wonder why it is that there is such a *coming out*. You may doubt that they are being called of God. But, if you would but believe God's word and *remember what He said*, you could not help but believe that the present religious system with all its abominations is indeed *the Babylon of the book of Revelation*, and, if you remembered the word of the Lord, you, too, would come forth and delay not going *unto Him without the camp*

of the world's religious systems which have a name that they live, and are *dead*, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Whether we want to believe it or not, there is a company in the world today who are hearing the call of God to *come forth*. Like the unknown seven thousand in Israel they pass almost unnoticed, refusing to bow to the image of Babylon. They have departed from their darkness and have left the tomb to go forth unto Him.

Yes, indeed. He is risen, and, upon remembering the words of the Lord, all doubt and unbelief must surely pass away. The stirring in the hearts of the people is not the stirring of a coming revival, but the stirring of a resurrection. It is taking place by faith in preparation for the actuality when the mystery of God is finished and corruption puts on incorruption and mortality puts on immortality. This is the hope of the ages, the *blessed hope* of the Bible. *He is risen! He is risen!* And we who have died with Him will live together with Him, and there shall be no default in that. The Bible contains more proof of the resurrection of Jesus than it contains either of His birth or of His death. The largest number of witnesses to establish anything in the courts is seven.

An oral will can be established by seven witnesses. The resurrected Jesus was seen of above five hundred brethren at once and by many infallible proofs He showed himself alive after His passion. Mohammed is dead; Buddha is dead; Confucius is dead; but Jesus Christ is alive, and all who believe in Him are transformed by His Spirit which He sent forth when He returned to His Father in heaven. *He is risen! He is alive* forevermore, and He holds the keys of death and the grave, saying to Hades, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in, for even the gates of hell cannot prevail before Him."

IF YE THEN BE RISEN

A rising from the dead is taking place. There is a coming forth from the tomb to a new kind of life and a new kind of experience, which we have not known before. Unto obedient men today Paul is speaking these magnificent words: "*If ye then be risen* with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." There is a spiritual rising with Christ that precedes the literal resurrection. Those who partake of it will find that their affections are being set upon heavenly things *above* and not on things on the earth. This can be your experience here and now in this present world. It is not enough to grasp the truth of this with one hand while holding fast to earthly things with the other. There must be a separation of loves. The love of the earth and the transient things of the natural must fade away and die, and the love of the permanent and eternal must mature and live. From henceforth you are not the same as you once were. You are risen with Christ and share with Him *even now* the glory and power of heavenly realms.

Our hearts have thrilled to the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and well they might, for Lazarus, not being raised to immortality, was a special *type of our spiritual rising* with Christ by faith. Lazarus, who was called forth from the smelly tomb, did not rise in incorruption and immortality, but came forth in mortality bound hand and foot with grave cloths, as many still are who by God's power are *coming forth* from the graves of the deadness and corruption all about us. He had to be loosed and let go, and the death cloths that bound him taken piece by piece from him, as also it has been with us. Perhaps we have wept for joy as we read the story of Lazarus and of Jesus who said, "I am the resurrection and the life," but the story does not end with his deliverance from the grave, for those who are *risen* with Christ are *seated with Him* far above all principality and power. Thus it was that six days before the Passover they made a supper in the house of Mary and Martha. Devout Martha had not died nor been raised to life again, so with her, life continued much as usual there, for it is recorded, "*And Martha served.*" Nor had Mary been raised from the dead; therefore she is still found in that place she loved so well at Jesus' feet. But with Lazarus all was changed. He had passed through an experience that raised him to an entirely new realm. He had died, he had been buried, and he had risen with Christ to an entirely new realm and a completely new life; therefore it is clearly said, "*But Lazarus was one that sat at the table with Him.*" **John 16:2.**

There is a crucified state where we *die with Him*, but there is also a resurrected life where we live with Him and sit down with Him in heavenly realms. For this reason Paul said, "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth, for ye have died and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.*" **Col. 3:1-4.** Our spiritual rising from the dead is a

new relationship with Christ. The grave stands between us and our old life. We were crucified through weakness, but we live by the power of God. We are no longer citizens of this world, but now we desire a better country, that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called our God, for He has prepared for us a city.

As the Passover was the beginning of months to the Jews, so the resurrection from the dead is the beginning of days to all who experience its transforming power. Upon the *seventh day* of the week God completed His work of a natural creation. Upon the *first day* of the week He completed the work of a spiritual creation in which men rise to walk in *newness of life* with Him. It is beginning to dawn toward the first day of the week, and many are now casting away the grave cloths of a life enslaved to a dying realm that they might henceforth live on the *resurrection side of the tomb* in newness of life with Christ. Unclutch your death grip and let loose your grasp on this present realm that your soul may escape as a bird from the snare of the fowler to rise to a new realm where Christ sitteth in "heavenly places".

THE THIRD DAY

Two sad souls with broken hearts journeyed on resurrection day from Jerusalem to the little village of Emmaus. Heavy and disconsolate they talked together of all the things that had happened. But as they journeyed, they were joined by another who, hearing them, asked, "What manner of communications are these which ye have one with another and are sad?" "Art Thou only a stranger and hast not known the things which have come to pass?" they questioned. "What things?" said He. Then they told Him the story of Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed, and of how the chief priests and elders of the nation condemned Him to death and crucified Him, and with naked despair they added, "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." Then, as though a perplexing ray of hope had added new complications to their dilemma, they continued, "And beside all this *today is the third day since these things were done, and certain women also of our company made us astonished which were early at the sepulchre, and when they found not His body, they came saying they had seen a vision of angels which said He was alive.*" **Luke 24:13-23.**

Beside all this *today is the third day*. These words have more significance to us today than to any people since those crestfallen ones walked to Emmaus. To us the *third day* is the *kingdom day*. You remember how, when Jesus would return to Judea, His disciples warned Him, saying, "Herod will kill you." But He replied, "Go and tell that fox. Behold, I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I will be glorified." **Luke 13:32.** We may say with reverence and truth that the ministry of Jesus on earth consisted of *cures*. He healed a leper here, a blind man there. He raised a few dead and cast out many devils; but at the end of His ministry there were still millions of sick and the world still lay in the grip of the prince of the power of the air. So also it has been with the church, for a day is with the Lord as a thousand years. During the *first thousand years* the church wrought only *cures* - a revival here, a few miracles there - and during the *second thousand years* likewise it wrought only *cures* - a few revivals, some souls saved, some bodies healed, even a few raised from the dead, but *only cures* - and even now at the end of this second day we may well ask, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" But *the third day is at hand*, blessed be God! And in it *Christ will be glorified*. In the third *twenty-four hour day* Christ the head was glorified. In the third *thousand year day* Christ the body will be glorified. Then shall *cures end* and permanence begin, for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

That we are now living in the dying moments of the second day there can be no doubt and it would only be a weariness to start repeating here the multitudinous signs that herald the hour when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and the dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, and we shall all be changed. But even at this very moment there is a kind of firstfruits of the resurrection that are *hearing God's voice and coming forth from their bondage* to walk in new realms and to live where Christ lives in the Spirit.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 5
THE GLORY SON TO BE REVEALED

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-5

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CHAPTER ONE
GOING ON TO PERFECTION

Man's journey to the celestial realm will always be punctuated with revelation and repentance, - revelation that we might catch a glimpse of the glories beyond us and repentance that we might attain them. No height of God has ever been manifest without a sovereign revelation from God's infinite mind, and no height in God has ever been attained without the repentance that revelation demanded.

Once we came under conviction of sin. We were in the world and belonged to the realm of the ungodly, but through the sovereign revelation of the Lord we saw ourselves as sinners in His sight. The unveiling of Christ as the Savior of all mankind was a revelation to our darkened hearts. To attain the salvation, which is in Him, we repented of all things of which we were convicted and found rest and peace in Him. We sang the songs of praise and thanksgiving, rejoicing in our new-found joy. Peace like a river attended our way. We sang of happy rest, of joy-bells ringing in our hearts, and of the blessed assurance we had. The songs of redemption echoed among the thousand corridors of our beings and we were always willing to tell of the change that had been wrought since Jesus came into our hearts.

It was not long, however, before revelation and conviction followed again and again. We heard of a Baptism of the Holy Spirit and we met its higher demands that we might receive its cleansing fire. Various demands of sanctification were made of us and we responded with repentance to the conviction they brought us. On and on God has led us throughout our lives bringing light upon light and conviction upon conviction. Repentance followed repentance always consummating in greater victory and greater freedom in Him.

It is a number of years now since the great revelation shone in a blaze of glory and conviction in our hearts. Let us never forget that, though we had been justified by faith and baptized with the Spirit, practically all of our spiritual existence had been lived in the shallows and misery of church tradition, grievous, slavish tradition that had increased in darkness and density from time immemorable. While our spirits sang songs of freedom and liberty, we were bound in chains and fetters of a midnight hour and knew not that we were in prison. It was a happy day, indeed, when by a sovereign act of God light transcending the light of any earthly sun pierced the heavy darkness of our tradition and shone like a searchlight into our gloomy prison cell. We rejoiced in the light and the revelation of God, wondering in ourselves why it was we had walked in darkness so long while thinking we were in bright light. We could not understand how we could have been so bound while thinking we were free. The light of revelation did not stop with one brief searching gleam. It has shone on and on increasing in light and heat as we approach the fullness of the day. Tremendous demands have been made upon us. We have seen institution after institution disappear. We have been called upon to lay aside understanding after understanding, tradition after tradition, doctrine after doctrine, until we wondered at times if there would be anything left of the temple we had built.

One day during the earthly life of our blessed Lord His disciples took Him on a sightseeing tour of the old temple at Jerusalem. They remarked with evident pride, "Master, see what manner of stones are here!" They were proud of the glory of that ancient place of worship, filled as it was by tradition and history of bygone days. They loved and honored it and almost worshipped the ground on which it stood. Never, never, they thought, would anything ever disturb the peaceful rest of this ancient monument of worship. Their minds must have

been greatly puzzled and their faces darkened with astonishment when the Master quietly told them, "I tell you there will not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." As John the Baptist declared, "The axe is laid to the root of the trees," so Christ was foretelling the hurling down of the rocks of their past traditions. The axe was to be laid not the trunk of the trees nor yet to the branches, for then it might have grown again, but the axe was to be laid to the root of the trees that they might never spring up. Never more would the beasts of the earth harbor in their shade or the birds of the air in their branches.

The stones of the temple were not be carefully removed to allow for modification or rebuilding. They were to be thrown down to the ground and carted away as useless, for the end of that era had surely come. However well an institution may have fulfilled a purpose, once God is through with it, it is washed up and finished. It is ready to vanish away. Our prerogative is to go on with the light - not to build again the things that are destroyed lest we become transgressors.

There need be no question in the mind of anyone but that we have come again to the end of an old era and we are standing at the threshold of a new one. The last decade has certainly been filled with wonderful things. Too numerous to mention have been the things God has taught us as we have walked in the light of His ever increasing truth. Our minds have often been staggered by the wonderful things we have seen and heard and our ambitions have been raised as we have looked forward to the promised land of the Spirit and have seen the innumerable and wonderful glories that lie just beyond the veil of the flesh. We are undoubtedly standing at the threshold of a new era in God, a new realm in the Spirit, and a new level of experience. When we come to a time like this, many will refuse to go on. There is some strange thing inherent in all men that makes them desire to exchange their moving tent for a fixed abode. They begin to feel that they have journeyed far enough and that the effort to go on into the new and more wonderful realm is too great a strain. What will I do with all the grand and marvelous things I have grown to love and adore, we ask. The truths we have learned, the government of the churches, the order and discipline, will we have to leave these as an established fact and go on? We would like to be partakers of the more excellent way, but we cannot bear to think that in that way prophecy shall fail, tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away. We become reluctant to admit that all our prophesying of the past was only in part, all our knowledge was only in part, so we cling to that which is in part and refuse to let the perfect come.

All the institutions of the past have been but a means to an end. In the mind of God they have not been the end itself. It is the body of Christ, which is the end God has in mind. All other things are just a means to bring it about. Once the house is built you dismiss the carpenters, brick-layers, plumbers and electricians and from there on the house itself enters into its ministry of being a home for a family or whatever other purpose was in the mind of the builder. In like manner, once the body of Christ is come to fullness, there must be a passing away of all the gifts and ministries that built it so that the body of Christ itself becomes a ministry to the world and to the universe.

There is a strange and foolish tendency in man to begin to rejoice more in the tools and professions of the trade than in the object we are building. The building is not to create workmen, but the workmen with their gifts are to create a building. The church is not found to create prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and a multitude of other ministries, but the ministries are created to found or build the church. Once that work is complete, the ministries that have built the body will decrease that the body may increase and become a ministry of life to the entire world. If you will take time to think and meditate about this, you will note that there has always been a tendency to leave off putting the emphasis on the building and to start putting the emphasis on the builders. We have been afraid to complete the building lest we run out of a job until finally we were running the job for the sake of our ministries instead of having our ministries function to complete the job. We get to thinking that the church is for the ministries rather than the ministries for the church. Personally I am not in the least sorry that I am coming to the end of the ministry as I have known it and as it has been known in the past to become a part of that ministering temple that is to fill the whole earth with the light of life. I am not sorry at all that, when that which is perfect is come, all that is in part will be done away. Neither am I sorry that the spectacular gifts calculated to awaken the dead are to give place to the wisdom and knowledge of God that flows as endlessly as the river of life itself.

There was a great deal of difference between the voice that called Lazarus from the tomb and the voice that unfolded the wisdom of God to that same Lazarus as they sat at the supper table some says later. The one

was the prophetic voice calculated to call a man from the darkness of the dead. The other was the voice of eternal wisdom and understanding flowing from the mind of God to renew the mind of man. We are now experiencing this very thing. In 1948 God thundered to us by the prophetic voice as we lay sleeping the sleep of death in the denominational cemetery. The thundering, spectacular, prophetic voice was heard and reheard by our dead, dull ears. Startled and trembling we arose from the dead and came forth bound hand and foot with the grave clothes with which tradition had bound us. There were more spectacular prophecies, commands and teachings as we were loosed from one bond after another and let go free. Those spectacular things are fast fading away because their usefulness is nearing fulfillment and the hour is fast approaching when we will live in the realm of the renewed mind.

While our minds have been in the process of being renewed since the day we were called from the grave, yet they are only in the process of being renewed. The day will come when our minds will be influenced no longer by the corroding influences of corruptible flesh, for our minds are becoming one with His mind. The power of the flesh over the mind is fading away and falling off, while the power of the spirit over the mind is increasing and waxing great. While our minds are under the control of our physical senses, our bodies are dying because "they that are in a sensual state cannot please God," (Good-speed), and if we live after the flesh we die. But when our minds are renewed and come under the control of the Christ within, then even our bodies are changed by the renewed mind so that corruption begins to put on incorruption and mortality, immortality. It is only as we are renewed in the mind of Christ that we live forever. I used to think it would be wonderful to go to the cemetery and raise the dead to life. The truth is it would be terrible, for all we would do would be restore their corruptible bodies and inflict upon them the necessity of another funeral. But those who become partakers of the renewed mind partake of the true resurrection, for then the life is in them and they cannot die.

It is difficult for me to see how the act of raising a man from the dead could be called a resurrection at all because the one who was raised would be receiving life from without. But those in whom resurrection dwells are not only raised from the dead, but have life from within so that they can never die. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." That was because He possessed life within that even death and the tomb could not extinguish. He could only die by laying His life down, but He could live again because death has no power to destroy life that is inherent within. It can only take away life that is borrowed from without.

I cannot say enough nor can I speak too highly nor with greater respect for the things that God has done in the last number of years, but I must admit, and I freely do, that though the things we have seen have been most wonderful, yet we have been seeing through a glass darkly and not face to face. Wonderful though the prophecy has been, it has been all in part and not complete. We are thankful for the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, but we have known only in part and the fullness of perfection has no yet dawned upon us. This partial wisdom has been pointing us with trembling finger to the fullness of the wisdom of God, which belongs to the celestial realm. These feeble prophesyings of the past, many of which have failed, have been but whisperings of a better realm, a better day, and a perfect order. Like breezes blowing over the sea bearing the rich fragrance of another land, so the tiny prophetic winds have born the rich perfume of the celestial realm, stirring our hearts to seek a better country, a land beyond the veil of the flesh. This wisdom and these prophesyings have been useful instruments to point us to the desired haven of the celestial, but in that haven they will be lost in the fullness of perfection. No more shall we know in part, for then we shall know even as we are known. No longer shall prophecy endure in that wonderful realm, for why should that which is partial endure when the fullness of another day has come? Prophecy shall fail; tongues shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. These things are all in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. We are standing at the threshold of the perfect realm, the realm of the Holy of Holies, the realm of the celestial. We are passing from the spiritual to the celestial, from the realm of the soul to the realm of the Spirit, from the Holy Place to the Holy of Holies.

I wish I could say with assurance that all who have come thus far will go the rest of the way and enter into the glory prepared for us from the foundation of the world, but I have no such assurance. Rather I fear that some have already turned aside, having loved too dearly the things that belong to this present age. Our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. It is far too easy to put on a false front, refuse to call a spade a spade and face up to things as they really are. Be it far from me to be the instigator of a system of do's and do not's. Doing this and refusing to do that, will not commend us to God in any way. Nevertheless, only a fool would

deny that those who have begun to feel the touch of the celestial realm find nothing but repugnance and disgust in the trivial nonsense and humbug that belongs to this age with all its fleshly desires. How can one whose soul has basked in the sunlight of the celestial world and whose feet have wandered in the fields of God enjoy for even a moment the corrupt products of the most carnal minds on earth? I do not believe it can be done. There is something wrong somewhere. An hour of feeding on the husks of the carnal mind causes the soul to be drained of spiritual life. The face of Christ grows strangely dim and prayer loses its power.

The word of God is replete with instance after instance of people who came to the very border of a vast new experience and then turned away because the cost was more than they could bear. Did not Israel fail to enter the Land of Promise through unbelief and turn back from Kadesh-Barnea to die and rot in the wilderness? Did not the two tribes and a half remain on the wilderness side of Jordan instead of going into the Promised Land with their brethren? The parable of the sower and the seed describes with great accuracy how people miss the best things of God, failing on every level to partake fully and enter in. We are told of Demas, who departed from his calling because he loved this present world, and of John Mark, who departed and went not with them to the work. Paul the Apostle warned us of our danger in these words, "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of you should seem to come short of it." At this hour we are standing at the threshold of the incorruptible. But mark well the truth of these words! If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption; if you sow to the Spirit you reap life (incorruption). There is no possibility at all of one's partaking of incorruption and of the flesh at the same time. Light has no fellowship with darkness, Christ has no fellowship with Belial, and flesh and spirit are separated by an impassable gulf. The one is carnal and belongs to this age; the other is spirit and belongs to the kingdom. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, neither can corruption inherit incorruption.

Man is a triune being - spirit, soul, and body, or spirit, soul, and flesh. Your soul is your true self. You are a soul. You live in a temple of flesh, a body we call it, and rightly so. Your spirit is like unto the Spirit of God. It came forth from God in the beginning and at death it returns to God who gave it.

1. **Your body or flesh is the realm of sense-consciousness.**
2. **Your soul is the realm of self-consciousness.**
3. **Your spirit is the realm of God-consciousness.**

When your mind is controlled by your body through your physical senses, you have a fleshly mind which is the same thing exactly as a carnal mind. Carnal means fleshly. If on the other hand your mind is controlled by the Spirit, you have a spiritual mind. The result is as follows: to be carnally minded is death. To be spiritually minded is life. If you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.

With a simple knowledge like this we should have no trouble at all in understanding what things belong to the flesh and what things belong to the Spirit. The things that gratify our five physical senses must necessarily belong to the body, and the things that are outside the realm of the body and the fleshly mind must necessarily belong to the realm of the spirit and the spiritual mind.

A man cannot love the Father and the world at the same time. Neither can he walk in the Spirit and walk after the flesh at the same time. The two are diametrically opposed. The one is the antithesis of the other. It is impossible to serve two masters, for you either love the one and hate the other, or you cling to the one and despise the other. It is impossible to serve God and Mammon. (Mammon was the Syrian god of riches and worldliness personified.) Let us consider for a moment why it is impossible to serve God and to serve Mammon. Riches and money belong to this present world system. I do not know of anything that money can buy except things for the use of the physical man - food, clothing, and shelter; things to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. The more money we have, the more inclined we are to serve Mammon. Benevolent god of the flesh that he is he bestows more and more of his benefits upon those who serve him. Even when money is used for charity, it is still powerless to do more than relieve the physical needs of man. And I am sorry to have to admit that I know of very, very few people who have been brought into the kingdom because they have had physical benefits bestowed upon them. Gifts have a strange way of creating ingratitude. You can never promote spirituality in the poor by giving gifts to them. You may make some progress yourself because of the blessing of liberality, but for the one who receives the gift to receive spiritual life thereby is well nigh impossible.

There was an occasion when Mary poured ointment of great value upon the head of Jesus. The covetous Judas, who always served the god Mammon, criticized the good woman for her deed, saying. "This ointment could have been sold for three hundred pence and the money given to the poor." It sounds good, wise, and charitable. But that is the way our deceitful hearts work. It made Judas look good, gracious, thoughtful for the poor, charitable, and kind. It made Mary look bad, careless, uncharitable to the poor, and wasteful. The truth behind the thing was exactly opposite to what it appeared. Judas cared not for the poor but was thinking of the extra pennies he could have stuffed into his own purse. Mary was anointing the Son of God for the death He was to accomplish for the whole world. Jesus in His great kindness set the situation in its true light. "The poor you have with you always, but Me ye have not always."

If you bestow temporal gifts upon a man, you impoverish yourself and make him your servant, but if you bestow a spiritual virtue upon a man, you enrich him and at the same time enrich yourself, for after you have imparted a virtue such as wisdom or knowledge to anyone, he now has the wisdom you possessed and you still possess it yourself yet in greater measure than before. It is, I think, impossible to impart our knowledge to another without having our own understanding increased. That is when it is more blessed to give than to receive.

It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven because he has too much ability to cater to his flesh. He need not withhold any pleasure from himself. He can have a great deal to eat and he can eat a great deal. He can wear any clothes he wishes: He can live in any kind of lavish circumstances he wishes. He can say to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years." But he does not know that his love of the flesh has blinded his eyes to the great eternal things. He does not know that to live after the flesh is to die. Neither has he learned that to mortify the deeds of the flesh is to live.

It seems to me that the time has come to arouse ourselves out of the complacency into which we have drifted. "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Let us lay aside every weight and the besetting sins and get down to patiently running the race that is set before us. Let us look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. The prize, which we seek, is greater than all prizes. All other experiences in God have been but preliminary to the one we are now to enter. It will do us no good to have successfully navigated the rushing rapids of the river if we now allow ourselves to drift complacently in the shallows.

The thing I fear most is the eternal tendency of Christians to settle down in an old established order, or gain one great level of experience and, having fallen in love with it, to remain on that level, content to go on as God moved in the beginning, gathering as a group for worship, singing, praying, prophesying, teaching, and then going home to dinner. / tell you, a new order is with us if we will take God's way. The thing we need to fear is the possibility of a promise being left us of entering into His rest and any of us coming short of it. A promise of rest, a life in the Spirit, has been left us, a promise of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. If we will enter beyond the veil of our own flesh as Christ entered beyond the veil of His flesh, we shall enter into the realm of the renewed mind. Once we come to this desired place, it should be very evident that all the vast amount of ministering that has been used to bring us here will not be needed, but we will walk in a new realm. We will minister to the world on the plane of the renewed mind. The renewed mind will produce a renewed body, and the former things will have become old and useless and will be done away.

To further illustrate what I mean we will take another example from life. When we are children, we are ministered to by our parents in a multitude of ways. Every effort is made by them to bring us to physical and mental maturity. They use playthings, picture books, blocks, textbooks, teaching and correction to produce the kind of man or woman they desire. It would be a foolish parent, indeed, who continued to use these things beyond the realm of their usefulness. When the child becomes mature, all the things that were used to bring about maturity were done away. When we were children, Paul says, we were under tutors and governors till the time appointed by the father, but, when the child comes forth as a full-grown son, all these things are done away. What I mean to show you is this: the ministry we have known in the past is not a permanent thing. The things we have been taught are permanent, but the means of establishing them are not permanent. Reluctance

to see this vital point will throw us completely off the track and cause us to end up in the same old merry-go-round into which all denominations have drifted. They all wanted to continue forever the wonderful things God had given them, and when God wanted to make the first things old and give them something new, they would not drink the new wine because, they declared, the old was better. No man having drunk old wine straightway desires new wine, for, he says, the old is better.

Am I not right in saying that the churches of the Reformation died right on the revelation that brought them to life? Is it not true that the old Pentecostal tarry meeting, once attended by such unbelievable glory, is now but a dead empty shell? Its days are over and gone and God has moved on, but the people won't have it so. They must still have their empty shout even if there is never a known result. Is the same not true about the healing meeting? There was a time when God came forth with mighty physical signs healing the sick and performing mighty wonders, but is it not true that the hour for this is past because we are approaching the incorruptible? Yet people will not have it so. They must play with healing meetings. But healing meetings are a thing of the past and they will never return again. Their usefulness has been fulfilled and God has moved on to bring His true church to the realm of the renewed mind where this vile body of our humiliation is transformed to be fashioned after His glorious body. What benefit is there in the healing of the flesh? If we live after the flesh, we only die. But if we through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the flesh, we shall live.

Once the house is built, there is no need of a carpenter. Having established this point in our minds, let us now come to our own special revelation and teaching. God has given special gifts and ministries for the formation of the body of Christ. But take heed to this warning, for it is true. The hour is at hand when all the tools God has given us to build the body are going to be done away, because their usefulness is fulfilled. Prophecy shall be done away, tongues shall cease, knowledge (on our level) shall be done away. Even teaching itself exists no more on the plane of the renewed mind, for you will have no need that any man should teach you. When that which is perfect is come, then all those things that are in part shall be done away. When the body of Christ is complete, there is no need of ministries.

We are indeed at a critical hour. We are no smarter than people who have preceded us. We can make the same mistakes they made. We can settle down now and just keep going the rounds as we have done for the last number of years, and refuse to forsake those things that we might embrace the better things that lie before us. You may say you do not believe it, but the tendency is ever prevalent among us, and I greatly fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of us should seem to come short of it. The ministering of the outer court is not the ministering of the Holy Place and the ministering of the Holy Place is not the ministering of the Holy of Holies. The methods of denominations are totally useless in this order of the Spirit into which we are now coming, and the methods of this order will be all out of date in the realm of the celestial where we are going. It should be evident to any person that, if such valuable aids as prophecy, tongues and knowledge are to fail, cease and be done away, surely there is no hope at all of retaining the foolishness of preaching. Preaching is almost a thing of the past right now. It has been valuable in bringing about the purpose God ordained for it, but, as soon as that purpose is fulfilled, God will discard it immediately and cast it aside. Many will continue to use it after God has discarded it, but that can only be because they have missed the way.

It seems a remarkable thing to me that, after the veil in the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom opening the way into the holiest of all, a blind and stupid priesthood patched it together again so that they could continue to use it and keep the old order going. This they did for some forty years after God had signified that He was finished with that order. Finally God used the armies of Titus the Roman to destroy not only the veil of the temple but the temple as well. The same sort of spiritual denseness was evident in the wilderness. Moses had made a serpent of brass and put it on a pole that the Israelites might look unto it and be healed of their serpent bites. But after the plague of serpents was past and gone, Israel preserved the brazen serpent and burned incense to it up to the days of Hezekiah when at last that good king destroyed it. (2 Kings 18:4).

Man has always been reluctant to let go the thing that has been a blessing to him and launch out into the unknown. He fears the unknown and dreads to leave the shelter of the place he has become accustomed to. Man fights to the last breath to stay in this corruptible body, not truly believing that to depart from it and to enter the realm of the Spirit would be much better than remaining in it and having to live after the demands and dictates of corruptible flesh. We sing, "I'm longing to go," but we fight like tigers to stay. We sing, "I'll leave without saying good-bye," but our good-byes are many and tearful.

The day Israel crossed the Red Sea, they were through with the bondage and slavery of Egypt. They ate no more of the garlic and onions of the land nor satisfied their stomachs at the flesh pots. They entered a new realm, an entirely new order. They ate manna that came from heaven and drank water that God gave them, but the very day they crossed over the Jordan River the manna ceased, and the old familiar pillar of fire was gone forever. Even their faithful leader, Moses, was taken from them. The watery veil of Jordan had parted to let them through to a land that had been promised to Abraham some hundreds of years earlier, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land where they would no longer be strangers and wanderers, a land that was their possession.

I seem to hear the voice of Jesus calling us today: "Come, ye blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the ages. I was hungry and ye fed Me, naked and ye clothed Me, sick and in prison and ye visited Me, thirsty and ye gave Me drink." How literally true this is for hungry and thirsty we find Christ's body at the end of this age.

May God grant us wisdom and understanding that we may not fail to enter beyond the veil of our own flesh. It seems very easy to do since God has revealed what the flesh is. To live after the flesh is but to sicken and die. The flesh is so trashy that, once you see what it is, the veil of the flesh falls apart and the glories of the celestial realm open to our amazed vision. The end of all flesh is come before God. Let us not fear to enter the Holiest of all. Let us rather come with boldness beyond that veil of our flesh. The only thing we need fear is "that a promise of entering into His rest being left us, any of us should seem to come short of it."

Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it! I think it is an excellent thing to stand still once in a while and do a little checking to see what progress we are making. Paul once wrote, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." It is very possible to hear and hear multiplied wonderful things, make them part of our theology, tell others about them, preach them and write about them, yet never actually set our course to attain the desired haven. There is actually nothing in the universe that can hinder you from attaining the desired haven of sonship providing your heart is fixed and set on attaining the goal. It matters not how many winds of fate blow against your frail bark. 1h& final destination depends on the set of your sail.

In **Acts 27:13** it is said, "And when the south wind blew softly, they thought they had attained their purpose." Isn't that just like us all? When the south wind blows, we think all is well, but when the contrary winds blow, we are in dread and fear and we think God has forgotten us and had hidden Himself, leaving us to face the tempest all alone. But not so; He is always there. The winds were contrary that night on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:24) when the disciples despaired of life as a mighty tempest roared upon them, but through the tempest came the Son of God making each billow a highway for His blessed feet and manifesting forth His glory in a way that would have been utterly impossible were it not for the contrary wind.

Paul's journey to Rome was beset by contrary winds (Acts 27:4). It was contrary wind that landed him on the Island of Crete, and it was his landing on this same island that heralded a revival that turned many heathen to Christ. It was a contrary wind that blew the rebellious Jonah into the center of God's will making him a submissive and useful servant of the Lord. If the weather had been calm, he would have sailed happily to Tarshish far from the mind and will of God. But because the winds were contrary, he found himself returned as it were from the dead, proclaiming mighty anathemas against a wicked city, and, because of the power of his message, he saw one hundred twenty thousand souls in forty days turn unto the Lord. I suppose he hated the wind while it blew and thought God was dealing harshly with him, but today he shines as a glorious sign of the resurrection and the wonderful deliverance from hell and the grave through the goodness and mercy of God. "Salvation is of the Lord," he proclaimed, and how thankful I am today that it is of the Lord and none other. Salvation is of the Lord, not only for Jonah, but for you and me and the whole world besides.

Contrary winds of cruelty and hate took Joseph to Egypt to be sold into slavery that he might become the wise deliverer of two nations of people. Contrary winds of famine and death drove Jacob and his sons to Egypt to find refuge and hope in that land of plenty, "all these things are against me," wept poor distraught Jacob. But they were really all for him, and had he known God as Paul did years later, he would have proclaimed, "All

things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Contrary winds of suffering and desperate illness blew upon poor Job until in his bitter distress and frustration he cursed the day he was born, but ere the wind had ceased his joyful lips were proclaiming, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee..." Oh, the value of contrary winds.

Do you realize, my brother and sister that God is more interested in your spiritual welfare than you could ever hope to be? It often appears that God is not concerned. It seems that you are walking alone, but the truth is that He never leaves you and He never forsakes you.

It is a most unfortunate thing that many people have been led to believe that for a Christian to suffer tribulation of one sort or another is sure evidence of the displeasure of the Lord. How often the sick have been told that their suffering was a sign of God's displeasure, and how often those who enjoy good health have taken it to be certain evidence of the pleasure of God toward them. Why have we so often reversed the truth? Is not the exact opposite of this more often the truth? Have you never read that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth?" And again, have we never read, "If ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons?" These scripture plainly teach that those people who have set their faces toward the goal of sonship are in for a rough voyage. They will have chastisement, trials, tribulation, affliction, persecution, reverses, sickness and misunderstanding. They will know what it is to be rejected. They will hear their good evil spoken of. They will know what it is to be despised by those who should love them, and to be scorned and set at naught by their brethren. They will know lonesomeness and experience fear within and without. They will know what it is to be betrayed by their familiar friends, but fear none of these things, for they are absolutely necessary to your sonship.

It is the trial of your faith that worketh patience. You do not possess the wonderful virtue of patience just by kneeling down and asking God to give it to you. You become a possessor of patience by having your faith tried and crushed, and tried and crushed again and again. You receive it by seeing your prayers go unanswered and your hopes deferred until your heart is weary and sick with longing. It is in the midst of such tribulation that the Spirit whispers, "The Lord is good to them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be that there may be hope, he giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His tender mercies." **Lam. 3:26-32.**

What wonderful perfection of truth is contained in these words, "Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Here is a whole world of truth compressed into one line and we seem to have missed it altogether. If patience has her perfect work, we will be both perfect and entire, and wanting nothing. How different that is from the words spoken to Belghazzar long ago, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting*"

The writer of the book of Hebrews was dealing with a people beset by difficulty like our own, a people who had caught a glimpse of "better things", but a people who were continually falling back because they could not let go their ancient traditions. As sheep return to their folds, so these people returned again and again to their forms and ceremonies and all their ancient Hebrew tradition. My own soul often grows weary as I read inspiring letters from people who are tasting the good things of God and the powers of the age to come, but who in the end insist on dragging in the doctrines, the forms and the ceremonies that have been our lot for centuries. They try so hard to find room in this new realm for gifts and ministries, baptisms and laying on of hands, church membership and program. They cannot understand that these are the things that are in part only, belonging to an imperfect age, but that an age of perfection is at hand. The emphasis is no longer on doing, but on being. It is no longer on miraculous gifts, but on sonship; no longer on the dispensation of grace, but on the dispensation of the kingdom of God.

There remaineth a rest for the people of God, and he who has entered into His rest has ceased from his own labor as God ceased from His. Heb. 4:9-10. Because the apostle saw that many of the Hebrew Christians were being hindered by their former ways of religious life and were failing to enter into the better things of the new realm, he rebuked and chided the people with longing and hope that they – would forget the things behind and

lay hold of the things which were before them. "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them..." **Heb. 4:1-2.** And again, "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief," **Verse 11.** Laboring to enter into rest may seem a strange paradox, but when one realizes the strangle hold church tradition has upon the people of God, we can well see that our greatest labor will be in delivering ourselves from the bondage and strangulation of our own traditions. It was with a measure of shock that I read this note in my diary, written forty years ago, "I am frustrated by the fetters of organization and bound by the blindness of visionless leaders." It has taken a lifetime of labor and great revelation of the Spirit of God to deliver my soul as a bird from the snare of the fowler and to break the bondage of man's opinions.

It takes a lifetime to "deliver them who were all their lifetime subject to bondage." It was Mark Twain who said, "Loyalty to a petrified opinion never broke a chain nor freed a human soul." Oh, that God's people in this tremendous hour would seek to come to the unity and oneness with Christ that only sons of God can know! Then would their chains of tradition fall off and their cruel bondage and servitude cease.

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." It is impossible to go on to the perfection of sonship until we leave the principles behind. Baptisms, repentance, laying on of hands and spiritual gifts are first principles, the very kindergarten of Christian experience. We should long ago have passed beyond them to the more excellent way. Well do we remember our first day at school when the teacher began to instill upon our childish minds the first principles of our education? We were taught the names of the letters of the alphabet and the sound that each letter made. We learned to put two or three letters together to make little words and that if three crows sat on a tree and one flew away only two were left. And so the lesson went until we were ready to leave the principles of our education and go on to something higher up. How much progress would we have made had the second year been naught but a repetition of the first year and the third year but a repetition of the second? We would never have been ready for college if we had stayed in grade one. Yet this is exactly what the church system does continually. Year after year, decade after decade, we hear a tedious repetition of age-old topics until our minds are filled with petrified opinions that become chains and prison bars to all spiritual progress. When we ought to be teachers, we have need that one teach us the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. Heb. 5:12-13.

In the wonderful but little understood book of Ezekiel the flight is ever upward. Whithersoever the spirit went, the wheels went, and all activity depended upon the spirit that was in the wheels. Ezek. 1:16-20. What was the story of the Exodus but the story of the liberation of the redeemed, the liberation from bondage, flesh pots and traditions? But they, being terrified of the unknown wilderness, in their hearts turned back to Egypt. Be not like them who at the very gates of Paradise turned back in unbelief, but let us go on to perfection.

CHAPTER TWO CHRIST THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED

A little seed lay in the ground
And soon began to sprout.
"Now which of all the flowers around,
It mused, "shall I turn out?
The lily's face is fair and proud,
But just a trifle cold;
The rose, I think, is rather loud,
And then, her fashion's old.
The violet is all very well,
But not the flower I'd choose;
Nor yet the canterbury bell;
I never cared for blues."
And so it criticized each flower,
This supercilious seed,

Till it awoke one summer hour
And found itself a weed.

Probably this little verse will bring an amused smile to all who read it, but if you give yourself time for mature thought and meditation upon the message it carries, you may find your mind wandering over the hills of memory far back into the distant past. Perhaps your unwilling memory will hear again for one brief moment the cruel and bitter criticism that fell from the lips of God's people as they worked themselves into disquiet and agitation over the faults and shortcomings of other Christians. You may perchance remember the days when you yourself wasted your precious time preaching sermons on dress and outward show and many other things which in the final analysis have nothing whatsoever to do with the inner man of the heart, but only garnish the outward appearance of a sepulcher that is full of dead men's bones. When meditating upon the worthlessness of the filthy rags of outward reform, one cannot but remember with sadness how pitifully often those who spent their time criticizing others about such things eventually ended their own lives more like noxious weeds than beautiful flowers in the garden of God, and only God can know in how many instances they ended their lives without any true faith or grip upon the eternal things that in God's sight are of great importance.

My true purpose, however, in quoting the verse above is that we may remember the unalterable and indisputable fact that, of whatsoever sort a seed is as it lies in the ground, of that same kind will it also be when it comes to maturity, and when the harvest ripens and the new seed appears in the ear, it will be of the same sort and variety that lay in the ground at the beginning. Nothing can possibly alter this immutable law. It is just as definite and indisputable as any of the divine laws of God's great universe. Far, far back in the beginning of visible things the edict fell from the lips of God, all-wise, almighty, and immutable, that kind MUST produce after its own kind.

In these the closing days of the dispensation of grace we find ourselves living in an hour of sacred and unbelievable importance, for God is preparing His glorious sons for their manifestation. The sonship message seems to permeate the very air we breathe till Christians who never before were awakened to its truth are beginning to long for sonship and to look with a groaning creation for the manifestation of the sons of God. Well may our hearts rejoice for this awakening and may the lines that follow on these pages provoke us to thoughtful prayer and meditation, because many people glibly talk of sonship while having no real knowledge of the truth of the message, nor any understanding of its sacred glory.

For many years I have become more and more aware that Satan has a most abominable and obnoxious way of endeavoring to make commonplace the wonderful things of God until the holy and sublime revelations that would make angels tremble are held in less esteem by preachers and people than the common earth and dust upon which they daily tread. Familiarity always breeds contempt and nowhere does it breed faster than among religious men who grab and grasp after the things of God, having no knowledge of their greatness nor of the eternal price which Jesus Christ paid that they might become ours. As Moses in ignorance approached the burning bush, so in impiety do these approach. The irreverence, impiety and lip-devotion of which I speak is the dreadful, miry bog into which the preachers of Babylon have dragged the sacred truths concerning the gifts of the Spirit. They claim gifts and publish miracles and healings, seldom because they have a compassion for the sick or because they want a true manifestation of spiritual gifts, but because men and women today are so body conscious and fleshly minded that they would turn themselves inside out if they could get rid of their sickness and enjoy physical well-being, while many other proud and unconsecrated souls would love to possess a spiritual gift to flout before the eyes of a gullible public. Cursed be the spirit of Balaam that makes merchandise of the things of God and would willingly make use of a spiritual gift in the hope of some temporal gain!

Only recently the newspapers carried this advertisement for one of Babylon's preachers: "Come and see Reverend . . . demonstrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit!" Accompanying this impious humbug was his bold-faced picture, mouth open as usual, and holding a microphone in his hand. I do not say these things from mere personal bitterness, but let it be thoroughly known to all who read these pages that such as this is not the way to sonship. It has nothing whatsoever in common with the sonship message and it not the way of Christ.

During the last few weeks the Spirit of God has impressed my mind with the fearful reality and truth, which I now tell you. In the days of Elijah there were eight hundred fifty prophets of Baal in Israel. The whole nation

was steeped in the rottenness of Baal worship and given over to it. The Spirit of God has already witnessed regarding our days, saying, "Behold, I send Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord." Whether the Elijah spoken of here is one or a company of men I am not in a position to say, but I know that he is coming, and, when he comes, he will bring these modern prophets of Baal into the most terrible judgment. Their miserable craftiness and sleight of hand will be over, for it will be proved before the eyes of all the people that these fakers had no power to call down God's fire on any sacrifice, nor had they the true manifestation of spiritual gifts.

The days in which we live are far more perilous than any among us even dare to think. The darkness that covers the earth and the gross darkness that fills the minds of the people have deceived all men so that they readily believe that wrong is right, Belial is Christ, false gifts are true gifts, that false prophets who stand in the pulpits are the servants of the Lord and that the false corrupt thing which calls itself the church is actually the bride of Christ. But the day is not far off when the dreadful error of these things will be revealed. Even at this moment in the deserts and lonely places of the earth God is preparing His beloved sons who will be in the deserts until their showing unto Israel.

Let us flee as far as we can from the awful spirit that possessed Simon the sorcerer, who seeing that by the laying on of the hands of the apostles the Holy Spirit was given, offered them money that he might also be given this power, that upon whomsoever he laid his hands they might receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter, looking upon him with indignation and disdain, being full of the Holy Ghost, said, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perchance the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." **Acts 8:18-23**. It is a fearful thing to desire any gift of God in the hope of personal gain or exaltation. Should many of these money-hungry prophets of modern Baal come into the presence of any genuine spiritual gifts, they would either repent of their wickedness, as Simon the sorcerer did, or fall dead in their sins as did Ananias and Sapphira.

We speak not inadvisedly nor loosely when we affirm that we are living in dangerous and terrible days. Of what more dreadful hour could you conceive than an hour when the sacred and holy things are cast as precious jewels in the swine pen of fleshly manifestation, when every modern Uzzah is putting forth his hand to steady the ark of God, (2 Sam. 6:6,7), and every Philistine is lightly lifting the mercy seat to peer with uncircumcised eyes into the ark of the Lord, (1 Sam:6:19), when every Nadab and Abihu is offering their strange fire, (Num. 3:4), and the sons of Sceva who know not Christ are crying over him that is possessed of the devil, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches that you come out of him." **Acts 19:14**. Why halt between two opinions? If God is God, then serve Him. Turn now from these vanities, for it is time to seek the Lord and be known of Him. Let us steadfastly refuse to associate ourselves with that crowd whose hearts and motives, though unclean in God's sight, continually take refuge in their supposed signs and wonders as though already saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name have done many wonderful works?" God has plainly declared He will say unto these, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." **Mat. 7:23**.

Darkness now covers the earth and gross darkness the hearts of the people. They do not know what makes them stumble. The situation in the world and in the professing church system is far more serious than any of us care to think. The world has become possessed with a reprobate mind until it is exceedingly corrupt and filled with terrible violence. So corrupt has it become that wisdom and sanity have fled from the earth. Worse still, the people of God are allowing themselves to be swallowed up by greed and confusion, hiding Babylon's goodly garment, not in their tents, but in their hearts. It is time for those who would know God to find a place of stillness before Him that their lives may be disentangled and rescued from the mass of unspiritual corruption into which countless millions have now fallen. The antichrist spirit is engulfing the whole earth, that all mankind should worship the beast and give honor to him.

Before the Spirit of the Lord can lead us into the fathomless depths of His eternal purpose, it becomes necessary that we be brought face to face with the present hopelessness of our own condition. It was for this very reason that the inspired writers of the scripture, while always extolling the goodness, mercy and loving kindness of God, never failed in all their writings to vividly portray the picture of human depravity and the

desolating, degrading power of the carnal mind. The sooner our eyes behold the putrid stagnation of the lukewarm Laodicean church system, the more quickly we will flee from it, nor shall we, as Lot's wife, look back again. When we see that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing, then with haste we will flee to Him who is the source of all righteousness, wisdom and honor. What part have godly men in a system that says, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing?"

When the truth of the absolute necessity of the new birth dawns like a ray of sunlight upon the heart of the self-righteous man, he counts all his righteousnesses as filthy rags and flees away to God that Christ may be born within him. The reason men remain a lifetime in sin is because the sinfulness of sin has never been made real to them. Unto the church of Laodicea it was written: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..." **Rev. 3:17, 18.** It is hard to tell a rich man that he is poverty stricken. It is almost impossible to disturb the composure of one who thinks he has need of nothing, who never surmises for a moment that he is miserable and wretched, poor and blind and naked. Yet such is the condition throughout the world and the entire realm of professing Christendom. I well remember a precious old lady who, having grown hard of hearing, imagined that her family intentionally spoke in subdued tones so that she would not hear their conversation, but, when after much difficulty she was persuaded to go to the doctor to have her ears washed out, then she wondered why everyone in the house was shouting so. That is just the way God's people are in this the hour of Laodicea. They are blind but think they can see perfectly. They have grown deaf to the true voice of God, yet they are positive there is nothing wrong with their hearing. They are full of religion and talk loudly of signs and wonders, but do not know that they are lukewarm in their love and relationship to God. Their works abound on every hand, but they are unaware that God has neither sent them nor required these labors of them. It is time, oh, child of God, to seek the quiet of the wilderness where every voice of man is hushed and no one has opportunity to speak but God.

Long ago the prophet Elijah had fled to a cave in Horeb. He had become an exceedingly unpopular man in Israel, for he had slain eight hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal. He had proved that the Lord was God before both King Ahab and all the ten tribes of the house of Israel, but now the harlotish queen Jezebel, full of rage and devilish fury, was after his head, his life, and his blood. "So let the gods do to me, and more also," said she, "if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." **1 Kings 19:1.** So Elijah had fled to Horeb. Now Horeb is called the mount of God. **1 Kings 19:8.** Perhaps those who glibly talk of Elijah's sagging faith have forgotten that it was in this very Horeb that Moses stood before the burning bush as he kept the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, in the desert. **Ex. 3:1.** And it was to this very place, this mount of God, that Moses had led the children of Israel. Here they murmured for lack of water, and here in Horeb he smote the rock and living water for all the hosts gushed forth in abundant supply. **Ex. 17:6.** It was at Horeb, the mount of God, that the Lord spoke face to face with the people out of the heavenly fire as Moses stood between them and the Lord. **Deut. 5:2-5.** Many other wonderful things transpired at Horeb, because Horeb was the mount of God. If we should be inclined to speak of Elijah's lack of faith in fleeing from the wicked Jezebel as so many are prone to do, let us remember that it is not his fleeing from Jezebel that needs to be emphasized. The thing of importance is that he was fleeing to the mount of God. How precious in the eyes of the Lord it would be today if thousands more like Elijah would flee from the harlot Babylon, who seeks their very spiritual life to take it away, and in fleeing from her would be found fleeing to the lonesomeness of the mountain of God!

So Elijah fled across that great desert of Sinai, which in our time has echoed the doleful tunes of war so recently, and, coming to Horeb, the mount of God, after forty days without the food of men, he sank down in a cave and lodged there. Then the Lord said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Do not think, my brother, that God was rebuking His son. Would God that all of you who read these lines would flee to His lonely mountain, and would God also that you, as Elijah, would flee because of your knowledge that, as Jezebel the harlotish queen sought his life, so the harlot of Babylon is seeking your life, draining you of revelation and spiritual understanding, throwing down the sacred altars and trampling underfoot the things that pertain to life and godliness. Come, my brother, alone to the mountain of God. What place have you with the harlot and her prophets? Come where you will hear God speak to you as He spoke to Elijah in the long ago; for there is a place where He dwells, but you will never find it amid Babel's confusion of fire and earthquakes and wind,

exciting and tempting as all these things may be. We must flee from it all if would hear God's voice and learn His will.

"And He said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?" **1 Kings 19:11-13**. It was here in the mount of God at Horeb that Elijah received the greatest revelation of his life. Here it was that final preparations were made for his departure from this earth. Hazael was to be anointed king of Syria, Elisha was to be anointed prophet in his stead, and he himself was to be caught up to heaven in a whirlwind to be numbered among the blessed few of whom it could be said, "He was not, for God took him."

I write these things because I know it is impossible for men to receive the transforming message of sonship until they have left the noise of Babylon with all its flimsy surface teaching. The church system has gone a whoring after the spectacular. The corrupt phrase, "food, fun and fellowship", bespeaks the mind of a system whose people walk after the flesh. Breakfasts and banquets are made a prominent part of the system and without their fleshly attraction the thing would fall apart. Surely these are the things to which Peter referred when he spoke of "revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." **1 Pet. 4:3**. And lest you who walk God's way should be caused to wonder at your lonely estate, he is quick to add this comfort: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." **Verse 4**. Seeing then we have cleansed ourselves from the bondage of corruption and useless tradition, and have fled to our Horeb, the mount of God, let us open our ears to the voice of the Lord as He reveals His transforming message to our hearts.

At the beginning of this article we pointed out that of what kind the seed is as it lies in the ground will determine what the seed is in the harvest, whether it be wheat, or barley, or some other kind. Nothing can possibly alter this divine decree. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption, mortality cannot inherit immortality, neither can flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God. If we through labor and travail and endless years of ascetic severity are going to try to fashion the corruptible after the incorruptible, we will find to our consternation in the end that we are just the same as we were in the beginning. The leopard cannot change his spots, and, even if he could, his offspring would still be a leopard with spots. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, and, even if he could, his offspring would still be the same color as he is. It is well nigh impossible to tell the difference between a turnip and a rutabaga seed, yet if you mix a pound of each together and cast them into the ground, each tiny seed will unerringly produce its own kind.

How then can we who are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, being by nature the children of wrath, ever hope to become the sons of God? Such a hope as this certainly demands something far more than the worthlessness of self-reformation. If sonship is, indeed, the hope of all creation and if our sonship in Christ is the hope and design of God Himself, then there must be some very definite and unfailing way by which God produces sons in the very image and likeness of Christ. There is a way, blessed be God! There is nothing complicated about it. It is as simple as life itself, as simple as growth or ripening or maturity. Though life is simple, it is simple only to God, for none but He can ever produce it. Man cannot now, and never under any circumstance will he be able to produce even the simplest form of life. God has reserved the realm of life Himself.

There are many things which our spirits know though it seems we know them not, for the veil of the flesh has hidden them from our eyes, but, if we were taught them by another, we would recognize their truth at once, for the babe of truth would go leaping in the womb of our spirit and we would say, and truthfully, too, that we knew it all the time. But a truth is never a truth to the heart until the Spirit of God draws aside the curtain and shines His light into the dark recesses of the understanding. Then and only then does the heart stand still or go, perchance, to leaping for the wonder of the revelation that has burst upon it from the presence of the Lord. The disciples who walked to Emmaus had talked for several hours with Jesus. Their hearts had burned within them as He opened the scripture and, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them all the

things concerning Himself; but, though their hearts burned within them, they knew not who their strange guest really was. But, when He blessed the bread and broke it, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. This is the way revelation and understanding comes to your heart. Christ blesses the bread of life and breaks it to you. Then the eyes of your understanding are opened. Then you know that all the while you had been standing in the presence of life and God and truth though you knew it not. It is like shining a strong searchlight into the darkness of a cave or pressing the light switch in the darkness to find yourself standing in a room that is flooded with light and full of precious jewels. Jacob, who lay with his head on a pillow of stone, awoke in dread from his vision, saying, "Surely God is in this place and I knew it not." This is a revelation so essential to us all.

As I waited before God, the infinite and hidden truths of sonship began to be opened before the eyes of my understanding. I had been praying and making requests before God when suddenly my words ceased in the midst of my prayer, for I beheld a truth face to face which, if known before, had not been revealed to me, but which now came alive and was quickened as never before by His Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God in His own inimitable way had shone His light of revelation on these inspired words from the pen of the apostle Peter: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." **1 Pet. 1:23.** If in the wisdom of God we can sound the fathomless depths of truth that filled the apostle's inspired mind when he wrote these words, I believe we shall have in our possession the explanation of many things that have remained secret and have been hidden from our understanding for centuries. If the Spirit of God will give us understanding concerning this incorruptible seed, then we will also understand what Paul meant when he proclaimed that Christ in us is the hope of glory. Then, too, we will discern as never before why it is that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Then we will know the meaning of Paul's words when he spoke of the hidden man of the heart, and we will know as never before how literal is the truth, "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure." **Phil. 2:13.**

In this passage of scripture (1 Pet. 1:23) so full of meaning Peter has told us the deepest and most profound truth concerning our sonship in these strange, remarkable words of inspiration: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word (Logos) of God that liveth and abideth forever." Have you wondered what it is that really and actually takes place in that blessed hour of the new birth? The simple yet infinitely wonderful truth is this: God by His Spirit actually plants the Christ seed in the believer's heart. That seed is incorruptible and indestructible. It cannot die. It is the Logos, the Christ that lives and abides forever. Thus at the very moment of the new birth the incorruptible seed, the living word, the Logos, the Christ, is implanted in the believer's heart, and from that moment on it grows and grows and develops and develops until its life consumes his old self completely. The process and growth of the incorruptible seed continues until he can say literally and in absolute truth, "It is not I, but Christ." In all my life I have not seen a more glorious truth than this! In the light of it all else fades into insignificance and nothingness. For centuries we have been like the inhabitants of Bethlehem who, though Christ was born among them, knew it not.

All natural things have spiritual counterparts. There is the living word, the written word, and the created word. Thus all things created by God, (and all things were created by God), though they be but natural things in a temporal world, shout out their spiritual truth. Paul wrote, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." **Rom. 1:20.** The long journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, together with their trials and wars in Canaan, were "ensamples unto us upon whom the ends of the ages are come." **1 Cor. 10:11.**

Since then these things cannot be spoken against, much less denied, our minds would be extremely dull should we now be unable to see a likeness between our natural birth in the flesh and our new birth in the Spirit. Who among those who read these lines is so ignorant of the simple facts of life that he does not know that in the order of natural generation it is when the male seed is placed in the female's womb that a new life begins, a new man, a new person*. Yes, a new creation is begun then and there. Who among us does not know that the implanted seed grows and grows and develops until it becomes a new human being in the image of his parents; and who among us does not know that one day after a certain length of time there is an unveiling when new life, yes, that new person, who until now was completely hidden by his mother's flesh, shall be unveiled and made manifest. This simple story of human birth is not only known to us all, but it has been experienced by us all, though at the time in our embryo state we knew absolutely nothing of it. We only learned it when the story was complete and we were old enough to understand.

We said above that all natural things have spiritual counterparts. It is never good or wise to press all the points in any type, and we should never draw too close a parallel between physical things and spiritual things, yet the lesson is there wide open to our understanding if we will but ask God to help us to see it. It must therefore be impressed upon your spiritual mind, oh believer, that, though that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, yet the similarity of what has taken place is too obvious a type and simile to be missed and left unheeded. It was this very truth that filled the inspired mind of Peter when he told us that in our new birth we are not born of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, and that this incorruptible seed was the Logos, the Christ, the Word that was in the beginning, (John 1:1), who created all things and from whom all things everywhere were created.

Let there be, therefore, no doubt in your mind that the word of God spoken of here, which Peter calls incorruptible seed, is the Logos; and the Logos in its truest meaning is none other than Christ, the creator of all. "In the beginning was the Logos (word)," said John, "and the Logos (word) was with God, and the Logos was God." This, my brother, this, my sister, this, oh believer, is the seed that is placed in your heart when you are begotten of Him or when you are born again. And this, oh child of God, is the beginning of the new man, the beginning of the new creation, the birth of the new creation, the hidden man of the heart. This is the very starting point and commencement of your eternal sonship in Him.

How completely shoddy is the error that would encourage men to seek for sonship! You need not seek it, my brother. You need not seek it my sister. It has been implanted in you by the overshadowing glory and power of the Holy Spirit. Sonship is begun. It actually began when you were born of the Spirit. The more, therefore, you will allow your old nature to be a partaker of the cross the more place there will be for the growth and maturity of the new man, the Logos, the Christ in you. This is the hope of glory. I think we now know better than before what Paul meant when in his exultation he declared. "... though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." **2 Cor. 4:16**. Then continuing the grand exultation in **verses 17 and 18**, he added this truth: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The things seen and visible are the things that concern the old you, your former sinful self, but the things which are unseen are the things which concern the glory of that new life which is forming, even the Logos, the new creature, the Christ in you the hope of glory.

There is no story in all the Bible more familiar to our hearts than the story of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ which, according to the inspired account given by the beloved physician Luke, reads thus: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also the holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God ... for with God nothing is impossible." **Luke 1:26-35, 37**.

We have said above that the parallel between the natural birth and the spiritual birth should not be made too close or exacting, but whereas this account is the inspired story of the incarnation that is the birth of Jesus Christ as a man and in the form of flesh, it therefore has a natural element about it; yet, because it is a virgin birth and is completely independent of any human father whatsoever, it is therefore a sign of our own sonship in Him. The heart of the young virgin must have bounded for joy at the message that God's Son Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, would be born through her, but her understanding of how God could accomplish such a wonderful thing in her virginity was as dark and limited as is our understanding as we search to know how that promised hope of sonship can ever be realized or accomplished in us. We long for sonship, 'tis true. Our

hearts ache to be able to say, "It is no more I but Christ that liveth in me", but how this intrinsic glory is to be accomplished we seem never to grasp. In our ignorance and blindness we grope about trying to do all manner of things in the futile hope that by our mighty works we will prove ourselves sons of God; but all in vain. Oh, what ignorance some men leach - that through miracles and spiritual gifts we shall attain to sonship in Him!

Truth can only be found when we diligently inquire of Him. Thus it was that, when the young virgin heard the glad news that God's Son should be born of her, she inquired with all sincerity, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" To this the angel answered, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." **Luke 1:35.** Child of God, can you not plainly see that it was the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit that implanted the Christ seed in the womb of the Virgin Mary that she by divine conception might bring forth the Son of God in flesh and blood? Does it then seem strange in the least or impossible to you who look for sonship in Him to hear that the same Holy Spirit who overshadowed the virgin long ago, placing in her womb the Christ seed that He might be born of flesh and blood, should now again in this the end of the age overshadow you to place in your heart the incorruptible seed, the Logos, that liveth and abideth forever? But the Christ seed in you shall never be separated from you as the Christ-child was separated from the virgin. He shall live and abide forever, coming to such spiritual maturity in you that you shall say at last, "It is not I, but Christ, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." These things are indeed no preposterous myth nor have we lost our reason in the glory of them. These are words of truth and soberness. Believing, then, that the incorruptible seed of Christ, God's Son, was sown in our hearts when we believed on Him, we have but to yield ourselves to God, gladly embracing His cross where death to self is accomplished that all that is old may die and we might live together with Him.

It is not for me to know who shall believe or disbelieve these precious truths, but let all who be of faith assuredly know that the moment your soul embraces the indisputable fact that you are born of the incorruptible seed of Christ, the Logos of God, your whole understanding of sonship will undergo a change and be enlarged and enlightened. Henceforth it is Christ in you that is the hope of glory. It is not Christ in heaven, Christ in the world, or Christ in the virgin, but, wonder of wonders, the incorruptible seed has been placed in you, there to mature into full sonship until the measure of the stature of Christ is attained.

The price which the all-wise God paid for such fullness of redemption as we have in Him was not an insignificant price of corruptible things such as silver and gold. Because our heavenly Father was preparing incorruptible things for incorruptible purposes, He therefore paid an incorruptible price. The blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which was shed for the redemption of the world was incorruptible blood. All other blood is corrupt and corruptible, but the blood of this Man who was born of a virgin is the blood of the Son of God of whom God spoke saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy holy One to see corruption." The blood that was shed on the cross of Calvary as a sacrifice for the whole world was presented before God in the holy of holies in heaven. There it abides in incorruption to this day, and there it ever shall be, incorruptible forevermore, better blood than that of bulls and goats, better blood than that of Abel, blood of which you and I shall all partake, blood of which the heavenly choirs shall eternally sing in chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and nation."

Thus it was that Peter, thrilling to the message God had revealed to him, wrote, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation... but the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world..." **1 Pet. 1:18.** This is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. It is the incorruptible blood that cleanses and purifies the heart. It is at that time when the blood is applied by faith to the heart that the Holy Spirit, overshadowing your spirit, implants the incorruptible seed of Christ, the Word, and the Logos within that the spiritual gestation of sonship has begun.

In Phil 3:18 Paul speaks of certain people who are "enemies of the cross of Christ." Immediately upon reading this, our minds conclude that it must be the sinner and the unconverted who are the enemies of the cross, but, my brother, hide not in such error, for the real enemy of the cross is the Christian who withholds himself from the cross that the old man, the old self, may be kept from death. Refusing to be identified with Christ in His cross, the old nature flourishes and the new nature is choked and restricted. Such a man is not only an enemy

of the cross, but an enemy of his own sonship as well. See now how Paul places the cross and sonship together by saying, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. The Christ seed, the incorruptible Logos, though planted in your heart, can never grow to mature sonship without the corresponding crucifixion and death of the "I". The "I" must be crucified that the "not I" may come to maturity. This is the hope of sonship and the only hope of glory. Therefore he who withholds the "I" from the cross is an enemy of the cross, and the Logos, though once planted within, can never come to maturity and manifestation until the "I" is crucified that Christ may flourish and mature. Therefore we who dwell in this tabernacle do groan that that which is mortal in us might be swallowed up by His life, even the incorruptible seed which was planted in us when we were born again. When this corruptible has put on incorruption and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

The Christ seed is the incorruptible seed of the word of God. Christ Himself is the new creature and the head of the new creation. God forbid, therefore, that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world; for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Let the word of Christ (the Logos, the incorruptible seed) dwell in you richly in all wisdom until the outward man is wasted away, the Christ is unveiled, and the Son is manifested in all his glory. This is the beginning of our sonship and herein lies the hope of glory.

CHAPTER THREE THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. Throughout the word the Holy Scriptures, shining with the clearness of the sun at noon, set forth the blessed hope of an entirely new relationship between God and every man who through faith has been brought nigh to Him by the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. It would seem to be almost impossible for any word of inspiration to set forth the perfection of that new relationship more clearly than does the scripture quoted above. This scripture shows in the plainest possible language that all men in Christ are both new creatures and new creations as well. They are new creatures because they are new creations from the Father's mighty hand. Furthermore, with the coming of this new relationship to Christ these new creations make the blessed discovery that the passing away of their old selves is accompanied by the passing away of every old thing that pertains to their former unregenerate state, and with the coming of the new creation new hopes, new ambitions and new loves are born.

It is doubtful if any Christian on earth has fully understood as yet how great is the transforming upheaval that works within the soul when men and women in godly sorrow repent of their sins and through the operation of the Spirit of God in their lives are born again, born from above, renewed, regenerated and recreated. The all-powerful, incorruptible Christ seed, which liveth and abideth forever, being placed within their spirits, develops and matures - first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full com in the ear (Mark 4:28) until from the incorruptible Christ seed, planted in the fertile womb of the spirit, there comes forth a new creation in the glory of the Father and the image of Jesus Christ. All of us, especially that honored company of women to whom God has granted the blessing of motherhood, know that the period of time from the day the child is conceived in the womb to the hour of his birth and manifestation to the world is a time important and momentous. During the days of gestation, there in the darkness of the womb a completely new human being is being formed in the likeness of the parents who conceived him, a life that will not pass away. In the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry a full display may be seen of the development of the human fetus from the time of conception to the hour of birth, or manifestation. It is a display capable of greatly solemnizing the spiritual mind as one realizes that these remarkable developments of the natural man from the implantation of a corruptible seed to the birth of a corruptible body are in fact typical representations of the implantation of the incorruptible seed in the believing heart to the time of the birth and manifestation of a son of God in the image of the Father.

We poor humans, restricted as we are in understanding, are still woefully incapable of explaining the wonders of a natural birth. Our minds are baffled to explain "how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child." Eccles: 11:5. The clever minds of men of science may be able to trace the progress of that development and discuss the many wonders of it, but they can neither explain its process nor reproduce its substance. The very fact of our ignorance of these natural and corruptible things explains as nothing else can

the significance of our Savior's words to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" **John 3:12**. But let those who long for eternal realities rejoice in this wonderful fact: "The Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." **Prov. 2:6**. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11**. It is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9, 10**. Therefore with all truth it must be said that those blessed people who with open hearts receive the revelation of the Lord are possessed of a greater understanding of spiritual things than men of science and learning have in natural things. Men and women who walk in the Spirit become wiser than all their instructors. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. He giveth understanding to the simple, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. "He giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." **Prov. 2:6**. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." **Prov. 9:10**.

Think, O reader, of the profound depths of truth that lie hidden in these inspired words: "The knowledge of the holy is understanding." Oh that God's people could be exhorted to flee from the commandments and doctrines of men to look away to heaven until the Spirit of light from God comes streaming down from above, bringing the knowledge of the wisdom and glory of God from the face of Jesus Christ! "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." **John 1:18**. He declared the Father's glory to certain humble ones who loved Him while He walked among men in the lowly realms of earth, and He declares the Father's glory in this the end of the age to men who love God and who open the gates of their believing hearts to the Spirit of revelation and understanding from above. There is little or no hope for the man who demands that all truth and revelation must fit into the mould of his tradition and the crucible of his doctrine. How often do God's people reject the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world by the seemingly wise, though silly, interrogation, "Have any of the rulers believed?" **John 7:48**. But this people who know not the laws are accursed. **John 7:49**. To put new wine in old wine skins is foolishness. Of how much greater foolishness is he guilty who thinks to confine an expanding revelation in the old wine skin of religious tradition!

When it pleases God, who separated us from our mother's womb, to reveal to our spirits His Son from heaven, there is henceforth no place left to confer with flesh and blood, or even to go up to those who were apostles before us, (**Gal. 1:16,17**), but rather to go, as Paul did, to some Arabia of God's own choosing where the light of the ages can stream down forever into our famished spirits, bringing the knowledge of the glory of God from the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **2 Cor. 4:6**. We will always find well-meaning people who condemn the truth made real to us by the Holy Spirit because it does not comply or agree with the truth as they imagine it ought to be; but those who walk in the light of the Holy Spirit, as He shines as the sun in strength upon the path of the just, are not at liberty to give ear to the thousand plaintive voices that call them to return to the apparent safety of the old way with its multitude of followers.

How often we hear the statement in advertising, "Can two million people be wrong?" Or "Can fifty million users be wrong?" The same childish prattle is carried into the world of religion and doctrine. I still recall an article published in a denominational magazine under the caption, "Can twelve million people be wrong?" Yes, indeed, twelve million people can be wrong! So also can six hundred million! But, even if they were right in some experience of the past and they rejoiced in the true light that once shone upon them to transform them, the fatal fault conies when they refuse to budge from their old camping ground, covering their eyes against the ever increasing light that shines more and more till the day is full. Do not proudly boast, O man that you are exactly the same as you were forty years ago. Repent rather that you have become a stagnant pool where the river of life has ceased to flow. I am the same person who was born in the pioneer town of Souris, Manitoba, in the year 1909, but today, though I am the same person, I am by no means the same as I then was. What a dreadful tragedy it would have been if after seventy-four years I was just the same as I was that morning they told my mother she had borne a son! I am the same person in whose penitent heart the Holy Spirit in 1926 implanted the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever and ever; yet I am not the same. What a dreadful tragedy that would be if I, fifty-seven years after my conversion, were just the same as I was that night when the angels in heaven rejoiced that a sinner had come home! Therefore, leaving the principles of the

doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, no more laying and re-laying those foundational doctrines of repentance, faith, baptisms, laying on of hands, and physical healing. There is more, much more, beyond for each and every life that becomes hidden with Christ in God. With the eye of my spirit I see nine men struggling with a violent demon at the foot of a mountain, unable to cast him out; but a little higher up three others of their company are beholding Him whose garments are white and glistening and whose face is shining as the glory and brightness of the sun. Matt. 17:14-21. Away from their vision has passed the form of Moses, that giver of God's holy law, and the figure of Elijah, who represented the prophets who prophesied of Christ. Vanquished forever is their childish hope of building tabernacles to house the glory of a message, for now they see no man save Jesus only. It is not our adherence to Moses and the law nor our steadfastness toward Elijah and the prophets that is so important, but our relationship to the Christ of whom they spoke, saying that of the increase of His government there should be no end. We shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness, and when we do, yonder violent demon in the regions below will be found to hold no power at all.

The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (life-giving) Spirit. The first Adam was given power to produce only corruptible seed, full of death, and dying. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, the Lord from heaven, is given power to produce incorruptible seed, full of life, and living. From the corruptible seed placed in the womb of Eve by the first Adam has come forth a world of corruptible men in Adam's likeness; but from the incorruptible seed of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, placed in the womb of the repentant spirit, comes forth that incorruptible new creation which liveth and abideth forever. Often in my writing I have tried to explain that the natural life, the corruptible life, is not life at all. It is really death, as Paul so forcefully taught. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." When Jesus said, "He that hath the Son hath life", He was speaking of that incorruptible life which He is and which liveth and abideth forever. When He said, "He that believeth on Me shall never die", He was not teaching us that He would merely extend our corruptible existence forever so that we would never go to the grave. He meant that He was planting a new life within us, even the incorruptible life, which He is, a life that could never end though we entered a thousand graves. The life He gives, the life He is, is the life of the ages. It is as endless as Christ Himself, for He is that life. It begins in our spirits the moment we believe, as Jesus said: "I give unto them eternal life (i.e., the life of the ages), and they shall never perish." **John 10:28**. That life, which begins in the spirit of man when Christ comes in to him by faith, extends more and more until corruption is swallowed up by incorruption as in type the yolk of an egg is swallowed up by the developing chick within, until in the end it is "not I, but Christ." Even now at this very moment the life that we live in this body of flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God; and that faith assures us fully that the uncorruptible seed, sown by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit, shall issue forth in incorruption, immortality and eternal life, For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Death is corruption, as we pointed out above. Life is incorruption. As the rush cannot grow without mire (Job 8:11) and as dung is fertilizer to the budding fruit trees, so, in a manner beyond my understanding, the incorruptible Christ seed, planted in the corruptible earth, which we are, bears its fruit in immortality, incorruption and life eternal.

I am wearied a little because so very often it becomes necessary to momentarily break away from the excellent glory of these sublime truths while we explain again and again that none of these things can be grasped at all by the intelligence of the intellect or the understanding of the natural mind. As the light of the world flooded the eyes of the man that was born blind when once the hand of Jesus touched him, so the rays of eternal truth, shining as suns from afar, burst in glory upon the fields of our spirits, kissing the hills with revelation and flooding the valleys with the light which He is. "I am the light of the world," said the Savior. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." **John 8:12**. Darkness and death abide together, the former deceiving, the latter slaying. Light and life are twin sisters, the one revealing, the other giving life.

It gives sadness just to know that by far the greater number of God's own blood-bought people still live in the outer darkness of the natural mind, though every one of them will testify that in the day they first believed the Bible became a new book. Their understanding was enlightened; their relationship toward God underwent a mighty upheaval; life itself wore a different face after they found the Savior, but, alas, all too often they were content to bask forever in the glory of the new light that had been revealed. As time went by, the settling down process began. The new things became old and the extraordinary became the ordinary and commonplace.

They soon imbibed the doctrines of the people among whom they dwelt and quite unknowingly settled down behind the high fences of their denominational creeds and their sectarian beliefs. I am not trying to curry the favor of those who read this article when I tell them with a sadness which God alone has placed in my heart that within the denominational walls men walk in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them. They handle the word of God with deceit because they want their sheep to remain within the constricting confines of their fence, and not go wandering off from their fold to follow yonder shining light that streams from God's throne afar. Thus do they waste their lives contending for their faith and for their way of looking at things, meanwhile condemning the experiences of other men as being of the devil, or refuting the truth that has transformed the life of another.

"No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared Him." John 1:18. What the eye has not seen nor the ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man God reveals by His Spirit. 1 Cor 2:9-10. These great edicts notwithstanding, Christians and sinners alike are loath to believe that their natural minds are useless tools, deceitful instruments, and distorting instructors in all that concerns the spiritual realm. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14.** Let us therefore leave off forever this vanity that would have us believe that the natural mind can understand spiritual things. How dare we assume that by wearying the flesh with much study the truth of God can be found? As in a mirror face answers to face, so natural ways of looking at things only produce natural reflections. Christians seem determined to refuse and reject the lesson that only the Spirit searches out and reveals the mysteries of God.

If you seek God, you will find Him; but in finding Him you will discover that He is not as you thought He was or how you thought He was. You will find that He is in no way confined or restricted by any tradition, doctrine, or imagination of men. Utter trust in God means utter abandonment to God. There is a holy abiding place where Christians may forever dwell where with fervent spirits, holy awe, utmost consideration and perfect reverence they can declare with complete abandonment, "I care not! Thy will be done!" When you can say with utter abandon, "Lead me, Lord! I care not where," then He will lead you. Ten or twenty years may pass before you are aware that He has led you, but you will find at last that your path has been the path of the just, leading you to the perfect day. When you can say, "Lead me, Spirit of God, I care not how," then some glad morning your happy soul, awaking as a sleeper from his dream, will have made the blessed discovery that the storms, shipwrecks and the fires have been the messengers of God to guide you to His desired haven, and your lips will be saying with Jacob, your friend, "Surely the Lord is in this place, though I knew it not." **Gen. 28:16.**

"One ship drives east, another drives west
By the selfsame wind that blows;
Tis the set of the sail and not the gale
That tells them the way to go.
Like the winds of the sea are the winds of fate

As we voyage along through life.
'Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal,
And not the calm or strife."

There is a wicked trait in human nature that always has us believe that solemn words of exhortation do not apply to us but are directed to someone else. But the "truth I write concerning revelation is directed to everyone. However great the insight which God has given you, you must humbly and honestly admit, "I know nothing yet as I ought to know." If you love God with all your heart, your one great interest will be to love Him more and more: and His great delight will be to manifest Himself more and more unto you. The true secret of revelation, or illumination, if you prefer the word, is simply an ever increasing love and an ever increasing devotion to your Father in heaven. "If any man love God, the same is known of Him," or, if any man love God, God knows that man. Jesus our Lord told us in the plainest possible words that our love for God was the secret key that would unlock the gates of spiritual understanding. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto

us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love Him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.**" **John 14:21-23.** Christ is the light of God. Christ is the word of God. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." No wonder the Lord has declared that to fervently love Him is the very fountainhead of all revelation, illumination, and spiritual understanding.

I am not same as I was forty years ago. I am not the same as I was twenty years ago, nor five years ago, nor am I the same as I was yesterday. Neither will I be tomorrow as I am today. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shines on and on until the day is full." Without light there is no growth; without revelation there is no spiritual progress. Let us then lay aside every weight and every imperfect tradition that by an ever increasing communion with God we may lay hold on the perfection He has set before us.

With this brief but fervent appeal let all who read seek that illumination which the Holy Spirit gives to make wise the simple and increase in strength the fainting heart that we may consider with renewed understanding the wonderful power of the incorruptible seed, Christ, the Logos of God, who liveth and abideth forever. The foregoing paragraph was written yesterday. In it I said, "I am not the same as I was yesterday, nor will I be the same tomorrow as I am today." And now I must testify that this is even so, for today I see truth concerning the incorruptible seed, which yesterday had not been revealed to me. It is this: Our Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray, saying "Our Father, which art in heaven." No man on earth is truly my father except the man by whom I was begotten. Therefore, I cannot call God my Father until I am begotten of God. Man is begotten of God that moment in which the Holy Spirit by His power divine places the incorruptible Christ seed in the repentant sinner's heart. The incorruptible life planted there liveth and abideth forever. God is spirit and only those who are born of His Spirit can call God their Father and only those who are born of Him can say, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" This was the question that puzzled the learned but perplexed Nicodemus. "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" he questioned in disbelief. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," the Savior replied, "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The good man Nicodemus was greatly mystified, because the natural mind receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. Such things seem foolish to him, but the Spirit gives light, illumination and understanding and sends us away, not only believing but receiving as well.

To those of us who realize the darkness, the death and the hopeless void of man's unregenerate state it is scarcely necessary to observe that we, who were without God and without Christ, were both as hopeless and as helpless in our corruption and death as was the dark, void earth before the wonderful day when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep and the voice of God rang through the darkness, saying, "Let there be light," and there was light. We have not been saved because we were worthy nor because we were good or wiser than other men. We were saved because the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be the first to put our trust in Him. When in God's wisdom the appointed time came, the Spirit of God moved upon the darkened waste and trackless void of our beings even as He moved upon the formless earth from which we were taken in the beginning. The wind of God, which is the Spirit, bloweth where it listeth. Its breath of life, overshadowing a man, breathes into his spirit the power of an endless life. By the power of that same Spirit the incorruptible seed is placed within the believing heart and we are born from above, begotten of God and born anew. The light of God shineth out of the darkness. The fragrance of the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valley becomes the perfume of our life. The fruits of the Spirit begin to bud and bloom as old things pass away and all things become new.

How wonderful is the wind of God, how matchless the breath of His eternal Spirit! How complete is the change that is wrought by the power of an endless life; how wonderful the assurance within as His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God and, if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ!

"Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Fill me with life anew
That I may love as Thou dost love,

And do as Thou wouldst do.
"Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine;
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.
"Breathe on me, Breath of God;
So shall I never die;
But live with Thee that perfect life
Of Thine eternity."

There is a remarkable similarity between the inspired statement of Gen. 1:2 and the words of Jesus in reply to Nicodemus' question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" The divine record gives this statement of truth concerning the earth before the creation of Adam and the Garden of Eden: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, **"Let there be light, and there was light."** The earth is old-very, very old. It was old and dark and void long before Adam or the account of **Genesis 1:1**. The former creations that had once dwelt upon it had long since passed away and now all was as void as the moon while darkness, ice and fearful cold surrounded it all in a mantle of death. Not only was the earth without form and void and covered with darkness and cold, but it was useless, hopeless and helpless as well. It could do nothing to change its deplorable state. There was no power within itself to change or transform its timeless wastes or its hopeless future. If help or change should ever come, it must come from without and from elsewhere; otherwise it was doomed to abide in darkness forevermore.

O that the eyes of men might be opened to clearly see that back of all things and before all things, yea, in the beginning of all things, standeth God-eternal, immortal, invisible, almighty, omniscient, immutable, holy, loving, and greatest and most glorious of all, full of purpose! Thus it is written, and thus it was, that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep; and God said, Let there be light, and there was light," and by the mighty moving of the Spirit of God the earth was born again, begotten anew. Darkness fled away to its secret hiding place. Icy mountains melted and flowed down before the light of His presence. Timeless snows, released from the vise-like grip of some former curse, transformed themselves into bubbling streams of live-giving water. Flowers appeared on the earth. The time of the singing of birds had come. The fig tree brought forth its fruit, and the vines with the tender grapes gave a good smell. The breath of God, the wind of the Lord, passing over its wastes, had brought forth life where once was death, and the earth was born anew.

"How can a man be born when he is old?" questioned the puzzled Nicodemus, and Jesus, seeming almost to quote the first two verses of the book of Genesis, replied, "The wind (the Spirit) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The Holy Spirit, like a wind of God, moves over the shapeless void of our corruption. "Let there be light," is the fiat of the Lord, and the light of God, which is Jesus Christ, and life eternal, the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever, enter the darkened void of a soul dead in trespasses and sins. The Christ seed, incorruptible and eternal, is planted in the repentant heart. A new creation has begun, for he is begotten of God, and Christ henceforth dwells in his heart by faith. Let the redeemed of God now thrill with joy to the inspired words of Paul: "Christ in you is the hope of glory." The glory of God is the image of Christ, and we shall be fully satisfied when we awake in His likeness. When the incorruptible seed is planted in our hearts by faith, we are begotten of God, and **"every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." 1 John 5:1.** And **"he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." John 5:18.**

Your understanding will be greatly enlightened when you are able to grasp the simple truth I now bring to your attention. A child is begotten the moment he is conceived in his mother's womb, but the child is born when he comes forth from his mother's womb to be manifest to the world. This is a type, an allegory, of the spiritual process at work in the believer's heart. We are begotten of God when we believe. The incorruptible seed of the word of God, the Christ seed, the power of an endless life, is planted within the believing spirit. There it grows and matures in the darkness until death is swallowed up of life, until it is "not I, but Christ." Then comes the day of manifestation when that which was conceived in faith, that which was begotten, is fully born and manifest to

the world. This is what the Bible calls the manifestation of the sons of God—a man child come forth from the travailing woman, a son in the image of Christ, who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron.

The Holy Spirit had a very definite purpose in mind when in wisdom He employed these two enlightening terms—begotten of God and born of God. Believers are begotten the moment they fix their faith in Christ. At that same moment of faith, without their understanding or knowledge of what is taking place, the incorruptible seed, the Christ seed, the quickening Spirit, the power of an endless life is placed within the believing, penitent spirit they are begotten of God and the Christ life has begun. Time and again I have taught that all natural things have spiritual counterparts. Therefore you have only to consider that brief history of your own development from the moment of your conception in the womb of your mother to the hour of your birth and manifestation to the world to understand almost perfectly the divine process by which the Christ seed, the incorruptible seed, is placed in the womb of the believing spirit, there to gestate and develop as a chick develops in its shell until corruption is swallowed up of life and in truth it can be said, "It is not I but Christ." Then will follow the birth and manifestation in resurrection and incorruption of the vast family of newborn sons, not as individuals only, but as the many membered body of Christ as well.

Christians have always been puzzled by the seeming contradictions found in the first epistle of John. We find it difficult to understand why the writer said in chapter 3 and verse 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," while in a number of other places he makes it clear that Christians both can and do sin; and for this cause he makes the provision that, "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1), and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," 1 John 1:9. But this seeming contradiction vanishes the moment we make a sensible distinction between the two progressive phases of our redemption, which John speaks of as being begotten of God and being born of God. In 1 John 5:18 this distinction is very clear. We read, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but (please notice this distinguishing conjunction, but) he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." We who are begotten of God and are as yet in the stage of spiritual gestation are often tempted and at times overcome simply because the old Adamic nature is still larger and stronger than the new nature, and the corruptible still wars against the incorruptible. He that is begotten of God keepeth himself. He must do so by the grace and power of God or he will fall into sin as others have done. Times without number we fail either to keep ourselves or to seek the grace of God to keep us. But, Christian Brother and sister, you will find endless spiritual strength and power to keep if you will ask the Holy Spirit to make vivid and real to your heart the indisputable fact that at this very moment the incorruptible seed, the Christ seed, is developing within your spirit, your life and your body as well. He who has this divine understanding keepeth himself in the blessed knowledge that the divine Christ life begotten within him will issue forth in a birth and manifestation in the glorious image of Christ.

We may not be wise in drawing too many parallels between the natural and the spiritual, but we would be lacking, indeed, if we could not see some definite similarity, yes, even an allegory, between the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through that earthly vessel, the virgin Mary, and the formation of the Christ in us by the impartation of the incorruptible seed. See now with what reverent and holy awe the Virgin Mary regarded the great thing God was doing as the physical form of the Son of God was being prepared within her for His birth and manifestation to the world. "My soul doth magnify the Lord," she cried, "and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever." Luke 1:46-55.

We cannot be wrong in affirming that each and every statement made by this holy, rejoicing woman because of that great thing God was performing can also be made with equal truth by us in whose spirits the incorruptible seed has now been planted. God did great things for Mary when within her physical womb He placed the seed of Him who was to be called the Son of God. I am not wrong in saying that a greater thing by far is now in progress in that the incorruptible Christ seed is now by faith gestating in a multitude of human spirits,

swallowing up death with life, corruption with incorruption, and mortality with immortality. Our spiritual understanding of the great thing the Holy Spirit is performing in the hearts of all who are begotten of God causes us to keep ourselves. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not." Do you not think that Mary kept herself in all holiness and purity, knowing as she did that the Christ was being formed within? Could any imagine that she would defile her body by uncleanness or lend her ears to unholy or unspiritual conversation? Would any venture to believe that she feasted her eyes on corruption and filth as Christians are wont to do today? No, indeed, she did not! She kept herself because of her joy and anticipation of the life that was forming within.

O, that God's people would seek Him until the Holy Spirit illumined their minds, giving them a mighty understanding of the great things now transpiring in the spirits of all who are begotten of God! Every man who has this spiritual understanding will keep himself with utmost joy, knowing that, when God's process is complete and all that is death and corruption within is swallowed up by the life and immortality which He is, his sonship will be complete and a man child will come forth to rule all nations with a rod of iron. It is not in me to understand all the mysteries being wrought by God, but he must be a blind soul who cannot see the association between what we have been saying and the great revelation given to John, who said, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, (heaven is the spiritual realm); a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered ... And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." **Rev. 12:1-2,5.**

Soon, very soon, there is coming a time of birth and manifestation. At this present hour we are begotten, but not born; but in that wonderful day of manifestation the saying will be wholly true, "He that is born of God cannot sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." It is not my intention to leave the impression with anyone that it is wholly wrong for us to say we are born again, though strictly speaking we are not as yet born, but begotten. I do say, however, that a correct understanding of the two terms - begotten and born - will greatly assist us to comprehend the wonderful power of the incorruptible seed now growing to maturity in the believer's heart, and the yet greater wonder that will be when the babe who now leaps in the womb of the human spirit shall issue forth in the power of an endless life.

The first epistle of John is a most remarkable revelation of the progress of the believer from that heaven blessed hour when by simple faith the incorruptible Christ seed is placed within and we through repentance and faith are begotten of God unto the wonderful hour of manifestation when sonship is complete and we stand on Mt. Zion in the very image of Christ Himself. The King James version (which I generally use) somewhat obscures this vital fact by saying in chapter 3, verse 1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," and again in verse 2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God". Since the original Greek word was teknon, meaning children, and not huioi, meaning sons, the passage should read, "Beloved, now are we the children of God." See Emphatic Diaglott, Weymouth, and others. Even in the natural realm there is a vast difference between children and adults, or between little boys and mature men. This difference is symbolic of the contrast between spiritual children, spiritual young men, and spiritual fathers. John himself emphasizes this cardinal distinction by saying, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." **1 John 2:12-13.** The moment we are begotten of God, we are God's children regardless of our age in the flesh. From spiritual infancy we progress in spiritual wisdom, spiritual stature and favor with God. This process continues until we reach the stature of full grown men in the image of Christ as Paul also wisely said, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." **Eph. 4:13.**

With this understanding fresh in mind Weymouth's translation of **1 John 3:1-2** is capable of giving us an enlarged comprehension concerning the great spiritual work now in progress within. "See what love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called God's children: and that is what we are. For this reason the world does not recognize us, because it did not recognize Him". Notice the words here, "and that is what we are." God's children - that is what we are. The fleshly part of us is still here. We are still corruptible and in the natural we are still the children of the first Adam. But a miracle has taken place. The germ of never-ending life is

growing within. The incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever, has been planted in our hearts by faith, and the process of maturing from infancy to adoption and full manifestation is in progress. The blessed and wonder-filled hours of gestation are passing swiftly by and we are now maturing from infancy to full sonship in Him.

Then John by the wisdom given him by the Holy Spirit continues to enlighten our pure minds with the words, "Beloved, we are now God's children, but what we are to be has not yet been manifested. We know that if He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And anyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself (keeps himself) as He is pure." **1 John 3:2**. Weymouth. Though we know we are now God's children, the glory of what we shall be has not yet appeared, but we know that, when He appears, we will be exactly like Him.

My heart is often saddened when I contemplate the multitudes of Christian men and women who vainly imagine that sonship may be attained through mighty works, spectacular gifts, or miraculous ministries and manifestations. O nonsense! Nonsense! Nonsense! Childish, foolish, misguided nonsense! Have you never heard that Jesus said, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." **Matt. 7:22-23**. This solemn truth applies to almost all the great men of our day with their signs and wonders and mighty works which they do in the name of the Lord. Spectacular ministration has nothing to do with that sonship for which creation groans. Most of this spectacular exhibition is the product of man's misguided will and not the work of Christ or the Spirit. But take courage, O thou afflicted, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife. Isa, 54:1. Have faith in God, O man unknown, though thou be unhonored and unsung, for the Lord our God, who reserved to Himself seven thousand in Israel, has reserved in our day a people who are known of Him. There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but to none of them was he sent but to a woman of Sarepta. Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha, but none were healed saving Naaman the Syrian. The Queen of Sheba shall arise in the day of judgement to condemn this generation, because she came from afar to hear wisdom of Solomon; but, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. It is Christ in you that is the hope of glory. It is the power of and endless life working within your being.

CHAPTER FOUR THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

PART TWO

Through the divine power of our Lord Jesus Christ God has given unto us "all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him." **2 Pet. 1:3**. He who has called us to glory and virtue has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises by which all who are called of God may become partakers of His divine nature. We who have been called by Christ have escaped the corruption that is in the world because we have been begotten of incorruptible seed by the word (Logos) of God that liveth and abideth forever. 1 Pet. 1:23. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word (Logos) of the Lord endureth forever." **1 Pet. 1:24-25**.

Our new life, which is in fact the only true life in all the universe, is the life that comes from Him - nay, better far might I say that our true life is that life which He Himself is. In God's living word it is recorded, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." **John 1:4-5**. In the economy of God death and darkness are synonyms, but the life is the light of men. Wheresoever the Spirit of God moves, the mighty voice of creation is heard to cry, "Let there be light," for God Himself is life eternal and incorruptible, and the life is the light of men. This is the true light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." **John 1:9**. The eternal God, immortal, incorruptible and invisible, dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach - a light which darkness cannot comprehend. All the light and intelligence of this world system is naught but thick darkness and horrible gloominess when compared to true light which Jesus is, and all forms of life which we now see and know are death, corruption and the tomb when compared to that life incorruptible, immortal, invisible and eternal, which He Himself is.

Sweeter than the dews of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion and more blessed than good news from a far country is the wonderful revelation with which He now fills our enlightened hearts, declaring that man, born in sin and altogether shapen in iniquity, may now partake of the divine nature because infinite grace and limitless power has placed within the womb of our spirits the incorruptible Christ seed that we in truth may be begotten of God. O joy of all joys! How good to know that we who once were born of the corruptible seed of the first Adam, placed by our earthly father in the womb of our earthly mother, may now through His divine power be born anew of the incorruptible seed of the last Adam, the Logos, who liveth and abideth forever. See with what wisdom it has been written, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven... And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." **1 Cor. 15:47,49.** The heavenly secret sealed up in the treasure house of these inspired words none but the Father Himself can unfold, and while heavenly angels, excelling in wisdom and understanding, desire to look into these things, we who once were born of corruptible seed are now reborn of that incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever.

Sometimes it is not the best of wisdom to draw too close a parallel between things that are natural and things that are spiritual, for earthly minded folk delight to drag all spiritual things down to the realm of their natural understanding, distorting and confusing truth that only the spiritual mind can comprehend. Let us, however, hear the word of the Lord on this matter that we may have a better understanding to see more clearly how by the use of natural things, which we understand, the Holy Spirit reveals things that are as high above our understanding as heaven is higher than the earth. "For," saith God, "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." **Isa. 55:9.** As the rain that comes down from heaven makes the earth bring forth and bud, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so the word of the Lord that goes forth from His mouth as life-giving water accomplishes that which He pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto He sent it.

Thus it was that Paul, writing of the heathen, showed that that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." **Rom. 1:19-20.** We should therefore understand that, while this statement condemns the unbelief of the heathen, it is also teaching us to see how things that are spiritual and invisible may be clearly understood by looking at the natural things God has made. So true is this that Paul says even His eternal power and Godhead may be seen by the things which God has made. **Rom. 1:20.** Is it not true that a connoisseur of art is able to recognize almost at a glance the work of Rembrandt, De Vinci, or Michael Angelo? Cannot a critic of music recognize immediately the styles of great musicians? The work of every man and every woman, though unknown to themselves, proceeds after a pattern peculiar to them. So also you will notice that every work of God, whether He be creating a universe or creating men, follows a pattern peculiar to Him. Thus, when He makes a week to contain seven days. then every week He makes will have seven days though those days be twenty-four hours or one thousand years in length. When the immutable Father brings forth a creation by placing a seed either in the earth upon which we stand or in the earth which we are, whether it be the seed of a flower or an oak tree, the seed of an animal, a bird or a man, He is working according to a pattern from which He will never digress. Which of all the living things has He not brought forth after this pattern?

The pattern of God does not end with things which are visible and natural as Paul by the Spirit has plainly said: "The invisible things are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." We must tread softly here and speak with infinite reverence, for, though the statement above is entirely true, it is impossible to grasp the metaphor, the allegory or the type until our eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit and our minds are enlightened with the light of life that streams from Him. "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." **1 Cor. 2:11-12.**

With my head bowed and my heart awed in deepest reverence I shall now try to explain that, when our God and Father ordained that a new creation should be brought forth in the image of Himself, to be born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, He followed the same wonderful pattern that infinite wisdom had devised to produce all living things from a seed. First He must bring into the world the holy and incorruptible

One who was to be called the Son of God, for He Himself was to become the seed of an entirely new creation of incorruptible sons of God. The Father decreed that through the medium of a virgin's womb He would bring into the world the incorruptible seed, the life germ from which would spring an entirely new creation - a creation of twice born men, born again of the incorruptible seed of God's Christ. Then, true to the pattern of sowing and reaping, that seed must fall into the ground and die; "For," said Jesus, "except a corn (kernel) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It is the outer shell that dies - not the incorruptible life within. The incorruptible life is the Christ seed, springing forth, first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full corn in the ear, to become the wave sheaf of Leviticus 23:10 as the incorruptible life of Christ appears in God's many sons, and each of these in his turn, crucified with Christ and falling into the ground in death, bring forth an abounding harvest of incorruptible sons of God.

When the virgin in her amazement asked, "How can this be, seeing I know not a man," the angelic reply was this: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." **Luke 1:35**. This was to be the divine method of bringing into the world that incorruptible Christ who is Himself the seed of a new creation of incorruptible sons of God. Here as always it can be easily seen that the Father is following His usual pattern of creation. The Holy Spirit was to move upon the earthly form of this virgin woman that she might bring forth the firstborn of an entirely new creation. However much the truth may tax our understanding, the fact is that this firstborn Son of God was to be the germ seed of an entirely new creation of incorruptible men, born not after the flesh, but reborn of His Spirit.

How very important and full of truth are the simplest sayings of inspiration! Who can fathom the depths of truth set forth in the words of our Lord: "I am the vine; ye are the branches." "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." "I am the bread of life. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." But, when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," He was describing the pattern and the divine process by which that incorruptible life which He is would be released from its confinement within God's Christ that millions of believing mankind might through faith in Him be born of incorruptible seed and live forever and forever. No fact in life is better known than this certainty: If there is to be a harvest, we must first sow the seed. Furthermore the knowledge is clear to us all that even one seed planted in the ground will in a few seasons multiply to a very great harvest to satisfy all the world with its life giving bread.

Therefore our Lord said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The natural creation tells us emphatically that, as long as the wheat is left in the granary, there will be no increase. Lying there in security, its life remains locked up within itself, producing nothing and bringing forth nothing. The life existing in every kernel remains locked up within its tiny body because there has been no death that would release it from its shell, and, because there has been no death, there is no increase, no blade, no ear, no sheaf, and no harvest. Well does the farmer know that his own livelihood, together with the well-being of the people, depends upon his planting those seeds in the ground. Well he knows that the death, which occurs in the body of the seed, will release the life germ that will yield an abundant harvest. Can you not hear Paul saying, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened (made alive), except it die." **1 Cor. 15:35-36**. Here again we see the pattern clearly stated, both for the natural and for the spiritual realm. If the corruptible life contained in the kernel is to be released that it might yield a great harvest, then the kernel must die. There is no other way. Is it not therefore abundantly true that, if the incorruptible life sealed up within God's Christ was to be released that there might be a bountiful harvest in incorruption, then God's Christ must die, and die He did. He must be planted in the earth, and in the earth they placed Him in Joseph's new tomb.

For three days and three nights our Lord lay in the heart of the earth. His loving friends, it seems, had forgotten that He had said, "After three days I will rise again." But His enemies had not forgotten, and they set a watch to make sure He would remain in the tomb. Forty armed men were appointed to watch over the dead! They rolled a great stone against the door of the cave and sealed the stone with the governor's signet to make certain no one would molest it. O fools and slow of heart to believe, did they not know that the life confined in that kernel of wheat was life incorruptible and immortal? Had they dragged the Rocky Mountains over the door of His tomb that would have been no deterrent to incorruptible life. And Mary Magdalene, poor dear, unable to believe in a

literal resurrection, came early in the morning in company with other devout women to anoint His dead body with oil and sweet spices and embalm Him in death forever. But the stone, much too great for little women to move, was already rolled away, and, looking within the tomb, she saw no dead body lying in shrouds and death. There in the tomb an angel spoke as though surprised at her great sorrow. "Woman, why weepest thou?" he gently asked. She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where now she had not so much as a dead Christ upon whom to pour her sweet spices? So with blinding tears and deepening sorrow she turned to go away, and Jesus stood before her; but she knew Him not. One sentence He spoke and one question He asked, just as the angels had done. "Why weepest thou?" O how hard it is for our benighted minds to understand and grasp the truth! We are so absorbed with this realm of death that we cannot see that beyond the sable pall is life incorruptible, immortal, and eternal. Why are we so slow to grasp the revealing truth, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit?" Can you now see from the things we have stated the absolute necessity of the death of God's Son? How else but by death could incorruptible life be released that they who dwelt in death and corruption could through faith partake of the power of an endless life? O what a death! O what resurrection! O what a harvest! O death, where is now thy sting? Thou canst not slay incorruption! O grave, where is now thy victory? Thou has but released the power of an endless life!

We flounder a bit in our understanding of all these things. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Psa. 139:6. Only faintly now we see as through a glass darkly, but as time passes by and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and shows them unto us, we begin to understand. The events that transpired at the cross are very full of meaning. Not one thing happened on that day of days that had not been ordered of God, and all things loudly proclaimed their truth that enlightened souls might understand.

As our Savior bowed His head in death, He said. "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit," and, having said this, He gave up the ghost. The body without the spirit is dead, and with the death of the body came the release of the Spirit of life, eternal, immortal and incorruptible. And the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent; the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and many graves of the saints were opened, and after His resurrection their bodies rose and came out of their graves and entered into the city and appeared unto many. Matt 27:51-53. When Jesus rose from the dead, He did not rise alone. How could He since it is written, "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit?" The first fruit (the wave sheaf) of the resurrection must rise with Him. One seed was planted in death. A whole sheaf comes forth in resurrection. That one sheaf was a kind of first fruit of the mighty resurrection, which will eventually encompass all things in its incorruptible power. One kernel was planted in the ground. One sheaf came up in resurrection, that one sheaf being full of individual kernels, each in itself an incorruptible seed. Isaiah saw much more than national restoration when by the Spirit he cried, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they rise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." **Isa. 26:19.**

In the twenty-third chapter of the book of Leviticus we have one of those wonderful Old Testament types so hard to understand until we see the anti-type in the New Testament. Among the offerings to the Lord was the offering of a wave sheaf after this manner: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then shall ye bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." **Lev. 23:9-11.**

As we read the above passage, we must remember that the harvest is the resurrection. But the harvest was divided into three distinct parts-the firstfruits, the great ingathering, and finally the gleanings. One sheaf from the firstfruits of the harvest was to be brought to the priest and waved before the Lord. This passage, like many others, has often baffled my understanding, but now I see some definite significance in it. The simple act of waving is common among men and it is used daily on many occasions and in many different circumstances. A wave of the hand may mean a farewell or it may herald some glad home-coming, as we so often see when ships are coming into the harbor. Again it may be a sign of victory or accomplishment. You will notice three remarkable things connected with the offering of the wave sheaf. First, it was just one sheaf from a great harvest. Secondly, it was offered on the day after the Sabbath, which would indicate the resurrection day, and, most important of all, it was connected with the offering of the he-lamb (verse 12), which lamb is God's Son who taketh away the sin of the world.

The wave sheaf, waved in victory before the Lord, signifies that the first part of the resurrection is accomplished. Its anti-type is found in the blessed fact that, when Jesus our Lord arose from the dead, He did not rise alone. Only Matthew records the sacred wonder that the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after His resurrection and appeared unto many. Matt 27:52-53. They were the first sheaf of the firstfruit of the resurrection. They were a sheaf waved in victory before the Lord, signifying that a great and mighty harvest of incorruptibles would rise in ages yet to come, never to die any more.

These resurrected saints who rose with the incorruptible Christ did not return to their tombs again; neither could they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels. Luke 20:36. These are they of whom Paul spoke when he said, "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." **Eph. 4:8-10.**

I dearly love the beautiful story recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke. It tells of two sad and disappointed disciples, walking and communing with broken hearts of all the astonishing things that had so recently happened in Jerusalem. As they walked, the story recounts, Jesus of Nazareth drew near and walked in company with them, but their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. Jesus Himself was the subject of their conversation, as they related the story of His betrayal, His crucifixion and death. Shaking their heads in abject sadness, they sobbed out their heart-breaking disappointment in these pitiful words: "But we trusted that it had been He which would have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which Were early at the sepulcher. And when they found not His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. Then said He unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." **Luke 24:21-27.**

Ought not Christ to have suffered? O poor, foolish world! How dare you insist that the death of the Christ was a tragedy! I tell you it was no tragedy, for God, the Creator of all, together with all He has created, shouts aloud and afar from the wonder filled passage, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" enquired the resurrected Jesus. How else but by death could He release the incorruptible seed to the millions who would in future believe? Had He not died, the incorruptible seed would have been forever locked up within Himself, but the moment He died, His eternal Spirit - yes, His eternal life - was released to go abroad into the hearts of an innumerable multitude of believers who would drink freely of that wonderful fountain of life which He is. It was not until Mary broke the alabaster box that the perfume of the ointment filled all the house where they were sitting; and it was not until that alabaster box of His earthly body was broken in death upon the cross that His Spirit was released to the Father to be sent forth by Him into every believing heart, bringing eternal life, incorruptible, immortal and unfading. My soul sings a thousand hallelujahs that I, too, am drinking of that exhaustless fountain of eternal life. And those who drink shall never thirst again, but the water that He gives is a fountain within them, a well of water springing up into life incorruptible and eternal.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:37-39.** They could not receive His Spirit until He was glorified, and He could not be glorified until His Spirit was released by death. With what wonder and admiration do we see Him, only a few minutes after He had revealed Himself to the two disciples at Emmaus, appearing to His disciples, who sat behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. "Peace be unto you," He said in greeting. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." And He breathed on them and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." **John 20:19-22.** It was right here and at this very moment that they were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. Christ Jesus, the Word of God, came by His Spirit to dwell, not with them, but in them in the power of His endless life. He liveth and abideth forever because He Himself is incorruptible,

and His incorruptible life, released to us by His death and burial in the earth, is freely implanted in every believing heart to swallow up death with life and to bring forth at last that wonderful harvest all glorious in incorruption. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." **2 Cor. 4:7-8.**

No words of mine can fully reveal the wonderful glory reserved and kept unfading in store for those who have been thus begotten of God. You will do yourself a great injustice if you try to make these spiritual truths fit the cold calculations of your natural mind. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. By faith we understand! **Heb. 11:3.** "The things of God knoweth no man, but God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." Never try to convince an argumentative Christian. All he will do is present his earthly way of looking at things and you will end up depressed and thoroughly in the flesh yourself.

Even our blessed Lord Jesus incurred nothing but the wrath of His hearers when He attempted to answer their questions regarding the bread of life. Indeed, by the time the discussion was through, though they found no words to answer Him, they accused Him of blasphemy and sought to take His life. Only by the Spirit can spiritual things be discerned. Indeed, I have made the disappointing discovery that from a crowd of perhaps twelve thousand people, who respond loudly with their fervent amens, probably only twelve of them are able to grasp the truth and spiritually understand. Long ago, speaking of the blindness of Israel, Paul said, "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is (where the Spirit is Lord), there is liberty. But we all, with open (unveiled) face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:15-18.** "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." **1 Cor.2:6.**

In one of my writings some time ago I made this statement: Jesus did not die that I might live. He died that He might give His life to me. No truth in the New Testament is more outstanding than the truth that the "I" must be crucified, and from henceforth it is "not I, but Christ," God's people are much too flippant in rendering their lip service to these immortal truths. Everywhere we hear preachers talking about the crucifixion of self; but how good it would be if God's dear people would pause with fasting and prayer, earnestly requesting that the Holy Spirit would illumine the truth of it to their hearts! Does not nature itself preach this message? Does nature not prove the statement of Jesus, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit?" You have been begotten of the Spirit, my Christian brother. When you believed, the incorruptible seed in the very person of God's Christ came to dwell in your heart. Christ in you is your hope of glory. He dwells in your heart by faith (Eph. 3:17) that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. You are begotten of incorruptible seed, and that incorruptible seed is Christ, the Word of God. Christ can dwell in you only because He was crucified. This treasure we have in earthen vessels because His incorruptible life was released when the corn of wheat fell into the ground and died. When He bowed His head in death, He committed His eternal Spirit to all who would believe, that each might freely partake of the power of an endless life.

Now, lest this should seem too much to believe (though I know you must believe it), give ear to Peter, that God-given shepherd and feeder of the sheep, as He explains the mighty Pentecostal outpouring that came fifty days after the crucifixion of our Lord.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David that he is

both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witness. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." **Acts 2:22-33.**

The mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the corn of wheat, released His life to the Father and the Father poured forth that eternal Spirit, the incorruptible seed, the power of an endless life into the waiting, thirsting hearts of all who believed. I am not trying to confuse regeneration with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I am only trying to show how the death of Christ released His Spirit that every member of His body might be born of incorruptible seed and know the glory and power of an endless life.

Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. You are the body of Christ and members of the family of God. Through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, you have been made partakers of the divine nature. O blessed and sacred truth, how can this pen of mine proclaim thy matchless worth? Yet Thou hast proclaimed it, and the ear of faith hath heard that we who once were born in sin have now been begotten of Thee! We who once knew only corruption now feel the pulsating life of Thy incorruptible seed, and we who once were "of the earth earthy" are now members of the family of God. We are the body of Christ - O Lord, Thou hast said it - and members in particular of the Christ body. "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16), that we might know the love of Christ and be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19); yea, and more also that we might attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph. 4:13. "This priceless treasure we hold, so to speak, in a common earthenware jar—to show that the splendid power of it belongs to God and not to us. We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down, but we are never knocked out! Every day we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus, so that we may also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. We are always facing death, but this means that you know more and more of life." **2 Cor. 4:7-13** (Phillips Translation).

I do not wish to leave this area of our discussion without pointing out an eternal principle that applies to each and every one who has been made partaker of that incorruptible Christ seed. Let us not be flippant in our thoughts and our deliberations concerning the body of Christ. God has blinded the minds of most Christians to the true knowledge of the body of Christ simply because they have approached it roughly as Moses approached the burning bush, refusing to remove the shoes from their feet that Christ might wash them. They have come with head unbowed and heart unsanctified. They have come with lives unseparated from the flesh and its lusts, and they have stood in harmony and hand in hand with the harlot daughters of Babylon. They think they see, but weary themselves to find the door. They say, "We see;" therefore their sin remaineth.

The body of Christ is a mystery. It is a mysterious temple that God our Father is in the process of building. It is a temple not made with hands. The stones of its all-glorious walls are living stones, each one born of incorruptible seed and knowing in himself the power of an endless life. The body of Christ is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The body of Christ is "My Father's house" in which are many mansions. Perhaps we would understand better if we should read, "In My Father's House are many temples," because we already know that we are the temples of the Holy Spirit and God dwells in us. There are many of these temples in "My Father's house." The Father's house, the house in which by God's grace I myself am a mansion, is the habitation of God through the Spirit. That, my beloved friend, is the mystical body of Christ.

In that glorious body, that wonderful temple of sons, there never has been a rift, a schism or division, but from the beginning of the age until now it has been steadily rising on the foundation of the apostles and prophets as each new living stone was readied and permanently placed within its living walls. The body of Christ is unhindered by fire, by tribulation or persecution, unaffected by the squabbings of sects and denominations or those harlot systems without, who vainly imagine their puny group to be the body of Christ, but rising in the power of incorruption and bound with the everlasting ties of God's eternal Spirit, it is builded a holy and living temple for the Lord.

The body of Christ is the fullness of Christ. The body of Christ is Jesus, God's first perfected Son, joined together with all that vast family of sons, who through the ages have been born again of the incorruptible seed, which He is. He became God's incorruptible seed, and we who are born of Him have been born of incorruptible seed. He is made after the power of an endless life (Heb. 7:16), and we, too, have been made after the power of an endless life. I cannot explain such marvelous grace. My mind is still to earthy and small to comprehend the fullness and power of words like these: "Of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace." Jesus, our elder brother, He who is the first-born Son, the Head of the mystical body of Christ, was made a priest after the order of Melchisdec. He was not made after the order of a carnal commandment as Aaron but after the power of an endless life. And we, too, God's younger sons, are made priests and kings after the order of Melchisdec, not after the order of Aaron to slavishly obey a commandment which our old nature could never keep, but after the power of an endless life. Yea, "ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Since, then, we are the body of Christ, and we are born of incorruptible seed, and the power of an endless life is within us, I must now explain - and may the Holy Spirit give understanding - that, wonderful as is the truth that we are born of incorruptible seed, and glorious as is the fact that the power of an endless life is within us, that life must remain sealed up within us even as it was in Jesus until we, like Him, embrace the cross. When death worked in Jesus the Christ, then life worked in me; and when I am delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, then life works in you. With this truth firmly in mind we can much better comprehend the meaning of Paul's words, which I now quote and which clearly show how the things which lead to the destruction of the old self are the things that cause the incorruptible life within us to fully possess us and be released to work life in other members of the human race. "We have this (incorruptible) treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power (the power of an endless life) may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you." **2 Cor. 4:7-12.**

From reading these inspired words of Paul we can easily see that, just as the crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus released the eternal Spirit, so now also the same divine principle is working in us who have received His life. For, as Paul said, it is when death works in us that life works in others. No word that I can say or book that I can write can possibly show with greater clearness the absolute necessity of crucifixion and death to self. In my book, *The Meaning of the Cross*, I have explained the eternal fact of our crucifixion, showing that it was accomplished by the great wisdom of God when before the foundation of the ages He placed all men in His Son and then led Him to the accursed tree, where we were crucified with Him. He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin that he should no more spend his time to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. The sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us; and the glory to be revealed is none other than that incorruptible life which we have received of Him by faith and which will be manifested in wonderful glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

It is a great regret to me and an almost unmentionable shame that many who in our day profess to be the ministers of Jesus Christ will dare to assert that God wants His people to have the best of everything this corrupt age has to offer. They tell the people that God never wants them to be poor, but to be filled with all the good things of this world. He never wants them to suffer either in flesh or in spirit, but all the luxuries of this life are to be theirs and in general, as the common saying goes, they are to live "high on the hog." I shall not speak further of this other than to say that all such teaching emanates from and is the product of the carnal mind of man and not the Spirit of Christ. Let no man deceive you with such vain words, for it is true now as in ages past that "they who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Tribulation, today as always, works patience; patience works experience, experience works hope, and hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. Rom. 5:3-5.

Still in the hearts of the crucified these words echo more and more with truth: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." **Gal. 6:14.** No man should be moved by affliction, "for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." **1 Thess. 3:3.** God has a wonderful intention in appointing His people to great suffering. Suffering weans us

away from the natural realm with its corruption and death. It reveals how weak and shoddy the flesh with all its weakness is. It causes us to relinquish our childish grip on natural things with all their weak and beggarly elements that we may lay hold on life, our joy and crown eternally.

This treasure of incorruption we have in earthen vessels. The vessel itself is not the treasure. The treasure is the Christ life within the vessel. The alabaster box in the hands of that devout woman of Bethany may have been very beautiful indeed, but the treasure was the ointment within. When our Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth, mankind recognized Him only as a man. Some knew Him as the carpenter's son, the son of Joseph and Mary. Others saw Him as an ordinary Jew, and others called Him a deceiver and a man possessed with demons. But others had flashes of revelation as one might through a rift in a curtain catch a glimpse of the coming scene. Thus it was with Peter, who with a conviction as fresh as the winds of heaven affirmed, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nathanael, too, upon hearing the words of Jesus, affirmed with heavenly assurance, "Master, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." **John 1:49.** And Thomas, who with questioning mind had walked and talked with the Savior for three years and more, now for the first time seeing beyond the shroud of His human flesh, with wonder starting from his eyes and with fingers pressed against his trembling lips burst forth with astonished joy, "My Lord and my God!" **John 20:28.** what shall we say of John, the Baptist, who cried with a voice that even today is echoing among the eternal hills, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." **John 1:29.** How good to hear that loving woman tell how she wept until He spoke her name! "Rabboni!" she cried as she fell in worship at His feet, and she, who had known Him only as Jesus of Nazareth, now knew Him as God's Son, the resurrection and the life. Yea, He was life itself. The incorruptible life, long hidden within the alabaster box of His human flesh, had now at last burst its bonds in death to manifest itself in the magnificent glory of the resurrection. The corruptible had put on incorruption, the mortal had put on immortality, and death, that had reigned since Adam, was swallowed up in victory, and all creation was shouting in triumph, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

O twice born men, who through faith have been begotten of His incorruptible seed, behold, I show you a mystery! That same incorruptible life, that sprang forth from His tomb with such glory that even His body, which was crucified in weakness, was raised in power, is now working in you and me. Dwelling side by side with other men and with the unbelievers of this world, scarcely would any notice the difference between us and them. It is not the beauty of the alabaster box that fills the house of this world, but the fragrance of life eternal, the incense of incorruption, the aroma of an endless life when we become identified with His cross. His life now works in us. It is incorruption. It is resurrection life. This treasure we have in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Cor. 4:7), always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body (verse 10) when that life shall burst forth in glory and resurrection, never to taste death any more. The incorruptible life within us is the Christ life. It is inseparable from Him. He who hath the Son hath life. There is no other life than this. All else is death.

Have you considered the words of Paul, "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God?" **Col. 3:3.** Surely now our minds can grasp the message he is trying to teach us. Life at this moment is hidden in Christ and He is hidden in us, yet His life is our life and that life is incorruptible. The apostle did not end his inspired statement here, but continued with these revealing words: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." **Col. 3:4.** When Jesus the Christ arose from the dead, He rose, not in corruption, but in incorruption; not in mortality, but in immortality; not in weakness, but in power; not in dishonor, but in glory; not a natural body, but a spiritual body. See 1 Cor. 15:43-44. And we, because of the incorruptible seed which is in us, shall soon, very soon, appear with Him in glory, for as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor. 15:49.

There was a day when our Lord Jesus was preaching and ministering in Caesarea Philippi, a little town nestled at the foot of Mt. Hermon, which is Mt. Zion. Deut. 4:48. It was here that Peter had uttered those memorable words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." **Matt 16:16.** It was here that Jesus had forewarned them that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the chief priests and be crucified and that the third day He would rise from the dead. It was here that Peter had rebuked Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: This shall not be unto Thee," and Jesus, turning to him, replied, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me." Offensive indeed are the exhortations of those who would spare us from the cross, for

without the cross there can be neither incorruption nor glory. "Whosoever will save his (corruptible) life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose His life for My sake shall have it." It was here at Ceasarea that our blessed Lord had said, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." **Matt. 16: 27-28.** "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and, behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." **Matt. 17:1-5.** Luke in his gospel adds the significant fact that Moses and Elias appeared in glory, and that Peter, James and John also saw Jesus in His glory. Luke 9:31-32.

The indescribable wonder of the vision of transfiguration depicts in radiant splendor the ineffable glory, which saints will attain with Christ in His kingdom. It is a manifestation of the glory that comes when the incorruptible seed, now lying in the earth which we are, shall burst forth in the glory and power of an endless life. This is the glory that will unfold when He appears and we appear with Him in glory.

It was after six days, that is, six days after the events recorded in Matt. 16, that Jesus led His disciples up the towering mountain of Zion (Hermon), the mountain that Peter calls the holy mount. 2 Pet. 1:18. This statement is typical and very significant, because it is after the six days of man's labor and travail, six one thousand year days after man's transgression, that the Lord's Day will come. In it man will do no labor. It is the millennial Sabbath, the long awaited kingdom of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has recorded for our learning that it was after six days that Jesus appeared in glory. The six days of labor since Adam are almost at an end. Five thousand, nine hundred and eighty-three (and perhaps more) years have already passed by. The seventh is at hand. Soon the sun will set forever on man's dreary six days of labor and the bells of heaven will ring in the seventh day, the kingdom, the Lord's day. Then will the angels chorus the hymn, "This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." **Psa. 118:24.** "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." Verse 23.

When He appeared in glory, so the three evangelists say, His face did shine as the sun, His garments were white as the light, He was transfigured before them, and the proclamation went forth from the Father, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." For this reason Paul wrote to tell those of us in whom the incorruptible seed now dwells, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Nothing can be more certain than this and nothing more wonderful. Peter, who wrote with such assurance, telling us we are born of incorruptible seed, showed in no uncertain way that, because we are born of incorruptible seed, we are therefore heirs of an incorruptible inheritance. Thus with the certainty of a man inspired he wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." **1 Pet. 1:3-5.**

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" **1 Cor. 15:35.** "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15:51-53.** This is the first resurrection. This is the harvest at the end of the age. This is the resurrection of the in Christ company. They are raised incorruptible because long ago through faith in Him they were begotten of incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever. They live because He lives. Since Christ has appeared, they now appear with Him in glory. With the sounding of the last trump of the great tribulation great voices in heaven were heard, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces,

and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldst give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." **Rev. 11:15-19.**

And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. Christ has abolished death by the power of His endless life to bring to light life and immortality forevermore. Amen!

CHAPTER FIVE THAT I MAY ATTAIN

We are thankful for the opportunity that is offered us to send out the message of the hour through this book. Many hundreds of people are being reached with the newness and freshness of a message that we truly believe to be the message God has given for the closing days of this dispensation. But writing, like all other human forms of communication, always has its limitations and inadequacies, and I freely admit that every time a new book goes out there is a measure of sadness and disappointment in my heart because I know that many things that should have been explained were not explained. And then there is always the knowledge that the truth has been cast as bread upon the water or as seed upon a field, some of which will spring up and bear fruit in earnest hearts and some of which will be cast away before ever it brings forth at all.

It is because of the desire to speak with each one individually and thus bring a more personal message to every reader that I am writing this message. The truth contained herein burns in my heart and I hope that while you read it you will grasp a new lease on God's life and come to a new experience in Him.

We are now living in the most momentous hours imaginable. In fact, it is beyond the power of human imagination to see and understand the greatness of the things that are happening all about us and to fully comprehend what God is beginning to do in His people. There is an awakening among the elect of the Lord that supersedes human knowledge. As at certain times of the year God puts into the minds of birds to flock up in preparation for migration to another realm or zone, so He is putting into the hearts of a chosen people the desire to ready themselves for the sonship He has prepared for them from the foundation of the world. He is putting into their hearts the very life and glory of the coming kingdom, and they are finding that they have lost all desire for the fleeting things of this present age.

We are now seeing before our very eyes the things that must precede the glory of the coming kingdom and the universal reign of Christ. We are seeing the rise of both spiritual and political Babylon. We are hearing a message such as has not been on the earth heretofore, and we are seeing a people being prepared of God for sonship who are to receive the glory of the kingdom with the Lord Jesus Christ and reign in splendor with Him in the glory of their Father in the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

I desire by God's help to impress upon your minds that the sons of God who are being prepared to reign in the kingdom with Christ are not just ordinary Christians with ordinary experiences. There has been a great fault among Christian people of all ages. They have always been prone to try to make the word of God fit the measure of experience they had instead of making their experience fit the demands of the word of God. They have claimed to be filled with the Spirit of God when all they had was a tiny earnest of their inheritance. They have insisted that they were born again, though to this day they have not been able to see or understand the kingdom of heaven, and though we are plainly told that "that which is born of God cannot sin, for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God," (1 John 3:9 and 5:18) still we go on sinning and insisting that we are born of God. Some men claim to have the gift of tongues because they can speak five or six different languages all of which they learned by natural courses, and so on and on it goes endlessly. Enquire of any denomination you wish and they will all have their own explanation of the new birth, or what it means to walk in the Spirit, or what it means to be in Christ, or what it means to be a son of God, but they all,

every one, fall far short of the glorious experience the word of God actually describes. All this confusion of ideas and doctrines of men was permitted by the Lord for the age which we have just passed through, but we are about to see a new age, even the age of the kingdom of God, and we must prepare ourselves for that.

As I have sought God through the years with prayer and fasting, waiting and searching, a great conviction has come over me that God's people are being prepared for an entirely new realm of experience in Him. I am not referring to some imaginary realm to which men may think they have attained and about which they console themselves, thinking they are holier than the rest. I am speaking of a realm, which is in truth the realm of God, the realm of the heavenlies, and the realm of the kingdom. Furthermore I am convinced that many are due to attain to the glory of that new realm now while the rest of mankind and the rest of the Christians go on as usual in the old realm and on the old planes.

I am very sure that many who are reading these lines have experienced in truth that the present age with all it holds is slipping away. It is not only passing away in general but it is falling away from you personally and in particular. The things you once loved have become a bore to you. The things you rejoiced in have become old and sour and a heaviness to your spirit. The glamour of crowds and meetings, preachers and programs, has passed away and you are hard pressed to be interested in them any more. You find yourself losing interest in money and bank accounts, in the temporal progress of this age, and in many other things you formerly held dear. All this change is of God, and He is preparing His people for the glory of a new realm. He that has wrought us for this change is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 2 Cor. 5:5. See also Phillip's translation.

Now there is no use whatever in a man's trying to imitate Jesus. The world is full of imitators and copy-cats who never rise beyond imitation. But Jesus Christ was a Son of God, the Son of God, who, while He walked the lowly earth in the likeness of men and in the fashion of men, yet lived in a realm unknown to men, unfamiliar to men, and independent of men. Though He lived on earth in flesh, yet He dwelt in heaven in Spirit and was able to say, "No man hath ascended to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Paul taught us that our citizenship is in heaven, but I fear we have forgotten that we may freely walk in that realm as citizens, and have chosen rather to build our kingdoms and glories here as citizens of this present world system.

We can see and point out some very important examples of Christ's heavenly citizenship, which show us as nothing else can that all the time of His earthly ministry He lived and moved on the plane of a son of God. He lived in higher realm. He lived in the realm He preached about, even the realm of the kingdom of God. We cannot be too emphatic in saying that the glory of the realm of the kingdom of God cannot in any way be compared to the purely earthly realm that is part and parcel of the dispensation of the grace of God. While eternity's praise is not enough to extol the grace of God, we must admit that the age itself has been very human and lacking in the glory, government, judgment, justice, and power of God and filled with human ways and human ideas, a thousand divisions, and much sin. When Jesus was here, He lived and moved in the realm of the kingdom which He preached, and I would like you to see that in every respect and in every phase of His life He proved Himself to be living in the realm of the kingdom and totally independent of every part of this world's system.

Let us notice first that He was completely independent of that one thing to which we are always in bondage—money, the currency of this world system. I often wondered why it was that, though Jesus knew that Judas was thief, He allowed him to carry the money bag and, though He knew Judas was stealing the money, He said nothing about it. Now I know it is wrong to steal, but the point we should see is that in the realm where Jesus actually lived He did not need money and did not care whether there was any money in the bag or not. He was no more in need of money than a robin, an eagle, or an angel. He lived in a realm where God was all in all and everything belonged to Him. It was a realm higher than the realm of men. Judas by his thefts was trying to lay by in store for this realm, but Jesus was not living in this realm nor for it, but independent of it and far above it in the realm of the kingdom.

Again I have wondered why it was that at one time Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the message of the kingdom without scrip and without purse, without two coats and without a sword, but later on He said, "When I

sent you out without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." Then He said, **"But now he that hath a purse let him take it and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one."** Luke 22:35-36. What was the difference? Why did He tell them to do one thing one time and another thing later on? The difference is just this: When He sent them out at first, they were sent out to proclaim the kingdom, a realm beyond the bondage of this age, but when they were sent forth the second time, they were being prepared to preach the gospel of this age, which is the gospel of grace, a very inferior gospel and a very inferior age in which they would have to depend on purse, scrips, and other earthly things. When for us He laid down His own life, did He not rise again the third day and ascend up to heaven in the sight of His people? He lived in a different realm. He lived in the realm of the kingdom, which He preached, which He will soon come to establish, and of which you and I are to be a part.

There is abundant evidence both in the spirit and in the natural that we are at the very doors of a new age, even the kingdom age. We are without doubt going to be called upon to relinquish our hold on all the things of this age - our striving for comfort and ease, our security for old age, and all the other things that make us conformists to this present world system. Not only are we going to be called upon to relinquish our hold upon natural things but we are going to have to bid farewell to all the systems of a Babylonish church order. Let us not forget that the kingdom, which Christ and the apostles proclaimed is still ahead of us, and it is into the glory of this kingdom with all its freedom of earthly systems that we are now about to come.

Then again, when Jesus fed the five thousand, did He enquire of Judas whether or not there was enough money in the purse to buy food for the crowd? Positively not! Without a thought of money He provided food in the wilderness from the super-abundance of the resources of the kingdom in which He lived. And when one day at the wayside well He requested water of a Samaritan woman while His disciples had gone away to buy food, He Himself gave water to the woman, water of which if anyone drink, he shall never thirst again, but the water should be in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life. When at last His disciples came with the food they had bought with money from the bag, He would not eat, but said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Neither food nor drink nor money was any consideration to Him, for He dwelt in a realm superior to our realm, even a realm, which He is now preparing us to enter.

In the realm of the kingdom where Jesus dwelt, He proved that He was not in bondage to taxes nor in straits to pay them. Taxation has been a bondage to the nations of all ages and in our day has become a relentless epidemic that will as readily rob you of the hopes of a life-time as a thief will rob you of your wealth or a cancer will rob you of your life. Yet Jesus was not in bondage to Roman taxation, first because He said, "Then are the children free," and the second because the taxes He paid He did not owe, but He paid them from the boundless resources of the kingdom of which He was a part. See Matt. 17:24-27.

But money and taxes are not the only bondages of this present age. With a little thought it will become plain that every modern convenience which is invented to make life easier brings us further into bondage until the whole civilized world staggers beneath the load of increasing debt and mounting usury.

Jesus was not in bondage to methods of travel. While He rode in a boat, He showed His power over the waves by walking upon their watery fields, and when He came into the little ship, both ship and passengers were immediately at the other side of the lake. He was not in bondage to the methods of learning common to this age, for He knew letters, never having learned, and amazed the doctors and lawyers with His questions and answers. He was never in bondage to houses or places to live. He was never sick or hurt and, when it came to death, He laid down His life voluntarily that He might take it again.

The things of which we have spoken show only one side of the picture of His life, for though He proved He was not in bondage to anything in this age, He also proved time and again that He was in absolute contact with God and that He lived and moved and had His being in the realm of the kingdom of heaven. Did not the heavens open at His baptism? Did not an audible voice speak to Him from heaven? Did not angels minister unto Him in the wilderness? Did He not talk to Moses and Elijah in the transfiguration and make His enemies fall flat on their backs at a mere word? John 18:6. Did He not heal all sick that came to Him without ever a failure, and raise dead men back to life, rolling away grave stones and stopping funeral processions?

In my heart I am sure that the curtain is ringing down on the church age. Paul's gospel of grace has run its course and fulfilled its mission in the same manner as the gospel of Moses ended with the coming of Christ. There is to be a rising into the heavenly realms in the end of this age, an invasion of the realms of principalities and powers. They will be cast down to the earth and will have much wrath because of the shortness of their time. Even now men and woman are rising into those new realms and the satanic hosts are filtering down nearer and nearer to the earth. Soon the world will be utterly filled with their delusions. The union of spiritual and political Babylon will take place very rapidly, for they already have much in common. The tribulation will soon be over and the kingdom will be here.

There is a change taking place in the hearts of the elect of God. The mind of Christ is beginning to overtake us and when it does, immortality and eternal life will overtake us as well.

The ways of God have no end. He is inexhaustible. The darkness of one day grows into the glory and light of the next. The cold of winter loosens her frigid grip so that from her icy storehouses waters flow to form the sparkling pools from whose bosom vapors rise to realms celestial to fall again in snow and rain like unto the living Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God to accomplish that which He pleases. The feeble caterpillar which crawls along the ground, trod upon by the foot of man, is destined to flit on starry wings in a heavenly atmosphere no longer hampered by terrestrial things but transformed as though by God's Spirit from a creature of dust and gluttony to one which has put on a somewhat heavenly tabernacle. In like manner God hath made man a little lower than the angels that he might suffer death, and, being thus proved, that He might crown him with glory and honor in heavenly realms of the Spirit and place him over the work of His (God's) hands forever.

Let heaven and earth be called to witness the infinite love God bestowed upon us when He made known to us the secret of His will, His will being that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He would gather into Himself all things in heaven and earth. The promise that we should be heirs of the world is left to man, for when God put all things under him (man), He left nothing that is not put under him. As yet we do not see all things under man. But what do we see? We see Jesus Christ, the great Head of the body, the firstborn Son in this vast family of sons. We see Him already far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world (age) but also in the world (age) to come. Where He sits we shall also sit after our testing and preparation is complete. Therefore take courage in "seeing Jesus", for where He sits we shall also sit in the near future.

The promise of such eternal things is left to man, but not indeed to man who is wayward and sinful. Neither are such promises to Christians who are filled with their own ways. If our earthly life of toil and suffering is permitted to work for us, it will produce a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory for us. We must not look at the things which are seen in our toil and tribulation, for they will but cause our hearts to sorrow in heaviness; but as we know that all things are working together for our good, we look at the things that are not seen, for it is the unseen effect of our tribulations that produces in us and for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I would to God that all men everywhere might see that everything everywhere is working tirelessly and endlessly to produce sonship in those who are the called according to His eternal purpose. Everywhere! Everything! Temptations, tears, heartaches, unfaithful friends and brethren, loss of property, loss of business, perils, hateful neighbors, fiery furnaces, dens of lions, rugged crosses and isles of exile! All things! All things! All things, too numerous far to mention, are working for the good of God's elect, and are adding, though unseen now, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory to us.

Your disappointing failures often constitute your greatest successes, for God is not interested in your successes but in your faithful stewardship. A kingdom so vast as that, which is to come, can not be entrusted to any who are not faithful stewards. It is not your apparent success that will determine your right to reign, but your faithfulness in the trust committed to you whether it be large or small. Seeming success or failure means nothing to God. Faithfulness means everything! With God defeats are often victories. If your heart is right, they are always victories. The very thing that seems to completely defeat God's plan is the thing that brings it to pass. Was it not so with Joseph? He dreamed a dream in which the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. His father interpreted the dream to mean that the whole family would bow to him, and he thoroughly rebuked him for his dream. He dreamed again and the sheaves of his brethren bowed down to his

sheaf, and they hated him for his dream and sold him into slavery in Egypt saying, "Now we will see what will become of his dreams." But it was their hateful action and the consequent apparent defeat of the plan of God that eventually brought his dreams to pass. His brethren that hated him and cast him out came and bowed before him and did obeisance. The full intent of God's heart and mind is clearly seen in Joseph's words: "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." (Gen. 50:20).

It is impossible to imagine the crushing load of grief and sadness that overwhelmed the disciples when Jesus died. Long speeches are not always the most eloquent ones nor are much weeping always the sign of the greatest sorrow. Never was heartache more truly manifest than in the two disciples who walked to Emmaus nor grief more eloquently spoken than in their plaintive words, "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," Luke 24:21. When will we ever learn that the visible and evident always sells us short? It is the invisible and unseen that tells us the truth. In the painful travail and bloody sweat of Christ the disciples could see naught but the death of their hopes and the birth of their fears, but He who seeth the invisible "saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied", and knew that by His knowledge He should justify many. Isa. 53:11. For as many as have been cursed by Adam's sin shall be blessed by Christ's righteousness, and in paradox we may truly say that all who have died through Adam's life will live through Christ's death. For so hath God declared: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Seeing then that God has planned to rule the universe through the sons of God whom He has chosen and predestinated to share His glory, our whole desire and effort must be to conform our lives to His will that we might know God.

It is one thing to know God by the hearing of the ear. It is another thing entirely to know Him because we have seen Him by the Spirit. "He that is of God hath seen the Father." John 6:46. Job was a perfect and an upright man. He feared God and eschewed evil. On several occasions God vindicated Job's righteousness, saying that there was none like him in all the earth - a perfect and an upright man. After the loss of all his earthly possessions he still held fast to his integrity and did not charge God foolishly. Good as this was it did not fully satisfy the Almighty, for His intention clearly was to bring this good man to the place of sonship. He must be changed from a mere acquaintance of God to one who knew Him by seeing Him. Any suffering is light and small in comparison with this great blessedness. Therefore Job was called upon to suffer still more, and suffer he did - days and days of endless pain, hours and hours of ceaseless nagging from friends who meant well but who were terribly wrong. In their zeal they heaped taunts and reproaches upon his head, thinking his afflictions proved that God had forsaken him. Well might they have learned together with all the children of God that "whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." It was not the wordy argument of his friends that produced sonship in him, neither was it his own lengthy defense, but when all men had ceased to talk and their words of human wisdom were ended, then God spoke to him. The questions God demanded of him Job could not answer and he realized he had spoken without wisdom. Then in repentance that only God can give this good man cried from the depths of his night of sorrow, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." He saw God! That is what made the difference. That is what made this perfect man see that he was perfect only in the light he had - which was the hearing of the ear - but now a new and better light had dawned and he saw God with his eye, and all his former goodness dwindled to dust and ashes.

God has always been pleased when we believe Him without seeing any outward signs. This has always been His will. A man who cannot believe without seeing does not really believe at all, for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The point I wish to make clear, however, is this: Walking by faith without seeing must eventually produce walking by sight, for it is when we see Him that we come to know Him. "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and every man

that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." **1 John 3:3.** "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him." **1 John 3:6.**

Isaiah had been a mighty prophet of the Lord in Israel, but it was not until King Uzziah died that Isaiah saw the Lord. Isa. 6. It was when the prophet saw Him, high and lifted up, the smoke of God filling the temple while cherubim chanted, "Holy! Holy! Holy! is the Lord God of hosts" that this mighty man of God saw his own uncleanness before God. With the same penitent voice that we heard in Job Isaiah cried, "Woe is me, for I am undone! For I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." Just to know God afar off is wonderful. Just to hear of Him by the hearing of the ear is benefit and blessing incomprehensible. Even this is sufficient to transform a life. But to draw nigh to God and see Him is to be changed into that same image and to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. When the prophet saw himself in the light of this Sun of Righteousness, he cried out in the shame of his uncleanness. Then and only then did the seraphim come with a live coal from off the altar of God and lay it upon the prophet's lips, saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is purged and thy sin taken away." Then in the light of this new revelation of God he heard God speaking to him in an audible voice.

"Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him." The crying need of our hearts is to see Him and thus know Him. Then shall we be at last free from our inbred sin. The experience of seeing God is an experience we have all thought of as far off in some future generation, but I want to show you a mystery. We can see God now just as Job and Isaiah did. Though our experiences may differ, yet the result will always be the same-freedom from sin. In the midst of this turmoil Job cried, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." He was positively sure in his own mind that in some distant future day he would see God, but what he did not know was that God at that very moment was leading him into the coveted experience. Within a few days he would shout with ecstatic joy, "Wow mine eye seeth Thee!" Job. 42:5. It is easy to put off spiritual experience for the millenniums to come, but God would like to have us enter them now.

"That I may know Him" was the ceaseless longing of Paul's heart. Phil 3:10. Too many sermons are preached about God, but too few people come to know Him personally. You can never know people by hearing about them even from their closest friends. You must see them, know them, and understand them personally. However vivid a description may be given of an individual, you could still pass him on the street without knowing who he was or even live in the same house with him without knowing he was the person in question. So also it is with God. You will know many things about Him by hearing, but you will only know Him when your eye sees Him. "No man can see God and live," but that does not mean that he will give up the ghost and die. It means that he will never live the same any more, but will live as God lives in the Spirit.

Books are written by the score on how to pray, but we really don't learn to pray that way. We learn by praying. Multiplied sermons are preached on how to imitate Christ, but God is not interested in your imitation. A parrot may imitate a man's voice but it is still a parrot, or a monkey may imitate a man's actions but he still remains a monkey. So also a carnal man may imitate God and try to be like Christ but he is still a carnal man. The only thing that satisfies God is the dying of the old man and the formation of the new, the Adamic nature being supplanted by the Christ nature, the corruptible being swallowed up by the incorruptible, the mortal by the immortal. **"He who is of God, he hath seen the Father."** **John 6:46.** To see Him is to know Him.

To know God is to become acquainted with His ways. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. Most of us never know anything about God except what acts we see Him do. Men love to feast their eyes on healings and miracles, but you will not come to know God by witnessing His acts however great they may be. To know the ways of God is another matter. Two million Israelites knew about the acts of God, but only one man knew His ways. The multitudes knew God by the parting of the Red Sea, the manna on the ground, the water that flowed from the rock but Moses knew the eternal purpose God had in mind when He created the worlds, when He called Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. He knew why God had raised up this rebellious people and what the ultimate end of it would be in the ages to come. He had seen God face to face and had spoken to Him face to face and was carefully making all things according to the pattern God had showed him in the mount.

The opinions we form by hearing about people are usually found to be wrong after we have come to know them personally. This is also true concerning God. When you come to know Him, you will find Him very unlike the description given by theologians. You will come to know that much that they teach is only rubbish because it is contrary to the nature of God. It certainly was so with the Jewish theologians and doctors of the law. When Jesus came, He smashed their theories to bits and tore the robes of their ecclesiasticism to ribbons. He ate with sinners, cast the devil out of the Syrophenician, let a sinful woman wash His feet, forgave a thief, healed on the Sabbath, ate with unwashed hands, called the best religionists of His day bars, hypocrites, serpents, snakes, children of the devil, whited sepulchers, and a generation of vipers. They thought that they knew God, but they didn't. He was more pleased with the sincerity of sinners than with the ritualism of scribes and Pharisees. When you come to know Him, you will find that it is the same now as it was then. He is outside the modern church and is knocking at the hearts of individual men and women for admittance. Rev. 3:20. If you want to know Him, you will find Him "outside the camp".

A man who knows God can answer questions about God because he knows God. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." **1 John 1:3**. These are the words of a man speaking from beyond the veil of the flesh, from the holy of holies, the presence of God. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

"Hereby we do know that we know God, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." It is not the Ten Commandments, which are in question here, but the keeping of God's divine will and command however it may be expressed. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." God's will and commandments in this age of the Spirit are being manifested by the leading of the Spirit. It is even as Jesus said: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do, for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth, and He will show Him greater things than these that ye all may marvel." **John 5:19-20**. The sons of God must be always acquainted with the voice of the Holy Spirit that they might be led by the Spirit in every detail. Then can it be said they know the Father and keep His commandments. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

"That I may know Him," cried Paul in the longing of his soul. "That I may know Him," patriarchs and seers of all ages have prayed. That I may know Him is the echo of ten thousand longing souls as the lengthening shadows of this dispensation of grace stretch across the weary earth and the millennial dawn with rosy steps advancing in the eastern clime comes stealing o'er the meadows of our hearts.

I hope we are all tired of repeating the theories and doctrines of the resurrection and have come to the place where we want to know the power of His resurrection. We want to experience its power working in us here and now. There will come a day when all men, good and evil, will rise from the dead, but the resurrection for which we look and long is not an event but a person. "I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day," said Martha, but Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Oh that we might know the resurrection in such power and glory as this - that without dying we could put on life] Oh that we might put on Christ and have our mortality swallowed up by life divine. The more the carnal mind reigns, the more we have of death. The more Christ reigns, the more we have of life.

It is sad to me to know that, though Christ has died once for all men, yet we continue to die because we insist upon it. He has borne the sins of all mankind, yet we continue both to sin and to bear the judgment that He has already borne. Why can we never believe Him? Why can we never accept such glorious promises as this? "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." **Heb. 9:26-28**. Death came by sin, and Christ appeared to abolish death. Christ abolished the law. 2 Cor. 3:13. Christ abolished the ordinances. Eph. 2:15. Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. 2 Tim. 1:10.

Oh that we might know experimentally the power of His resurrection! Paul's desire to know Christ and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable to His death, was that he might attain the resurrection of the dead. **Phil. 3:11**. He admitted that as yet he had not attained it but declared, "I follow after; if that I may

apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." To apprehend means to lay hold of. Thus he says, "If I may lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me," that is, the resurrection. **Phil. 3:11-12.** He declared he had not yet attained what he wanted, but he said, "This one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." **Phil. 3:13,14.**

So, you see, this life in Christ was the prize he wanted to attain. He was straining every spiritual nerve to receive it. Whether or not he ever attained is more than I know. Perhaps he had to die in faith without receiving that perfect prize. His exhortation in **verse 15** is this: "Let us therefore as many as be perfect (Weymouth-mature) be thus minded." However foolish such things may appear to the natural mind, let all who are mature be thus minded.

The natural mind with its natural way of looking at things never did and never will understand the things of the Spirit of God, for "they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." **1 Cor. 2:14-16.** The natural man cannot comprehend the incomprehensible. His faith can never revel in the impossible. He is hermetically sealed on the natural side of things. The spiritual man lives in a different world. While his physical body walks the earth, his spirit roams the elysian fields of the realm above and basks in the sunshine of his heavenly citizenship. He is in the world but not of it. He is prone to speak of the things that pertain to that spiritual world and is counted a fool by the natural man. He is like a man from another world who speaks freely of the things he knows, but to those who do not know his words are idle tales. No man will attain the prize of God by troubling his head about what other people think, for the thoughts of man are not the thoughts of God. Therefore let all who would attain the power of the resurrection forget everything that pertains to human learning and knowledge and press toward the goal set before us. The world by wisdom knew not God, so why am I obliged to hear its wisdom? Yea, the wisdom of man is foolishness with God.

Why should it be thought a thing impossible that God should raise the dead? And why should it be thought a thing impossible that a man should live forever, his mortality being swallowed up by God's life? We have all been taught to believe that death is sure and certain, but if we can find even one man who escaped death, then death is not certain. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, did not die. He escaped death. In fact, it is written, "By faith Enoch was translated that he might not see death." **Heb. 11:5.** Elijah did not die, for he was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. And who dare say that John the apostle died when Jesus declared, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" **John 21:21-24.** And hear the inspired words of the apostle Paul: "Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (die)." **1 Cor. 15:51.**

Said Jesus, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." **John 6:49,50.** "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If a man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." **John 6:51.** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My sayings, he shall never see death." **John 8:51.** However fantastic or impossible such truths may appear to the natural man, my heart goes on longing to know the power of His resurrection. Should I never attain, I know I shall but sleep and stand in my lot at the end of the age with those who have attained. In this flesh of mine God shall some day be seen-God who is life and cannot die. "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," sobbed Martha. Of course he would not have died if Jesus had been there. How much less should we die when God's Son dwells within, He who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light that no man approacheth.

Men have come forth with numerous doctrines and theories concerning the resurrection. With natural minds they have arranged each event in order. They have debated and fought over the theories of pre- and post-millennialism. Some have had all the dead, good and bad, rising at once. Others have divided them up into companies. This is all very interesting material, but it really doesn't get us very far or bring us any closer to God. 'Tis true there will be a great day of resurrection, but the thing the theologians have missed in their zeal is the thing they always miss - the most important point of all. In this case they have forgotten that the resurrection is not so much an event as a person, and that person is Jesus Christ Himself. Can you not hear that wonderful conversation between Jesus and Martha? Listen to them as they talk. Said Martha, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will

give it Thee." Jesus saith unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha saith unto Him, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" She replied, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

"Believest thou this?" questioned the Son of God. "Believest thou this?" He asks today. Let us answer that question with Martha. Do we also believe that He is the resurrection? The importance of this understanding cannot possibly be overestimated, for herein lies the great truth of the power of His resurrection. If Jesus Himself is the resurrection, then to have Him is to partake of the resurrection here and now, for if a man eats of this bread, he shall never die. John 6:50. This, indeed, is the life of Jesus being made manifest in our mortal flesh. 2 Cor. 4:11. Again, "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11.**

There is abundant truth in **Rom. 8:13.** "If we live after the flesh, we shall die." Is it not true that all Christians, practically speaking, live and move and have their being after the dictates of the natural? The result is they all die. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." To live in the Spirit is to live on the plane of the resurrection. All our natural ways of looking at things must go if we are to enjoy this heavenly citizenship. It is those who are led by the Spirit who are the sons of God. They alone can begin to enjoy the power of the resurrection.

I have been staggered by the truths contained in 2 Corinthians, chapters 4 and 5. We are all accustomed to reading these passages from the King James version and have unconsciously built our theories around each verse. I wish, therefore, to quote a few verses from chapter 5 from Goodspeed's translation. "For I know that if this earthly tent that I live in is taken down, God will provide me a building in heaven to live in not built by human hands, but eternal. This makes me sigh with longing to put on my heavenly dwelling, for if I do I shall never be disembodied. For I who am still in my tent sigh with anxiety, because I do not want to be stripped of it, but to put on the other over it so that what is only mortal may be absorbed in life. It is God Himself who has prepared me for this change, and has given the Spirit as a guarantee." **2 Cor. 5:1-5.**

The death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are the very heart of the Gospel. The death of Jesus alone would be small consolation for any of us, for "if Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins and all who have fallen asleep in Jesus are perished." The fact that He is alive and ever liveth flows out from the heart of the whole plan of the Gospel and redemption. The resurrection must not be limited to the physical rising of one man even though He was the Son of God. It is more by far than a physical fact. When he died, He died for me personally and He died for you personally. Because of this I was with Him in what He did and accomplished and so also were you. Did not Paul declare, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above?"

It is an eternal fact that both our death and our resurrection are accomplished in our identification with Him. If by the Holy Spirit we can see this truth, our struggles to attain will be over. For the thing we wish to attain has already been attained. The thing you are searching for is your possession. The thing you long for you possess. A perfect and complete work was accomplished by the Christ of God. It is finished and nothing can be accomplished by a struggle. I am not trying to persuade you to live in lethargy and empty faith, but our only struggle will be manifest in our effort to receive by faith what has been eternally done for us. If we can believe the debt has been completely paid, we will no longer spend our lives struggling to pay it. Even a sinner must discover that -

Jesus paid it all;
All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.

If we can believe that Jesus died for us, then there is no possible reason why we should die. But we all unconsciously or consciously go on making preparation for death. If we believe that Jesus rose again and we rose again with Him, then we can present ourselves to God as living men risen from the dead. When he died,

we died. When He rose, we rose. When He ascended, we ascended. When He was seated in the heavenlies, we were seated with Him in heavenly places. It is of faith that it might be by grace.

I know it is impossible to see such a truth as the above with the natural mind, but though eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him, yet He hath revealed them to us by His spirit. I humbly beg of you to see that it is quite impossible to understand any spiritual truth without the revelation of the Spirit. Until the Holy Spirit moves, the earth is without form and void and darkness is upon the face of the deep. Only let God say, "Let there be light," and light will push its golden fingers through the gloom and darkness of your minds. The struggling of a drowning man is often the thing that hinders his rescue. So also our strugglings and labors hinder us from entering into His rest.

Our hearts are often filled with unbelief because of the errors tradition has taught us. Human beings are always prone to form doctrines that seem to fit in with the general experience of mankind. Because the vast majority of Christians live after the flesh, we are inclined to discredit the possibility of any living after the Spirit. Because "all seek their own", we are inclined to think that none can seek the things that are Jesus Christ's. Because we see nothing but death working in men, we do our best to spiritualize any scripture that dares to imply that life could work in us instead.

There are certain times and seasons when God brings to life truths that have been allowed to lie in grave clothes for ages and dispensations. As a seed lies dormant in the winter months and then bursts into life in the warmth and rain of spring, so also has the truth of God been allowed to lie in death throughout the wintry night of the past six thousand years now at last to burst into a fruitful harvest in the millennial spring. Did you ever notice the eternal truth of this scripture, spoken first by Isaiah and repeated by Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch two thousand years ago? "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away and who shall declare His generation, for His life is taken from the earth." **Acts 8:33**. For almost twenty centuries people have believed that the humiliation of Christ referred only to His rejection by Israel at His first coming, and they have thought that the taking of His life from the earth referred only to His death on the cross. But the unfolding revelation of this hour teaches us that the whole church age has been a time of Christ's humiliation and a time of humiliation for the people of Christ. The children of God have known only humiliation for centuries and all true judgment has been taken away from the earth. It is also true that His life is taken from the earth and, in truth, it has been taken away from the earth for all these centuries that have passed, for, while men rejoiced in spirit, their bodies were on the journey to the grave. But the winter of night and death is almost over. It is time for the flowers to appear on the earth and the singing of birds to come. It is time for the humiliation of Christ to be ended and His life to be restored to the earth. It is time to know Him and the power of His resurrection, for His kingdom is at hand.

The hour is at hand for mortality to be overtaken by immortality. The hour has come for corruption to be overtaken by incorruption. The time has come for death to be swallowed up of life. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

Christ Himself is the resurrection and Christ is the life. All who believe in Him, though they were dead, yet shall they live, and all who live and believe in Him shall never die.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 6
THE BODY OF CHRIST-THE HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS
BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
THE MYSTERY OF THE TRUE CHURCH OR THE BODY OF CHRIST

When the renowned poet, Sir Walter Scott, lay dying, he said to his servant, "Bring me the Book." "But, Sir Walter," replied the servant, "there are twenty thousand books in your library. Which one do you wish me to bring?" "There is only one Book," replied Sir Walter; and without hesitation the servant brought him the Bible.

No book ever written can be compared to the Bible, for this is the word of God. It does not merely contain the words of God. The Bible is the Word of God. The mighty Lord Himself is the Author divine, inspiring each truth, each sentence, and each word. It is a book free of errors, whether historical, scientific or prophetic. It is free of all contradiction and in its original state completely perfect. The created word, which includes all creation, the written word, which is the Bible, and the living word, which is Jesus Christ, are a threefold word, speaking with sublime harmony of the purpose which God designed in Jesus Christ long before the ages began. No other book ever written can compare to this whose depths are fathomless and whose truths are inexhaustible. None can uncover the past with such accuracy or with so few words, and none but this can draw aside the darkling veil that shrouds the future to reveal its secrets with an accuracy as certain as history itself. Not one jot or tittle of it has failed or will fail until all is fulfilled. Think not that our heavenly Father is distressed because of the blatant rantings of atheists. Well He knows they are but fools who in their hearts declare, "There is no God." Nor does He rouse Himself to disprove the error of the evolutionist whose childish defiance seeks to rob the Creator of His creation and the Almighty of His power. God wrote this Book and breathed into its pages light and understanding to all that fear the Lord, but darkness and death to all who doubt His goodness and fear Him not.

Centuries ago the Psalmist questioned, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" **Psa. 11:3**. We are living in a day when "darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." These are dark ages of doubt, fear, confusion and misunderstanding. Men in our day allude to the middle centuries as the dark ages, but they do not seem to know that darkness beclouds their own understanding, hiding from their eyes the glorious revelation for these closing days of time. When the Spirit of God spoke, saying, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," **Isa. 60:2**, He was speaking of the day in which we now live. The earth of which He speaks is the world as a whole. Terrible is the darkness and confusion that in our day holds mankind in its chain. The world is groping in darkness and misunderstanding to such an extent that all things in it are out of course. Millions starve while plenty abounds. Strong nations cry, "Peace, peace," though their guns are never silent and blood flows like rivers to the sea. People cry out for more and more knowledge only to find, as they did in Eden, that their knowledge brings death and sorrow, trouble and confusion. But, alas, dark and forbidding as is the darkness that covers the earth, it is but early twilight compared to the gross darkness that covers the people.

Perhaps you will ask this question, "To whom does the prophet refer when he speaks of the people?" There is only one answer that can be given. The people referred to here are the people of God, for whether they be Jews, Israelites, or Christians, darkness, yea, gross darkness that can be felt, covers them all. As far as I am concerned, and I think God has given me some wisdom for these last days, the grossest darkness of the hour hangs like a thick cloud over that whole system, which we in our ignorance refer to as "the church", but which

the Bible unerringly brands as Mystery Babylon the great, mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Rev. 17:1-7. Such gross darkness enshrouds this confused system that those who dwell within its precincts cannot see their way. The blind lead the blind and both fall into the ditch. Her prophets preach for hire. Her shepherds fleece the sheep. Her healers heal for prominence and gain. The cry of her hireling ministry is gold, silver, and dollars! Money, money, money, money! No project is ever undertaken for God without the subtle appeal for cash. While the church of Rome pleads for money to relieve the distress of the world, her own coffers bulge at the seams with an estimated five hundred billion dollars. The radio, the television, the mails, and the meetings are loud and unashamed in their wanton appeals for more and more money for this work and that, for this orphanage and that, for this missionary and that until all who listen should surely know that modern religion is empowered by the financial system of this evil world and not by the Spirit of God.

Against the black and forbidding cloud of darkness that covers the earth and the gross darkness that covers the people it is my purpose in this article to show that God has reserved to Himself in our day a people who is completely different, a people who is wholly His. He has a people who dwells in the light which Christ Himself is, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, sanctified by His Spirit, obedient to their heavenly Father, and sprinkled with the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Unto them He calls, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise my love, my fair one, and come away." **S. of 8.2:10-13.**

May the Spirit of the living God lay His finger of inspiration upon all that is true, enlightening the eyes of our understanding, giving us abundantly of the wisdom of God that we may be able to discern and easily differentiate between that virgin church without spot or wrinkle, which Jesus Christ is preparing for Himself, and that bawdy harlot system, full of names of blasphemy, who which her multiplied sects and denominations now proudly boasts, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." **Rev. 18:7.** One would certainly think that God's people would readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not always the case. Would God that the eyes of all men could now see the hidden mystery of Christ and the true church! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery, this pearl of great price, has nothing in common with that tradition-ridden system which men in all walks of life believe to be the church. So thoroughly do they believe this vast system of denominations to be the church that they willingly follow it all their lives, giving their time, their talent, and their abundance of wealth to the upbuilding of that which, being increased in goods and having need of nothing, has made herself drunk with the blood of the saints and thrust Christ Himself outside her doors.

Tradition is an exceedingly powerful force. Tradition in my opinion is neither wholly good nor wholly evil. Whately said, "Tradition, as held by the Romanists, is subordinate to scripture and dependent on it as some parasite plants are dependent on the tree that supports them. The former cling to the latter and rest upon it; then gradually overspread it with their own foliage till by little and little they weaken and then smother it." This is true, but it need not be said only of Romanists. It is true of every religious denomination in the world of whatsoever sort or brand it be down through all ages unto the present time. This I declare to be true without any exception to the rule. The same Whately said, "To follow imperfect tradition in order to avoid erring in our own judgment is but to exchange one danger for another." "I am well satisfied," said Thomas Arnold, "that, if you let in one little finger of tradition, you will have the whole monster, horns, tail and all."

The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:47. The English word church, as I think the reader knows, has come from the Greek word ekklesia (ecclesia). Ek - means out; kaleo means call. Ekklesia therefore means the out-called or the called out. The English word church, therefore, means the called out. It is concerning this true church, the sacred mystery of God that I wish now by the help of the Spirit to write.

In the preceding paragraph we quoted the words of Whately concerning the power of tradition to smother and destroy the truth, and I must state with the greatest possible clarity that nowhere in all the world has tradition held more deadly sway than in the church system. In the quotation written above Mr. Whately makes this significant comparison: Tradition ... is dependent upon scripture ... as some parasite plants (are dependent) on

the tree that supports them. The former (the parasite) clings to the latter (the tree) and rests upon it, then gradually overspreads it with its own foliage till by little and little they weaken and smother it." I once stood admiring a great oak tree with stalwart trunk and spreading branches; but this oak tree was different from the other trees in the forest, for in spite of its great size and beauty it was completely dead. Its life had been smothered out by an ivy that had grown up from the ground, encircling the tree and the branches as a boa constrictor encircles and crushes its prey, until it had smothered the giant oak and spread its own foliage in its place. That is what tradition has done to the church. The foliage of tradition has spread itself over the church until the true is lost in the untrue, the real in the unreal.

At the beginning of the dispensation of grace the world was visited by events so momentous in their power and glory that all things were changed from that time onward. In the eternal realm before the ages were formed, and ages before man first saw the light of earth's day, the almighty Lord set in motion His omniscient and immutable purpose for the ages, which were to follow. As a year is filled with days and a day is filled with hours, so eternity is filled with ages and ages with dispensations. Let it be thoroughly known and devoutly believed that our all-wise heavenly Father planned the events of each successive day from the very first age unto the ages of ages far beyond the comprehension of man.

The eternal purpose of Him who purposed all things after the counsel of His own will is being worked out one step at a time in each succeeding age-day in like manner as people who read these lines have often planned in advance the work for each successive day of the week. Is it not so that many of the wives and business men now reading these lines have plans in mind for today and tomorrow and perhaps for each day of the week?

Whether consciously or unconsciously we all plan ahead, daily and even hourly working toward some human goal. Ask any little boy on the street what he wants to be when he grows up to be a man and in nine cases out of ten he will give you an answer. His answer may be but a notion and naught but childish imagination, yet the fact that some purpose is in his little head shows that he is the offspring of that wise heavenly Father whose almighty power worketh all things according to the counsel of His will so that we should be to the praise of His glory who first fixed our hopes in Him. If you remove purpose aionian and eternal from your understanding, then your sheltered harbors become whirlpools and all your mighty rocks become misty clouds. Your eternal treasure house of hope is left full of gaping holes where thieves break through and steal, and you yourself are left as hopeless as a crow in the ocean or a pelican in the wilderness. Dare we know that a little bird would plan a nest to rear her young and that a puny man would spend one-third of his life schooling himself for a work he purposes to do and still imagine the infinite, the all-wise, the almighty and immutable could be purposeless? I trow not, for whatsoever you see of purpose in God's creation, whether birds or beasts or men, that purpose is there because they are creatures of Him who purposed all things according to the counsel of His will.

There is nothing that opens the wellsprings of love, of faith and understanding, in the human heart like the knowledge of His purpose. What infinite joy, what satisfaction and assurance soothes each troubled soul when for the first time in our lives our all-wise heavenly Father is seen to be a God of purpose, knowing the end from the beginning because He planned the beginning and planned the end! He created all things and made all things and brought all things into being that His glorious purpose might be fulfilled. It was this triumphant knowledge that filled the heart of the apostle Paul when he wrote these immortal words to the ecclesia at Rome: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" **Rom. 8:28-31.**

You will probably ask me the question, "Did God plan the fall of man?" I answer with assurance, "Most certainly He did." You may ask again, "Why would God plan a thing like that?" The answer is very simple. It is this: He had a purpose in the fall of man, a purpose lost to our sight because tradition has blinded our eyes, but that purpose was so far-reaching and glorious that it is the very foundation of a perfect universe to be unveiled when the plan of God is complete. Hear now what the Spirit of God says concerning this tremendous truth. Paul, writing to the Romans, drew aside the veil to give mankind a clearer view into the mysteries that lay

hidden in God's mind from the foundation of the ages. This is what he clearly stated: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Now take particular notice of the inspired words that follow. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18-21.**

A Chinese proverb says, "Never pass beautiful scenery in a hurry." Let us apply this principle to these verses, for here lies one of the most beautiful scenes in all the Bible. God has a purpose in suffering and suffering came by the fall; and, when the purpose is revealed, all the dreadful suffering of all the ages, which I admit is beyond the power of description, will be unworthy of mention compared to the glory that has been heaped upon us as a direct result of it. There is a purpose in suffering, in pain, in sickness, in bereavement, in heartache, disappointment, separation and betrayal, and these all came as a direct result of the fall, which is our subjection to vanity. Name any suffering you wish; then lift up your eyes to God with love and trust and He will tell you that your suffering is for a magnificent purpose that only He at present understands. He will show you that suffering is God's fire that melts the rock, releasing the precious gold that will form a priceless vessel in the Father's house, which is in truth the body of Christ and which in truth you are. "Why did God allow this tribulation, this pain, this calamity?" you ask. Have faith to wait and see, after He has tried you, you shall be as gold. We have a high priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Beautiful, isn't it? But have you not read that this same high priest that had been through the grinding mill and the burning fire, and every priest in His kingdom of priests, every vessel in His holy, living temple which we are, will be found to be a precious stone because it is a tried stone, disallowed of men but chosen o/God? 1 Pet. 1:7.

"Why can't I be like other people, Lord," so oft I cry;
"I see the careless multitude go laughing, passing by.
Why must I bear this burden till it seems that I must die?"
Then the answer comes, "Have I not chosen you?"

I cried, "O Lord, why am I made a laughing stock to foes?
"Why can't I lightly turn aside from other people's woes?
"Why is it that from year to year I bear the worldly blows?
Then the answer comes, "Have I not chosen you?"

And some day, when I'm crowned within that home beyond the sky,
I'll ask, "Why am I honored thus?" while countless ages fly;
He'll smile and answer sweetly with the love-light in His eye,
"My child, it is because I've chosen you."
Herbert Buffum.

Thus it was that at the beginning of the dispensation of grace the Lord began that special phase of His aionian purpose, the calling out of a people who would be in the image of Jesus Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, the ecclesia of God. Never did He call them to become members of one of man's denominations. He called them to be members of Himself, of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Therefore it is written, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things in common... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." **Acts 2:42-47.**

It is my earnest prayer to God that our eyes may be enlightened and our understanding made keen by the Spirit of God so that we may grasp the truth that, when the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved, He was forming and adding to that true ecclesia, that called out company, which was to form the body of Christ. This is the true and only church, the great mystery of this age of grace. There was then none other

church but this. There is today no other church than this. Man has organized his multiplied imitations of God's church, giving each group some special name to add to the ever increasing confusion of saint and sinner alike, but God recognizes none of them as His. He wraps the whole mass of confusion into one great bundle and describes this abominable mystery of man's making as a woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast, full of names, denominational names, sectarian names, which the Spirit declares to be names of blasphemy. This confused harlot, the mother of many daughters, sits arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her forehead is a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Rev. 17:5.

This is the subtle foliage of church tradition, which Satan has spread to bury and smother the true ecclesia, but the Lord recognizes none of it as His. He is still admiring that spotless virgin church which has been rising in the heavenly realm throughout the centuries and which He has kept separate and holy unto Himself, as pure today as in the beginning. In the very beginning the Lord added to the true church daily such as should be saved, and I have confidence to believe that every day since then during all these long centuries of time He has been adding daily and hourly to that same mysterious church such as should be saved.

The book of Romans is the center and heart of all the writings of Paul, and, if I may draw the likeness, all his other epistles are like expository sermons, enlarging on the great truths laid down for our learning in that remarkable epistle. When Paul, therefore, wrote to the church at Ephesus, he enlarged greatly on that mystery, the true and only church, the body of Jesus Christ, which is being prepared by God to govern the world in the kingdom age to come, to restore all things and make them one in Christ in the dispensation of the fullness of times, and then to govern the universe in the ages to follow. This one true church, which He has been forming through the centuries, is no after-thought in the mind of God. Surely even mortal man of finite understanding can comprehend that an ecclesia ordained to such universal works of restoration and government in the ages to come must of necessity be the object of special care and preparation in the hands of an all-wise Father.

In the book of Ephesians the burden of Paul's message was to show clearly how important the true church is in the plan of God. Therefore, after briefly stating his own calling as an apostle in verse one, praying that the grace and peace of God would rest upon them in verse two, and giving thanks to God in verse three for the abundant spiritual blessing in these heavenly realms where we dwell, he then begins a sermon concerning the high and holy calling of the true church, a disclosure so great that no man could believe or understand it except the Spirit of wisdom and revelation from on high were his teacher and instructor.

In verse four the importance of the calling of the true church is greatly emphasized by the remarkable truth stated in these words: "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." I exhort all to read those lines of inspiration with diligence and prayer because the truth written therein will give you an entirely different outlook concerning all things. You will see yourself as God saw you in His plan. You will see the wonderful love and wisdom of God, and grasp, at least in part, the vast importance of your calling in Him. You, blood-washed saints of God, are the true ecclesia, the called of God. Furthermore, I am sure that, by meditating in the Spirit upon these words, you will discern the difference between that true mystery which is the ecclesia of God and that other mystery, the false hodge-podge, headless confusion of human denominations and organizations, which is Mystery Babylon the great. And, seeing the difference by the Spirit, may God grant you grace to wholeheartedly "come out of her" and come unto Him. "Come unto Me," saith Christ, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

So important to the plan of God is this mysterious ecclesia, the true church, His body, that He chose each member of it before the world was founded or ever begun. Before the stars were rolled out in their orbits or the sun and moon took their watch in the heavens, the all-wise Father brought forth the plan of the ages, rejoicing the hearts of the sons of God till the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. He chose the members of His ecclesia before the foundation of the world and ordained that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Now consider of how great importance the purpose of God for His church must be that He with infinite care and unerring foresight would plan in minute detail every purpose concerning it long before the worlds were formed or the ages begun. Consider further how great the plan must be that He would foreknow, choose, predestinate, and call each and every man and woman who in the will of God would carry into fruitfulness the intrinsic details of His immutable purpose. Would God that I had the speech of angels and wisdom that could unfold to each spiritual mind an understanding of the infinite glory that God is preparing for all His creation and for His own glory and infinite joy! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things God hath prepared for them that love Him, but He does reveal them by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Before the worlds began and before the ages were formed, yea, before Adam walked in His beautiful Eden, our all-wise heavenly Father foresaw not only the day when there would be a garden of Eden in the earth, but a day when the earth itself would be a garden of Eden in our universe, and a greater day when our universe would be a garden of Eden in the great sidereal realms beyond, and yet a day still further on when all things everywhere would be restored and inhabited and governed by the hosts of the redeemed. In that day all creation shall walk and work, increase and prosper. There is no need of the sun to shine by day or a moon by night, for the Lord God giveth them light. They shall walk in the light, which He is, and He shall be their dwelling place. God Himself shall be their Father and they shall be His sons.

My puny mind, even when touched by the finger of inspiration, is completely incapable of describing the glory, which God has prepared for those who love Him. That eternal realm will not be a heaven after the pattern of human tradition, which in visages a sort of static heaven with nothing to do but play harps and shout hallelujah, but a realm of restful labor as world after world and universe after universe is brought into the sweet harmony of the everlasting Father. Is not this what Paul is saying when momentarily he is swept beyond the bounds of our present heavenly calling to cry aloud with the trumpet voice of inspiration that **"in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him?" Eph. 1:10.** Can we heap blame upon the head of this faithful apostle and accuse him of digressing from his subject when his heart was filled to overflowing with the unspeakable knowledge that the restoration of the entire universe was in fact God's basic reason for the calling of this mysterious and glorious ecclesia? And does not the abounding revelation and the magnificent hope he sets forth of things to come make the calling of this elect ecclesia an object of infinite reason and a wealth of divine understanding? Is it not wisdom, in the light of such universal restoration and peace, that God should call, predestinate, and choose before the foundation of time or ages those harbingers of His message of restoration, those workers in His vineyard of peace, those sons of His high calling? Need I say that this is the wisdom of the Infinite, the knowledge of the Omniscient, the power of the Almighty, the truth of the Faithful, and the hope that maketh not ashamed?

When for a brief moment my eyes descend from the glory of these celestial hills, I am filled with a sadness that is unspeakable, for there on the plains of human understanding I see a multitude of tradition-bound men, many thousands of them saved, indeed, but bound by the chains of tradition to human systems. They struggle to get men saved before it is eternally too late, never understanding the truth that no man comes too late, never understanding the truth that no man comes except the Father draw him, John 6:44, and failing to comprehend the words divine, **"All that the Father hath given Me will come to Me." John 6:37.** They do not realize the depth of the meaning of Paul's words, **"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. 15:22-26.** They may frantically try every method they wish, but they will not hasten God's plan or His purpose. Those who are to come in during this age will come in as God calls them. Those who are to come in the kingdom age will come in as God calls them. Those who are to come in the fullness of times will come as God calls them. Every man will partake of the resurrection in his own order. As young men are called to arms by groups and classes in times of war, so God has decreed that every man in his own order will answer the call and be made alive.

Let the saints of God abandon the smothering theories of tradition. Let them break the chains placed upon them by a harlot church system, a system that owns neither husband nor head. Let them cast off the shackles that bind them as galley slaves to the doomed and sinking ship which mankind in ignorance calls the church.

Why should you give your substance to the harlot woman who is of the earth earthy? The Spirit of God is calling you to lift up your eyes to the heavenly hills to behold the pure virgin who sits in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, both in this age and that which is to come. Darkness now covers the earth, but shame on us that gross darkness covers the people — the people of God, not the people of the world! Why should the people who once walked in the light of the Lord now sit in gross darkness? Because they have embraced the tradition of the harlot! They have been wedded to a system and have not sought to become one with that heavenly Christ, the head of the true ecclesia whose dwelling is in heavenly places.

Do I not speak the truth when I say that times without number evangelists who serve in the bondage and tradition of the church system, after seeing many men repent of their sins, seek the cleansing of His blood, and rejoice in a new found joy, have straightway said to these new converts, "Go now and join the church of your choice." Forthwith men and women, who on Sunday rejoiced together in the love of Christ, found themselves on Monday divided and scattered by the demon of denominationalism, ready to tear each other's eyes over doctrines and creeds of human origin. Why did not these men who call themselves evangelists tell their converts that the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit had already made them heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ? Why did they not teach them that in one Spirit they were all baptized into one body, even the mystical body of Jesus Christ, who is the Lord and head of us all? The moment He cleansed us in His blood and placed His regenerating Spirit within us, then and there we became members of the only true church in the whole universe, but these tradition-bound men turned our innocent eyes away from the church of the firstborn, whose names are in heaven, and pointed us to the mother of harlots and her many daughters, telling us to embrace whichever one we chose. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," saith God almighty, "but he that is joined to an harlot is one flesh." **1 Cor. 6:15-17**. Why, oh why, dear child of God, can you not see the heavenly? Even because your eyes have been directed to the earthly. Why can you not see the heavenly virgin? Because those who ministered to you have exalted the harlot, which is of the earth earthy.

Many thousands of well-meaning people are desperately trying to unite in one all these harlot systems. They hope that by so doing they can present a united front to the world. They want Catholic and Protestant to hold dialogue and meetings together to iron out their differences, vainly imagining that by such methods they are bringing to pass the prayer of Jesus, "That they all may be one." Are we so blind that we do not see that, when the mother of harlots is united with her harlot daughters to form one world-wide system, they will still be harlots and not the true church, though they now abide in one house? The understanding needs but little enlightening to perceive that such a union as this can never possibly become the virgin church or the mystical body of the Son of God. Oh, what gross darkness covers the people that they could ever imagine that such a thing could be acceptable to God, or that they who gather in the harlot's house could ever be the children of the living God! The fearful doom of this abominable system is clearly stated in Rev. 17:1-18. Let us turn with repentance from all these vanities. Jesus Christ is the head of the true church. Make Christ and Christ alone your head that you may be one with that which is true. Turn in repentance from these earthly systems. Their tradition is as a thick smoke to blind and darken the eyes, ever hiding from our understanding the glorious fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He reconciled us and cleansed us in His blood and made us His own. He brought us peace through the blood of His cross, we who were once enemies of God by wicked works, and, having cleansed us by His blood, He put His Spirit within us. We became members of His body that He might present us holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight, if we continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which we have heard and which was preached to every creature under heaven. But, sadly, many are moved away from such wonderful hope in Christ to waste their lives in the service of earthly systems. They are coaxed away from their fidelity to Christ to join the harlot in her perfumed bed of adultery, so aptly described by the scene of the young man's encounter with the adulteress in Proverbs, chapter seven.

The true and only church is a special company, elect of God before the foundation of the world. The church is a people who have been called by God to be especially His. They have been called out of the world and all the world's crude systems and they have been called unto Christ. Our hearts should greatly rejoice in the words of wisdom that flowed from the inspired mind of Paul when, writing to the church in his day, he exhorted, "Be ye followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us

an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." **Eph. 5:1,2.** When the Spirit of God called us out, He called us to be especially His. He intended that right there and then we would become followers of Him and Him alone. He never intended us to become followers of men or of sects or of denominations, but followers of Him. He fully intended that we should walk with God and learn of Him. He desired that we should be led of His Spirit and, being thus led, should grow up into full sonship in Him. He desired to lead and feed us as a shepherd that we might grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, but, instead of following Him and making Him our Lord and head, we were instructed in the doctrines and traditions of men.

We made the precious things of God a raging battle ground, a never ending doctrinal war. As a result we became stunted in our spiritual growth, weak and powerless in our spiritual lives. The weaker we grew the more involved we became, and the more involved in tradition we became the less power and spiritual life we had. What a hateful deception it really is! Yet, because it is dearly loved by the carnal mind, men and women cling to this false system as though their lives depended on it.

For decades we fervently sang, "Dare to be a Daniel; dare to stand alone," but it seems few people have ever learned that our relationship is with Christ and without Him we can do nothing at all. We would do well to consider Abraham, who walked before God and was perfect. He depended on no religious system to keep him straight. He leaned on no man to ensure his strength, but his strength and faith were made perfect because he knew Him whom he believed. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him; but I trow he would not have been walking with God at all had he been a member in good standing with some sect or denomination of his day. What does it mean to you, my brother, to hear the words, "Enoch walked with God"? What does it mean to you to hear that Christ was faithful in all His house, (which house are we if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end)? How greatly Paul adds to our courage and faith in Christ when he manifests the very secret of his life in these words: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." **2 Tim. 1:12.** Well did this saint of God know that the secret of victory, of spiritual growth and understanding, was in knowing Him. The precious text does not say, "I know in whom I have believed," but with tremendous force and emphasis it says, "I know whom I have believed," and therein lies a great difference. It is one thing to believe in Christ as the sectarians do. The devils believe also and even tremble. Jas. 2:19. It is something entirely different to believe Him. Paul was not believing in some doctrine. He was believing Christ, and that is what I, too, am doing. Would God thousands more would cast off the yoke of slavish dependence upon that false church system to lay hold of the promise for ourselves, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

After Paul explained the infinite care and love of God in that He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4), he then tells us that we were predestinated to be sons of God. Adoption means the proclamation of a son. It is very clear that our adoption (sonship), our redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of our sins are all wonderful manifestations of the grace of God. God is the God of all grace. He is full of grace and truth. Grace is unmerited favor. Grace is an attribute of God. It is part of Him. He can never be separated from grace nor grace from Him. Just as certain as our God is holy, omniscient, and almighty, so certain it is that grace is His inherent nature. If God could die, grace could die also; but, as God is eternal, so also is His grace eternal. Full well did Paul speak of the eternal aspects of His grace when he wrote, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The great work of the true church, which is to be fully accomplished in the ages to come is not the theme of our message now, but I know of nothing that will awaken our understanding or inspire us to make our calling and election sure like a simple knowledge of God's purpose for the true ecclesia in the ages which are yet to come. With this in mind we quote the mighty words of Eph. 1:7-10 that all men may hear the declaration of God almighty Himself concerning His work of restoration in the ages to come and what part the true, faithful, and holy ecclesia will have in that great purpose.

"It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the tunes are ripe for it - the purpose, which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yea, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him." **Eph. 1:7-10** (Weymouth Original).

See now with what infinite care the Lord God, our Father, is preparing His ecclesia for His ministry in the ages to come. They are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. They were sanctified by the Holy Spirit and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. All this and much more is contained in Peter's greeting to the strangers scattered over the world when he opened his letter with these words: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied."

1 Pet. 1:2. What a wealth of divine information is contained in these few words of inspiration! What a pity it is that we have become so familiar with them that we rhyme them off without even a serious thought as to the depth of their meaning!

Oh, that God's people would awaken to their high and holy calling and to a reverent understanding of the place given them in Christ before the world began. Oh, that the eyes of their understanding could be enlightened to see the hope of the ages to come - a hope hidden in the heart of God from the foundation of the world, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, but is now being revealed to those who walk in harmony with Him, turning aside from that tradition-ridden system that deadens the hearts and befuddles the minds of men and hides from them the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Must it be so that those who are elect according to God's foreknowledge can see no more to their high calling in Christ than the excitement of a healing meeting? Can we see not more in the church than a hodge-podge of religious denominations? Is there no more to unity than that false, counterfeit thing called ecumenism, which vainly imagines that dialogue between the mother of harlots and her daughters is the coming together of the body of Christ? Do you fancy that the Pope of Rome, who sends his emissaries to Warsaw, Belgrade, and Moscow to hold dialogue with the leaders of Communism, and who at the same time sends his bishops and priests to hold dialogue with Pentecostal people, has any more sincerity toward one than the other? Oh, slow of heart to understand, can you never discern that "he who sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," is the antichrist? Turn from these false ideas of church unity and lift your eyes to the hills of God that by revelation you may behold the hidden mystery of the true church, the ecclesia of God that even now is seated with Him in heavenly places as the Lord predestinated from the foundation of the world.

Those precious elect ones whom God has chosen in Christ He has sanctified by His Spirit. Sanctification is too great a truth to more than mention here, but sanctification is the work of setting aside holy things for holy uses. It is the Holy Spirit who changes our lives. It is the Spirit who separates us from the world and who separates the world from us. It is the Spirit who reveals our carnal nature. It is the Spirit also who reveals that God placed our carnal nature in Christ, together with ourselves in entirety, and that we were crucified with Him when He was crucified. It was this that Paul declared when he said, "I am crucified with Christ." **Gal. 2:20.** And again: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." **Gal. 6:14.**

The burden of the prayer of Jesus Christ as recorded in John, chapter 17, is not a prayer for the world (verse 9), but a prayer for the separation and sanctification of all those whom God had given to Him. "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled ... I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." **John 17:9-17.**

Friendship with the world is enmity with God. Jas. 4:4. Those who imagine themselves free to partake of the world live in a lie. Sanctification first makes holy, then separates unto God all holy things. It has neither part nor lot with worldliness. It holds nothing in common with that mixture of good and evil found in ecumenism and it has no place of agreement with the present wretched trend of thought that makes Him who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens nothing more than a long-haired mendicant who wandered about like a hippy, refusing to work or pay taxes and forever clashing with the establishment. These

things Jesus did not do, and it is nothing but blasphemy against God's Son to pretend that He did. All such people may have a Jesus, but it is another Jesus. They may have a spirit, but it is another spirit. And they may have a gospel, but it is another gospel. 2 Cor. 11:4. There is no place for worldliness, for filth or corruption, in the true ecclesia; and I shall also add that in the true ecclesia none but the sanctified dwell or have a part. "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world," prayed Jesus, "but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

The elect of God, the true church, is a people sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 1:2. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" **Heb. 9:13-14.** "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." **1 John 1:7.** His blood speaketh better things than that of Abel. Heb. 12:24. We are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." **Rom. 3:24-26.**

It is the Spirit of God that sanctifies. It is the blood of Christ that cleanses from sin. If you will consider the above passage with care and meditation, you will see by the statement, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past," that it was God Himself who had perfect faith in the blood of His Son. God - not man - had perfect faith that all the sins of the world would be remitted by Christ's righteousness. You will see also that God offered the blood of His Son, not to propitiate and appease Himself, but to propitiate and appease mankind. God does not need to be appeased; He is appeased. God does not need to be reconciled; He has always been reconciled. Nowhere in all scripture is it intimated that God must be reconciled or appeased. Instead, it is written, "We pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." I can neither describe nor portray the faith God has in the precious blood of His Son to fully pardon the sins of mankind and reconcile man to God. The blood of Abel could do naught but cry from the ground for vengeance because its shedding brought death; but the blood of Jesus Christ proclaims peace to all because its shedding was for the life of the world.

We are living in the end of this age. This hour finds the world and all religion immersed in the most appalling confusion and disorder ever known. The confused ideas and crude notions put forth and propagated as truth would certainly make a man of God blush for shame. Those who have read my article, Belshazzar's Feast, will be more alert to see the devilish way in which the things of God are being desecrated and dragged into the realm of the worldly, the bawdy, and the unclean. Even the wonderful Christ Himself, holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners and higher than the heavens, is pictured as an unwashed hippy who begged and bummed and slept in the hedge, continually clashing head on with the establishment. This the meek and lowly Jesus did not do, but taught men to render unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's and to God the things which were God's. He paid His taxes, healed men and fed them from His Father's store, and gave His life a ransom for all.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in these solemn words: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." **2 Cor. 11:3-4.** I am convinced that in these last days many thousands of well meaning but deluded people are receiving, not the Christ of God, not the Spirit of God, not the gospel of God, but another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel. Let us turn our eyes to Him lest we, as Eve, be beguiled by this devilish mixture of good and evil.

The abounding truth concerning the true church, the ecclesia of God, would fill more volumes than man could write. Therefore I shall conclude this chapter with these statements of truth: The church of the living God is a people called out, a people chosen in Christ before the ages began. They are washed in the blood of Christ. They are sanctified, set apart, and made holy by the Holy Spirit. They are begotten unto a living hope. They are born anew by the Spirit. They are partakers of the resurrection. They are a people kept by the power of God. They are a people in preparation for manifestation and to be revealed as God's sons to a waiting,

groaning creation. In times past they were not a people; but now they are the people of God. In times past they had not obtained mercy; but now they have obtained mercy. They have partaken abundantly of the grace of God. They are children of God and members of His family. God has ordained that in the ages to come they will be used to manifest the immutable aspects of His grace and wisdom to the entire universe. Eph. 2:7. Their calling is high and holy, and they will reign with Christ until all things in heaven and earth have bowed the knee to confess that He is Lord of all.

"You are therefore no longer mere foreigners or persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are members of His family. You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22.** Weymouth.

This is the true ecclesia of God. It is farther removed from that many headed monstrosity of man's building than day is removed from night, east is removed from west, or Christ is removed from Belial. The ecclesia, the true church of God, though still a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth, sitteth together with Christ in heavenly places, far above all power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come.

"Until the day break and the shadows flee away I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." **S. of S. 4:6-7.**

Arise, my love, and come away.

CHAPTER TWO THE BODY OF CHRIST OR ONE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN

The human body has nine hundred muscles, one thousand miles of blood vessels, three hundred main arteries, one million five hundred thousand sweat glands, and the lungs are composed of seven million seven hundred thousand cells. At seventy years of age the heart has lifted by its throbs five hundred thousand tons of blood. The nervous system has three trillion nerve cells. The blood has thirty million white corpuscles and one hundred trillion red ones. Each minute in every man's body some one hundred and fifty million radio active carbon atoms go pop releasing a total energy of twenty-one billion electron volts. The heart beats about seventy times a minute, forty-two hundred times an hour, one hundred thousand times a day, thirty-seven million times a year, and two billion times in sixty-five years. To make a machine resembling the human brain would take a space the size of Rockefeller Center. It would take three lifetimes to wire it, one third of the electric energy of New York City to drive it, and the Hudson River to cool it. All the multiplied marvels of the human body God has formed of the dust of the earth. Each new day His wisdom brings tens of thousands of such wonderful organisms into His world, and ere the close of day with a sort of sacred wastefulness from His creative store He lets as many others fall back into the dust from whence they came.

But God is forming another body of which the marvels of the human body are but a feeble type, a body not made with hands nor yet of dust and clay, but eternal in the heavenlies. He does not raise it up in months nor let it fall back into the dust of the earth at the close of day. With divine inspiration the apostle Paul for our edification wrote the words of truth that show God's intention throughout the dispensation of grace to bring the body of Christ to the complete and full stature of His Son. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by (in) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." **1 Cor. 12:12-14.**

What body does Paul refer to here? It is Christ's mystical body, the true church. And now in simple humility we ask, "What is Christ's body?" The overwhelming truth that should well nigh cause us to tremble is simply this: The body of Christ is the fullness of Christ. Is not this the sublime and solemnizing revelation of Paul's words quoted above? "As the body is one and has many members — so also is Christ." And when Paul puts forth the words of **1 Cor. 12:27**, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," is he not showing exactly who these members of Christ really are? Ah, yes, indeed He is. This body of Christ, of which the preachers are

forever speaking, but about which they know so little, is in truth the fullness of Christ. The spiritual body of Christ is the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" of which the apostle wrote in **2 Cor. 5:1**. It is the house of which Jesus spoke when He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." **John 14:2,3**.

Before we further develop the truth concerning the body of Christ, we must turn aside for a moment that we may learn how great is our need for divine revelation to comprehend such truth. Let every man who reads forever understand that the things of the Spirit of God are only spiritually discerned. They can never, never, never be understood, comprehended, grasped, or perceived until the Holy Spirit of God shines the light of their truth into the heart, bringing the knowledge of the glory of God from the very presence of Jesus Christ, until it may be truthfully said that "that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them." **Rom. 1:19**.

We are living in a day of much learning and the pitiful thing about it is that men and women mistakenly imagine that the letters of degree that follow their names are a certain evidence of their knowledge of the things of God. It is for this very reason that so many preachers are anxious to flash the title Doctor before their names. Whether the title belongs to them or not is of no importance to me, but let it be thoroughly known by every man who reads these lines and let this truth be burned indelibly into every heart that none of these things commends us in any degree to God. These titles are no evidence of divine commendation nor are they any evidence whatsoever of spiritual understanding. Indeed, if my own observation is correct, I am led to believe they are evidence of the very opposite. The wisest men of earth, whether they be Einsteins, Edisons, or Socrates, though words of wisdom crown their heads and knowledge lies on every hand, fall a thousand fathoms short of the simplest spiritual understanding because their minds are hermetically sealed in this natural realm, and in that realm of natural understanding they must forever remain until God is pleased by His grace to reveal the eternal things to them.

Many centuries ago, when the people of Israel were offering their gifts and sacrifices according to the command of God, there lived a king upon the throne in Jerusalem, the sweet singer of Israel, a man after God's own heart, the psalmist who has enlightened millions with his songs of revelation. One day as the glory of God filled his being, he took his harp and sang these words: "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O Lord my God, are the wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: They cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: Burnt offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required." **Psa. 40:4-6**. Mine ears hast Thou opened! Mine ears hast Thou opened! Whatever is he saying? Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire! Mine ears hast Thou opened! Had not God commanded sacrifice and offering? Yes, indeed, He had. But, while the multitude went on endlessly in a tradition that had become completely meaningless to them, David was listening to the voice of God, for God had opened His ears to hear the revelation of dispensations yet unborn. It was not the ears of his head that had been opened, but the ears of his heart, the inner ear of his spirit that alone can hear the voice of God.

In this fantastic age of invention man has contrived remarkable instruments to pick up and mature sounds and pictures and even colors out of the silent atmosphere. How my heart thrilled one morning as I listened to the giant radio telescope from Jodrell Bank, England, broadcasting sounds from outer space made by planets before the dawn of time. Wonderful beyond description as these instruments of science are, there is only one instrument that can ever hear the voice of God and that is the ear of the spirit within. There is only one eye that can see God. It is the eye of the spirit. And the only intelligence that can know God is the waiting, longing spirit unto whom God reveals Himself.

The natural man is like Dr. Saul of Tarsus of whom Festus said, "Much learning doth make thee mad," for this Saul, learned in all the tradition of the law, of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, marched with a band of armed men to Damascus to take captive the followers of Christ and bring them bound in chains to Jerusalem to be tormented and put to death for their belief in Christ. We will surely say that a man of such great learning should have known better than to indulge in such persecution as this. Could this man of letters not see that Jesus

Christ was indeed the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures? Could he not understand that the shedding of the blood of Christ was the anti-type of every Old Testament blood sacrifice? Could he not see that Jesus was the seed of Abraham, and the child that was born of a virgin of whom Isaiah prophesied? Isa. 7:14. But this, my friend, is the darkness of the natural mind of which Saul, being born again, wrote, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14**. So it was that in the blindness of his heart and the darkness of his understanding he rode in wrath and bitterness to destroy the Christians at Damascus and erase the name of Christ forever from their midst. But, as he rode, the thing he least expected happened. The blazing light of revelation shone into his spirit, a light so exceedingly bright that even the light of the sun was as the dimness of a candle. The light that had enlightened David now illuminated Saul. Mine ears hast Thou opened. He heard the voice of Christ speaking to his heart, to his spirit, and to his mind. "Who art Thou, Lord," he cried; and the voice responded, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Oh, what a difference, what a change, what a transformation is made by revelation from above! How quickly we begin to abandon our old ideas! How willingly we seize the eraser to erase from our names the letters of human approbation in which we vainly glory as with tearful joy we repeat, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!" Can you not hear this Saul of Tarsus, this man who was so thoroughly transformed that even his name was changed, as he testifies to the Galatians, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." **Gal. 1:16**. What indeed could flesh and blood with all its human learning add to him? Nothing! Nothing! Much less than nothing! It is written, "As heaven is higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Do not seek for revelation. Seek only the face of Christ. If you seek revelation, your mind may be filled with the grotesque doctrines that possess so many of God's children in this hour. I am amazed and saddened by the jejune notions published and proclaimed as revelation, which are not revelations at all, but the vain imaginations of distorted and twisted carnal minds that have a craze for publicity and a hankering for the spectacular. Seek revelation and you will get ideas galore, many of them inspired by Satan. Seek Christ and you will see the glory of God in His blessed face.

In the days intervening this hour and the magnificent glory of His kingdom it is impossible to over-estimate the value of our personal relationship to Him. While thousands are seeking experiences, you should seek Christ. While other men seek for spectacular gifts, you must seek the giver of every good and perfect gift. While others try desperately to practice gifts they do not really possess, you must abide in Him, for the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine. While carnal Christians try to show love, yea, love that they do not have, let the Christ who dwells within you manifest forth the love that comes from God only. And, while many talk of sonship, hoping by their great works to manifest themselves as sons of God, you walk in the Spirit, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.

How regrettable it is that so many who speak of sonship do not have the Spirit of His Son who cries, "Abba, Father"! How sad that so many preach a coming kingdom who do not possess the spirit of the kingdom nor allow the king to reign in their hearts! Ah, my friend, seek His blessed face. Come into vital communion with Him. Walk in Him. Abide in Him. Draw your wisdom from His mind dwelling in you and His voice in speaking through you. Identify yourself fully with the cross that you may say in truth, "I am crucified with Christ". Identify yourself with the resurrection that you may say in truth, "The life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." This kind of association with our Lord Jesus Christ causes Him to open His mind to us that we might know all truth and revelation that is necessary in these vital hours of preparation.

In revealing His truth, the Lord always seeks to take us from the finite to the infinite, from the small to the great, from the cradle to the throne. "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." As the earliest rays of dawn herald the coming of the fullness of day, so the babe that was born in the manger of Bethlehem heralds the coming of the fullness of Christ that finds its completeness at the end of this age when Jesus, the only begotten Son, is no longer the only begotten, but the first begotten of a vast family of brother sons who will fill the earth with God's glory in the kingdom of God that soon will encompass all

the earth. There was a time when my oldest brother was the only begotten son of my father, but after we three younger brothers were born, he was no more the only begotten, but the first begotten. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Every man who hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." **1 John 3:1,3.** What a revelation of truth that is!

I pray God, the Father of all wisdom and understanding, that the eyes of every saint may be enlightened by the Spirit to give them a vision of the true and mystical body of Christ. Then will they be able to discern the fallacious notions of carnal Christians who love to pretend that their little group, around which they have built a fence, is the ministering, functioning body of Christ. During the last twenty years the doctrine has gone out as never before, deceitfully propagating the error that the Babylon of confusion and error we see all about us is in truth the body of Christ. Your severest task will be to free yourself from all such binding traditions that you might see the truth of His body and what your place in Christ really is.

The Holy Spirit often uses simple methods to acquaint us with the deepest of eternal truths; and, if you can receive it, you will sometimes find that evil things have a sort of spiritual parallel. If, for instance, there is an antichrist, there must of necessity be a Christ, the first being the complete opposite of the latter. When God through the prophet Daniel undertook to display to the world the sinister fact concerning the ever present mystery of Babylon that was to rise and consume the whole earth in a confusion of politics, religions, nationalities, languages, sects, and denominations, He caused the king of Babylon himself to be confused by a terrible dream that disturbed his sleep and made him afraid. In the dream that so disquieted his mind he saw an enormous image, the image of a man. Never had such a man as this appeared before. His head was of gold, his breast and his arms were of silver, his belly and his thighs were of brass, his legs were of iron, and his feet, upon which the whole body depended, were the weakest conglomeration imaginable - iron and clay mingled together. Dan. 2:32-33.

When Daniel came in before the king to show the dream to him and to interpret it for him, he began his interpretation with these significant words: "Thou art this head of gold." **Dan. 2:38.** Then, continuing with the other parts of the image, he interpreted the silver shoulders and arms to represent an inferior kingdom that was to follow him, (Media-Persia), then a kingdom yet more inferior as brass that would bear rule over all the earth (Greece), and after that a fourth kingdom vastly degenerated in glory, but with the strength of iron (Rome). And I think we will not be wrong in saying that the fifth kingdom, represented by the feet and toes consisting of iron mingled with miry clay, is merely a degeneration of the fourth kingdom, the despotic, dictatorial iron rule of political Rome mixed up with the miry clay of modern democracy, and the despotic papal rule of religious Rome mingled and mixed with the miry clay of Protestant sects, groups, organizations, and denominations. Thus were all the varied aspects of the mysterious Babylon system portrayed by the image of a man. Do not fail to see that each and every part of that system in all its varied ramifications is but one system, one image, one man, one Babylon, whether it be the golden head, the silver shoulders, the brass belly, the iron legs, or the iron-clay feet. These are not five different systems, but five different aspects of one and the same system.

It should not surprise us to find that, all the while this great system of confusion is consuming the ages, the God of heaven is preparing Himself a body in the image of Christ for eternal dominion, the head of which is not Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, but Jesus Christ whom God ordained to be King of kings and Lord of lords. The members of His sacred body will not be the kings of Media-Persia, Greece, or Rome, but sons of God, begotten of God and perfected in the lowest parts of the earth, cleansed by His blood, partakers of His Spirit, baptized in one Spirit into that one body, even the body of Christ.

I am possessed with an almost unspeakable desire that you, my reader friend, should be torn away from the mass of tradition foisted upon you by Babylon's golden image, for only then will your eyes behold the beauty and simplicity of the body of Christ. Then will your eyes be opened to see that you and Jesus Christ are members in particular of one and the same Christ. If now you see Christ as one and yourself as someone entirely different, then you are undone indeed, and every word I can say and every teaching I can give concerning the body of Christ will be wasted upon you. May the revelation of the Almighty reveal to your spirit that just as Nebuchadnezzar, the golden head, and Julius Caesar, the iron legs, were integral parts of the same image of Babylon, so our Lord Jesus, the first begotten Son of God, the head of the whole body of sons,

together with you and me, the sons of God belonging to the feet company, are integral parts of the same body and fullness of Christ. When the Holy Spirit presented the image of Babylon to the world, He used the symbol of a man. It is not strange then that, when God would portray the image of the fullness of Christ, He would portray that many membered Christ as a huge man — a man so huge that he is described as a mountain, as we shall presently show, a body so huge that it includes in its composite self every man and every woman of this age who has come to sonship in Him. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And, if we are sons, then are we God's heirs and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, that every eye might see and every heart understand the significance of that oft repeated term, in Christ! "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." **Rom. 8:1.** "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." **1 Cor. 1:30.** "The dead in Christ shall rise first." **1 Thess. 4:16.** "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." **1 Cor. 5:17.** "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." I am not at all disposed to believe that sonship is the undisputed heritage of every Christian. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. Many believers sadly never mature beyond infancy and never partake of any salvation beyond that which Jude describes as the common salvation. Jude 3. Whether I am right or not, I have become convinced that to be in Christ is to be partaker of a very special experience of abiding in Him. "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him... If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." **John 14:20-21,23.** Those who have come into a unity and an identification with Christ such as this have much more than the common salvation spoken of by Jude. They have become partakers of that so great salvation spoken of by Paul. Heb. 2:3.

In the natural world nothing is accomplished by commanding a man to grow. No man by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature, but in the spirit it is the opposite. Men can grow in Him if they have the desire. Therefore it is written to all who long for spiritual maturity: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 3:18.** Every reader must be aware that of the many Christians with whom he is acquainted the vast majority are content to be partakers of the common salvation only. They are satisfied to be justified by faith and accept any crumb that may fall from the Master's table. If at last they arrive in heaven and not in hell, they are perfectly satisfied. An abundant entrance means nothing to them. But there are others who cannot live except they live and move and have their being in Him. They cannot abide except they abide in Him. They fear any decision that is not directed by His Spirit. The will of God is their meat and drink, and to love Him is better than any sacrifice or offering.

A number of years ago a very simple incident occurred in my life that was to add a great deal to my understanding of the fullness of Christ and the completeness of His body. It has helped to unfold the mystery of our place in Him. It was my lot one morning to fly from the city of Seattle, Washington, to the city of Victoria, British Columbia. As I remember it, the morning was rather unpleasant, for a complete cloud cover obscured all the sky so that no sun shone through to the earth below. The great plane with its human burden sped on its silvery wings up and up through the clouds until we suddenly burst into the glorious sunshine far above the sullen shadows of earth below. The clouds, now far down beneath us, had the appearance of a mighty ocean, a vast sea in the turmoil of a storm. It was impossible to see through them to the earth below and one could not possibly know whether he was over earth or ocean. It was at that moment I beheld a sight so indescribably beautiful that no scene in all my travels has ever surpassed it. Far to the west the mighty Olympic mountains like mystic towering giants were thrusting their magnificent snow-capped peaks through the rolling storm clouds until their mammoth heads stood two thousand feet or more out in the glory of celestial, radiant sunshine, far above the clouds, the rain, the sleet, and the snow. The beauty of that sight was almost beyond imagination and I think perhaps even in eternity I will not forget it. I am sure you know that those beautiful sunlit peaks, lifting their hoary heads into the heavenlies, were actually and in truth standing with their feet in the valley far, far below - so far below that they were out of sight, hidden, and obscured by the stormy clouds that hung like a mantle about their massive breasts. It is true beyond any possibility of denial that the mountain I saw in glory and heavenly sunshine far above the clouds was one and the same mountain that was standing with its giant feet far below in the lowly valleys of earth. If you, my friends in Christ, can see this picture, then you will see a vision of what the body of Christ really is. The Head white as snow, even now is in the

heavenlies at God's right hand far, far above the storms and strives of earth while we, the feet of that same mountain, even the mountain of the body of Christ, are standing in the valleys of earth inseparably joined to the Head in heaven. As the mountain above the cloud was the same mountain that stood on the ground, so Christ through His undivided body of sons is now declaring, "Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool."

Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swells from the deep and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

"As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." **1 Cor. 12:12.** At the commencement of this article we described how the human body, composed of millions of cells and having many members, is one body. So also the spiritual body of Christ has many members and those members are people begotten of God, sons of the Most High. They are grafted by one Spirit into one vine, members of one body, rooms in one house not made with hands. The body of Christ is composed of tens of thousands of sons and yet it is but one Christ - not one in heaven and many on earth, but one mountain whose head is in heaven and whose feet are on earth. In truth we can say that this vast family of sons, who, though a multitude, is but one body, may now be called the only begotten Son of the Father.

Well did the prophet Daniel describe the fall of the false but powerful system of Babylon when he said, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." **Dan. 2:34-35.**

That great mountain, Oh saints of the Lord, is none other than the mystical body of Christ, the true ecclesia, the true church, the chosen sonship company who follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth, who, being led of God's Spirit, are sons of God and joint heirs with Christ. These are they who are not defiled with women (sects and denominations). In their mouth is found no guile and they are without fault before the throne of God. "But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." **Micah 4:1-5.** See also Isa. 2:2-5.

Thus hath the Lord spoken of the stone cut out without hands, even the mystical body of Christ, that in the latter days it should smite the image of Babylon that now holds all nations and peoples in its grip of deception. On its corrupt feet of iron and miry clay shall it be smitten till it fall and be broken to shivers to become as the chaff of the threshing floor that the wind driveth away. And the stone that smote the image shall become a great mountain that will fill the whole earth. From the things, which we have spoken it should be easily seen that this great mountain is none other than the true ecclesia, the sons of God, the fullness of Christ manifested in His many sons.

In this hour of telling forth the glory of the Lord I feel as the writer of the book of Hebrews must have felt when over and over again he left off speaking of the high calling of God and the so great salvation to warn his readers of the dangers that lay all about them. There is a danger today that scarcely existed in the days of the apostles. In their day sectarianism was almost unknown and, whenever its ugly head was raised, it was smitten with apostolic sternness and authority. 1 Cor. 1:11-15. But in our day partisanship and sectarianism is rampant and increasing every hour. It has become such a confusion of tongues that the name of God is blasphemed

among the unbelievers because of its abominable heresies and divisions. Cursed be your divisions, your sects, and your denominations! They have torn asunder the body of Christ, crucified afresh the Son of God, and displayed Him to the ridicule of the whole world. What part have you, O Son of God, with those who by their divisions, often advanced for personal gain, tear asunder the body of Christ? You speak of sonship and pretend that you have attained, yet you worship the image of confusion - if not the golden head, then the silver shoulders, the brass belly, the iron legs, or the crumbling feet. Do you not know how dangerous a thing it is for you to remain in this camp, declaring by your very seat in the congregation of a sect that you are a sect worshipper and a member of the Babylon system? Do you not know that suddenly, while you are unaware, the mystical stone, cut out without hands, will smite this giant image of which you are a part and it shall crumble as dust and be no more? Is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit spake by John and said, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues." The invitation of the hour is not to the sinner to come to Christ. The invitation is for the Christian to come out of Babylon and cease from the worship of its ungodly image.

Has it ever occurred to you how strange a thing it was that, immediately after Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the king had bountifully rewarded him for his service and promoted him to the office of Prime Minister, it is said, "**Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, ...and set it up in the plain of Dura?**" **Dan. 3:1**. Then, calling together all the princes and governors, the captains and judges, the treasurers and counselors, the sheriffs and all the rulers of the provinces, he had a herald shout the message to all people and all languages that they should fall down and worship the golden image of Babylon, and, failing to do so, they would be cast into the burning, fiery furnace. The worship of this abomination was not done without show. The bands and orchestras were present replete with cornets, flutes, harps, sackbuts (trombones), psalteries, dulcimers, and all kinds of music. Verse 5. And all mankind was instructed that they must fall down and worship the abominable image the moment the band struck up the tune.

Among that vast throng of head-noddors and yes-men assembled before the image there were but three lonely men who remained standing, refusing to dance to the devil's tune or to bow down at Babylon's abominable altar.

The average, I fear, is no better today. My friend and brother, all unknown to you the image of Babylon's confusion is daily before you, complete with all the fanfare of pretty choirs and all manner of musical instruments. There among her congregation you yield yourself to regimented worship with the docility of a robot. Like a puppet on a string you willingly bob, you stand, you sit, you sing, you praise, you dole out money at the command of the puppeteer in the pulpit, and then you call that church, you call that Christian, you call that sonship, you call that worship, you call that assembling and insist we must not forsake it. What it really is is Babylon. It is worshipping at the shrine of an image that the sons of God will soon smite on the feet and destroy.

"But," you ask, "if we come out of this, as you say we should and as the Bible says we should, where will we go?" The answer to that question is clear and un mistakeable. Centuries ago in anticipation of your question God gave the answer in these simple, certain words: "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." **Heb. 13:13**. It will be a reproach; make no mistake about that. It will mean the burning, fiery furnace of ridicule and misunderstanding, but the fire will deliver you from your bonds and your thongs, your strait-jackets and your handcuffs, Dan. 3:25, and the form of the Son of God will be seen, for God is walking with you. You will neither be harmed nor hurt nor burned, nor will the smell of smoke remain upon you. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. ... Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." **Heb. 13:10,12-13**. It will be a happy day for any man when by God's gift of revelation he discerns between the false church and the true, the image of Babylon and the reality of Christ. You will not have much longer to decide.

As it was in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, so shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall come, and unto those who have heeded the warning, let the further exhortation be given, "Remember Lot's wife."

It was given to Daniel to see the image of the false, Dan. 2, but it was given to John to see the true. Rev. 1:10-18. John was a young man when he walked in Judaea and Galilee with Jesus of Nazareth, the one he loved above all else and all other. Though John wrote more of the love of God than any other man, he was not mild by nature. He and his brother James were the men the disciples nicknamed Boanerges, meaning sons of thunder. These were the men who said of the Samaritans, "Shall we call down fire on them as Elijah did?" But the years of association of this son of thunder with the Son of God had wrought a change in him that naught but the transformation of regeneration can possibly explain. He had seen Jesus carry His cross, and he had seen Him die upon it. Grasping the meaning of the cross he had taken up his own, willingly borne it and died upon it so that the John of Patmos was scarcely the "Boanerges" of yesteryear.

What a difference there is when we associate with Jesus! What a transformation takes place when we glory in His cross and identify ourselves with it! Nothing was so despised in ancient times as the cross and nothing was so detested. To the Roman it was capital punishment, the place for felons to die. To the Jew it was a stumbling block and to the Greek it was foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. It was a fitting symbol for us sinners, a fitting place for our serpent natures to die and eternally perish in our identification with Him. How well is our rebellion, our carnality, our sin and our beastly nature typified in that serpent of brass which Moses hung upon the pole that all men who were bitten by serpents might live by beholding that which was crucified. "And Moses made a serpent of brass and set it upon a pole, and it came to pass, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." **Num. 21:8-9.**

Is it any wonder, then, that this man who through life was so thoroughly identified with Jesus and His cross should now begin his book with these words: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." As Daniel saw Babylon portrayed as the image of a man, an idol before which all men should worship, so now John saw the completeness of Christ as a man - not the image of a man, but one like unto the Son of man. God grant us all the spirit of wisdom and understanding that we may see that this wonderful mystery which John beheld was in truth the fullness of Christ as He shall appear at the end of this age in which we now live. According to the record John was in the Isle of Patmos in banishment because of the witness of the truth. In Weymouth's vivid translation the record reads like this: "I, John, your brother and a sharer with you in sorrows and the kingdom and endurance of Jesus, found myself in the Island of Patmos for my loyalty to the word of God and the truth told us by Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was inspired by the Spirit and heard behind me a loud voice like the blast of a trumpet. It said, Write the vision in a book, and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. I turned to see who it was that was speaking to me; and then I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the center of the lampstands one resembling the Son of man, clothed in a robe, which reached to His feet and with a girdle across His breast. His head and His hairs were white, like white wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were like flames of fire, His feet were like silver-bronze when it is white hot in a furnace, and His voice was as the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword was seen coming out of His mouth; and His face was like the sun shining in its full power. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead, but He laid His hand upon me and said, Do not be afraid: I am the First and the Last, and the ever-living One. I died; but I am now alive for evermore, and I have the keys of the gates of death and of Hades." **Rev. 1:9-19.** Weymouth.

It seems presumptuous that I should attempt to explain a glory and a wonder so great as this. It was D. L. Moody who once said he had never preached a sermon on John 3:16. Its truth was too great for him to explain, so he just quoted it and let it speak for itself. But it may be that, if we now with much humility behold the vision as it was given to John on Patmos, God will of His kindness open our eyes that at least part of its meaning may grip our hearts. The blind man, when he heard the call of Jesus, cast aside his garment and ran to Him. In these sacred moments, when our eyes would behold the Lord, we may find it necessary to cast aside the shoddy garments of our church theology, our human ways of looking at things, and come running to Him that our eyes may be opened to see the truth as God sees it and not as tradition explains it.

The one like unto the Son of man is the fullness and the completeness of the Christ. Jesus of Nazareth was the seed that fell into the ground and died. The vision John saw was the fullness of the harvest at the end of the age. The lonely voice that had stirred the towns and cities of Judaea and Galilee was no longer the voice of

an individual, but the voice of many, sounding as many waters and as a trumpet in its glory and strength. Jesus of Nazareth was the head of the body; the man John saw was both the head and the body of Christ. Jesus of Nazareth was the first born of many brethren; that which John saw on Patmos was both the first born and the many brethren. The fullness of Christ of which Paul wrote is Jesus with His many brethren, "Behold, I and the sons which God has given Me." **Heb. 2:13**. It was of the fullness of this body of sons that Paul spoke when He said, "Whom he did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29**. Weymouth puts it, "Those whom He has foreknown He has also predestinated to share the likeness of His Son, that He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers." It is this vast family of brothers that is the fullness and completeness of the Christ. It is this vast family of brothers that God for two thousand years has been preparing as the mystical body of Christ. This family of brothers consists of the sons of God complete at the end of the age and prepared to govern the world in the kingdom of God to come. The marvelous vision that John saw of one like the Son of man is the representation of Jesus, the first born, together with His many brethren. This is the fullness of Christ. This is the body of Christ. This is He of whom the Holy Spirit spake, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, behold I and the children (brethren or sons) which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:12-13**. It was in truth "I and the brethren" that John beheld as "one like unto the Son of Man," **Rev. 1:13**, whose voice was as the sound of many waters (many people).

One day some Greeks came to Philip, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip and Andrew went and told Jesus of their request, but Jesus, instead of presenting Himself to them, left them to ponder this strange paradox: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified... Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." **John 12:20-24**. Jesus Himself was the interpretation of this. He was the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died, but the much fruit at harvest time is the family of many sons of God, complete in one great body at the end of the age. So go and tell these Greeks, Philip, that, if they really want to see Jesus in all His fullness, they will have to wait until harvest time when in all His completeness He stands amid the candlesticks with eyes like a flame of fire, head and hairs as wool as white as snow, His voice as the sound of many waters, a two-edged sword issuing from His mouth, His face as the sun shining in his strength, and His feet like fine brass as if they burned in a furnace. Thus shall appear the great body of sons at harvest time.

How different is the abominable lifeless image of Babylon from this revelation of the fullness of Christ! How different the head and how different the feet! How different the worshippers who fall before it!

Because we share in the body of Christ, Paul says we are bone of His bone; we are flesh of His flesh. We are baptized into His body and we have become partakers of His divine nature. It was this wonderful reality that John saw on Patmos as one "like unto the Son of man." In the light of all this reality is it any wonder that God now calls His sons to come out of Babylon with all its organized worship? Images are not far removed from idols. They are both objects of false worship. It is the image of Babylon that the church system worships today and not the Christ who, when He comes in the fullness of the harvest, will in one hour destroy that system.

My heart rejoices that Daniel, who saw the image of Nebuchadnezzar, was later given a vision of the true Son of man, a vision that was in such accord with the vision of Patmos that one would think he had been sharing the scene with the apostle John. This is the awe-inspiring description of what he saw: "I raised my eyes and looked, and, lo! there was a man clothed in linen, his loins girded with the fine gold of Ophir, his body flashing like a topaz, his face like lightning, and his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and legs gleaming like burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude." Dan. 10:5,6. (Goodspeed)

The hour of the fullness of this revelation is at hand. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Cleanse your garments, therefore, and lay aside every weight that you may be accounted worthy to be found in Him without spot or blemish, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, a son among a vast family of sons who form the mystical body like unto the Son of man.

CHAPTER THREE THE HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS

No man who ever lived labored more faithfully than our Lord Jesus Christ and none was ever endued with so great an anointing as He. Mighty were the signs and wonders that followed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, yet even that bountiful outpouring was given by measure, but of Jesus Christ it is written, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." Time and again I have marveled at the wisdom with which He spoke. The trickiest questions His scheming enemies could devise were answered with the greatest simplicity, but in such a way that His adversaries were put to shame and ventured not to interrogate Him further, fearing lest the last remnants of their refuge of lies would be swept away by the eternal wisdom of His answers.

In the Archko Volume, page eighty-eight, the following statement concerning Jesus Christ is attributed to the writings of the learned Gamaliel, at whose feet Paul was instructed. "He turns nature into a great law book of illustrations, showing that every bush is a flame, every rock a fountain of water, every star a pillar of fire, and every cloud the one that leads to God. He makes all nature preach the doctrine of trust in the divine Fatherhood. He speaks of the lilies as pledges of God's care and points to the fowls as evidence of His watchfulness over human affairs. Who can measure the distance between God and the flowers of the field? What connection is there between man and the lily? ...Thus, beginning with a flower, He reasons upward to the absolute and then descends and teaches lessons of trust in a loving Father. The lessons of trust in God reassure the anxious listener and create an appetite that makes him long for more."

The reverent heart is made to wonder at the unmistakable authority He always manifests in the face of the most incredible challenges. See Him at the wedding feast and marvel as He changes water into wine. Listen to the sobs of a desperate father, who brings before him a maniac son whose demon possession has rendered helpless even those disciples who had been given power over demons. With sadness He rebuked them, saying, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto Me." One sentence of command, one word of life fell from the lips of Him who had created worlds and tears of sorrow were turned to pearls of praise as the happy father embraced a transformed son.

One day they brought Him tidings that His friend, Lazarus of Bethany, was sick unto death, but Jesus, knowing aforetime, remained yet four days beyond Jordan that there might be no doubt in any mind concerning the certainty of Lazarus' death. "Lazarus is dead," He told His disciples, "and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent that you might believe." Then, coming to the grave, the sobs of heartbroken sisters and weeping friends fell upon His ears, till Jesus Himself lifted up His voice and wept with them - not because of helplessness, but because they did not yet believe that He was the Christ, the Son of God. Though they had seen His power and He had taught them so much, still their hearts were dull and their minds slow to grasp the vision of who He was. "Take away the stone" was His word of command; but they, fearing He could do no more than view the rotting remains, objected, "By this time he stinketh!" "Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" He asked; and they, taking away the stone, heard Him command the rotting, dead man, "Come forth!" And he who was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. John 11.

All power in heaven and earth is at His command. Of this the Roman centurion was fully aware when he came bowing before Him, saying, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." And Jesus, bless His name, instead of shrinking back in unbelief as others might have done, looked about Him in amazement, saying, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," and, rising to the occasion without the slightest effort, He issued the command, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." **Matt. 8:5-13.**

Follow Jesus through His life and you will see His authority everywhere. The boisterous waves cease their raging at His command to become a peaceful glassy sea. "Stretch forth thy hand," He commands the withered, and life divine floods back into drooping muscles as life-giving blood surges through once shriveled veins. To the leper He says, "Be clean," and his loathsome disease departs from him. "Take up thy bed and walk" is His command to the frail and palsied man and he, filled with the strength of youth, leaps up at the command. Of the furious mob who came to take Him He demands, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," was their reply. "I

am He," was the fearless answer that fell from His lips divine, and they, hurled backward by a force they could not see, fell prostrate and helpless at His feet. As if to doubly manifest their powerlessness in His hand He demanded again, "Whom seek ye?" And they, trembling and afraid in His presence, replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." "I have told you that I am He," He said. "If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." Can you imagine such heavenly authority as this - that He whom they expected to be their cringing captive, helpless as a lamb in the mouth of a lion, would be heard issuing His omnipotent commands, orders which they, His enemies, dared not disobey?

In Pilate's report to Caesar, vividly describing the uproar of the mob at the time just preceding the crucifixion, this statement is found: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" cried the relentless rabble. The vociferations of the infuriated mob shook the palace to its foundations. There was but One who appeared to be calm in the midst of the vast multitude. It was the Nazarene!" Archko Volume. Page 140.

Does it not seem incredible that Christ could be so endued with God's mighty power that even creation would do obeisance to Him, that He should speak words of omniscience such as no man ever spoke, heal every disease known to mankind, trample beneath His feet the strongest demon, raise the dead back to life, calm the fury of the boisterous waves, and cause an angry mob, who came to take Him, to fall in helplessness at His feet, and in the face of all these wonders they would yet remain blind as to who He was? It would appear that His own disciples remained in some degree of darkness. Nothing can display with greater certainty the extent of the blindness of the natural mind. Even today the same shadow remains, showing as nothing else can that no man comes to Christ except the Father draw him.

Through much study in the word of God and through many years of personal experience I have become thoroughly convinced that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain, and except the Lord reveal the deep and hidden things of God, they will forever remain unknown to us no matter how excellent our teachers or how diligent our instructors.

One day in Caesarea Philippi, as the disciples of Jesus gathered around Him, He asked them this question: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" And they said, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." It is evident from these answers that the natural mind can come to any number of conclusions, but, however well considered those conclusions may be and however good the reasoning behind them, the real truth remains a hidden mystery until the Spirit of God unfolds it through the enlightening power of revelation. Each answer they gave had reason on its side. John the Baptist had baptized in water. So did Jesus' disciples. John had enormous crowds, and so did Jesus. Thus their reasoning was that this Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead. As to Elias - had not the prophets foretold that Elias would come? Certainly some of the works of Elijah were clearly seen in the ministry of Jesus. And Jeremiah, the prophet? Was it not he who sighed, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears," (Jer. 9:1), and was not this mighty Jesus a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?

Yet He was none of these. Then said Jesus, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Peter, speaking from a heart overflowing with revelation, fervently affirmed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was not by much learning that such mighty truth had been revealed to this lowly fisherman. He was an unlearned and ignorant man. It is doubtful that he could read or write, much less that he had learned of Christ's Sonship through poring over ancient volumes or sitting at the feet of some Gamaliel. The eternal message he uttered that day had not been revealed to him through the instruction of Jesus. The truth that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, had come flooding into his soul as a light from heaven. A light, shining in dark places, had revealed what eye had not seen nor ear heard nor had entered the heart of man. Well did our Lord know whence these words of truth had come, and for our profit and the enlightenment of all who should afterward believe the Savior pronounced this blessing upon his head: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 16:13-16.

Beloved reader of these lines, ponder, if you will, this solemn inquiry: Has the Holy Spirit ever revealed to you that Jesus is the Christ? Is He just Christ because someone told you so? How sad I feel when I find men and women, not excluding some of those who profess to be born again, to whom Jesus Christ is little more than a good man who lived two thousand years ago! When I hear people refer to Him whom angels adore as "the

man upstairs" or "my Jewish friend" and other such demeaning terms, then I know for certain that all they have known of Jesus is what flesh and blood has revealed to them. When "My Father, who is in heaven," reveals that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, neither heaven above nor earth beneath can find terms grand enough to express our adoring adulation of Him. If you have seen Him even through a glass darkly, you will be as Isaiah, who wrote in the sixth chapter of his prophecy, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." If we see Him in this way, we will cry as Isaiah did, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Any man who sees the glory of God so longs to be rid of the filth of his sin that he cries, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

It saddens my heart to know that most of the preachers today have never seen that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. They know Him not as holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens. They know not in their hearts that from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. They know not that through Him God hath reconciled all things unto Himself or that He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. They have not seen that God the Father had such faith in the blood of His Son that He declared remission of all the sins of the past. Rom. 3:25. They treat Him not as one close at hand, but as a God afar off. Ah, Jesus, Thou blessed Christ of God, Thou art He whom angels adore. Thou art He who has redeemed us and has prevailed to open the book of life and the seven seals thereof.

I learned to know a name I highly treasure.
O, how it thrills my spirit through and through.
O wondrous name beyond degree or measure.
My heart is stirred whene'er I think of You.

Many centuries ago our beloved Lord said to a throng of religious men who stood before Him, "I have come in My Father's name and ye receive Me not. Another shall come in his own name; him ye shall receive." Paul must have been mindful of this very truth when he wrote to the Corinthians in these words: "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." **2 Cor. 11:3-4.** Another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel! These money-grabbing radio and T.V. preachers who use the gospel as a gimmick to promote their worldly programs are total strangers to the gospel Paul preached. They preach another gospel. Indeed, they may use fine and polished sentences. Their sermons may sound good to people who, like Eve, have been beguiled by the serpent, but their gospel is not the gospel of the kingdom and it is not the gospel of grace. It is another gospel. To Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Daniel said, "Thou art this head of gold." Babylon's image has a head of gold. All its wealth is the wealth of the world. That is why the radio and T.V. preachers are always begging for your money. They glibly ask their listeners for millions in donations and willingly resort to every sordid trick and sob story to persuade the people to give more and more money. The main thrust of their program is neither the gospel nor the preaching of it, but the need for more and more money to carry on their programs, which neither fatten nor fill a hungry soul. All the while they preach this foreign gospel, sin increases in all its avenues. Murders multiply. Thefts and robbery increase. Rape runs rampant. Adultery becomes universal. Drunkenness curses the nation and drugs scourge and darken the minds from the highest to the lowest as evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

The gospel they preach is not the gospel of grace or the gospel of the kingdom. It is another gospel. It is the gospel of Babylon. The Jesus they preach is not the Christ of God, but another Jesus of their own making. They use His name in vain, because they know of no other name that would attract such unusual interest. They feign the power to heal in His name and would have the world believe they have no failures, but if all the people were healed who they claim were healed, there would not be a feeble one among our tribes.

The covetous, self-exalting spirit is not the Spirit of God. It is another spirit - the spirit of that golden-headed monstrosity called Babylon. By it millions are deceived to flock to the standards of covetous men. If you will listen to them talk, you will seldom hear the worship of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, but the adulations of one who purports to be God's man of the hour or some specially chosen vessel, commissioned to bring the gospel to the whole world in the last days. If their human effort were taken away, their programs would disappear in a month.

Thomas was a blessed man of God, a chosen disciple of the Lord. He always was a bit of a doubter, unwisely demanding proof that he could see with his eyes or understand with his natural mind. For three wonder-filled years he had followed the Lord. He had heard His wisdom unfolding the mysteries of God. Standing by Jesus' side, he beheld the marvels of His power. Oftentimes he had watched the lame walk or had seen the miracle of a leper cleansed. He had heard the dumb glorify God as the string of his tongue was loosed. His eyes had seen the raging waves become as calm as a crystal sea. Many times this Thomas had felt the touch of the Lord's hand on his own. He had watched the Lord die in the cross and stood in awe at the fearful darkness that spread its terror over the land. He had felt the terrible earthquake as all creation struggled and groaned with the dying Savior. He remembered that Christ had said that He would die and after three days rise again from the dead, but alas, for all this the dimness of the natural mind still clouded and befogged his understanding. Thus, when the glad heralds proclaimed that Jesus was alive and had been seen of many, with stubborn determination he vowed, "Except I shall see the print of the nails in His hands and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Don't judge him too harshly, my brother. Why should he believe when until that very day death had always kept his prey? It is true that Lazarus and others had been raised back to their mortality by the miracle of Jesus' power, but now, alas, alas, it was Jesus Himself who was dead and who was there in this dread hour of loss that could hope to raise Him from the dead? Our blessed Lord always knows what is best for smoking flax and bruised reeds. He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Then that very night, appearing among them like some phantom maturing from the shades, Jesus Himself stood in their midst. It was to Thomas He addressed His words of grace and kindness, for none as He knew the dreadful ache in His servant's heart. "Reach hither thy finger," He bade a man bowed down with doubt and fear. "Thrust thy hand into My side," He said to him whose faith was almost gone; and Thomas, deigning not to draw near or touch Him, but starting up in the amazement and glory of the revelation, saw by the Holy Spirit what he had never fully seen before. Jesus was both Lord and Christ. "My Lord and my God," he gasped; and nothing more could he say. He saw now what before he had not known, for God had made this Jesus, whom the rabble had crucified, "my Lord and my God."

Only days ago I read a book about Jesus. The author had done a tremendous amount of research and I am sure that many of his conclusions were correct, but he ended the book with these words of darkness: "Jesus of Nazareth was a man; nothing more and nothing less." Had that man's words been born of revelation, he would have cried aloud with the wondering Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

In these last days the Lord God Almighty is calling out a people for His name. He is not concerned about bringing all the world to the light just now. That He will do in His own time and in whatever age He has ordained it. Long ago He shed His blood for the world. His blood is eternal life and that life is for all the world. When God the Father saw the sacrifice of His Son and the power of His life-giving blood, He **declared His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.** **Rom. 3:25.** Since God the Father had such abounding faith in the blood of His Son, we must conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. The law is not made void through the operation of faith. Nay, by faith the law is established. Let us therefore abandon all our carnal reasoning to see Jesus as God sees Him, both Lord and Christ. If we are to see Him at all, we must see Him by revelation.

My heart is greatly burdened in this, the end of the age, that God's people should not become absorbed with the doctrines and fancies of men, lest we, as others before us, make the word of God of no effect by our tradition. Let our fervent prayer be, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Lord and Father, I know my eye has not seen. I know my ear has not heard, for it was never tuned to the wave length of heaven. I know my heart has never understood eternal things. "My soul is night; my heart is steel! I cannot see! I cannot feel!" Come, Holy Spirit, and reveal Thyself. Take the things of Christ and disclose them

to me. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. Where the eye has failed, where the ear has become unhearing and the mind has become unthinking, O Christ, manifest the hidden things to my searching spirit, yea, the deep and mysterious things that eye cannot see nor ear hear, neither can enter into the heart of man.

Let this, then, be your prayer and let it be mine, for the natural man can never grasp the things of the Spirit. But now the Sun of righteousness, arising with healing in His wings, gives light to our blind eyes. Its virtue will unstop the deaf ears and remove the covering of darkness cast over the minds of God's people. It will touch the simple with understanding and to those who have no might it increaseth strength.

Reverence for the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore get wisdom and, with all thy getting, get understanding. If our God will be gracious and in loving kindness will anoint our eyes and draw back the curtain of night, then in the words that follow we will see that pearl of great price, for the sake of which the heavenly merchantman has sold all other pearls that He might obtain and bring to perfection that one which He has chosen in this age of grace.

THE HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS

The ministry of our Lord on earth was almost over when He called His disciples to a large upper room, furnished for the occasion. He knew that the hour for His departure out of the world had come. Already Satan had put the act of betrayal into the heart of Judas Iscariot, and Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand and that He came from God and went to God, took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash the disciples' feet. "Dost Thou wash my feet?" Peter asked. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shall know hereafter," was the wise reply. "Thou shall not wash my feet," Peter protested. "But if I wash thee not," said Jesus, "thou shall have no part in Me."

Thou shall have no part in Me! No part in Thee if Thou wash me not? O Christ, what words are these? Thou hast washed my heart and cleansed it white as snow. Thou hast washed my hands that I do no evil before Thee. Thou hast washed my head and anointed it with the oil of gladness above my fellows; but O, my feet! Day after day I tread earth's sordid pathways. Though I am not of the world, I am still in it. I have abandoned Babylon and all her daughters, but her dust still clings to me. Wash my feet, O Christ! Prepare Thy people for a higher realm. Make my feet like hinds' feet that I may dwell high in the mountain of God. *"An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."* **Isa. 35:8-10.**

So Jesus washed Peter's feet; and verily I say to you that all who will have part in Him to become members of that mystical body, the body of Christ, must be washed by Him from every last grain of earthly dust. Many thousands have been washed, but how often our feet are soiled with the things of this present life! I dare not detract anything from His salvation, for he that believes in Christ is certainly justified from all things, but there are many vain talkers in the world who speak much about the body of Christ while in their hearts they are saying, "Thou shall never wash my feet!" They are determined to secretly cling to those earthly things that forever identify them with this present evil world.

I cannot give it up, this little world I know;
The innocent delights of youth, and things I treasure so.
My Father's heart is kind; He will not deem it ill
That my small corner of the world should please and hold me still.

Yet those innocent delights are the things from which Christ would now wash you that you might have a part in the glory of the temple, which is His body.

I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled.
Though some may dwell where these abound,

My prayer, my aim, is higher ground. So Peter yielded himself to the washing that he might have a full part in Him. And now that Christ had washed them all, the mysteries of a higher realm began to unfold before their wondering eyes as Jesus began to tell them of a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Their hearts were greatly troubled because He had warned them of troublous times that lay ahead. He told them that He would be crucified and for this they mourned. He said that He would rise again, and because of this they were astonished beyond measure. He had shocked them by His warning that one of them would betray Him and this had filled their hearts with consternation. Now, to add further to their sorrow, He had told Peter, who seemed to be a pillar of strength, "The cock shall not crow twice till thou has denied Me thrice." Now, therefore, with a heart filled with understanding He comforted their troubled minds with a hope never before revealed to mankind: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions."

Here now we must ask the Spirit of the Lord to lift the hidden things from before our understanding and reveal the things that since the world began have been kept secret. If you are one of the many who find comfort in believing that "My Father's house" is heaven, and the many mansions are the houses on golden streets in which you will dwell for eternity, we shall have no quarrel about that, but truly I tell you that the house of many mansions, of which He spoke that day, is something far more than houses in the sky. "My Father's house" is not my house, but an eternal abiding place, which our God is building for Himself. His house is a temple not made with hands, built not for time but eternal in the heavens. That house not made with hands (may God reveal it) is the mystical body of Christ. Every stone in it is a living stone, a redeemed person who has partaken of eternal life, whose feet have been washed from the grime of all of Babylon's system and whose steps no longer lead to the harlot's house. Every stone in this temple is a living stone. Every living stone is a redeemed person, made alive with His life, which is eternal.

Listen to the words of Peter in later years as he presses this golden truth home to the hearts of understanding saints. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." **1 Pet. 2:3-5.** This superb gem of revelation vividly reveals just what the Father's house really is. It tells us that the living temple is made of living stones, each stone a living person, and, though they are so many, yet they are one house of many living stones. It was for this our Savior prayed, requesting of God, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." **John 17:21-23.**

I stand in amazement and wonder, marveling at such words of life as these. The Christ within rejoices in them and my own spirit bows in adoring contemplation of them. Such truth belongs to the eternal realm and can never be explained to the satisfaction of the natural mind, no, not in ten thousand years.

Only the Holy Spirit can manifest the glory of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and how can we know except by the illumination of inspiration that our own relationship to the Father is as His relationship to the Father? "Thou in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." I shall not try to explain this further, the Holy Spirit alone can make it clear. Let us therefore humbly bow before the God of glory, earnestly requesting that He would make known this heavenly mystery, hidden from all previous ages, "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." **Col. 1:27.** "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . Ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:20,27.**

Now when Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth, he often expressed surprise at their lack of spiritual understanding. We dare not imagine the pain he would feel if he were faced with the ignorance, the blindness and the unbelief to be found in the twentieth century church, which is without doubt the church of Laodicea. In **1 Cor. 3** the apostle carefully explained the wonders of Christ's temple not made with hands, saying in **verse 9**, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Solomon built a magnificent temple of stone. He overlaid it with gold and adorned it with silver. All manner of precious stones were in it. So wonderful was it that the queen of Sheba, beholding even the ascent to the house of the Lord, was breathless at the sight. But the temple built by Solomon was only a fleeting foreshadow of the living temple which Christ would build in the age of grace — a temple not made with hands. Not of dead stones, but of living stones. Not covered with glittering gold, but overshadowed by God. Not adorned with silver, but founded on redemption. Not fashioned with glittering, precious stones, but by the eternal jewels of His gifts and graces.

It is with an expression of shock that Paul demanded of the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" **1 Cor. 3:16**. And again, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" **1 Cor. 6:15**. And with still greater emphasis, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in You?" **1 Cor. 6:19**. It is very evident that Paul is manifesting genuine surprise, if not incredulity, to discover that the people who have been Christians for years, who prided themselves in spiritual gifts, should still be totally ignorant of their true relationship to Jesus Christ. "What?" he asks in amazement, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Do you not know that God dwells in you? Do you still imagine that He dwells in stone temples, made by the art of man's device? Do you not know that "My Father's house" is a house of many mansions and that you, God's saints, are that house? You are that temple not made with hands. What? Do you not know that you are that mystical body of Christ and members in particular? Has God not made it real to you that every individual who is joined to Christ in the Spirit is an abiding place or a room in that heavenly mansion? That, I am sure, is the meaning of the scripture, "In My Father's house are many mansions (abiding places)." The house is made of many living stones. Every stone is a redeemed person and every living stone is a separate abiding place in which the Spirit of God dwells. "My Father's house" is the temple of God, a building of the Lord, a house not made with hands. It cannot be either temporal or transient as was the temple of Solomon, which was destroyed and left without one stone upon another. The temple which is Christ's body is eternal in the heavens. It is not earthly nor does it belong to the earthly realm, but to an heavenly. It is not of corruption, but of incorruption. It is not of mortality, but of immortality.

These are solemnizing truths. These are unspeakable words almost unlawful to utter. I cannot approach such truth with lightness or glibness of heart nor hear them without awe. I stand amazed at them, being aware that these heavenly precepts are being spoken to men who were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Beheld what an amazing manifestation of amazing grace that is that mankind, born in sin and conceived in rebellion, should now, exonerated from their sins, be sons of

God and joint heirs with Christ, members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, and placed as living stones in a living temple, the habitation of God through the Spirit, the holy house not made with hands from which God in ages yet unborn will govern the entire universe in righteousness.

Oh, that men and women would cease from their elation that demons are subject to them or that they were eyewitnesses to a healing or a miracle and rejoice rather that their names are written in heaven. It was to her eternal credit that the queen of Sheba traveled the dusty desert roads from a far country to hear the wisdom of Solomon and to stand in breathless awe at the sight of the glittering temple he built. But a greater than Solomon is with us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God is building a temple of living stones, even stones of fire. Every stone is living. Every stone is speaking. Every stone is breathing the breath of eternal life. The living stones in this temple are the members of the body of Christ. They are sons of God and members of His family. By adding them to Himself God is expanding Himself, as a man by fathering many sons expands his family and himself. By God's family of sons, the holy temple, the Lord will fill the universe with Himself, for the saints are the fullness of Him who filleth all in all.

The knowledge of this sublime truth will make you holy. No one can ever thus see his place in God and yet remain in carnality. Should one claim to see these truths and yet remain as he was before, then he has not

seen by the Spirit, but by the natural mind only. Be gone all lightness and frivolity! Away with all sin and pride! Cast off all self-seeking and fleshy imagination. What? Know ye not that ye are God's temple and that His Spirit dwells in you?

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." **Eph. 2:19**. This meaningful passage of truth deserves the earnest prayer and consideration of every saint of God. There was a time when you were a complete stranger to Christ and a foreigner to His kingdom, having no part in His promises, but by His Spirit He brought you nigh. By His blood He cleansed you. The Holy Spirit was imparted to do the work of regeneration that you might know the power of the new birth. It is not the old you that now exists. Through the miraculous power of God you have become a new creature, a new creation in Christ. You have been born into His family. You have not been adopted into it, as we so often hear it said. You have been born into it and thus you have become a member of the family of God by a spiritual birth. We should never confuse adoption with the new birth. Adoption is a heavenly rite by which a young son of God is proclaimed of age, responsible, and capable of being heard and doing the Lord's will and purpose. Jesus was the Son of God when He was born, but on the day of His baptism a thunderous voice from heaven declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." That was the rite of adoption. Paul says Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. That is adoption.

The house not made with hands, the temple of the Lord, "My Father's House" is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:20-22**. What could be clearer than these verses? Do they not vividly demonstrate what the Father's house really is? Does not Paul's use of the word groweth in verse 21 indicate that God's temple is a living organism, composed not of bricks, but of living beings, sons of God, ever growing, ever maturing and ever being added to as new sons are born into God's family to take their place in a living temple? This house not made with hands is not only being built by God, but is growing in numbers, growing in maturity and in spiritual understanding and wisdom.

As I write these lines our Canadian Parliament has just gone down to defeat. Carnal, worldly men devoid of the wisdom of God strive to run the affairs of the nation without prayer, without inspiration, without morality and without God. They have no chance of success, and, when a new Parliament is elected, the same godless crowd will face each other across the floor, promoting more sorrow and confusion until the whole Babylonish mess of corruption finally falls. This confusion of man's making will not endure always. For two thousand years our God has been preparing a living temple, a house not made with hands. His Spirit abides in every living stone and His mind rules over all. From that holy temple He will govern the world when the times are ripe for it. Then the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Thanks be unto God that corruption is almost at an end. The stone cut from the mountain without hands will soon smite the image of Babylon on its unworthy feet. Six days shalt thou labor, O man, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Lord's millennial day. In it none of the works of man will be found, but the Lord shall reign in Zion, for it is God's Sabbath day.

Weymouth in his beautiful translation renders the above passage, **Eph. 2:19-22**, in these devout and meaningful words: "You are therefore no longer mere foreigners or persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are members of His family. You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit."

The Scripture is one composite whole. Every part of its structure depends upon every other part, for this reason Paul says, "In union with Christ Jesus, the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising to form a holy sanctuary for the Lord." We are being built together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit. In the light of this, how true are Paul's words: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." **Eph. 4:4-6**.

I do not have the ability to make this truth any plainer than Paul made it when he first wrote it, but surely the devout mind can see with some measure of clearness what infinite pains the Holy Spirit has taken to reveal God's purpose for the saints in this age of grace and more especially their ministry in the ages to come. We earnestly pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened that you may know the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us. Often we talk and sing about our inheritance in God, but I am afraid it is seldom indeed that anyone takes time to explain the exceeding riches of God's inheritance in His saints.

Would God that all the saints might see God's purpose as one complete whole. The purpose for man is the same today as it was when the Lord said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion." Never for one second has the immutable Father deviated from that purpose. Even the fall of man in the garden is part of the unchanging, unvarying purpose. The blessed Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world was not slain in case man should sin, but because the creature was to be made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope. Rom. 8:20 Well did God know that, after His creation had suffered a while, He would establish, strengthen and settle it. The blessed Father knew that, when the prodigal had returned in penitence from the swine pen of his transgression, there would be a fatted calf to nourish him, a best robe of righteousness to cover him, covenant rings to be placed on his fingers, and shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace to be placed upon his feet. There would be heavenly music and dancing, for this, the son that was lost, is found and he that was dead is alive evermore. God's inheritance in His saints is that they should be His eternal dwelling place, the habitation for God in the Spirit, for God shall dwell with them and in them. They shall serve Him day and night in His temple. In this temple the stones are living. They are the sons of God whose service will restore the whole creation to find its one head in Christ.

The book of Hebrews, that incomparable revelation in which the author rises to inexpressible heights of inspiration, has this to say concerning the house which the Lord is preparing: "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." **Heb. 3:6,6.** Whose house are we! O may the Father of light reveal the fathomless depth of that truth to our hearts! The Revised Standard Version says here: "And we are His house." On that sad night, when Jesus washed His disciples' feet, for the first time ever He began to reveal the mystery of the Father's house and, though they understood not what He was saying, He left them with this blessed and holy promise: "I go to prepare a place for you." For centuries in our lack of understanding we have made that statement to mean that somewhere in heaven beyond the blue in a city of gold Christ was preparing us a mansion in which we could dwell. We are so earthbound in our thinking! Man is continually imagining after the earthly. He imagines heaven to be not much different from earth. He thinks eternal life is little more than an extension of time, though eternal life has nothing to do with length of days. The holy temple, which He is building, the Father's house, is not being made for you or for me, but for the Father. We ourselves, the redeemed of the Lord, are that habitation for God in the Spirit.

It is not possible to explain these truths to human satisfaction. The things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man must be revealed to us by the Spirit. Abraham centuries ago had a vision of the new Jerusalem bride of Christ, the city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, but do you think for a moment that he was able to impart the truth he saw to his nephew Lot? It is possible that even his wife Sarah did not see nor understand his vision. Abraham alone saw the city that hath foundations and followed hard after it, but he died in faith before he reached it. Even now in this far off day that Holy City has not descended from heaven. Neither will it do so for another thousand years or so more. Nevertheless, there is nothing more certain than this: The day will come when that city, which was seen afar off through the eye of faith, will be seen coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

In the messages of Christ to the churches a special promise was always given to him that overcometh, but to the church at Philadelphia He gave a promise that is worthy to fill every page of this booklet. May our Lord give us the Spirit of revelation to understand what He said. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." Just think of that! I am sure that thousands of saints will rejoice to know they are living stones in the

wall, but here is a promise, given to overcomers, that they shall be pillars in the temple of God. It is beyond me. I cannot explain it. These things are too wonderful for me. The pillars bear the weight of the superstructure. It is a high and wonderful promise. Blessed be the name of the Lord. One day, when Paul was writing to the Galatians, he made mention of James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars. Gal. 2:9. Even in that far off day these men had overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and even then they were beginning to minister as pillars in the temple of the living God.

It is Christ Himself who is preparing our place in Him. He alone knows the place prepared from the foundation of the world. It is not a question for us to decide. He divideth to every man severally as He will. Long before the ages began, He foreknew us all and predestinated us to our place in Himself, and, having done so, He prepared our trials and furnaces of affliction that we might be vessels perfectly fitted for the master's use. How thankful I am that it is Christ who is preparing my place in Him! "The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men... He fashioneth their hearts alike; He considereth all their works." **Psa. 33:13, 15.** "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth... Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfected; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them." **Psa. 139:15-16.** Selah. Just think of that! He had the print of every member of His body, His holy temple, when as yet none of them existed. God is not unlike men in this regard, for they, too, go to much expense to prepare blueprints and plans for their earthly mansions before ever a sod is turned. Should it then seem strange that our all wise Father should know our fashion and appoint our place when as yet we were not on the earth?

He tells me of the years that went before me,
When heavenly plans were made for me to be;
When all was but a dream of dim conception
To come to life, God's verdant glory see.

If Abraham, a man like you and me, could see the Holy City afar off, dare we think that our Lord, the Father of eternity, would not have seen the glory of His own temple long millenniums before the foundations were laid? When the fiery Stephen was giving his apology before the Christ haters of his day, he, being anointed mightily by the Holy Spirit, spoke of David's desire to build a temple for the Lord. This the Lord refused, but Solomon built Him an house. This statement is immediately followed by a pertinent fact, which we today must never forget. "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: What house will ye build Me, saith the Lord; or what is the place of My rest." **Acts 7:49-50.** There is only one temple recognized by the Lord. It is the temple of His body, the greatest mystery of the ages. This is the true temple made without hammer or the sound of instrument. For two thousand years it has been rising on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and it will not be long before the flaming words of the prophet Malachi will be fulfilled: "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." **Mal. 3:1-3.**

"God, who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything." **Acts 17:24-25.** This passage contains a special message for the sons of God in these last days. Never since the days of Noah have we seen such times as these. This is an evil day. It is the evil day. It is an hour when both the world and the professing church apparently believe that money solves every problem. To hear radio and T. V. evangelists speak, one would conclude that money, money and more money will bring the whole world into the truth. It is an abominable lie! John the Baptist never mentioned money, yet he shook the world. Money has never saved a soul and never will. Can you imagine Martin Luther begging for money to further his reformation? Can you imagine John Wesley or George Whitefield putting any confidence in it whatsoever? You will always know a false man by the time he wastes on his program begging for money. The love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon and Daniel, interpreting his dream, said to him, "Thou art this head of gold." I am not trying to be funny or cynical, but Babylon has always had a head of gold. The whole Babylon system, both the world system and the church system, depends on money. The Beast of Revelation is the world system. The harlot of Revelation is the church system. That is why John saw the drunken, harlot woman riding on the back of the Beast. That is where she has always ridden. It is the world system that sustains the organized church system. These preachers are just as ready to receive their funds from the world as anywhere else. In fact, they depend not on the power of Christ or the mighty power of Pentecost to carry on their work but upon the currency of the world. It is an awful indictment, but it is true.

I cannot waste time trying to rectify the errors of the harlot system, which the Bible calls Mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. To preach to them is not my calling at all. My calling is to minister to the temple of the Lord, which is rising to form a fixed abode for God in the Spirit. Where better, then, can I look for help than to the inspiration of God's word and the towering words of the apostle Paul that are so wonderfully applicable to us in this the end of the age. Let us see for a moment what exhortation he has for the saints, who are members of Christ's mystical body, the temple of the Lord. Let us lend an attentive ear to Paul's teaching concerning the temple of God and our association with idolaters, remembering as we read that we ourselves are the temple of God of which Paul speaks. Please notice the opposite mentioned here. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:14-16.**

You may say to yourself, "But the people I associate with are Christians. They are not unbelievers." My brother, there are many preachers who wave the Bible over their heads and shout, "I believe this book from cover to cover!" But go and ask if they believe **Eph. 1:10** - "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him" - and you will soon discover whether they are believers or not. Ask them if they believe Col. 1:20. Then ask them if they believe the all inclusive promise of Acts 2:38, 39, where Peter promised that men of all ages would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as they did at Pentecost. Ask them if they believe Rom. 8:20, 21 or a dozen other passages and you will find out that the very men who make such proclamations of faith are, in fact, unbelievers.

I am not anxious to condemn them; but to you the word is spoken, for God has said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17-18.** We are indeed intensely interested in the temple of the Lord, and it has been abundantly demonstrated that the temple of the Lord is the true body of Christ. Furthermore it is perfectly evident that the sons of God are the members of the body of Christ, the house not made with hands. Are we then so foolish that we will overlook this earnest exhortation of Paul, in which he gives promise that those, and only those, who come out of the Babylon system will be sons and daughters of God? At any rate that is definitely what the apostle said. "Come out from among them... and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I am totally at a loss to know how we can longer dilly-dally in the face of such a stern command and such a glorious promise.

The feet of the image of Babylon are partly iron and partly clay - a very weak mixture to say the least. The entire Babylon system is now rising to its dizziest heights. I will tell you what will happen. This present pope, Pope John Paul 2nd, or the pope who follows him, will complete the work of forming a world church. The progress now being made in many quarters in gathering together Protestants, Catholics, Jews and Moslems into one drunken harlot system under Rome is nothing short of phenomenal. After this has been accomplished, the pope following will receive power from the beast system of world government to force everybody to worship the church beast whose deadly wound was healed. All manner of signs and wonders will be present to deceive the people insomuch that the image of the beast will speak and call down fire from heaven in the sight of men.

Rev. 13: 12-18. Fearful things are coming and I warn you that they are coming upon the very people who now believe they are going to be raptured out of all tribulation. The day is near at hand when the terrible cry will go forth in all the land, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and has become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird." This sordid condition exists at the present time. The church system is rising to dizzying heights in preparation for its unspeakable fall and with it the monstrous beast of the political system is also rising in its godless dominion over the very souls of men, but it shall come to its end and none shall help it.

Even now as I write, unknown to the multitudes in the world and in the church, a world government is already in place. The colossal world wide banking system, controlled by the Rothschilds and Rockefellers, govern both the communist and the so-called free world. Let us make no mistake about that. They have power to bring about crises, wars, strikes, rebellions and revolutions, depression or inflation whenever they will. Is it any wonder then that at this moment the Spirit of Christ is calling to His sons, "Come out from among them and be separate... and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty." If Christ is speaking to you, then obey Him and leave all the results in His hand.

Revelation and understanding can never flow in the heart of the disobedient. It is when we "come out" that Christ comes to sup with us and from His lips we learn the unspeakable mysteries of His kingdom. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." **Phil 2:12-13.**

The end of all things is certainly at hand. The temple, which is His body, has been in the process of building during the entire age of grace. It will be completed and ready for its glorious millennial ministry at the end of this present age. The sons of God are the body of Christ. They are members of Christ. He is the head Son; they are the body of sons. He is the eldest and firstborn of a vast family of brothers (Rom. 8:9, Weymouth), all of whom are sons of God and members of His family.

It is my opinion that the apostle John was transported over two thousand years of time from his imprisonment on Patmos to the day of the Lord at the end of the age when that great family of God's elect sons would be complete. The vision John saw on Patmos of the complete body of Christ was so incredibly magnificent and so far beyond his comprehension that, when his eyes beheld it, he fell as one dead, and I suppose, if the angel had not strengthened him, he would have died. The most glorious revelations of God often make their appearance when we least expect them. It was a dreary night for Jacob as he journeyed in fear from Padan-aram (Gen. 28), but what an unexpected glory overshadowed him when in his restless dreaming a ladder appeared before his eyes with angels ascending and descending upon it. Perhaps even then he heard the words of Jesus, "Henceforth you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Was the truth then made plain to him that an hour was coming in a far distant age when the Son of man, Christ the head and Christ the body, would be a ladder with its feet on earth and its Head in heaven, the Head and the body together, one glorious Christ, one celestial ladder, joining heaven to earth in one glorious kingdom of God? At the end of this age the hand of God will be stretched forth to remove the dark veil of the years; then a ladder will be seen reaching from earth to heaven. It will be the Christ of God, the head and the body perfectly one. Upon that ladder heaven will have access to earth and earth will have access to heaven.

Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swells from the deep and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the stormy clouds are spread,
Eternal sunlight settles on its head.

Thus it was with John, in exile on little Patmos, a place of few inhabitants and always swarming with pirates, but he writes: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; ...And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a

garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: **I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."** **Rev. 1:10-18.**

Throughout the preceding pages our endeavor has been to show that "My Father's house" is the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is the temple of the Lord. It is the mystical body of Christ. It is not a temple of cold hard stones as was the temple of Solomon, which was at best only a figure of the true, but a temple of living stones, in which every stone is a born again member of a living temple, which is His mystical body. This is the living temple of which Paul wrote, saying, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." This is that body of which Paul said, "The body is not one member, but many." And again, "The body, being many, is but one body, and every one members one of another." Such wisdom is too great for me. It is high; I cannot attain unto it, but in spirit I understand and my whole being cries, Amen. I see and I know! In spirit we see a temple rising from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies and that, I am sure, is what John saw that never-to-be-forgotten moment on Patmos when in the Spirit he was carried away to behold for the first time that which eye had never seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered the heart of man. It was the temple of Christ's body - not the Christ as He was at first, but Christ the first and the last together.

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Perhaps you will insist that the Lord's Day means Sunday. Others will insist that it means Saturday and I have no argument with you whatsoever. It very well could have been either of these days that the vision took place. I would like to point out, however, that the great prophetic statements of scripture always have two or more fulfillments. First they have some present and local interpretation, but if you look a few millenniums into the future, you will discover a larger and more wonderful interpretation than was at first believed. It is like a seed planted in the earth that springs forth, first the blade, second the ear, and third the full corn in the ear. Or it is like unto a protoplasm placed in the womb that grows and matures, we know not how, from an infinitesimal speck to a fully formed human being, ready to come forth from the womb to manifestation and maturity. Those who believe in God should never curse themselves and destroy their understanding by holding tenaciously to some tradition of the elders, but should remember rather the words of Peter when he said, "**No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."** **2 Pet. 1:20.** There is always a greater and more important revelation further on.

John was in the Spirit. This is a fact of extreme importance. The realm of the Spirit is a realm beyond the reach of the natural. Spiritual things are all about us to such an extent that we live and move and have our being in them, yet the natural man can never see them until the Spirit draws aside the dusky curtains of our mortality and opens our eyes to the things of the eternal world. It was this way with the servant of Elisha as in fear and trembling he saw the hosts of Syria surrounding them, but what a small flight it was to the spiritual realm when in answer to Elisha's prayer, "Lord, open his eyes," he saw the mountains and hills filled with the hosts of the Lord.

Little did John realize in the lonesomeness of Patmos that Christ in His glory was so near. He did not imagine that he was to see in the Spirit what no man had ever seen. This same John had seen Christ, the First, but now he was to see Christ the First and the Last in one glorious manifestation of sonship. He was to behold Christ the head and Christ the body in one. My souls sing Amen! And in these far off days I know the full glory of that revelation is nearer to us than it was to him.

The voice John heard was as the voice of a trumpet speaking. No Roman fanfare proclaimed the coming of Christ to Bethlehem, but gentle angelic voices announced to a few elect and humble people, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." In the end of this age Christ our Lord shall appear again, and nothing is more clear than this: His coming will be with the sounding of the trumpet of God and the towering voice of the Archangel.

For two thousand years the body of Christ has been forming in secret in the lowest parts of the earth (Psa. 149:15), the head, the body, the hands and the feet. All this has been in silence and very often in persecution

and in prison, but now the body of sons is almost complete and ready for the manifestation. The Alpha is joined to the Omega. Christ the First is one body with the Last. That is what the trumpet voice was saying to John and that is the mighty message for the age to come.

The voice John heard came from behind him so that he had to turn himself about to see from whence this mighty voice arose. I may not say for certain, but perhaps it is significant that John was looking in the opposite direction when the Lord spoke. How often our expectations are in the wrong direction! Almost always we find it necessary to turn ourselves about before we can see the revelation of Christ.

The candlesticks are the churches. Rev. 1:20. That is all that needs be said about them. The wonder that caught John's eye was not the candlesticks, but someone who was standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks. It was Christ the Alpha and the Omega, Christ the head and Christ the body. As the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal in Elijah's day were somewhere in the midst of Israel, so the sons of God are in the midst of the candlesticks as the kernel is in the husk and the spirit in the midst of the body and so the true body of Christ today among the outward forms of the churches. Was not Jesus the Alpha formed within the womb of Mary to come forth in manifestation as Christ, the head of the body? Should it then seem strange that the body of Christ, the Omega, should be formed in the midst of the church woman? Was not this the thing that John was seeing by revelation?

The personage John saw was like the Son of man. He was in truth the very image of Christ. John, who had known Jesus so intimately while He was here on earth, could plainly see the identical likeness, but his spirit told him that this revelation of Christ's glory was something far beyond anything he had ever known. This was the Christ in His fullness, the Alpha and the Omega together, the First and the Last in one, Jesus of Nazareth the Head, one body with a vast family of sons, all speaking with the harmony of a mighty symphony, for the voice he heard was as the sound of many waters. Waters are symbolic of peoples and multitudes. That is why the sound of their voices was as the sound of many waters - many people, many sons, all with one glorious message for the redemption of the world. "I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First and the Last. I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death."

This one like the Son of man was clothed with a garment from the head to the foot. It was one garment for one body of many members. It was the robe of righteousness, the robe of royalty, the robe of the priest, for these have become a kingdom of priests. The robes of Aaron were robes of glory and beauty. How much more shall the robes of the Alpha and Omega display the power and the glory of God's Christ! His golden girdle is the girdle of truth. All that He is and does is in truth. Everywhere about us today we find deception as evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Men in high office have become inveterate liars. International policy is often calculated to deceive. Solemn agreements are signed without any intention of keeping them, but the world is soon to see a governor whose garment of righteousness is girded with the golden girdle of truth. Demosthenes said, "What we have in us of the image of God is the love of truth and justice," and Horace Mann remarked, "Keep one thing forever in view - the truth; and if you do this, though it may lead you away from the opinions of man, it will assuredly conduct you to the throne of God."

His head and His hairs were white like wool as white as snow. White hair is symbolic of omniscience. It is the crown of spiritual wisdom, long experience and understanding. He learned obedience by the things He suffered. He was tempted in all points as we are. The long night of man's evil rule taught Him the intrinsic value of justice and wisdom. He knows every end from its beginning. He knows every thought afar off. He needeth not that any man should ask Him or tell Him. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

His eyes were a flame of fire. All He shall look upon will be flooded with heavenly light. Since the transgression in Eden long ago, man's eyes have been fallen. They have no power except to receive light and reflections from without, but in the beginning the eyes of man were intended, not only to receive light, but to give light as well. For this reason it is said, "His eyes were as a flame of fire." Daniel's vision of the Christ was as fearfully intense as John's. His awesome revelation is stated in these words: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was

like the beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude." **Dan: 10:5, 6.** Is this not a most astounding, unspeakable vision of Christ, the Alpha and the Omega? His eyes were as lamps of fire. The purpose of a lamp is to give light. In the glory of Christ's kingdom, when this vision will be a reality in the whole earth, it shall come to pass that all that is looked upon by the sons of God will be flooded with the light of pure understanding. Even in our fallen state the eyes can tell us many stories. The boxers watch the eyes of their opponents to see where they intend to strike. Lawyers watch the eyes of men suspected of crime for signs of deception. Our eyes manifest innocence, jealousy and reproach as well as trust and happiness and much, much more, but this is a fleeting shadow still flickering in our fallen state. Then shall our eyes be as lamps of fire, giving truth and light and direction to all mankind.

His voice was as the sound of many waters. We mentioned above that the waters represent peoples. Rev. 17:15. The body of Christ is not one member, but many - a multitude. This is Daniel's description of His voice. "The voice of His words was like the voice of a multitude." I do not know how anything could be clearer. If Jesus is the firstborn of many brethren, who are in the image of Christ, why would not the voice of this Alpha and Omega be the voice of a multitude? It could scarcely be anything else. John was not seeing Christ as He was at first. He was seeing Christ as He is at last. He sees Him in triumph, shouting, "Behold, I and the sons which God has given Me!"

Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. The Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. When we read, "With it He will smite the nations," our first thought must not be vindictiveness as so many preach. This sword of the Spirit does far more than kill. It pierces to the dividing asunder of flesh and spirit and discerns the thoughts of men and the intents of their hearts, and more often than not it brings repentance rather than judgment. The mighty outpouring of God's word at Pentecost caused men to be pricked and cut and pierced to the heart until they cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And the answer of the word was quick and clear: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." **Acts 2:37-41.** When Stephen preached the word, they were cut to the heart, and to Paul the Spirit said, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." It is true that to the unbeliever the sharp sword of the Word of God will someday condemn and kill, but the first and primary meaning must always be that it will pierce and cut and prick the conscience, bringing repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ.

His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength. Daniel, in corroboration of this statement, said, "His face was as the appearance of lightning. The prophet Ezekiel said, "The earth shined with His glory." **Ezek. 43:2.** In the light of this glorious revelation of what the body of Christ really is, I do not wonder that, when John saw the glory of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, he especially noticed that the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. Rev. 21:23.

There is in verse 15 a beautiful statement, which I have purposely left to the last. Daniel describes it thus: "His arms and His feet were like in color to polished brass." Dan. 10:6. In the beginning of this chapter we spoke of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples and of Peter's protest, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" "But," said Jesus, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me." The feet are as much a part of the body as the heart or the head, but we need not be reminded that the head appears first at birth followed by other vital parts of the body and finally the feet. Centuries ago a baby was born to Rachel. He was the last of the twelve sons of Jacob. When that child was born, his mother died. She called him Benoni, meaning son of my sorrow, but Jacob named him Benjamin, which loosely translated, means this: Son of my right hand born in the extremity of the age. We who are coming into sonship now in the extremity of the age are the feet members of Christ's body, the last to be born into God's family of sons. "Blessed are the feet of him who bringeth glad tidings of the gospel of peace." The gospel of peace is the gospel of the kingdom.

It is all very glorious and I marvel not that John, upon seeing it, fell as dead at His feet and Daniel, seeing the same things, says, "There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me to corruption, and I retained no strength." **Dan. 10:8.** Such a sight as this is too much for mortal eyes, but its glory destroys corruption and mortality and awakens the saint to incorruption and immortality and eternal life. Such in the words of a man is the glory of "My Father's house," though seen afar off as through a glass darkly. Thus in the faltering words of man is the picture of "My Father's house," God's living temple, the body of Christ.

One day, as I read the vision which John saw of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the bride, descending from God out of heaven, I was amazed to read these words: "And I saw no temple therein: Rev. 21:22. Taken aback, I asked, "Whatever has become of the temple of His glory, which He has been building with such meticulous care throughout the entire age of grace?" Then I saw and understood the infinite words of truth, "For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." This is "My Father's house." This is the temple not made with hands. This is the body of Christ. From this temple of sons our God will rule the universe. Again in spirit I hear Paul say, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22.** Again I hear our Savior pray, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou has loved Me." Amen.

CHAPTER FOUR MY FATHER'S HOUSE

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" **Psa. 8:4-9.**

Before we attempt to explain truth so sublime as is contained in these beautiful words, it would be well to pause that our hearts may be searched to see if we are ready to receive such divine revelation as God's Spirit would bestow. The closer our walk with God and the further we go in the deep things of God the more we are faced with the indisputable fact that it is impossible for man to receive any truth from God unless that truth is revealed to the heart by a revelation of the Holy Spirit. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11.** Again it is written that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9,10.** It is not by the spirit of the world that God would give us understanding that we by earthly wisdom and scholarly attainments might unlock the hidden things of the Most High, "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14.**

Men were always in conflict with Jesus of Nazareth because they belonged to the earthly realm while He belonged to the heavenly realm. The only things that were real to them were the things that could be seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched, while He saw the invisible, hear the inaudible, and clearly understood the incomprehensible. Because of the plane on which He dwelt, He knew that the things that are seen by natural eyes or heard by natural ears are only temporal, but the things, which are not seen, are eternal. **2 Cor. 4:18.**

Before our eyes can behold the visions of God, we must be done forever with the opinions of men. We must be ready to throw all our human notions and church traditions on the dung heap, for "what things were gain to me" must be counted loss for Christ. Though we, like Paul, may have been brought up at the feet of some learned Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), instructed in all the traditions of the fathers, and found blameless in the light of our own understanding, yet, in that very moment when light brighter than any earthly sun shines into the darkness of

our natural mind, we will count all but dung and refuse in comparison to the more excellent glory of God's eternal purpose. We could without difficulty make an impressive list of righteous men who abhorred their very existence and deplored their corruption in that moment when a ray of light from on high burst upon them. We could tell of Job, a man perfect and upright who feared God and shunned evil, of whom even God Himself testified that there was none like him in all the earth. Yet, when all his arguments were done and the dissenting voices of his counselors fell silent, God spoke, and, when He spoke, all the understanding and wisdom of Job shriveled and withered into the dusts of nothingness, for he found he could not answer one question in a thousand and his own righteousness was such that he abhorred himself in God's sight and repented in dust and ashes. Job 42:1-6.

Oh, how quickly will men dismount the hobby horses of their traditions, how willingly will they cast their prided doctrines on the dung hill, and how gladly will they discard the trinkets of their teaching in that blessed moment when a ray of light from the celestial realm shines through the darkness of the natural mind! You, my friend, now reading these lines, are not exempt, nor am I who write them, for the understanding of the Almighty will come to give us light and, where the understanding of God bursts upon our spirit, we will wonder how it was that we could have been so blind or so content with the emptiness of our knowledge of Him. The proud in wisdom will be abased when they see in light eternal that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God.

As a little boy I was raised on a farm far out on the western prairies. We were pioneers in the truest sense of the word. We were homesteaders forty miles beyond the end of the steel. There were no telephones, radios, autos, or superhighways. Our transportation was horses and wagons and our first habitation was a seven by seven tent. As time went by, a little village grew up twelve miles from our farm home. Finally the railway came in and there were many signs of bustling progress. But what was my great delight when one day my younger brother and I were treated to a trip to a distant city! There our wondering eyes saw things we had never known existed. The electric lights, running water, the great buildings and beautiful stores, the dazzling array of electric signs and things to numerous to mention, though commonplace now, were then a new and living wonder to us. At last the day came to return to our country home. It was midnight when the train pulled into our little town of Alsask and, had I not been able to read the name clearly printed on the railroad station, I am sure I would have thought we had got off at the wrong place. Instead of brilliant lights and flashing signs a little kerosene lamp in a brass bracket offered its pale and doubtful glow. The station itself seemed to have shrunk to one third its size since we last saw it two weeks earlier, or had the old one been moved away and a new and tiny one brought in to replace it? The whole village must have been asleep except the mailman who loaded his bags on a little cart and trundled off through the frosty night to the Post Office. As the big engine puffed off into the darkness, we toddled off through the snow to the little hotel where, I still remember, we paid one dollar for a bed.

How quickly falls our castle of cards in the light of greater things! How soon our paltry religious world with its little "church" ritual withers away in the blessed light of celestial realities and the vaunted strongholds of our traditions crumble into nothingness in the light of the heavenly vision. For as heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. But His rain, falling down from heaven, causes the earth, which we are, to bud and bring forth fruit, and His word of truth, falling with the light of revelation upon our darkened hearts, fills us with the understanding of the Almighty until from the dust and ashes of our desolation we rise to sing, How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

We are going to need more than human understanding to give the correct answer to David's question, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" How sadly often have I heard this text used to prove that man is nothing but a useless worm and that it is a never ending wonder that the Lord even notices him or pays any attention to him. Whether we believe it or not, this, alas, is the attitude of almost all the existing church system and almost all her ministers of whatsoever sect or faction they may be. I am afraid that comparatively few people have ever noticed that, when David by inspiration asked, "What is man?" he immediately proceeded to answer his own question in that strange veiled manner so common to divine revelation. "For it is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." **Prov. 25:2.**

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Bear with me a moment and we will paraphrase this question to allow our minds to be lifted from the rut into which tradition has cast us. Let us read it this way. "What hast Thou in mind for man? What is Thy purpose concerning him?" Why did God make man in the first place? Why has He so marvelously visited the sons of men with such abounding grace and longsuffering? If we can begin to think in these terms, then the very attitude of our lives will be transformed. Instead of seeing mankind as a sort of troublesome mystifying nuisance unworthy of God's notice, we will behold eternal purpose in God's creation of man and in all His continued loving-kindness and tender mercy toward him.

We may be eternally thankful that David did not leave the question without an answer. The same Holy Spirit that provoked the question of his heart inspired the answer of his lips. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him," he mused, "or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Then the answer sprang like a prophecy in his spirit, and, as we read his inspired words, we may well see that they blaze with a wonderful graduation of truth that portrays each progressive step in the history of man from the day of his creation until that blessed day when he, a member of the body of Christ, sits enthroned as the Lord of the universe. Thus in the eighth Psalm does David by the Spirit trace with unerring accuracy each progressive step which God from the beginning purposed for mankind in that day when the divine fiat went forth: "Let us make men in our image and after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." **Gen. 1:26.**

What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Or, what hast Thou in mind for man?

First; Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.

Second; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Third; Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands.

Fourth; Thou has put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through of the paths of seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

The superb wisdom of God has ordained that all things in His creation must develop from the finite to the infinite. The majestic oak must begin as an acorn. The towering redwood of five thousand summers must serve its term as a sapling. The mighty Amazon must begin with its tributaries. So sons of God, ordained to the throne of the universe, have their beginning as enemies of God, the children of wrath fulfilling the desire of the flesh and of the mind, without God and having no hope in the world. "But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus". **Eph. 2:4-7.** And, lest we should doubt His almighty ability to manifest His grace in ages to come, He twice reminds us that we, too, were saved by grace and by grace alone. See Eph. 2:5,8. Since God's grace so abundantly reaches us in the despair and desolation of our sin in this age, why should it be thought a thing impossible that the God of all grace should in coming ages extend His mercy and His kindness to all creation through Christ Jesus? However much some may try to defend their ancient tradition of condemnation and despair, let it be known that God has declared that in the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:7.

The second chapter of Hebrews begins with these words: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." **Heb. 2:1.** The things, which we have heard! What things does he mean? Have you ever seriously asked yourself that question? What things have we heard to which we are to give such earnest heed? Oh, that God's people would meditate upon His word and earnestly enquire of Him, for I think that, the moment God's true purpose for mankind is revealed to any man by the Spirit, that man like blind Bartimaeus will cast away every hindering garment to go running after Jesus. What man is there who will not follow God when once God's infinite purpose is made known to his

heart? The gospel being preached by the church system today is not the true gospel, but is largely morbid poppycock founded upon Roman tradition. It shows neither the purpose of God in creating man nor the purpose of God in redeeming him. It has no promise for the saints but an idle heaven and no future for the sinner but a blazing hell. It proves Satan to be stronger than the Almighty, giving him the lion's share of all God's creation. It makes him wiser than the omniscient One in that he outsmarted Him. It offers no purpose for the fall of man, considering not at all that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." **Rom. 8:20-21**. Why, the sufferings of this present fallen state are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18), for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4:17-18.

What then are those things to which we should give such earnest heed? are they not the things of which the apostle spoke in Hebrews, chapter one, and of which he continues to speak in the remainder of the entire book of Hebrews? If you would understand the book of Hebrews, you must first understand that wherever the son is mentioned more is implied than the blessed Jesus of Nazareth. You will have to comprehend that the son referred to here includes that vast family of sons who are coming into His image and likeness of whom the blessed Jesus of Nazareth is the exalted and glorious representative head. For as we, being many, are all one body, so also is Christ. Thus it is that the sons of God become the Son of God, for in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body; therefore, if you can understand this magnificent truth, you will see that the whole body of sons has become the only begotten Son of the Father. In one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, one body of what? One body of sons and one body of Christ. Did we not say above that mighty oaks from acorns grow? Did not Jesus say, "I am the vine; ye are the branches?" And is it not infallibly true that we have all grown up into Him which is the head that there may be one body of sons and that one body the only begotten of God? We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We have been all made to drink into one Spirit and thus have we become one spirit with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. What a miracle of divine grace is this that as the water mingles with water, so spirit mingles with Spirit that man may be one spirit with the Father!

Here then in order are the things to which we must give earnest heed: **First**, God who spoke in time past by the prophets is in these last days speaking by His Son. **Second**, God hath made the Son better than the angels, for by inheritance He hath obtained a more excellent name than they. Heb. 1:4. **Third**, to which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. Heb. 1:5. **Fourth**; When He bringeth His only begotten into the world, He saith, "Let all the angels worship Him." Verse 6. **Fifth**, He maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire, but unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, oh God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. Verses 7, 8. **Sixth**, to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Verse 13.

My head and my heart, my soul and my spirit bow down in the dust of humility at the mention of such marvelous grace as God has bestowed upon us in that we should be called the sons of God, and truly it is said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." **1 John 3:2-3**.

In the blazing light of such humbling truth can we not now understand what the apostle meant when he said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip"? I am sure that, once such sublime hope becomes part of the inner spirit and we can see the hope of sons of God, then there will come a radical transformation in every life. The hope that is set before us of entering into such glory will fade every trial into nothingness. Every unsurpassable mountain will become a mole hill, every difficulty a stairway to the stars. Every fiery trial will be a light affliction and every loss of natural things a gain in the Spirit, and we will find ourselves citizens of heaven while yet we dwell on earth. Instead of groaning over tribulation, we will take pleasure in affliction, in persecutions, in distresses and in loss,

for that which is a loss in the natural is a gain in Christ, transforming the sons into the image and likeness of the only begotten Son of the Father. In our weakness we will be strong, for His strength is made perfect in weakness.

I do not persuade men to conform their lives to a creed that they may attain heaven when they die. Let those preach thus who will, but let us who have the hope of sonship burning within our breasts count everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, for whom we now suffer the loss of all things and do count them but dung that we may win Christ and be found complete in Him.

Not only did the apostle exhort us to give heed to the things we have heard, but he was also preparing our hearts for things, which he would yet tell us. It is of great significance that he now takes up an exposition of the words of the prophet David, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Thus he says, "For unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one (David) in a certain place (Psalm 8:4) testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." **Heb. 2:5-8**. It is unfortunate that we become so accustomed to rhyming of the scriptures that we seldom pause to let the Holy Spirit reveal their truth to our hearts. For this reason it is often beneficial to read from an unfamiliar translation of the scripture that our understanding might be changed and enlightened. Now Weymouth in his translation makes **Heb. 2:5-8**, the passage quoted above from the King James version, to read like this: "It is not to angels that God hath assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of which we speak. But, as we know, a psalmist has exclaimed, how poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him/or a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor hast Thou crowned him, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. (Psa. 8:4-6). For this subjecting of the universe unto man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him (man). But we do see Him, who was made for a little while lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that He by the grace of God might taste death for every man."

The plain and indisputable teaching of this passage of scripture is that man, who was made lower than the angels, shall at last through the wisdom of the Father and the boundless grace of Christ be crowned with such glory and honor that he shall be set over all the works of God's hands, and that everything shall be under his feet. Indeed, the passage you have just read distinctly says, "This subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him." The apostle follows this almost unbelievable statement with these words: "We do not as yet see the universe subject to him (Weymouth translation), but we do see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor." Now what is so significant about the fact that we do see Jesus crowned with glory and honor? It is simply this: In seeing Him crowned with glory and honor, we are beholding the beginning of the fulfillment of this wonderful passage, for He (Jesus), being the head of that vast company of sons who are now coming into His image, has already been crowned. Thus there can be no greater surety in either heaven or earth that we too shall now follow Him into that same glory as sons of God and joint heirs with Christ. Since the first Son, the Prince, Captain, and the Head of all the sons, has been crowned with glory and honor, we have the perfect assurance that we also who are sons and members of that same body of sons, we who are the shoulders, the hands, and the feet of that same glorious Christ, the only begotten of the Father, will enter into glory and honor with Him when our turn comes. "For it was fitting that He for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should perfect by suffering the prince leader of their salvation. For both He who sanctifies (Jesus Christ) and those whom He is sanctifying (you and me) have all one Father; and for this reason He (Jesus) is not ashamed to speak of them (us) as His brothers; as when He says; "I will proclaim Thy name to my brothers: in the midst of the congregation I will hymn Thy praises" (**Psa. 22:22**), and again, "I will be one whose trust reposes in God" (**Psa. 18:2**), and again, "Here am I, and here are the children (sons) God has given Me." **Psa. 8:18. Heb. 2:10-13** (Weymouth).

Words fail me to express such eternal wisdom, kindness, grace and power as God does here display. Such promise gives me no feeling of pride or exaltation, but of sober and terrible humility, "for I have heard of Thee

with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

There is a spirit of sonship. It is the Spirit of His Son - the spirit of reverence and fear, the spirit of adoring contemplation, the spirit that is willing to suffer in the flesh and thus be done with sin. The spirit of sonship willingly embraces tribulation, affliction, poverty, pain, and misunderstanding, knowing that Jesus was perfected by the things He suffered. So also will those younger sons by affliction be transformed into that same image. In one Holy Spirit all are being baptized into one body. Thus in the unity of that one body the many sons of God are becoming the Son of God that God may forever proclaim, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." I make these points in humility because many today vainly boast of sonship, but, alas, they do not have the Spirit of the Son of God. Many preachers are laying claim to what they call the sonship message who themselves have never caught a glimpse of what sonship really means. I have heard men boast about what we are and what we are going to do as sons of God. Silence, O man! Silence! For you know not of what you speak. Imagine not in your vain heart that a boisterous public ministry, accompanied with much noise and glamour, and loud proclamations of healing and miracles, whether real or unreal, has anything in common with the spirit of sonship. Dare any man boast or be light and frivolous about such a sublime truth as this? Why, even Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that said unto Him, "Thou art My Son: today have I begotten Thee," Heb. 5:5.

There are far too many who understand with the head and not with the heart. They have never learned that it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. Eternal truth can never be displayed to natural minds because God is spirit and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Long Ago the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians, saying, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and have become such as have need of milk and not strong meat; for every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." See Heb. 5:11-14.

Only by revelation of the Holy Spirit can the depths of God's wisdom be explored. The world abounds with men and women who preach the kingdom of God, but who themselves do not possess the spirit of the kingdom. There are literally millions compassing land and sea to make proselytes to the church who have never learned by the Spirit what the church is. The question "what church do you belong to " upon the lips of millions screams the ignorance of every man who asks it, for they imagine that the church is something made with hands, a denomination, a sect, or even a building, but they know not that the church consists of those who are joined to Him and Him alone. During the last twenty years preachers by the hundreds have been circumscribing little groups of people and calling them the body of Christ, but the body of Christ does not consist of visible groups whether large or small just because they adhere to a certain line of teaching. The body of Christ consists of those who have drunk deeply of His Spirit. They are the mystical company neither known nor recognized of men who in one spirit have been baptized into one body.

What God's people need today is not a repetition of the revivals of yesteryear. They need to separate themselves unto God. They need to set aside two or three weeks for fasting and prayer, humbling themselves before God to empty themselves of themselves and all their human notions. They need to lay their doctrines and beliefs on the altar and to lay all their past as well as their future in His hands. When you fast, do not fast for something. Do not fast for a gift, or for power, or even for revelation. Do not fast for a revival or anything else, but fast that you may be so emptied of self that henceforth He may lead you. It is not what we want that counts. It is what God wants that is important. Men never seem to cease from begging God for things they think they need or things they imagine should be. But God will not give you things. He will give you what you need and strip you of much you imagined was necessary. The life of every man will undergo a great change if there is honest fasting before the Lord.

Now the Lord dwelleth not in temples made with hands. The tabernacle in the wilderness, built with such intricate direction from God, was only a figure of the true tabernacle, which is the body of Christ. The temple of Solomon, so replete with typical observance, was but a frail prefigure of that wonderful spiritual habitation which the Lord is now building - a temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Let us seek the inspiration of God and the revelation of the Lord that our eyes may be opened to discern spiritual truth. Let us look beyond the phraseology commonly used by preacher and priest that we might begin to understand the true meaning of scriptures which we have read and re-read, often without thought, for the better part of our lives.

Hear now with the ear of the spirit the words of the apostle Paul who calls the true church the household of God, the true church of the Lord, the true and eternal habitation of God, of which Christ is the true corner stone. In the book of Ephesians he writes: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22.** Wonderful as these words are, their meaning comes with even greater force when we read from the less familiar words of Weymouth's translation. "You are therefore no longer foreigners nor persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are members of His family. You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the corner stone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22.** (Weymouth). These are the words of divine inspiration proclaiming to the heart that is attuned to God's voice that God has no temple but the holy saints of the Lord, no habitation but the true and mystical body of Christ, no house but that house not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavenlies. The word household simply means a number of persons dwelling under one roof. Thus the saints of the Lord have become the household of God, and we are members of His family. We are not strangers and foreigners excluded from civil rights, but we are members of His family and of His household, sharing all the blessing and benefit of His paternal care until that hour when we come to maturity or come of age as joint heirs with our elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are, I suppose, benefits in being a member of any family, and there are blessings in belonging to almost any household, but the eternal benefits of belonging to the family of God and being a member of His household are better left without description, for the frailty of man's words would seem only to decrease the endless bounty of such a wonderful relationship. Those who are members of God's family are God's heirs. They are joint heirs with Christ to all the things that God had in mind for man when first His edict went forth: "Let us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, and let us give, him dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." **Gen. 1:26.** Which things are an allegory, for the fish represent the things under the earth, the cattle the things on the earth, and the birds the things that pertain to the heavenlies.

God in these last days has spoken to us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things. Heb. 1:2. Even now, while we read this promise, His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be glorified together. **Rom. 8:16, 17.** "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." **Gal. 3:26-29.** "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." Gal. 4:1. But the time of maturity is at hand and the years of childhood and adolescence are past. It is time to enter maturity and the age of spiritual responsibility where children are no more children, but sons of God. There is a wonderful maturity between the words of **Gal. 4:1**, "the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant", and the words of **Gal. 4:6,7**, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son in your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (our Father). Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Lest we should let the truth slip from our hearts, we will emphasize this truth. We who have been begotten unto a living hope through faith in Christ Jesus are begotten of God, even as John wrote, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself and the wicked one toucheth him not." **1 John 5:18.** Peter also by the wisdom given unto him wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy

hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." **1 Pet. 1:3.** Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Head, was begotten of God the Father, but so abundant was God's grace toward us that we, too, have been begotten unto a living hope. "For of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." **Jas. 1:18.** "And every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." **1 John 5:1.**

Surely our spiritual understanding will grasp the truth that we, being members of His household, are in truth the household of God, and we, being members of His family, are the family of God. But now we must learn also that we, being members of His body, are not only members but one body in Christ and every one members one of another. The body of Christ is the completeness of Christ. It is the fullness of Christ. In its unity the sons of God become the Son of God, for in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. It is right to believe that we are complete in Him, "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." **Col. 2:9-10.** Wonderful is the glorious fact that we are complete in Him, but what shall we say when our spiritual understanding begins to grasp the revelation that He is complete in us? For God "hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." **Eph. 1:22-23.** The words of Weymouth's translation are most remarkable. "God has put all things under his feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." Thus the true church, the true body of Christ, becomes the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. Is it any wonder, then, that David by the Spirit mused, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained: what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

Moses was faithful in all his house (tabernacle) as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we..." **Heb. 3:5-6.** A house, as we well know, is a dwelling place or an abiding place. It may be a hovel or it may be a mansion, but it is none the less a dwelling place. Therefore, to make the truth live that we might easily grasp it, we are here called the house of the Lord, as it is written: "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:16.** It is important that we understand that we are the House of the Lord. We have become so accustomed to calling church buildings made of brick and stone the house of God that we are amazed when we are shown that these are nothing but buildings, which will fall into discard and be left without one stone upon another. The true house of God is a spiritual temple, which temple you are. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" **1 Cor. 6:19.** "For the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of My rest?" **Acts 7:48-49.**

Long ago our Lord told an earnest disciple, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head", but in the ages since that day He has been building with infinite care an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, after a pattern devised by God long before man breathed the breath of life or became a living soul. Even Jesus referred to Himself as the temple of God when He said to the unbelieving Jews, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up..., but He spake of the temple of His body." **John 2:19,21.** Is it any wonder, then, that we, the sons of God born in the extremity of the age, should also be told that we are the temples of God? "Know ye not," said Paul, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" **1 Cor. 3:16.**

During the few final hours our Lord spent with His disciples before the crucifixion He told them many things they could not understand, for their eyes were clouded with tradition and their spirits dulled by their fleshy mind. If they could not understand the fact of His death nor what the rising from the dead would mean, how could they understand truths that were far beyond the comprehension of most Christians even in our day? He had said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" How then could men such as these understand the sublime truths of John 14?

"In My Father's house", said He, "are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you." You will have to discard your tradition if you are to understand what He meant, for He was not describing some distant heaven

with houses and lawns and flowers as we have so often heard, but something far more wonderful than that. We have already learned that God's people are the habitation of the Lord. Therefore the true and mystical church, which is being formed by the craftsmanship of God, is the Father's house of many mansions. Every room in that house is an individual believer and every believer is an abiding place for God. God dwells in them all, for we have become the habitation of God. Even now, while we live and breathe, He is preparing our place in the body of Christ; yea, He is preparing us for our place in Christ that we might be the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. In Revelation chapter 22 the bride of Christ is described as a holy city, great and high, with gates that are never closed, into which the nations in ages to come will bring their glory and honor. Is it any wonder, then, that the bridegroom company should be described as a house of many mansions, the habitation of God through the Spirit?

The great King Solomon, when preparing to build the temple at Jerusalem, made this remarkable statement: "Who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build an house, save only to burn sacrifice before Him?" **2 Chron. 2:6**. But the beloved John, seeing the end of the matter, proclaimed, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." **Rev. 21:3**. Rejoice, Oh house not made with hands, for in thy many membered mansion the Father dwelleth!

CHAPTER FIVE MY FATHERS HOUSE THE TRUE TEMPLE OF THE LORD

Man, like his Maker, has always been a builder. As a boy builds with wooden blocks a model of his father's skyscraper, so little earth-bound man has tried to build a model of his heavenly Father's temple. If he had known that the model he built was nothing more than a model, all would have been well, but, not being able to see into the realm of the Lord, man has built his temples and his towers, vainly imagining that the mime (farce) he was building was the finished product that God desired.

In a beginning, for with God there are many beginnings, the Lord uttered the decree, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." No man that has ever walked on the earth has yet remotely fathomed the depth of purpose laid up in that one mighty edict. As centuries have passed, man has embraced many theories about himself. The theologians, erroneously so called, of the church system see man as a sort of lost cause, 'gone completely astray in every sense of the word from the path God had planned for him so that even the Almighty Himself was hard put to it to salvage from the wreckage even a remote few of the billions who would come into the world.

I despise the hateful teaching that has crept like a plague into the understanding of men, leaving them with the distorted and ridiculous notion that one day, back in the Garden of Eden, God's plan went all wrong, that it took a turn of events that the Almighty never intended and that had not entered the mind of the Omniscient at all. We are given to understand that, whereas the whole plan backfired and exploded in God's face, the Lord was hard pressed to quickly devise a scheme to salvage a handful of these benighted souls from the awful calamity that had unwittingly befallen both them and their Maker. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and nothing could be more dishonoring to the wisdom of the omniscient God. Times unnumbered we have heard well-meaning but grossly ignorant men explaining to their gullible congregations how that after the fall of man a council was held in heaven to enquire by what means man could be redeemed from the awful catastrophe that had befallen him. With my own ears I have heard them tell how, after this plan and that plan of redemption was advanced by angels without hope of success, Jesus volunteered to go to the earth to die for man and this plan was accepted by the Lord. I greatly fear that my own mind is so intolerant toward such childish human notions that it would be safer to make no comment at all, for such human device leaves God in the untenable position of having no more wisdom, understanding, or forethought than fallen men. Indeed, it leaves Him with much less wisdom than Satan himself, who could thus come unobserved into the garden of God and, with a moment's trickery and persuasion, hopelessly undo, and that forever, the thing that God had planned.

However man can profess to believe that God is omniscient (all-wise) and in the same breath propagate a teaching that clearly makes Satan much wiser than He, I do not know. Nor can I understand how one could

believe that God is omnipresent (everywhere present) and still imagine that something could transpire in His absence. How could one embrace the truth that God is omnipotent (all-powerful) yet still believe that Satan overcame Him, or that God is immutable (unchanging) yet had to change His purpose to fit a calamity which He had not foreseen? Oh, the foolishness and ignorance of the inconsistent carnal mind! Oh, the blindness and degradation of human tradition! Poor little earth-bound man, puny in strength, unwise in mind, changeable as the wind, confined entirely to that which is immediately present, has forgotten that the Almighty God, omniscient in wisdom, plans the end before the beginning. His immutability can never swerve from its divine course because of things unknown, for there is no unknown with Him. His almighty power irresistibly carries forth the edicts of His infinite mind; neither is there angel, principality, nor power that can let or hinder Him. He is the omnipresent, and should I "make my bed in hell," He is there.

"Oh Lord, Thou has searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with Three." **Psa. 139-1-18.**

Did ever such a river of life flow from the mind of saint or seer, philosopher or prophet, that could more adequately describe the one true God, omnipotent, omnipresent, immutable, omniscient, eternal, full of grace, truth, and love? Oh, the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Who hath understood the mind of the Lord? Who hath been His counselor? Who has given anything to Him for, which he must be repaid? From Him everything comes; by Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends. To Him be glory forever and ever more!

Every man that names the name of God, and even those who never call upon Him, should seek after the Lord if haply He would reveal Himself to them. Verily, verily I tell you that, once He begins to unfold the greatness of His power, the un-searchableness of His wisdom and understanding, the immutability of His purpose, the extent of His kindness, the length and breadth, the depths and heights of His love, you will find a regeneration taking place in your life that you never could have otherwise known. The blinding traditions of men that have so long chained you in outer darkness will begin to fall as scales from your eyes in the light of what He really is. No longer shall the liberating truths of God be confined by the narrow and egotistical interpretations of human theology that bind men in chains and lay upon them burdens too heavy to bear, for He who lives within does plainly declare that, as He is, so are we in this present world. 1 John 4:17. No longer can he whom the Son of God has thus set free subject himself to the ball and chain of human organization. He will cast it far from him, for he will see it to be the shadowy specter of outer darkness that it is. Denomination and human organization are to the believer what a plaster jacket is to the body. Breathing is checked. Activity is greatly limited. Presently the whole frame is weakened until it becomes entirely useless and dwindles away. This is the faithful witness of the Word of God and of history as well. If some will say, "In unity there is strength", we must answer that the only unity God knows is the unity that comes, not when minds are one with each other, but when minds are one with Him. All other unity is human, carnal, earthly, and doomed. It is like the disgusting spectacle of ecumenism, for there everyone throws away all that may be precious for the sake of presenting a grotesque image of togetherness before the eyes of men, even an image that will have power to speak and cause all who will not worship it to be put to death. Rev. 13:14-15.

The temples of the Old Testament, built by the artifice of men, were only typical at their best. The kings and priests of the Old Testament were but a shadow of nations of kings and priests to come, eternal priests after the order of Melchisedec and eternal kings after the same order, of whom Jesus Christ was the fore-runner, Melchisedec was King of Righteousness, for that is the meaning of his name, and King of Salem, which means king of peace. Jesus is the prince of the kings of the earth, for He hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. Rev. 1:5-6. The magnificent temple built by king Solomon in Jerusalem, in spite of all its transcending splendor, was at best but a fleeting shadow of the temple of His body which will one day, and that right soon, lighten the whole world with its glory, and the universe as well. The seven flickering lights of the holy place were at best frail representations of the sevenfold light of God's Spirit that shall make needless the sun as it shines in that temple not made with hands. The blood of beasts that flowed like rivers in sacrifice for the sins of the nation, could never take away sin and was but a herald of the blood of Christ which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, blood incorruptible and eternal that was offered once and for all to take away the sins of the whole world. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin," (Heb. 10:4), for in them there is a remembrance of sin made every year, but now, once in the end of the age hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Naught of the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty sinner peace,
Or wash away his stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

More than a thousand years before Christ, the Lord God of heaven gave to His servant David a pattern for a temple that would be typical of His mystical body, the true church, which is that true temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Any man who has read the word of God will have noticed that only seldom does the Lord give minute details of anything. Being a God of truth, He seldom produces facts to prove His case, but merely states things exactly as they are. Such, for instance, is the case in the vast and sweeping statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It is only when men try to tamper with His statements that they get themselves into a world of difficulty. Important as was the creation of the earth, yet in my opinion it stands as almost nothing in comparison to the creation of that mystical heavenly temple, not made with hands, which is forever to be the habitation of God through the Spirit, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, the dwelling place of the Lord.

In order to better display how priceless and important is the temple of His body, the Holy Spirit has seen fit to portray in minute detail almost all things concerning both the wilderness tabernacle and the magnificent temple at Jerusalem. The movable tabernacle, so important in all Israel's wilderness wanderings, represented the formation of the body of Christ here on earth. The permanent temple in Jerusalem represented that enduring day when journeying is done and the government of the whole world shall go forth from the living temple, which is His body, His holy habitation. "For I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I shall be their God, and they shall be My people."

"Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and the houses thereof and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers and the inner parlors and of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit". 1 Chron. 28:11-12. Furthermore, David said, "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things to be made of silver, and brass for things to be made of brass, and iron for things to be made of iron, and wood for things to be made of wood; onyx stones and stones to be set, glistening stones and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones and of marble stones in abundance."

1 Chron. 29:2,3. From his own treasure he gave three thousand talents of gold of Ophir, seven thousand talents of refined silver (verses 3,4), and to this the chief men of Israel added much more. (Verses 6-9). But David himself was not permitted to build the temple because he was a man of war and a bloody man. Therefore the task was committed to Solomon, his son, to whom the Lord appeared to grant him wisdom above all that had been before him, and such as exceeded all the kings of the nations about him. 2 Chron. 1:7-12.

The preparation made by Solomon for the building and glory of the temple of God staggers the imagination, for in the history of the world no other building of such surpassing splendor has ever been built. Seventy thousand men were employed to bear burdens, eighty thousand men were employed to hew timber in the mountains, and thirty-six hundred men were placed as overseers. 2 Chron. 2:2,18. Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent to Solomon a man "skilful to work in gold, in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber; in purple, in blue, in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men..." **2 Chron. 2:7, 13-14.** Such was the skill and wisdom of this unnamed artificer that one must immediately recognize him to be an outstanding type of the blessed Holy Spirit in whom is all wisdom and understanding of the omniscient God to build, not a temple made with hands, but a temple not made with hands, even the living temple of his body.

To gain a better understanding of the glory of that typical temple built by Solomon, it is necessary to peruse in detail the first seven chapters of the book of second Chronicles. There one will read of a house that was garnished with gold, magnificently studded with all manner of precious stones. Even the nails that held the timbers were of pure gold. The cherubims whose wings extended twenty feet over the Mercy Seat were also of pure gold. Silver was in such abundance that it was as stones in the street. 2 Chron. 1:15. When therefore one remembers that gold is a symbol of deity, silver is a symbol of redemption, brass is a symbol of judgment, and wood is a symbol of humanity, how glorious in type and symbol was this magnificent building whose wood (humanity) was overlaid with gold (deity), whose altar of sacrifice was of brass (judgment), and whose silver (redemption) was as plentiful as the stones.

Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, five hundred and ninety years after the exodus from Egypt, one thousand and twenty years after Abraham came out of Mesopotamia into Canaan, one thousand four hundred and forty years after the flood, and three thousand one hundred and two years after the creation of Adam. It would be impossible for anyone, however skilful, to describe the magnificence of Solomon's temple. History records that the dazzling splendor of it could scarcely be believed even by those who saw it. According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, the foundations were laid deep in the ground. The materials were strong stones and such as would resist the force of time. These were to unite themselves with the earth and become a basis and sure foundation for the superstructure, which was erected over it. The foundation was to be so strong that it would support with ease the vast superstructures and the precious ornaments whose own weight was to be not less than the weight of those other high and heavy buildings, which the king designed to be both ornamental and magnificent. They erected its entire body, quite up to the roof, of white stone. Its height was sixty cubits, its length was the same, and its breadth was twenty cubits. The entire building was enclosed with cedar to which were fixed plates of sculptured gold, so that the whole temple shone and dazzled the eyes of those who entered by the splendor of the gold that was on every side of them. The whole structure of the temple was made with great skill of polished stones laid together so very harmoniously and smoothly that there appeared to the spectators no sign of any hammer or other instrument of architecture, as if, without any use of them, the materials had naturally united themselves together that the agreement of one part with another seemed rather to have been natural than to have arisen from the force of tools upon them. Doors of cedar overlaid with a great amount of gold led to the holy of holies, and before the doors hung the magnificent veil of blue and purple and scarlet of the brightest and softest linen with curious flowers wrought upon them. Solomon made all this for the honor of God with a great variety of magnificence, sparing no cost, but using all manner of liberality in adorning the temple. It exceeded all description in words, "Nay, if I may say so, is hardly believed upon sight." (Josephus)

2 Chron. 9 gives a remarkable account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba. In **verse 4** it is recorded, "And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel; his cupbearers also

and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her; and she said to the king, it was a true report that I heard in my own land and of thine acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not their words until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me; for thou exceedest the fame that I heard." King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom, and all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart. 2 Chron. 9:20-28.

Such is the meager and faltering description of the magnificent temple of God, built by the skill of human hands. Though such exceeding splendor has never been equaled before nor since in any building made by human hands, yet it is only dust, a thing that was to pass away. It is no more than a shadow of things to come, a meager representation of that true temple not made by the art of men's hands, even the temple of His body, spiritual, eternal, and not made with hands. The stones of the true temple are not of polished granite, but every stone is a living stone, men and women tried and tested and polished by the vicious storms of life, fitted with such exactness of unity that none can tell but that they have been knit together and grown together from one foundation, Jesus Christ. The gold of this heavenly temple is not the molten gold from the bowels of the earth, but the true gold which is divinity itself, for we who have escaped the world's corruption are made partakers of the divine nature. All is God, God is all, and He is all and in all. Every human board is overlaid with the gold of deity, for just as Christ, who was in the form of God, took upon Himself the form of man and was made in the likeness of men, so we who were in the form of man have taken on the nature of God and are being made in His likeness and in His image. Long ago three men were cast alive into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace, bound hand and foot, in their hats, their coats, and their hosen. But, when the servants of the king looked into the furnace expecting to see naught but ashes, their astonished eyes beheld a fourth man whose form was the form of a Son of God. That is what is transpiring now. Amid the blood and fire and vapor of smoke forms are changing, hearts are being regenerated, spirits are being transformed, that we might rise free from our chains in His likeness and in His image.

Through millenniums and whole dispensations the gladsome hope of awaking in His likeness has filled the hearts of the people of God. From the desolating dusts and ashes of their fiery furnaces their shouts of triumph are rending the very heavens. Through tears of sorrow, of loss, and of bereavement Job triumphantly exulted, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and after my skin worms destroy this body, in my flesh shall I see God." In my flesh dwelleth no good thing" said Paul, and truly he said it, but from the dust and ashes of our crucified selves comes forth that which is incorruptible and immortal. The flesh is like the raging lion that roared against Samson, threatening to destroy him on the spot. But through the Spirit Samson destroyed this ravaging beast whose only strength was in his own flesh. By the power of the Spirit he tore him as one would have torn a kid and, stamping him into death, he hurled him aside, but told no one of his victory. When many days later he turned aside to see the car case, he found it filled with sweet honey which he took up in his hand, and, as he ate thereof, his heart conceived this wonderful riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." **Judges 14:5-14.** When the roaring lion of your carnal self is crucified, there is honey in that dead lion, and I think Paul knew it when he said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which / now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

Now when Solomon was preparing to build the temple, even as he gathered the material and contemplated its magnificence, he uttered this wonderful truth from his heart: "Who is able to build Him a house, seeing the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build Him an house save only to burn sacrifice before Him?" **2 Chron. 2:6.** Centuries later that inspired deacon of God called Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost and standing before his murderers, declared, "Solomon built Him an house. Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What house will ye build Me, saith the Lord? Or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?" **Acts 7:47-50.**

For three wonderful years the Lord Jesus Christ had instructed His disciples in words of truth and wisdom such as even Solomon had never known, but, as His short earthly ministry drew to a close, He still had many things to tell them that they were not able to bear. John 16:12. The slowness of the human heart to understand is almost inconceivable. How well do these words fit us all! "Oh fools and slow of heart to believe!" We are so full

of our own childish interpretations, so plagued with our pet doctrines, so enamored with our traditions that we can understand nothing as we ought to do. 1 Cor. 8:2. If we are ever to understand the truth as God would have us do, we will find ourselves unlearning almost all we thought we knew. The things we think we know for certain and the revelation of the Lord just do not agree together, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. I have no hesitation in saying that practically all of the commodity we call theology is nothing more or less than a vast conglomeration of human ideas, passed on as tradition from century to century.

If you will read the Gospel of **John, chapters thirteen** through seventeen, you will discover that these chapters comprise one marvelous discourse. While there can be no limit to the truth contained therein, yet the whole sermon is one incomparable teaching, showing as nothing else could do, that the dwelling place of God is in His people, and that the dwelling place of His people is in God. **"I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (17:23)** is the very theme of the whole discourse. **"That they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be made one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."** Chap. 17:21.

The dwelling place of the Lord Jesus was in the Father, and when He said, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am," the indisputable meaning is that they (we) also should dwell in the Father and that the Father should dwell in them (us). The hour has come when we must give up the shadow and grasp the reality. Century after century Israel offered sacrifice of bulls and goats upon their altars, but it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could ever take away sin. But when once in the end of the age Jesus Christ appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, then all the former shadows were done away, for what need is there of shadows when the reality has come? When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. Then He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. Heb. 10:8,9. We are now at the end of the age and not at the beginning. We are at the time when all shadows and types are to be done away, for all which they fore-shadowed is at hand. When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When Jesus entered into the temple, He found it was no longer a house of prayer, but a den of thieves. Crafty-eyed, smooth-talking old cattle dealers, eager to make a quick drachma, had herded their cattle into the temple to sell to the people for sacrifice. Cages of pigeons and turtle doves were on sale for the poor who could afford no better while greedy old money changers had set up a veritable banking system right in the house of God. They were doing a roaring trade in the house of the Lord, but methinks even those crafty old merchandizers could have learned much from the modern money-mongering evangelist as he stands extorting endless thousands of dollars from gullible people in the name of some trumped up program for the conversion of the heathen, to buy a gospel tent, build a temple, purchase a Sunday School bus, or any one of a thousand other crafty schemes that he has no intention of carrying out. Well did Peter say, **"Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not."** **2 Pet. 2:3**. Theirs is the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive of which Paul warned. Eph. 4:14. If Jesus were here today, He would do again what He did then. He would seize a scourge and chase these covetous corrupters helter-skelter from His presence. "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," He warned. And, if He thus cleansed the typical house, what will He do in the true? He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather the wheat into the garner.

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." **John 14:2-3**. "Where is He?" we may ask, to which He replies, **"Believest thou not that I am in the Father?" Vs. 10**. And again in **verse 11**, **"Believe Me that I am in the Father,"** That is where He is. And this is the place He is preparing for those who will become one with Him in the Spirit. This is our hope and eternal resting place. Let us not forget, however, that when Jesus said He dwelt in the Father, He also added that the Father dwelt in Him. John 17:21-23.

The interpretations of poor human beings are always childish in the extreme, for we know nothing yet as we ought to know. 1 Cor. 8:2. We have tried to picture heaven as a place of many mansions, full of temples and lawns, fountains and flowers, where idle inhabitants while away eternity walking golden streets and shouting

hallelujah. I must frankly confess that I know very little about heaven, but of this I am sure: My Father's house is not another name for heaven. It is in truth the dwelling place of God, for it is written. "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I shall be their God and they shall be My people." My Father's house is a house not made with hands. It is the eternal habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2:22. My Father's house is a house of many mansions, for every true believer is a mansion in which God dwells. Every true believer is an habitation of God, and all these fitly framed together in the Spirit grow to a holy temple in the Lord.

"He is our peace — He who has made Jew and Gentile one, and in His own human nature has broken down the hostile dividing wall, by setting aside the law with its commandments, expressed as they were in definite decrees. His design was to unite the two sections of humanity in Himself so as to form one new man, thus effecting peace, and to reconcile Jew and Gentile in one body to God by means of His cross — slaying by it their mutual enmity. So He came and proclaimed the gospel of peace to you who were so far away, and peace to those who were near; because it is through Him that Jew and Gentile alike have access through one Spirit to the Father. You are therefore no longer mere foreigners or persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are members of His family. You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:14;22.** (Weymouth). How could a description of the Father's house be clearer than this or how could its truth be more eloquently stated? We are the building, which is rising on the true foundation to form a holy sanctuary for the Lord, the fixed abode for God through the Spirit.

Many centuries before the New Testament writing revealed the true nature of God's eternal habitation, king David sang these words: "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed ... until I find out a place for the Lord and an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob ... Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou and the ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let Thy saints shout for joy.... For the Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever. Here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. . ." See **Psa. 132.** Thus on the foundation of the apostles and prophets the Father's eternal house of many mansions, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2:21, 22. During the dispensation of the law both the temple and the tabernacle were referred to as the house of God, but after Pentecost the house of God is that spiritual house, the true church, the true believers, and the true body of Jesus Christ. "Every house is built by some man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end." **Heb. 3:4-6.**

Nothing can be clearer than this, that we are the house of God. We are God's workmanship. We are God's building. We are God's Temple. We are the Father's house of many mansions in which a place is being prepared for those who believe in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. It was to this house that Peter referred when he said, "Judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" **1 Pet. 4:17.** And it was likewise to this eternal house that Paul referred when he said to Timothy, "But if I tarry long, that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." **1 Tim. 3:15.** What dynamic words are these! One would need to have an extremely natural mind to think that such living words referred to a building made of brick or stone. But, alas, that is the fathomless depth of ignorance to which the professing multitudes have sunk. One can almost hear the shock of surprise and unbelief in the voice of the apostle Paul when the desperate ignorance of the Corinthian church dawned upon him. "What?" he cries. "Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." **1 Cor. 6:10, 20.**

It was a tragic day, indeed, for the church at Corinth when those noxious weeds of sectarianism were sown among them, for the moment any Christian begins to follow a man, a sect, a system, or a denomination, at that very moment, his spiritual understanding begins to depart from him. There is one church and there is one foundation, even Jesus Christ, the Lord. He is the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, and other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ. 1 Cor. 3:11. See then the awful pit of carnality into which the Corinthian church had fallen, for, instead of knowing the voice of Christ and building on that sure foundation, they had become followers of men. Every one of them was saying, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ." **1 Cor. 1:12.** The result was that they were all divided and all carnal and completely unable to receive anything but milk. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able, for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while (as long as) one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" **1 Cor. 3:1-4.**

Would God that all who read these lines would wake from their slumber of death, for, though the seeds of sectarianism were sprouting in the church in Paul's day, stunting the growth of the believers and filling them with division, throttling revelation and making all strong meat indigestible, in our day that tiny, fertile, noxious seed has grown to a mighty spreading tree in which the unclean fowls of the air find their resting place. In our day denominationalism and all forms of sectarianism have become so popular that every man is expected to be a firm adherent of a denomination or sect of some sort. Those who read know of what I speak, for whether you apply for a job, enter a hospital, join the army, or become a civil servant, the question, "What church do you go to", is always demanded of you, and if you insist that you are just a follower of Christ, they glance at you as though you were some impossible fanatic who had taken complete leave of his senses.

How hateful in the sight of God are all these names of blasphemy. Rev.17:1-3. How numerous have these Babylonish harlots become! Well might Paul cry again, "What I Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body, for two, saith He, shall be one flesh, but he which is joined to the Lord is one spirit. 1 Cor. 6:18. There is a natural fornication and there is a spiritual fornication. He that commits fornication with a woman sins against his body. 1 Cor. 6:18. But he that commits spiritual fornication with these harlot sectarian systems sins against his spiritual body, which is the body of Christ, the temple of the Lord. Therefore doth the Holy Spirit declare, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." **1 Cor. 3; 16, 17.** Surely we must have noticed that all these warnings by the faithful apostle Paul follow his scathing rebukes of their sectarianism.

Let not God's people be longer deceived by these sectarian systems, for they are not the true church, They are not the true body of Christ. They are not the Temple of the Lord. They are filled with division, unbelief, strife, unrighteousness, all manner of human tradition and program, knowing neither the purpose of the Lord nor the knowledge of His will. "Therefore, be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols; for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people, wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:14-18.** Therefore flee this city of destruction without delay, never looking back.

In the midst of all the confusion of the religious systems, which are but the work of men's hands, there is a temple rising upon the mighty Rock, Christ Jesus the Lord. It is a temple not made with hands. It is not a figure of the true, but it is the true. Every living stone is being prepared in the dark quarries of the earth by that master craftsman who proceeded forth from the Father, even the Holy Spirit of God. He is preparing the living stone to present every man faultless and flawless before the throne of God's majesty with exceeding glory. Each living stone in God's living temple has been disallowed and disqualified by men, but chosen of God, and "ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." **1 Pet. 2:3-5.**

That God no longer dwells in temples made by hands there can be no doubt, for, when Solomon had made an end of building the temple, the singers with one hundred and twenty priests stood by the altar, and, when the singers and trumpeters were one, the cloud and glory of the Lord filled the temple so that none could stand to minister. 2 Chron. 5:12. We need not hesitate to say that this event when one hundred and twenty priests stood of one accord and praised God as His glory filled the typical temple is a type of the day of Pentecost when one hundred and twenty believer priests were all together and of one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and they (the people) were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and the fire of God sat upon each of them. In Solomon's day the typical temple made with hands was filled with the glory of the Lord and the fire consumed the sacrifice, but the priests were not filled. At Pentecost it was the living temple that was filled and the fire sat upon each of those blessed living stones (Acts. 2:14), for His new habitation was His people. Even Pentecost was but an earnest of our inheritance, for the living temple was not then complete. Only the living stones were being filled. But the temple has been slowly rising for two thousand years and the day of its filling and dedication is at hand.

What a weight of blessing and spiritual understanding would come to you who read these lines if you would ask God to reveal to you what the true church really is! Then you would soon discover that all these visible organizations are naught but dust and ashes. They are the works of men's hands - nothing more. They have become false Christs to the people. Displacing Christ, the one true shepherd, they have become false shepherds, which lead the sheep in their own ways to enlarge their folds. They compass land and sea to make proselytes, vainly imagining that all they do in God's name is for God's glory. But amid the raging strife of false shepherds and sheep stealers there are those whose ears are deaf to every voice but the voice of the true shepherd. They are dead to every realm but His realm, for they look for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. For ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.

"And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." **Rev. 21:22.** When the worshipper considers that the truth of the temple not made with hands fills the thought of the New Testament, well might he enquire the reason for this strange statement! / saw no temple therein. Has the work of God for all ages been in vain, or do we now behold such depth of meaning as only God Himself can devise? Here, at last, is the end to all our longing, here the answer to every prayer. Man at last is one with his Maker. As the seamless robe of Jesus was knit together, they, too, are knit together in one Spirit, they have grown to a holy temple in the Lord. It has come to pass as Jesus prayed, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe."

"For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked... He that hath wrought us for this self same thing is God who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." **Rev. 21:22.**

CHAPTER SIX AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TRUE ECCLESIA

No man that has ever lived and no revelation that was ever given has been able to remotely comprehend the vastness of the wisdom and love of God's purpose toward us who believe. It is God who filleth the vastness of the eternal heavens. It is God whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. Some time ago I looked in amazement upon an astronomical chart showing what was termed to be "The Sun's Neighbors". My poor finite mind was staggered with the thought that thousands of other suns were often more than forty million light years away from our sun. Light traveling one hundred eighty-six thousand miles per second would take forty million years to travel the distance. Such things are too wonderful for me. Though only about six thousand stars are visible to the natural eye, the mighty telescopes show that there are enough galaxies in the heavens to give one to every man who has ever lived. Yet the heaven of heavens cannot contain God!

The time has certainly come for us poor earthworms to raise our sights to the glories He has prepared for us that we might see and know that the body He doth prepare is a spiritual habitation for Him whom the heavens cannot contain. I pray unto God the Father that exceeding grace may be granted unto you that by the Holy Spirit's revelation you may know what inspired His eternal call to you, though you be the least of all saints.

The plan and purpose of God for the entire universe was finished in minute detail before the foundation of the earth was laid. With infinite care He charted the course of mankind, knowing in Himself what the end of all labor and travail would be. Inasmuch as God has foreseen the course that every man will take, either in faith or in unbelief, He has foreknown those who will share the likeness of His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and has by His foreknowledge predestined them to be placed as sons of God in the image and likeness of that firstborn Son in every respect - not physical, for we know no man after the flesh, but spiritual, for we know Christ only after the Spirit. Therefore did David say, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness", and the beloved John said, "As He is, so are we in the world." Paul by the wisdom given unto him declared them to be "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh", and Peter affirmed, "We have become partakers of His divine nature." He, being the firstborn among many brethren, is not ashamed to call us His brethren. Such was God's gracious will and pleasure, and such is the splendor of His marvelous grace, for with such treasures He has enriched us in the Beloved One. This is grace and wisdom as fathomless as God Himself. Should any man speak of the grace of God, let him know that to partake of His body and blood, to drink of His spirit, to partake of His divine nature, and to have His name written in our foreheads is grace beyond the understanding of any man. Having cleansed us from the vileness of our sins through the righteousness and sacrifice of His blood and having given to us the Spirit of His own dear Son, we now cry as did our elder brother, "Abba Father!"

The glorious sonship of which we now partake is in strict harmony with the infinite plan of God - a plan laid before the world began unto His praise and glory. By this plan God shall govern the entire universe in the ages which are to come, for everything in heaven and in earth must become subject to Him that He might be Lord of all. Everything shall be beneath His feet and everything will bow the knee and do Him honor. In His own mind He has planned the restoration of the entire creation that it may find its one head in Him. God has chosen this company of sons beforehand to carry out this great restoration. The design of His will He is unfolding to them that they might be acquainted beforehand - even now - with the immutable intentions and purposes of God, and might know what hope He had in mind when He called them. It was the hope and unchanging purpose of God that they, being adopted and placed as God's sons and having learned both good and evil, should no more come under the dominion of evil but be in the image of God and with Christ their captain restore all things to His righteous government. It was not Adam alone that God intended should be in His image, but man, and thus it shall be, for the purpose of God no circumstance shall alter. Unto you, therefore, who were first to fix your hopes in Christ and to understand the purpose of God for the ages to come special grace has been given, and the Holy Spirit of God has sealed you as His own, the Spirit being a small foretaste of complete redemption which is a state more glorious than Adam possessed - a state exceeding the glories of the transfiguration, a redemption specially designed by God for the manifesting of His glory that the predestined restoration of the entire creation might be accomplished.

Let increasing thanks be continually rendered to God/or the faith that is rising among His people as they embrace His purpose and conform their lives to that predestined plan of God. Let continual prayer and intercession be made to God that by the spirit of wisdom and revelation a divine insight might be given us into these most glorious mysteries. The inner eyes of the understanding must be enlightened by the Holy Spirit that we may see why He called some first and acquainted them with His will for coming dispensations.

Unto the elect first God reveals His will and purpose and shows them that the Almighty, who possesses all, hath an inheritance in His saints. The purpose of universal government in them He first made manifest when He raised His first-begotten Son from the dead and set Him far above all principality and power, all might and dominion - above every name and sovereignty in this age or in the ages to come making Him supreme head of all things everywhere, including His body which is the completeness of Him who fills the universe. To join that forerunner, even Jesus Christ, our Head, we have been made alive and quickened by the Spirit. We have rejoiced in a foretaste of that same resurrection. Once we were servants of the prince of the power of the air and were the sons of disobedience motivated by the same evil spirits now at work in the world and among

those who, though they have believed, are still governed by their lower nature. It was through the grace of God and His intense love wherewith He loved us, though we were completely dead in our sins, being foreigners to divine citizenship, hateful to God and hating each other, that we have been made partakers of resurrection life and have received a foretaste of complete redemption, even now sharing His life, being raised with Him and seated by faith with Him where He sits, high above all principality and power and every ruler and authority, where all things are under His feet. In these heavenly realms in the Spirit we sit enthroned with Him, His purpose and will being that in coming ages He might display the transcendent riches of His wisdom and grace to all creatures when they behold and understand the goodness of God which was displayed in us who first believed and were seated with Him.

This glory is all of grace. No meritorious work of man has helped us to partake of it. Our heavenly enthronement with Christ was given us in Him before the world began. Even the faith by which it is received is the gift of God. Let no man boast or pride himself in works or think himself above another, for we are all God's workmanship, designed before the world began. For His glory He predestined us to perform His work and fulfill it. Let us not forget that we were an uncircumcised and an unholy people, that neither God nor the things of God had any part in us. Because we changed the glory of God into images of four-footed beasts and creeping things, we were given up to uncleanness. Because we worshipped the creature and not the creator, we were given up to vile affections. Because we did not want to retain God in our knowledge, we were given up to a reprobate mind to do those things, which were not convenient. What merit have we then to offer? None! Yet God's grace is shown to be the greater, for without works His grace has been brought nigh to those who were far off, bringing them near to Him and enthroning them in heavenly rulership with Christ, our Lord and elder brother.

So through the grace of God those who had nothing have attained and those who had much merit have fallen short. His grace then puts all men on equal footing, destroying every dividing wall, those who have the law having no advantage over those who trust in His mercy. By His grace, then, the great divisions are united and the enmity is slain, bringing peace to all, for it is only in Him and through His grace that we have access to the Father and mutual citizenship in the heavenly realms. Through God's mercy and His predestining purpose we have become foreigners to the course of this age, and have been placed as sons of God. We are members of His family and our citizenship is in the heavenly sphere. Foreigners are excluded from the civil rights of other countries, but we, having become members of the family of God, share citizenship with Christ in the heavenly realms of the Spirit.

When Christ departed from the world, He declared, "In My Father's house there are many mansions (abiding places). I go to prepare a place for you." The Father's house is the mystical body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit. "For I will dwell in them and walk in them and I shall be their God and they shall be My people." This mystical body of Christ, the Father's house, the habitation of God through the Spirit, is rising on the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in union with whom the whole body, bonded together by the Spirit, is rising to form a holy habitation for God in the Spirit. We as living stones are built up a spiritual house where sacrifices acceptable to God are offered. This is precious to those who believe, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to all who believe not and are disobedient. The formation of the mystical body of Christ to be a habitation for God was the great secret locked up in God's mind from the beginning of the world, and this is in harmony with His purpose to govern the universe when the time is ripe and the spiritual habitation is complete. As the law of God went forth from the temple in Jerusalem to govern the nation, so shall the law of God go forth from this heavenly habitation, which is His body, composed of His elect sons of all ages, to govern the entire universe. Christ, the Head, who is seated far above all principality and powers and might, all rulers and every name that is named, has made us live together with Him and has prepared to enthrone us with Himself far above all powers that the will of God shall go forth to the universe from this heavenly temple till all things everywhere are under His feet and He is Lord of all.

The plan for the government of the world was concealed in the mind of God from the beginning of time. It was first unfolded in a revelation given to the beloved apostle Paul that all races, both Jews and Gentiles, with all their hostility abolished in Christ, should share common citizenship in the Father's house, the body of Christ,

which is the habitation for God through the Spirit. Thus the laws and ordinances of a foreign world have no effect whatever upon our mutual heavenly citizenship. Every rivalry is forgotten and we are fellow-citizens of the household of God. Had we been mindful of that country from which we came out, we might have had opportunity to have returned; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called our God, for He hath prepared for us a city. Even the patriarch Abraham went looking for that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

In the preparation of this heavenly habitation He left us not without a plan for its erection. When He ascended on high, He gave gifts unto men and ministries whereby the mystical body of Christ might come to perfection. Thus to some He gave the ministry of apostles, to some prophets, to others evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Upon these five ministries rests the entire work of bringing the body to perfection, for they were given to equip His people for serving and to build up the body of Christ till we all come into the unity of the faith and the oneness of the knowledge of the Son of God, reaching the perfection of the full stature of Christ. Who can over-emphasize the importance of such ministries upon whom rests such sacred enterprise? Those ministries in truth proceed forth from God. They are sent of God and speak the words of God. Who cannot see the wisdom of Satan in distorting these five ministries in that he has filled the church system with false apostles, false prophets, false teachers, false pastors, and false evangelists, all speaking contrary things and none having any idea of the plan that lay concealed in the mind of God for the building of the habitation of God through the Spirit? Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this testimony: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Jesus Christ warned us long ago that in the same field where good seed was sown the enemy would sow weeds and tares, and in the field where His apostles were sent forth to labor, to minister and teach, a false ministry would arise, speaking all manner of perverse things in their lust to draw away disciples after themselves. He warned the world that false teachers, false apostles, false prophets, and even false Christs would arise. As sure as His word is truth and His prophecy much more enduring than this world that is passing away, all things have come to pass as He foretold and even now are evident before our very eyes. The world today is treated to the sickening spectacle of seeing a harvest field choked with tares, but the awesome tragedy is not that the field is choked with tares, but that the people actually think the tares are the true wheat. The greatest tragedy is not that mystery Babylon exists, but that the people of God actually think that the monstrosity that is Babylon is the true church. They speak of it as the church. They religiously attend its gatherings as the assembling of the church. They reverence it as the church and pay their money to it as the church. But it is not the church. It is a monstrous confusion, a Babel of ideas and doctrines. It has nothing in common with the church of which I now write, no likeness to the church, which Jesus described, and no communion with the church which was founded by the apostles. It is an abominable enormity full of false teachers, false prophets, false apostles, false pastors, and false Christs who for the most part are nothing superior to the very prophets of Baal, who were the preachers and prophets of a pagan, backslidden, distorted Israel, worthy only to be destroyed by the fierce judgment of Elijah. Is it any wonder that the Almighty God has declared, "I will send Elijah before that great and terrible day of the Lord?" The ministry of Elijah is as badly needed now as it was in the days of Jezebel, that queen mother of all harlots and lover of false prophets.

The true Ecclesia, the true and holy church, is separate and distinct from this confused and drunken harlot that straddles the whole earth. The true church is the company whom Jesus described when He said, **"My sheep know My voice and I know them, and they follow Me."** **John 10:27.** If any man will prayerfully read the tenth chapter of John, he will clearly see the vast gulf between the false church and the true, the false followers and the true, and the false ministries and the true. The true church is the habitation of God, and it is the true and almost invisible ministry that God hath set that is perfecting it upon the true foundation.

Just as the ten tribes of Israel became lost to the eyes of the world after the Babylonian captivity, so also the true church has largely become lost to human view since the captivity began in the days of Constantine. God still knows what has become of the ten tribes of Israel, and God still knows the members of His true and holy church. This pearl of great price, though remaining hidden and buried from the prying, curious eyes of an unbelieving world, stands far beyond the comprehension of a church system that has worshipped and honored the works of its own hands. It is still known and loved of God as a treasure hid in a field. Century after century, year after year, day after day, and hour after hour it is the object of His continual care as He strengthens, establishes, and keeps each precious member. In His love He causes them to grow in stature by secretly

feeding them the milk of the Word, the bread of life, the strong meat of revelation, and the rich corn and wine of the coming kingdom. With loving paternal care He unerringly brings them to sonship. The chastening rod of correction falls upon them until they suffer such dire loss in all things of the world that their sinking souls seem to be beyond hope of recovery. But in the greatness of their distress they learn to sing with the joy of God in their hearts, "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Beneath the rod of His correction they learn to know true values. They come to know the transient nature of all earthly things. They see them rise like a green bay tree, which, after it is grown, has no known value. They see them grow like the grass which today is and tomorrow is withered with the east wind. They see all earthly things as the flower of the field which blooms today but tomorrow is cast into the oven to wilt with the burning heat of summer. He makes their gold and silver canker and lose its value that men may see that only in Christ are true values to be found. Men of earth have no understanding of true value. They are much like Jonah who was very angry that God had destroyed the gourd, which grew up in one night and upon which he bestowed no labor, but was unable to see the value of one hundred twenty thousand souls whom God had spared from judgment by his preaching. Such is the understanding of carnal man.

Those blessed people whom God is creating to bear the image of His son must sooner or later learn that they can depend only upon the Lord. Our heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom knows how to teach His children that the man or woman who puts his trust in man will be utterly disappointed. He will soon learn the meaning of the words, "Cursed be he who maketh flesh his arm, but blessed is he who maketh God his strength." The life of the great apostle Paul was lived beneath the shadow of the cross of Christ, but let no one think that this was a glorious experience for the flesh, for it was not. He knew the bitterness of unfaithful friends. Hear him as he says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," and "At my first answer no man stood with me." He knew what it was to weep as he warned God's people of false teachers. He was betrayed by friends and delivered up to prison and to the stocks. By the time the earthly life of this man of God was ended, God had taught him that only Christ was all in all.

Have you often wondered why it was that the further you went in your walk with God the fewer friends you had? You may have wondered times without number if perchance you were walking the wrong road because your companions in travel were so few. Why did Jesus say, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword!" Is He not the Prince of Peace? Did He not say, "They that take the sword will perish with the sword?" Certainly He did. But all who would be sons of God must learn that peace between the flesh and the Spirit can never be, not even for a moment. They two are mortal enemies ever warring against each other, never declaring an armistice, never proclaiming a truce, never enjoying peace. The flesh is an implacable enemy of God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so that they who are in the flesh cannot please God. Cain, who was of the wicked one, slew Abel, who was of the Lord. God hated Esau, who was after the flesh, and loved Jacob because he was after the Spirit. Joseph's brethren hated him because his father loved him. Ishmael, who was the son of the bond woman, mocked Isaac, who was the son of the free woman, and thus the war goes on forever. Jesus said He would divide a house against itself, two against three and three against two. **"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Matt. 10:35.** This is a conclusion, which is unavoidable, not that God rejoices in division, but that wherever men will walk with God they will always find opposition from those who walk after the flesh. How many million times have children seen the glorious light of revelation from heaven only to be opposed and hindered by parents who see nothing at all but the traditions of their fathers! How often has a wife embraced the glory of Christ's salvation only to find herself at sudden and bitter variance with a Christ-rejecting husband! How often have we seen men who loved God and longed to walk the green field of God's ever expanding truth only to be hindered and thwarted by the pettiness of a worldly minded wife who could never see beyond the circle of her friends and the luxuries of her home. The faithful followers of Christ will never find it necessary to pick quarrels with the worldly-minded. They will always find the Cains ready to murder, the Ishmaels ready to mock, the Shimeis ready to curse and throw stones (2 Sam. 16:5-7), the Absaloms anxious to rebel, the authorities waiting to plot their destruction (Dan. 6), and the high priests and religious leaders ready to crucify. They will be misunderstood by the people who profess to know God and hindered by those who should give them help. But all this is for their great eternal benefit, for it will cause them to come to know Him separate and apart from all people and all things, and that is a blessing of untold value. Once a man learns by experience that it is

impossible to put confidence in any human being, then for the first time that man will begin to throw all his weight upon the Lord. Then will he lean on the Lord. He will learn that those who put their trust in the Lord are never disappointed or ashamed. Experience will teach him as David was taught that, "when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." He will learn not to trust in the advice of men, for earthly minded men, even though they be Christians, do not know the mind of the Lord. All who have learned to reject the mind of men have at last reached the place where they can let the mind of Christ dwell in them richly. The mind of man will always lead astray, for it knows only earthly counsels, but the mind of Christ is omniscient, and brings into the innermost being all the counsel of God.

In the light of these things can we not clearly see the universal benefit bestowed upon God's sons because, when all earthly dependencies are taken away, we grasp like a drowning man for things eternal that we may depend on them forever? When our tried and trusted friends fail us and turn away from us, reject us for no apparent reason, even becoming our bitterest enemies, then the pain and travail of this most bitter experience causes us to flee away to Him who never leaves us nor forsakes us. Experience has taught me the bitter pain of seeing men turn back just when the mountain peak was in sight. I have felt the traitor's kiss and have seen the toil of years vanish as a whiff of perfume in the breeze. But these apparent tragedies are not tragedies at all, for they teach us to put our trust only in the faithfulness of God, and by such temptation we are abundantly able to succor all others who are tempted in like manner. It was for this very reason that Jesus Christ was tempted in all points as we are, and of Him Paul has written, "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. It is only because He has suffered all the temptations known to the human family that He can now be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God.

Bitter though it may be for a man to learn that he cannot trust in men, nor put his trust in leaders regardless of their strength, yet there is still a lesson to learn which is even more bitter, but more essential. You must learn above all things that you cannot trust yourself. The greatest enemy is the enemy within the gates, the fifth columnist, the quisling, the traitor within. It is always human and natural for us to say like Peter, "Though all men deny Him, yet I will not," or "Though all men forsake you, yet I will never forsake you!" But all who will be sons of God must learn by experience that they can no more trust in themselves than they can trust any other man. Your flesh is just as weak as your neighbor's. Furthermore, your flesh is just as much the enemy of the Spirit of God as the flesh of any other man that ever lived. Well did Paul say, "When ye think ye stand, take heed lest ye fall." Only the flesh has the audacity to think it stands. The spirit is ever fleeing away to take its refuge in the Lord, knowing that He alone is a rock and a fortress. The righteous runneth into it and is safe. While I trust in myself. I am just as capable of sinning as any man on earth. I am just as capable of being deceived, of falling into error, of being snared and destroyed by a lust of flesh. Bitter has been my disappointment in many men I deemed worthy of trust, but bitter as gall has been my disappointment in myself, for I have/own by experience that I am not a whit different from any other man. It is the mercy of God that we are taught these things that we should no longer trust in man or in ourselves, but in God who giveth liberally of His grace and strength to all men who will forsake the arm of flesh and trust no longer in themselves, but in Him who maketh us after the image of God.

The moment we begin to see that we cannot trust ourselves, then our self-righteousness begins to disappear. When we realize that we are made of the same substance as the worst of God's enemies, we lose our power to criticize those who are our enemies. There are far too many men in the world who, like the Pharisee, thank God that they are not like other men, but far too few Christians who, realizing they are like other men, bow their heads and beat their bosoms crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

By these methods then does the Almighty God deal with His elect and chosen though they be hidden from the eyes of a gazing world. It is this hidden gem that is the true church. This is the pearl of great price. This is the treasure hid in the field. Men of the world and Christians likewise look on the vast fields of tares and imagine in their ignorance that it is wheat. They look on the pastures teeming with endless flocks of goats and they say, "Behold the sheep." They look on the assemblies of Babylon with all her confusion of doctrines and traditions, her sects and creeds, her endless ceremonies, her bitterness and strife, and say, "Behold the church", knowing not at all that the true church is one of God's greatest mysteries. **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but**

he is a Jew which is one inwardly, for circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." **Rom. 2:28-29.**

As the true church is a great mystery and her members are known to God alone, so also is the true ministry a great mystery known and set by God alone. The ministries named by Paul in Eph. 4:11 are not to be confused with the vast array of reverends, right reverends, very reverends, doctors of divinity, priests, cardinals, bishops, and popes, together with a host of lesser lights in existence today. These for the most part are no more New Testament ministries of the church than the prophets of Baal were the true ministries to Israel and Judah. They are part of the confusion of Babylon. When, oh when, are people going to realize this fact and withdraw from all such confusion, settling in their hearts that he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit, but he who is joined to an harlot is one flesh?

The true church and the true ministry are like the tabernacle in the wilderness whose boards of wood and gold were joined by five hidden bars, also of wood and gold. This is the true church with its hidden ministry, seen and known of God. Though the tabernacle in the wilderness had a value of \$1,500,000 in gold, silver and precious stones, yet all was covered with badger skins so that no one knew the treasure beneath it. This is the true church; this is the treasure hid in the field. There is a ministry today known unto God. It is for the perfecting of the mystical church till we all come to the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure and stature of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us then approve ourselves as the servants of Christ in patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet known, as dying and behold we live; as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

When the body of Christ is complete in the Spirit, I will have one faith, for all men moved by the same Spirit speak the same thing. The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God searcheth all things and reveals to us the deep things of God. There in one Spirit are we all of one mind, one faith, one body. The work of perfecting the body is given to these ministries. They will continue till we all arrive at oneness in faith and oneness of the knowledge of the Son of God, - till we attain maturity in Christ and are no longer babies but full grown men in Christ. This is the sonship and adoption for which the whole creation is groaning. This maturity is the fore-ordained purpose of God. It is the beginning of righteous government and the reign of Christ on earth. In it is the hope of all creation - that they might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. With this maturity the will of God begins to be done on the earth as it is done in heaven. With it all nations come under a blessed and righteous government. It is the fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus Christ who prayed, "That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they all may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me." This is the body through which God will reign in the millennial kingdom when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters the cover the sea. This is the body that will subdue all enemies and bring all things under His feet. The last of all enemies that shall be destroyed is the most notable - death itself. Then, when death is defeated and all things are under the feet of Christ, He shall be subject to the Father that God may be all in all. By man came death. By man also comes the resurrection of the dead. Oh, the depths of the wisdom of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

These five ministries will exist until unity is gained, until the full measure and stature of Christ has been attained and we no longer resemble babies, for the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. Neither shall we resemble mariners on the sea, tossed to and fro with every changing wind of doctrine that blows. The things cleverly preached by unscrupulous and cunning men to draw away disciples to themselves will have no effect. Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, let us hold with love to the truth, growing up into union with the Head, even Christ. Let no shifting device move you from the purpose devised in God's mind before the world was, for the purposes thus ordained of God,

though long in fulfillment, are sure and steadfast, God counting those who have fallen asleep in death while waiting as though they still lived; for He will raise the dead in Christ to join the living when the time comes.

As the body of Christ comes into maturity, every muscle and ligament in it will begin to contribute to its growth. Thus shall those other ministries - too numerous to speak of now - come into being and operation, that the body may be built up in love by that which every joint supplieth, by the effectual working in the measure of every part. Since such a hope is left us of entering into His glory, let us no longer walk in rebellion and perverseness of our mind; for while some seek freedom and liberty that their own thoughts may be established, they become slaves to their own corrupt ways of thinking and in bondage to every hateful doctrine and commandment of men that robs them of their place in Christ's body where there is one faith, one Lord, one Spirit, one baptism. The understanding of the natural mind is darkened and insensible to the revelation of the Spirit of God. Man, thinking he knows God's plan, goes about to establish it and finds himself to be fighting against God. If our understanding of God's purpose is darkened, we are bound to live as the Gentiles live. By reason of our deep-seated ignorance we become subject to human programs and doctrines, supposing that gain is godliness. Man's ways are always opposite to the ways of God. Man honors the rich; God blesses the poor. Man loves great crowds of followers; God chooses the remnant. The Jews demand miracles and the Greeks insist on philosophy; we preach Christ crucified - a thing revolting to the Jews and to the Greeks sheer nonsense, but to us who are saved the wisdom and power of God.

The man who bears about with him this hope of partaking of a heavenly citizenship has a tremendous price to pay. He must begin at once to put away his carnal nature and his earthly inclinations. There is no good thing found in the carnal nature. All its influences are misleading and blind us to the true purposes of God. Love of crowds, love of money, love of programs, love of eating and drinking and all manner of luxury spring from the carnal nature and are at strict enmity with the will of the Lord. Anger, wrath, evil speaking, corrupt communication with each other, together with all malice and unrighteous judgment must be put away. There must be a renewing of the spirit of our minds. The judgment of the sons of God must not be with bitterness, malice, and unrighteousness, for God's judgment is with longsuffering and righteousness.

To become a son of God and be a member of the body of Christ a walk in the Spirit is of greatest necessity, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. The Spirit leads us to walk in love. Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness and all such like are the opposite of love and should not be named among the saints of the Lord. Neither should we practice foolish talking nor low unclean jesting, for this is not conducive to grace and sonship. To be a son of God is to be a partaker and ruler in the kingdom of God; but let us be assured that unclean persons, idolaters, railers, drunkards, and extortioners shall have no part whatever in that kingdom. Let us do none of these things, neither let us speak evil one of another as some are given to doing. Evil speaking comes from evil surmising, and evil surmising comes from a corrupt mind. The wrath of God falls upon the disobedient because of all these things. How much more shall it fall upon the members of the family and household of God if we walk in their ways! In times past, when you were children of darkness, you walked in darkness, but now that you are light itself no darkness should come from you. The darkness you see in the world coming from carnal Christians should not be allowed to find reflection in you. The light that proceeds forth from the sun of righteousness is the light that should glorify our faces. It is the light that makes manifest the works of evil, and that which is made manifest should be reprov'd.

Since we are given such understanding of the will of the Lord, let us walk circumspectly and as befits our call from heaven, redeeming the time, for the days of preparation are few and we are encompassed with evil. If we are led by the Spirit of God, then are we the sons of God. To be filled with wine is mockery, but to be filled with the Spirit is to walk in the Spirit. This, at least, was God's intention and purpose when He filled us — that, having received of the Spirit, we should walk in the Spirit, not fulfilling the lusts of the carnal mind, but, being led by the Spirit, we should be manifested as the sons of God. Woe to us that, after being filled with the Spirit, we have walked after the lusts of our former nature. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is manifested in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable to the Lord.

The life of the Holy Spirit manifests itself by an overflowing life of praise - speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Eph. 15:19. The fig tree does

not bear olives nor the vine figs. Neither doth a fountain give forth fresh water and brackish. Let it be, therefore, that the mouth that speaks psalms and hymns and songs in the Spirit will refrain itself from evil and its lips from speaking guile. Otherwise its sacrifice of praise will be a putrid odor and its prayer an abomination to the Almighty. The life in the Spirit will manifest itself by thanksgiving for all things, for all things are working together for good to those who love the Lord and to them who are the called according to His purpose. It is the carnal nature that complains and frets over the difficulties of the way that grieves over losses and crucifixion. The things God takes from us are the things that hinder us in the Spirit and in our progress toward sonship. Therefore let us not mourn our apparent afflictions nor turn back when we are forsaken, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory while we look not on the things that are seen, but on the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. Therefore, knowing the end of our calling, let us give continual thanks to God, for all things are working together for our manifestation with Him.

The life in the Spirit is manifested further by submission. Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God. This is the order of the coming government of the universe. Without it there can be no kingdom. Children must obey their parents. Wives must obey their husbands, Husbands must love their wives and themselves submit to all authority God has placed over them. The world is full of false ministries. To them we should neither give heed nor submission, but the Spirit of God will reveal His true servants. To their kind and loving authority we may safely and joyfully give heed. Likewise must ministries be in obedience and submission to Christ, for "surely the Lord will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets to His servants, the prophets." Let us, therefore, follow the example of Him who came not to do His own will but the will of Him who sent Him, whose words were not His own, but the Father's, and whose works were those given to Him to do. These three things, then, manifest a life in the Spirit: praising, thanking, and submitting to authority. Without them there is no hope of sonship.

All our submission and all our authority must be in the love, which the Spirit gives. He who said, "Wives, obey your husbands," also said, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them." He who said, "Children, obey your parents," also said, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath lest they be discouraged." There is no room in God's program for disobedience. Neither is there room for carnal despots, Paul who said, "Be ye followers of me," said also that He was a follower of Christ. As dear children let us walk in love, for he that walketh in love is made perfect. An obedient wife is a crown of glory to her husband, and an obedient church is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. She will extol His glory in the coming ages and the nations will bring their glory and honor into her. Let every person obey those who have the rule over them, and let those who rule love those who are subject to them. There can be no Spirit-filled life without obedience to authority. The mystery of this obedient and Spirit-filled church is most glorious, for she is made bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. She has partaken of the divine nature and has drunk of His Spirit.

In the armies that war against flesh and blood on earth the warriors must first learn discipline, submission, and obedience to all authority from the supreme command to the most inferior officer. Much more those who now wrestle to attain the mastery over the spirits that now govern the world and are masters of the air and the heavens surrounding us should learn obedience. Satan and all his forces of darkness are not in hell, but are princes and rulers of the air above us. The disobedient and unsubmitive church has killed her apostles and prophets and put the elders from their seats of oversight. Wives have been disobedient to their husbands and children to their parents; therefore, no weapons of warfare have been given us. We have no armor to withstand the evil, no girdle of truth, no breastplate of righteousness, no gospel of peace, but division, no shield of faith, no helmet of salvation nor sword of the Spirit. The prayer and supplication of the disobedient is not heard.

The great warfare against the powers of the devil is about to begin in desperate earnestness. It will be accompanied by the evil day of great tribulation when the sons of God with Michael the archangel shall wrestle against the principalities and powers and the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places until that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, with all his host shall be cast down into the earth. Then shall these mighty warrior sons of God, these obedient and submissive children, be caught up to literally sit in heavenly places with Christ, having cast Satan out of the heavens.

This great and terrible warfare will be the beginning of the great day of restitution when all things everywhere shall finally bow and confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. How unsearchable are the plans and purposes of God! How inexhaustible His resources! From Him everything comes. Through Him everything exists. In Him everything ends. Glory to Him forever! Amen and Amen!

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**TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 7
WHEN SAINTS BECOME THE WILL OF GOD**

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-6

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**CHAPTER ONE
LET US DRAW NEAR**

It seems good that our pure minds should from time to time be stirred up and awakened lest the dreadful sleepiness and drowsiness of this ever deepening night overtake us in our journey, and we be found in the morning of a new age broken, bruised and senseless in the calamitous wreckage of a dispensation that has fallen under the judgment of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ by word, by parable and by example taught us that we should always be watchful and we might well conclude that constant, continual and diligent watchfulness ran as a theme throughout His life. He understood the ever present human tendency to turn the eyes aside from the eternal goal to watch with interest some paltry thing that had both its beginning and its end in this present life, and thus be sidetracked and led astray into fruitless paths that have nothing to do with the will of God. Well did that great teacher know that it was while men slept that the enemy sowed tares among the wheat. With what gravity of word and forcefulness of parable did He show that the cares of this present age, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of many other things entering into our lives are like vigorous thriving thorns that choke the Word, the Logos, making our lives barren, fruitless and desolate before God. Matt. 13:22.

King Solomon by the wisdom given him of the Spirit left this gem of truth for our earnest consideration: "Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." Then, as though he would intentionally emphasize his statement, he associates this drowsiness with such cardinal sins as wine-bibbing, riotous eating of flesh, drunkenness and gluttony. "Let not thine heart envy sinners," he warns, "but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end: and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among wine-bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." **Prov. 23:21.**

If the sleepy-headed people of this present age find themselves walking in physical rags and constantly beset by poverty, we may well consider what harm and loss we suffer if we allow ourselves the dubious luxury of spiritual drowsiness. I have found a great evil among Christians, a mistake of such magnitude that it literally robs them time and again of the divine blessing that should be continually theirs. Almost all Christians are prone to imagine that they are perfectly capable of understanding the deep things of God by the use of their natural mind. They are possessed with the mistaken notion that a sincere Christian can understand any spiritual truth, providing it is presented to him with logic and a sound scriptural basis. This, however, is not the truth. In fact, it is as far from truth as anything can possibly be. The truth is simply this: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14.** But someone will immediately reply that because they are

Christians and living for God, therefore they are no longer natural men. But my long and bitter experience has proved beyond doubt that God's people have become so steeped and grounded in doctrinal tradition that they are forever comparing spiritual revelation with their natural way of looking at things. They have puddled and paddled for years in the muddy waters of denominational tradition so that they can see nothing else, and in consequence they are completely ignorant of the unimpeachable fact that beyond them lie limitless oceans, unfathomed depths, unreached limits and breadths of eternal truth and revelation. They are not unlike the proverbial frog who lived in the well who thought he possessed all the water in the world.

Furthermore, it is a mistake for one to conclude that, because in the past he became a recipient of a great spiritual revelation, this will be a life-long guarantee of his continued spiritual understanding. Such thinking is very far from the truth and is indeed a gross and dangerous error. We are aware that many of the great, but dead, denominations in the world today were once living spiritual movements, having their pilgrim feet planted firmly upon a spiritual revelation. They had seen a present truth and for a time had basked in the glory and wonder of the experience it revealed. They thought they had reached the sunlit peak of the mountain when in truth they had but little ascended above the valley floor. As the ocean that bore them receded to her fathomless depths, they were left building castles in the sand, and so they built a fence around their truth and called it a denomination. With its help they hoped to keep all error out and all their people in. But the thing they seemed to have forgotten is this: As the body without the spirit is dead, so a revelation without the Spirit is dead. What value is there in preaching justification by faith if the Holy Spirit who gives the faith is absent? Is there any benefit in preaching holiness if we lack the presence of the Spirit of holiness? Is there any truth at all without the presence of the Spirit of truth? Without the presence of the Holy Spirit truth itself becomes an error, holiness becomes self-righteousness, faith becomes presumption and order becomes confusion. This is the pit into which the denominations have fallen, and this is the pit into which your cherished little group will fall and into which, all unknown to you, it has already fallen.

Did you ever put a new patch on a very old garment? Did you ever put new wine into old bottles? Did you ever attempt to pour the burning truth of a fresh and heavenly revelation into the old denominational wineskins? Did you ever go to a people who have been taught that one plus one makes two and try to tell them the glorious truth that one and one makes one? Does not the scripture say they two shall be one? Can you tell the natural mind that Christ and I have become so one that it is no longer Christ and I, but Christ, and yet that one is two and that two is one? Men hate these truths with a hate that is unrelenting and remorseless. To their natural minds they make no sense at all. Therefore, they deem them to be fanatical nonsense. Yet in the bosom of their fathomless depths lies the very secret of God's purpose in the creation of man - that man should be in God's image, the visible representation of Himself, God increased and God extended in preparation for the fullness of His government in all the uttermost corners of His limitless universe.

So intent was our Lord Jesus upon the task of revealing to mankind the existence of definite realms, one natural and one spiritual, that He often challenged their minds with the truth of it. **"Ye are from beneath; I am from above,"** He said. **"Ye are of this world: I am not of this world."** **John 8:23.** Well did the Saviour know that the realm to which He belonged was such that natural men on natural planes could not hear its voices much less understand its words of life and truth. **"Why do ye not understand My speech?" He asked them. Then, without waiting for their reply, He pressed the truth upon them, a truth they did not understand: "Even because ye cannot hear My word."** **John 8:43.** In this natural world there are sights and sounds all about us that we are completely incapable of seeing or hearing. The natural ear of man is capable of receiving sounds up to fifteen thousand vibrations per second. Any sound higher than that passes him by and his natural ear does not hear it. But the porpoise, for instance, has a much more sensitive ear and is capable of hearing one hundred and fifty thousand vibrations per second. Thus this creature of the sea is able to hear tones on a scale ten times higher than that heard by man. If then such a difference exists in the hearing ability of two natural ears, should we think it strange that the natural ear cannot hear the sayings of God and the natural mind cannot understand them? The Lord Himself has told us that **"as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."** **Isa. 55:9.**

It is at this point in our incapability that God comes to the rescue of those who fear Him and put their trust in Him, **"because that which may be known of God is manifest unto them, for God hath showed it unto them."** **Rom. 1:19.** As it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the

things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And again, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-11.** When Paul was unfolding to the Christians at Ephesus the unspeakable wonders of the plan of God for the ages to come, he turned aside to remind them that he never ceased to give thanks to God for them and to make continual mention of them in his prayers. And this was his earnest prayer: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead..." **Eph. 1:15-20.**

This apostle, whose life was filled with an ever expanding spiritual revelation, knew well that the almost fantastic revelation of God's eternal purpose which he was bringing before the people could neither be heard nor understood by the natural mind. As the natural ear cannot hear a radio broadcast without a radio or the natural eye see a T.V. program without a television, so the natural mind cannot understand spiritual things without revelation. Therefore it is the Spirit and the Spirit alone who can take the things of God and reveal them unto us. Saul of Tarsus, according to all his natural understanding, believed Jesus Christ was the biggest hoax and the most monstrous deceiver that had ever walked on the face of the earth, but when a light brighter than the sun shone into his darkened heart, and his dull ears were touched by the Spirit of God, he heard a voice speaking and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutes! thou Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord?" he cried. And the answer came with quick assurance, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutes!" "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" he pleaded; and the Lord said, "Go into the city and it will be shown thee what thou must do." With this revelation from above an entirely new life began. Earth receded and his natural way of looking at things passed more and more into dimness and obscurity, while heaven opened with increasing light to become an endless source of truth and spiritual understanding. When writing to the Galatians, who had seemingly lost their touch with God because of persistent dependence upon their natural understanding, he said, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." **Gal. 1:15-17.** Christ, preached or proved, meant little; Christ, revealed, meant everything. One day Jesus asked His disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias: and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." **Matt. 16:13-17.**

We are inclined to entertain the vain imagination that, should Jesus Christ walk the earth in our day, startling men with His miracles, amazing their hearts with His sermons, or staggering their minds with His wisdom and understanding, any man, just any man at all with his natural mind and human wisdom, would recognize Him as the Christ of God. But that is not the truth; neither could it ever be. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a revelation. You could walk with Him as Thomas did, seeing and hearing, yes, even believing, yet never really knowing Him as God's Son. A man? Yes. A prophet? Yea, more than a prophet. You could see Him as righteous and good and worthy of trust, the greatest man the world had ever known, yet always fall just short of the divine revelation that He was God's Son, begotten of Him before the foundation of the world. But in that instant when a flash of revelation came to Thomas, revealing in heavenly light that Jesus was God's Son indeed, nothing could ever more dissuade him as in astonishment and assurance he gasped, "My Lord and my God!"

Our own sonship in Christ is likewise a matter of divine revelation. There is a spirit of sonship that produces sonship. Mark well the hidden secret of this inspired phrase, spirit of sonship. With great plainness of speech I must tell you that in our day there are tens of thousands of Christians who have tasted of salvation, who have been baptized in the Spirit, who believe the Bible and who live Christian lives, but who do not possess the spirit of sonship. To them God is God, divine, supreme, the author of their salvation, and sitting on His throne in heaven, but He has never become a Father to them. With their lips they have recited the Lord's prayer saying, "Our Father who art in heaven," but their spirits have never been able to breathe with the solemn assurance of

revelation, "My Father!" It will be a great day for you or any man when God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart, crying, "Abba Father." Our Father. It is the spirit of sonship that proclaims you a son of God indeed. It cannot be just the written word on the pages of the Bible. With great sadness of heart I must confess that I have seen the most shameful characters boldly setting forth their claims to sonship just because the Bible says, "Now are we the sons of God." But without the spirit of sonship you are not a son of God. Let no man deceive you about that, for it is to those who have the spirit of sonship that the words, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," were written.

As I knelt before God yester morning long before the sun had kissed the eastern hills, the Holy Spirit directed my eyes to a passage of scripture, which I had never noticed before. In the long genealogy of the descendants of Judah mention is made of one obscure man whose name was Jabez. Of him the Holy Spirit pauses to say, "And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, *"Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."* **1 Chron. 4:9-10.** Do you know why it was that in that long tedious genealogy, relating who begat whom, the Holy Spirit paused to tell us about Jabez? Our minds need not be in doubt for long, for here among the descendants of Judah is one man who is not only a son of Judah but a son of God as well. He was more honorable than his brethren only because God had granted him the spirit of sonship, the spirit that was sadly lacking in all his brethren.

If we draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to us. If we cleanse our hands that we touch not the unclean thing, and purify our hearts that we may be delivered from double-mindedness, God will meet us. Christ will come in and sup with us and we shall be His sons and daughters.

We are living in an hour so serious that it is impossible to find words, which will adequately put things forth in a clear light. If a man fails to see that we are now at this moment living in the calamitous hours that must precede the end of the age, then surely he must be very ignorant of Bible truth and very blind to the signs of the times. How could a man possibly read the record of events and conditions as they were in the days of Noah, plainly recorded in Genesis 6:1-6, and still not know that the prophecy of Jesus is being literally fulfilled in our day? Luke 17:26-32. Let this truth be impressed upon every heart, for there are few, it seems, who know it. There was one grievous condition in Noah's day that is conspicuously evident in our day as well. The awful truth is simply that no one would listen. No one would believe that calamity was coming, nor would they believe that God would judge the earth. No man can say he believes until he is willing to act upon that which he believes. If he says, "I believe the flood is coming," but refuses to bestir himself from his evil surroundings and make his way with haste into God's ark, then he is a liar. He does not believe at all, because he refuses to take warning and act upon the message God has sent him.

Could we say that the children of Lot had faith in the message of the angels when they mocked at those who were sent to call them out? Gen. 19:14. What good would it have done for one to say, "I believe the city will be destroyed by fire," yet remain in his bed as the minutes ticked away to the moment of doom? Can that kind of faith save a man? The awful truth of the days of Noah and of the days of Lot was that no one would listen to the truth of the hour. They would readily lend their ears to fables and lies, but to the truth they gave no heed at all. Rather, they made it the song of the ribald and the jest of the drunken and obscene.

We no longer live in the days of Noah, nor yet in the days of Lot or Sodom, but in the days of the coming of the Son of man - dreadful days, so filled with calamity and judgment, so filled by sin and every evil imagination of the human heart, so violent and so replete with forms of godliness that our blessed Lord and Saviour said of them, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man." But they would not listen then and they will not listen now. They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Psa. 58:4,5. For "the wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Psa. 58:3.

The people of Noah's day could not see that they were exceedingly wicked. The people who lived in Sodom were unaware that they were submerged in the vilest kind of iniquity and transgression. Neither do the people of our day understand their abominable estate as they mingle the lusts and passions of their flesh with their

multiplied forms of religion. They think nothing at all of lying all night upon the bed of adultery, then rising in the morning to sing with the congregation, "Just a closer walk with Thee." It is nothing to them to practice dishonesty, drunkenness, blasphemy, and even sodomy, and then to sing, "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee. Take my moments and my days; let them flow with ceaseless praise." Oh, God! Break the teeth of the ungodly! "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord. Let them melt away as waters, which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun." **Psa. 58:6-8.**

But it is not to the ungodly I now write, but unto you, Oh men and women of God; for your hands are not pure, neither have you delivered yourself from the embrace of the greatest destroyer that ever stalked like a specter across the face of the whole earth. Verily I say unto you that at this very moment almost all of God's children are dwelling in Babylon, that great harlot system that embraces every religious organization, every sect, and every denomination on the face of the whole earth. The mother of harlots is Rome. The daughters, multitudes of them, are the Protestant denominations. Men will rebel more and more at the truth I speak, but be assured of this: those who dare to remain in the embrace of this octopus system serve not Christ, but the system. They labor not for Christ, but compass land and sea to make proselytes for the system. From this standpoint they boast and upon this ground they stand before God to proclaim, "Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works?" And, standing upon this same ground, they will hear the words of the all-wise God, saying, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Oh virgin daughter of Babylon, the call of God is upon you. As the call of God to Lot was to come out, the call of God to you is also to come out. Do not call my attention to the wonderful works your sect is doing. Speak not unto God and say, "We are prophesying in Thy name and casting out devils for Thee." Obedience is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. The command of God for the end of the age is given to you. "Come out of her, My people!" Come out of the harlot system, the great Babylon of religious confusion that has encompassed the whole earth.

The failure of God's people to differentiate between the beautiful virgin church of which the apostles spoke and the bawdy harlot system which in our day dares to call itself the church has so blinded their eyes and confused their minds that they see nothing as they ought to see it and know nothing as they ought to know it. We need not hesitate to say that there is scarcely one person in ten thousand who can either see or understand that the monstrous system which calls itself the church and which, like a multi-armed octopus, clutches over a billion souls in its embrace is not the church at all, but none other than mystery Babylon the great. When, oh, when, will God's people see by the Holy Spirit that the true church of which the apostles wrote is not a harlot system, but a chaste virgin. The true church is the ecclesia, the called out ones, a people called out of the world and called unto Christ, a people called out of Babylon and all its multi-headed confusion to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. The true church has nothing to do with denominations of any of earth's religious systems.

Well do I know that my own voice, which for many years has called to the virgin daughter of Babylon, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues," has been a the voice crying in the wilderness of this evil system. It is with great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart that I confess that, though many hundreds have with their lips ascribed to the truth of the message, they themselves choose to remain in bondage to the harlot system, refusing to break off its shackles or free themselves from its chains. They say, but they do not. They hear, but obey not. With their lips they speak the truth, but their hearts abide in error. Woe to you, my brother, for Babylon the great has fallen and has become the hold for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird.

So it was that in the days of Noah men refused to listen to the message. They knew things were wrong, but they paid no heed. God had not stepped in before, so why should He interfere now? "Why then," thought they, "should we change our ways or repent of our sins?" So they went right on marrying and giving in marriage, the sons of God taking the daughters of men, practicing every imaginable corruption, filling the earth with violence, committing senseless acts of terror even as we see everywhere today, and the whole thing was smiled upon

and condoned. The messenger God had sent to warn them was considered, no doubt, the biggest fool that ever walked the earth. And so "they knew nothing till the deluge came and swept them all away." **Matt. 24:39.** (Moffatt). Those are very potent words. They knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away. Dare we say that there is any difference in our day? Sinners will not listen. Christians will not listen. Every sign foretold by the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus Christ is filling the earth and telling us in the most unmistakable terms that the end of the age is rushing in like a tide upon us to sweep away the whole mess of violence, greed, sin, drunkenness, adultery, war, homosexuality, ungodliness, forms of religion, dishonesty, destruction and an ever increasing multitude of evil things. Even the vilest of men know the world is ripe for judgment, but they will not listen.

Several years ago in the book *Mystery Babylon* and others I warned that there would be a great alliance of all religious systems of the world, that Romanism and Protestantism would come together, that they would take into their fold all such religions as Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Confucianism and whatever else there was. I warned also that there would be an alliance between Romanism and Communism. These things are coming upon us now with ever increasing swiftness. They are becoming more and more evident every day. Furthermore, I warned that there would be a union between the religious system and the political system, the religious system being the first beast and the political system the second beast (see Rev. 13), and that the second beast would command that everybody on earth worship the first beast. Every day we are coming closer to this very thing, but scarcely anyone will listen. Christian and sinner alike continue right on in the system.

They would not leave the system in Noah's day. They would not leave Sodom in Lot's day, though angels were present to call them. And Christians will not leave Babylon in this day even though God's pronouncements of judgment against it are more serious and severe than those pronounced against Sodom or Nineveh. You have read the awesome list of her sins as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation by John who, carried by the Spirit into the wilderness, saw "a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.* And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration." Please read Rev. 17:1-18. Truly cried the angel of God, saying, "*Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*" **Rev. 14:8.** Are we to imagine that a subject that consumes practically three chapters of Revelation, chapters 17, 18, 19, and part of chapter 14, is a subject of small importance? Dare God's people continue to go on cherishing a system, which is full of the names of blasphemy? The names given to the multitudes of sects today are the names of blasphemy. Why is it that God's people cannot see this? You simply cannot mention the word church without someone asking you which church? Which church, indeed! And if you cannot shelter yourself beneath one of these names of blasphemy, then you are considered a heathen or an outright unbeliever. How far have God's people wandered from the simplicity of discipleship! How far they have strayed from that true and blessed ecclesia that has heard God's voice and has followed Him! But no; they must have a name tacked on to them, a name of blasphemy, to designate what division, what sect, what political party they belong to, until the whole system has become full of names, which God's word describes as names of blasphemy. Rev. 17:3. And the woman who sits astride it is called a harlot. A harlot is a woman that commits adultery and fornication with all comers, and this, I think, is an apt description of the system as we see it in our time. Is it any wonder the angelic message today is "Come out of her, My people."

It is not my purpose to take up further time writing about that monstrous system Babylon that seeks to enslave us all, bringing our minds and spirits into the bondage of its ever narrowing walls and ever tightening shackles. But I shall have no hesitation in saying that in our day as never before in the annals of history God's people must throw off the shackles of the harlot system before ever they can begin to make any real progress with God.

We are living in the Laodicean period of the church, the day when God's people are neither hot nor cold, a time when they have a form of godliness but deny the power of it. Where are those glorious experiences of justification we witnessed years ago when chains of sin were snapped, and lifelong habits instantly broken,

when family altars were set up, glorious baptisms flooded thousands of souls, and men walked with God? They are gone, my friend, and in their place has come a tepidity that is sickening to the heart. Christians are neither hot nor cold. The wheat is indistinguishable from the tares. It is impossible to tell whether they are sheep or goats. They assemble for an hour on Sunday to listen to a preacher, and they sit for hours watching Hollywood's corruption on T.V., that monstrous, one-eyed corrupter of souls that has done more to fill the world with violence and degradation than any other invention known to man. Christians seem to have lost all the tenderness of the Holy Spirit. They have flirted with evil so long that they cannot tell what is good and what is evil. Permissiveness is the order of the day, but the Spirit has fled and the glory has departed from us. No wonder the prophet said, "All tables are full of vomit," and the whole system is described as a hold of devils and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird. The curse of God is upon it, and except you, my brother, depart from it, you will be destroyed in the flood that is soon to sweep it all away.

It is time for Christians to sit up and take notice. We are definitely at the hour when God is dividing. He is gathering the good in vessels, but the bad He is casting away. He is separating the tares from the wheat. The tares He is gathering into bundles for destruction and the fiery wrath of the great tribulation, but the wheat He is gathering into His garner to become the seed of the kingdom of God. He is separating the sheep from the goats. Those tractable sheep are the sons of God who love to be led by God's Spirit, but the untractable goats are those people who are concerned only with their own will and desire. They get from this life everything they can and hope that somehow at the end of the journey God will have mercy upon them. Why, even the publicans and harlots will find their place in the kingdom more readily than this mad throng of pleasure-loving, money-grabbing Christians who never seem to learn that godliness with contentment is great gain, but seem to imagine that they must become absorbed in the rat race for this world's goods and vain glory.

Of the writers of the New Testament the apostle James seems to be the most practical. If you would explore the wonders of the love of God, you will sail its boundless ocean in the writings of John. When your soul is hungering for a spiritual feast, who can feed the famished sheep like Peter, who by his calling was a shepherd of the flock of God. To him Jesus had said, "Feed My Sheep." For sheer logic and spiritual understanding in the eternal purposes of God Paul was a vessel specially chosen to unfold unsearchable mysteries, hidden from the foundation of the world, but ready to be revealed in the last days by apostles chosen for that purpose. But if you need practical advice and spiritual common sense presented right down on your level, you will find the book of James a gold mine of information. His epistle abounds in instruction to the sick, the afflicted, the tempted, the proud, the impatient, the evil speakers, the boasters, the double-minded, the respecter of persons, the people who talk too much, the people who profess great faith in God but deny it by their lives. His writings are an inexhaustible mine of information for practical Christian living.

Notice what potent words of truth are set before us in this message: "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." James 4:7, 8. Many of God's dear children have written to me expressing a fervent wish that they might have a much closer relationship with the heavenly Father. What desire can be better or more noble than the desire to live in ever increasing harmony and unity with the Lord? Why, that was the petition of our blessed Lord and Christ when He prayed to the Father, pleading. **"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."** John 17:21. Your desire for a deeper, richer relationship with God is a precious jewel in the eyes of the Lord and a sweet perfume to His nostrils. But I greatly fear that many a man has let that earnest longing die within his breast, even as the prayer died upon his lips. Perhaps he thought that all he could do was wish and hope before an unresponsive God, but this, God be praised, is not the fact.

Our relationship with God and our unending progress in Him is always a two way street. Thus it has always been; thus it is now, and thus it ever will be. Therefore James, this most practical writer, says to you and me, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." I once read of a Christian who said to another, "I would give all the world to have an experience like yours." To this the other replied, "That is exactly what it cost me." Ah, there is truth in that saying! In all my life I have never found a man whose depth of experience cost him nothing. If your experience has cost you nothing, then it is worth exactly nothing. If it has cost you everything, then it is worth everything. Would you have God draw nigh to you? Then your first step is "draw nigh to God." Draw not nigh with a mouth full of requests, telling Him what you want, but draw near with a heart full of

submission (James 4:7), longing to know what He wants. Those who thus come submitting themselves to God will find acceptance before Him. It has long been a source of distress to my spirit to find that, when Christians come to God, they invariably come with a mouth full of requests. They tell God what to do, what they want done, and how it should be done just as though He were the lackey, the servant and the slave and they were the all-wise Lord. Or, if they do not come with their demanding, they come as whining discontented children, hoping the Lord will feel sorry for them and give them the toy they seek, or deliver them from the trial He has sent to try them and do them good. To hearken is better than the fat of rams; therefore, listen long to Him before you speak.

We may safely say that ninety-nine and nine-tenths of all the prayers prayed are on the same level as the request made by the mother of Zebedee's children who came to Jesus requesting, "Lord, grant that these my two sons may sit one on Thy right and the other on Thy left in the kingdom." Lord, grant me this. Lord, grant me that. Lord, heal me. Lord, save my wife. Lord, save my children. Lord, bless the missionaries. Lord, bless the campaign we are going to hold. If you analyze all your prayers and the prayers of other, you will find they are usually on the give me level. It is almost always, "Lord, I want you to do this", and very seldom, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Since, then, we are drawing near to the end of the age and all the former things are swiftly passing away, together with our opportunities, let us speak with great plainness concerning "drawing nigh to God".

When I attempt to tell you of the great benefits of fasting together with prayer and waiting on God, it goes without saying that a number of people all write to tell me how pitifully wrong I am. They will try to convince me that all such things as fasting and tithing belong to a forgotten era, that such things are Old Testament truths and do not apply now. But if they will examine their hearts before God, they will find that their reason for denying these things is not because of their convictions, but because they entail the crucifixion of the flesh, and they are loath to submit themselves to God. You must always remember that the flesh, the body, the natural man, literally hates anything that will facilitate your drawing nearer to God. The flesh is God's enemy and there is no bigger devil anywhere than self as it operates through the desires of the flesh and the instructions of the carnal mind. The carnal (fleshly) mind is an enemy of God and the natural man will not submit himself to God. As the scripture has said, he is not subject to the law of God and neither, indeed, can he be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Fasting, accompanied by submission to God, an all-encompassing surrender to His will, is the first step any Christian should take if he would draw nigh to God. In the temple at Jerusalem there was veil that hung between the holy place and the holy of holies where dwelt the shekinah. That veil represented the flesh (Heb. 10:20). There is a veil that hangs in the temple, which you are, for your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. That veil of flesh hangs between your present experience in God and the relationship you long to have with Him. But it is the same veil untaken away (2 Cor. 3:14), namely, the veil of the flesh. When Jesus died on the cross, His life went out and the flesh was dead. Then the veil in the temple was torn apart from top to bottom and the way into the holiest of all was made open for all to enter. Matt. 27:50-51.

Fasting and prayer causes the earth and all its rotten, deceiving glamour to be shown in its true light before your searching eyes. Earthly possessions shrink to the status of childish toys and wealth and riches become moldy treasures corrupted by moth and rust, capable only of fortifying the frail flesh to the detriment of the eternal spirit. Position and earthly ambition dwindle into the dust of nothingness as the flesh weakens and the spirit, drawing nigh to God, grows stronger.

Why is it that almost all the world, whether Christian or non-Christian, is prone to believe that at the moment of physical death the spirit immediately flies away to heaven, whether it be the Christian's paradise, the Indian's happy hunting ground, or some other? Do we not realize that it is the spirit's deliverance from the bondage of the corruptible body that permits it to return to God where it has always longed to be? Why, then, are we so slow of understanding that we cannot see that, when the body is mortified through fasting, right there the spirit is permitted for the first time to really begin to draw near to God. I have no argument with those who wish to debate the matter. I will not answer them even one word. My only desire is that those who do sincerely long to draw near to God, as I also do, may find the way to do it, being delivered as far as possible from the deceptive bondage of the corruptible body, for the maintenance of which the whole world system functions, for the lusts

of which every war in history has been fought and for the filth of which Sodom was destroyed. The earth was flooded in the days of Noah and is even now reserved unto fire and the judgment of almighty God. It is this same flesh which wars against fasting, which dreads even now as you read these lines lest you should announce to it that it must go without food for ten days, for seven days, or even for one day. The flesh is the enemy that is always weak when the spirit is willing. It is the enemy that demands sleep when the spirit would watch and pray. It is the enemy who would demand food when you would fast and pray. All our lives we labor and travail to preserve our physical flesh, but in the end it lies down and dies. Yet we coddle it and cater to its whims rather than give ourselves to fasting and prayer. No wonder James prefaced his instruction[^] to draw nigh to God with the admonition, "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." There is no devil closer to us than the corruptible flesh and the carnal mind that never ceases to press the demands of the body.

There is nothing complicated about fasting and prayer except the complications made by those who would avoid it. We will fast when our desire for God is greater than our desire to fill our stomachs. Only then will we do it. A three-day fast can prove to be of great value to you. A ten-day fast unto the Lord will uncover even greater benefits. Fasts of three weeks and forty days were by no means uncommon among the saints of old and among many saints of our day as well. Fasting never does the body any harm. As a multitude of diseases are caused by over-eating, so a multitude of cures come by fasting. It is, however, the spiritual man who is most blessed by fasting. Let us then draw near to God in this manner that He also may draw near to us.

Jesus gave some good instruction about fasting when He said, "**When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.**" **Matt. 6:16-18.** Your attitude toward God in all things is of the utmost importance. I have known men to fast for forty days that they might be given the gift of healing. I wonder what their motive really was? You may know what you want, but do you know what you need? Do not draw near to God to ask for the things you want, but come rather submitting yourself to Him who knows all things and who does all things well according to His infinite wisdom and foreordained purpose. Never measure yourself by yourself to see what you have gained by fasting. Neither measure yourself by the experience of another. It is God who sees and rejoices in your spiritual growth. Fasting should never be a once-in-a-lifetime affair. It should be undertaken whenever we feel a special need of drawing nigh to Him.

The things written in this book are present truths that lie heavily on my heart. I do not pretend that they are well ordered nor do I suppose they will make anyone happy. But the conviction that we are now in the closing hours of this age has at times been almost overwhelming. The hour of change is not near; it is already here. Let us, then, cast off our drowsiness and sleep to stand with our loins girded and our lamps burning as those who watch for the bridegroom, lest, coming suddenly, He find us sleeping. Let us draw near to God.

CHAPTER TWO TO ALL WHO LOVE GOD

The element which we call time is swiftly passing away. The hour approaches when a mighty angel will stand with one foot up on the sea and one foot upon the land and will lift up his hand to heaven and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no longer, and, in that hour when the seventh angel shall begin to sound the last trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished. Rev. 10:5-7. Cf. Rev. 11:15.

Just as the members of the resurrection comes forth each in his own order — Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are His at His coming, then cometh the end, (i.e. the end of the resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:22-24) - so all things likewise come in their own order and all events at their appointed time. As a mighty army moves, each man in his own company and each company in his own order, so the inhabitants of the coming kingdom march from experience to experience, from light to light and from truth to truth until that blessed day when corruptible puts on incorruption, mortal puts on immortality, the saints in God's image take the kingdom and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and forever. Rev. 11:15.

Centuries ago Israel marched across the burning wilderness of Sin. Ex. 16:1. Forty years they journeyed under the continual care and correction of God. Angels' food was their meat (Psa. 18:25) and spiritual water was their drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. 1 Cor. 10:4. Their bodies grew not weary and their garments waxed not old; neither was there a feeble one in their tribes (Psa. 105:37) as they journeyed under God's orders and moved at His command. So it came to pass that, "on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: The cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed." **Num. 9:15-23.**

We today are under similar care and similar orders though we know it not. From time to time through the ages the church has been commanded to move on with the cloud to new revelation and experience in God, and after each move to pitch our tent and patiently wait for the moving of the cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night. What a tremendous sight it must have been for Israel, after having camped for a day, a month, a year, or many years, to see at last the cloudy pillar of God's presence and glory begin to move on, and what a hustle and bustle there must have been as they broke up their old camps to follow the cloud, every tribe in his own order, and every man in his order whithersoever the Spirit led them!

As time has swiftly passed, the light of that same fiery pillar has illumined to our waiting hearts many truths which we have embraced and have made part of ourselves and ourselves part of them. But with many of us, as with many of them, God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness (1 Cor.10:5). They lusted after evil things, became idolaters, and committed fornication just as thousands today are doing who once were baptized in the cloud, drinking of the spiritual rock and eating the spiritual meat. 1 Cor. 10:2-4. We have made jobs and money, possessions and pleasure our idols and our gods, and we have committed fornication with the harlot daughters of Babylon times without number. We have tempted Christ and murmured because of the rigors of the way, sat down to eat and drink in the fleshly realm, and rose up to play - to play at church and make a play of religion. Cf. 1 Cor. 10:5-11. These things that happened to them are for examples to us upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Verse 11.

In the depths of my spirit I seem to hear the trumpet call to a new awakening. It is time to move on from the revelation of the past years. It is time to partake of the resurrection, the bread of God, the better blood and the water of life. The pillar of fire is moving; it is time to move on. The great mystery of the ages, "Let Us make man in Our image", is about to be fulfilled when all things will begin to find their one head in Christ.

There is a great difference between a childlike faith in God and a childish faith. While the former believeth all things and endureth all things, retaining in maturity the simplicity of childhood, the latter never matures at all, believing less as the years go by, hoping for nothing and quite unable to endure the trials and furnaces of afflictions prepared of God to refine the gold and purify the silver. Childish faith cries like Jacob, "All these things are against me" (**Gen. 42:36**), but childlike faith responds with Paul, "All things work together for good." (**Rom. 8:28**). Almost half a century ago I learned a poem whose lilting theme dances like a pretty fairy, dispelling doubt and gloom with her wand of childlike faith:

Two girls I know, Jeanette and Jo,

And one is always moping.
The other lassie, come what may,
Is ever bravely hoping.
Beauty of face and girlish grace
Are theirs for joy and sorrow;
Jeanette takes brightly every day
And Jo dreads each tomorrow.

One early morn they watched the dawn;
I saw them stand together.
Their whole day's sport, 'twas very plain,
Depended on the weather.

" 'Twill storm!" cried Jo. Jeanette spoke low,
"Yes, but 'twill soon be over."
And as she spoke the sudden shower
Came beating down the clover.

"I told you so," cried angry Jo,
"It always is a-raining!"
Then hid her face in dire despair,
Lamenting and complaining.

But sweet Jeanette, quite hopeful yet,
(I tell it to her honor,)
Looked up and waited till the sun
Came streaming down upon her.

The broken clouds sailed off in crowds
Across the sea of glory;
Jeanette and Jo ran laughing in,
Which ends my simple story.

How happy is the man who grows and grows in wisdom and understanding, ever speaking the language of childlike faith until the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, much less the temples we build for Him. How desperately unhappy is the man whose childish faith never grows beyond the play-pen of his religion, peevishly fretting about every storm, and regarding each chastening rod as a threat to his pleasure, his well-being and even his very existence.

It is indeed a long road that has no turning. Even in the journey from the natural through the spiritual to the celestial there is a turning. It is not a turning to the right nor to the left, but an upward turning from the terrestrial to the celestial, from the fields where we walk and talk and live as men to the kingdom where Christ dwelleth, far above principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the ages to come.

It is necessary that we should understand the course of this age, knowing something of Babylon, the Beast, and the coming tribulation, but there must come a time when, as sons, we view all things from the mountains of God and not as men from the doldrums of earth. Therefore God, even our God, is calling a chosen people apart from the thinking of men, aside from the motley crowd with all its pitiful worry about physical welfare, the benefits of the body and the healing thereof, their worry over programs and enforced concern for the souls of men. With what foolishness and unbelief do childish Christians, concerned about their physical welfare, seek to establish desert hideouts in hope of being preserved when the floods of God's wrath are upon the earth! This they vainly do, for they have never learned the truth of that sacred text, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Here it is that plagues come not nigh our dwelling though a thousand fall at our side and ten thousand at our right hand. Psa. 91:7. In this natural realm

where we have lived so long the forest is obscured by the trees. Leave then the plains of men and the realms of human understanding to soar with Him up higher to view the broader plains from celestial mountain peaks in the heavenly realms where Christ sitteth at God's right hand.

Did you ever stand in awe and marvel at the work of the great artists on earth? Perhaps expressions failed and words became inadequate as you stood before Michelangelo's statue of David or gazed with wonder at the faces of the presidents carved in the heights of Mt. Rushmore. Wonderful as are these things, it must be that, ere the sculptor placed his chisel upon the stone to chip it away, he beheld in the uncut rock the very image of that which he by toil and skill would bring into being. Thus it was that God, the mighty architect of the universe, beholding in His own Spirit the glorious image of things to come, set the forces of His own will in motion to bring forth with unerring exactness the image of His pleasure in the very likeness of Himself.

No man can truly love God until with the eye of faith he catches a glimpse of God's eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the ages began. All the purposes of God were in Christ before there was a man, before there was a temporal world and before an age was formed in the midst of eternity. God with omniscient wisdom planned with unerring and immutable accuracy every blow of the hammer that would in the end bring forth from the uncut rock a race of sons in the image of Himself. With omniscience there can be no errors, and there have been none; neither shall there ever be. With immutability there can be no change in purpose. There has been none; neither will there ever be. With omnipotence there can be no contrary powers, except those who, like Pharaoh, were designed by God Himself to fulfill His unerring purpose, for even of Pharaoh God has said, **"For this cause have I raised thee up that My power might be seen in thee and that My name might be known in all the earth."** Rom. 9:17.

Weakness has no part with omnipotence. Ignorance cannot be associated with omniscience. They are the antithesis of each other; therefore, we must immediately discard all childish philosophy, inherited traditions and all purposeless theology that have sprung up like tares in the fertile fields of the carnal mind to be handed to men as sacred truth. Banish from your heart all thinking that would make God capable of mistake or error. Abolish all idle theory that would lead you to believe that somewhere Satan disrupted and thwarted the perfection of the purpose God has formed in eternal wisdom. Dare you longer think that wisdom can be unwise or that infinity can be finite? Can immutability be changefulness, or omnipotence weakness? Nothing can slink unnoticed into God's garden. No power can thwart or delay Him nor can any wisdom instruct Him.

We are forever hearing about the power of Satan until one would think that he was only a whit behind God in omnipotence. But hear this, Oh fools and slow of heart, for the God of heaven and earth has declared, **"There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God."** Rom. 13:1. Where in scripture will one search to find the thought that Satan is a power with whom God must reckon? Where, indeed, will one turn to find that Satan has great power over men? I am fully persuaded that he has no power over anything but such as is given to him by the permissive will of God, and outside of that he is as helpless as you or I. He is a deceiver and subtle of heart, walking to and fro continually seeking occasion against men with which he might accuse them before God, for he has this permission of the Lord. It is for your good and mine that temptation and affliction come, for that is part of the chipping by which the image of Christ is brought forth from the rock in God's perfect likeness. Though Satan had completely considered God's servant Job, he could touch neither his property nor his flesh without the permission of the Almighty. See Job 1:6-12, 2:1-8.

When at last we see God eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, omnipresent, loving and holy, then upon these seven mountain peaks we take our stand to behold the glory of His purpose for the endless ages. Behold, Oh child of God, the blessed assurance that fills the spirit of man in the knowledge that God's purpose cannot fall short or fail or die, for He is eternal. It cannot be halted, for He is omnipotent. It cannot be changed, for He is immutable. It cannot go astray or be found at fault, for He is omniscient. Nor can man or Satan mar His purpose, for in omnipresence He stands, keeping watch upon His own. His love is over all that not a fragment should be lost, and by His holiness He has sworn that His purposes should be accomplished.

The hurry and rush of our modern way of life is far more a curse to us than it is a blessing. Rush and hurry have become so much the order of the day that few men pause long enough to consider the eternal wonders God would speak to our hearts. The Lord never speaks to a man who is in a rush, but unfolds His wonders to

those who wait upon Him. To many the reading of scripture has become a matter of haste - of reading a short chapter and reading it fast so that they can get on with the more important business of living after and caring for the things that concern the body. But, if you will meditate upon the scriptures you have read a hundred times and found nothing in them, you will see the unfolding of an eternal revelation of the wisdom and understanding of God's purpose.

What heavenly peace comes into the spiritual mind when we grasp the force of this mighty edict: "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." **Col. 1:16-17**. I firmly believe that a spiritual understanding of a truth such as this will revolutionize a man's life, transform his outlook and conform him to the image of Christ. The world is full of people who do not know that God is in control. They have never learned that back of all things stands the Almighty, that He is before all things, and that by Him all things exist, consist and subsist, and that in Him we live and move and have our being. It is He who raises nations up and puts them down again. He is the one who raises up mighty dictators and discards them when they have fulfilled His purpose. He raises up Pharaohs and Hamans, Herods and Hitlers to chastise His people, and when He has finished with them, He brushes them off as dust from the balance and they disappear into the nothingness from which they came. Satan himself is a dignity against whom not even archangels are permitted to rail, (Jude 9), much less men of flesh and blood, but in the end it will be seen that even he who has been the dread of the nations has had his part to play in the divine purpose of an all-wise God.

Even the simplest analysis of God's word reveals the vast benefits of temptation, that by the trial of our faith we should be able to discern both good and evil, forsaking evil and choosing good. Even our blessed Lord Jesus Christ was tempted in all points like as we are. Heb. 4:15 But God had a purpose in it, for through this very temptation He was able to become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. Heb. 2:17. Many a man has made vain boasts before temptation came, but afterward he confessed that he was like all other men, weak and helpless, needing the grace of God and power from above to carry him through to sonship. Temptation not only proves the weakness of the human frame, but gives us understanding to succor all who are being tempted as we have been. No man or woman will ever enter the glory of sonship without temptation, and gladly will he boast that but for the grace of God he would have been overwhelmed by it. Thus, then, in the wisdom of God even the tempter becomes a part of the plan. God has never once told us to love Satan, because he is all that is evil and we are to hate evil. Nevertheless, he who speaks evil of Satan speaks evil of a dignity and does not understand how, in the counsel and wisdom of God, even this stormy wind is fulfilling His word. Psa. 148:8.

Long, long ago, about fifteen hundred years before the story of Bethlehem's manger, the saintly Job had been in long debate with three learned and very intelligent men. Though all their argument was filled with wisdom such as men today never speak, yet it was the wisdom of philosophers rather than the wisdom of God. When at last these men fell silent, the Lord answered Job out of a whirlwind in these words: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the cornerstone thereof? When the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy?" **Job 38:2-7**. If you will read on through this passage, you will find there are forty questions asked by the Lord, none of which Job could answer. I may also add that these questions for the most part are still unanswered in our day, baffling scientific minds with the greatness of their mystery.

It would, I think, be almost impossible to read this passage and pass unnoticed these words: "Who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy." Here in God's goodness is the curtain lifted to give a glimpse into a long past age when in God's counsel all the vast plans of eternity were laid, line upon line, plan upon plan, purpose upon purpose, ascending with unerring accuracy from glory to glory until that marvelous day when all things should be in the image of Him who created them by the word of His power and for His eternal glory. There the course of angelic things were planned, the perfecting of the sons of God, the fall and redemption of man, the preparation of the bride of Christ and the final gathering of all things in heaven and earth into him. Eph. 1:10.

These things are far too wonderful for me, and so wonderful were they then that the morning stars rose and sang a great universal hymn of praise and the sons of God that surrounded His throne shouted and shouted for joy until the very corridors of heaven echoed and re-echoed from universe to universe and from eternity to eternity. It was then that Eden was planned and all the events thereof. There Calvary was ordained, the Lamb of God slain and the blood of atonement shed before the foundation of the ages. There the resurrection was planned, the ascension, the preaching of the Gospel and the gathering of all things in heaven and earth into Christ until that glorious day when sorrow and crying are ended, pain has vanished and tears are wiped away forever, when all that was lost in every fall has been restored and righteousness reigns without alloy forever and ever and ever. Amen!

It was there that you and I were planned. Indeed, we may have been there! The exact day of our entrance into this world was ordained as was also the day of our departure and all the minute details that go to make our sonship complete. Oh, how big God is! Oh, how infinite in understanding! Oh, how perfect in counsel! Oh, how omnipotent in might! I stand all amazed in Thine omniscient counsel and, but for the weeping of this present night, would rise and sing with Thy stars of light and shout with Thine eternal sons! But, though weeping shall endure for a night, with certainty shall Thy joy come in the morning. The passing statements of scripture always surpass the understanding and imagination of man. The morning stars of which Job spoke in Job 38:17 were in truth sons of God. I think our Lord Jesus Christ intended we should have such understanding when He said, "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." **Rev. 22:16.** And to the overcomers of the church of Thyatira He gave the promise of sonship when He said to them, "He that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as a vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." **Rev. 2:26-29.** Peter also, giving counsel to guide us to sonship, said, "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." **2 Pet. 1:19.** What a promise of sonship that really is, yet how obscured from the prying eyes of the careless and unbelieving! Even the erring prophet Balaam made this unerring prophecy, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." **Num. 24:17.**

It is not wisdom to be wise above that which is written and it is foolishness for any of us to claim revelation if it is not in accord with the word of God. To speak of things which we do not understand is not profit, but loss, for it will bring us into error; and the very error in which we find ourselves will in turn close the door to truth, for falsehood does not easily vacate its throne nor make an exit from the human heart. Therefore we will leave with God that which we understand not and endeavor to state those things which are plainly evident to all.

Centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote a letter to his friend, Philemon, regarding a slave who had escaped but who, after his conversion through the ministry of Paul, was being returned to his master. Of this slave Paul wrote these significant words: "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in times past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me; whom I have sent again; Thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels ... For perhaps he therefore departed for a season that thou shouldst receive him forever: not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." **Phil. 10-12, 15-16.** This verse in some wonderful way seems to go far beyond the local setting of a slave that departed from his master and returned again as a brother. It speaks of a creation that departed from its creator and became unprofitable, but will be returned at last to Him as a chaste virgin full of all the wisdom, the knowledge, the understanding and the reverence that our long night of separation has brought us. Do not ask me to explain the wisdom and counsel of God in this, for could I explain it I would be as God; but with respect and godly fear we shall believe Him in whom all wisdom dwells embodied.

Between that blessed day when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy and that wonderful day when at last the temple of God is with men, strange events beyond human understanding have taken place. Thrice in the course of the ages there have been falls of almost unbelievable magnitude and separations that none but God can understand. Known unto God are all His ways. All God's works are in

wisdom and His ways past finding out. Who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath given to Him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For from Him everything comes; by Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him forever. Amen and Amen! Rom. 11:34-36. We need not concern ourselves with the sick theology of a modern harlot church system that forever makes God to be the loser in His own eternal purpose; neither should we consider for a moment the abominable trumpetry palmed off by eloquent preachers who, with feigned concern for the welfare of the lost, fill their own coffers with gold and live like kings from the pittances of well-meaning widows. Let us rather concern ourselves with the eternal purpose of God, seeking always to put ourselves at His divine disposal that we might come as quickly as possible into the fullness of that eternal plan.

One of the greatest blessings that can come to mankind will come to you when your eyes are opened to see that God is before all things - God, all wise, all powerful, all enduring; God, who is in all, through all, and over all; God, with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning; God, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it comes to pass; God, in whose hand the mightiest nations are but dust in the balance, who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and whose bitterest enemies do His will, who knows the end of a matter from the beginning because He is both the beginning and the ending of all things. In Him dwelleth all the wisdom of the universe. He hangs the earth on nothing and tells the number of the innumerable stars. Nothing ever gets out of hand with God. Nothing happens in time or in eternity that He did not anticipate and fully know before ever He formed any creature. Well did the apostle say by the mighty anointing of God's Spirit, "**Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the ages.**" **Acts. 15:18.**

How different would be the prayer of Christians if they had this blessed knowledge! Then would all their frantic demands be gone and they, like Christ, would breathe from the innermost Spirit, "Thy will be done! Thy will be done!" We do not have record of many prayers that Jesus prayed, but those that are recorded speak forth the assurance of His soul that all things were following the course that had been laid down for Him on that wonderful day when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Even the opening words of the prayer recorded in John 17 are these: "Father, the hour is come." What hour did He mean? He meant that the exact day and hour of His crucifixion had been set ages and dispensations before, and now at last that long awaited hour had come. The hour had been set in the counsel of God when the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. Jesus was not crucified before the world began, but the immutable purpose and plan of God willed that on such and such a day at such and such an hour God's only begotten Son should be slain and His blood shed for all sin and all uncleanness. It was then that God decreed that without the shedding of blood there should be no remission of sins. The blood of Jesus Christ was not ordinary blood, but better blood than that of Abel. It was not corruptible blood, but incorruptible blood as fresh and pure today for the life of all the world as the day it was shed on Calvary. That blood was not available for earthly things only, but heavenly things as well. The apostle long ago declared, "**Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purged by these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.**" **Heb. 9:23.**

See again the eternal assurance that filled the heart of Jesus when He said, "**I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.**" **John 17:4.** And again, "**For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.**" **Verse 8.**

There is nothing that will give you greater confidence in God than the definite assurance that God is on the throne, that all things are working according to His counsel and are carried out by His might. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. Acts 15:18. Neither the wrath of man nor any wisdom of Satan can change one jot or tittle of anything God has ordained. He has His plan for the heathen, for the true church, for the harlot church, for Israel and for the Jew. He has His purpose for those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death and for those who have never heard that God had a Son. He has His plan for the rich and the poor, the naked and the clothed, for slaves and free men; and, when at last we see it as He planned it and have learned experimentally that our light afflictions which were but for a moment have, indeed, worked for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, we will shout with joy with all the ransomed sons of God, even as John the apostle in the Revelation beheld when he wrote, "**And every creature which is in heaven, and**

on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." **Rev. 5:14.**

It was certainly in such knowledge and eternal assurance that Jesus faced the bitterness of the cross with all its blood and sweat, its agony and separation, but, because He knew the result was certain, for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despised the shame and is even now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. God's people have the wrong idea of the joy of the Lord. They look upon joy as some sort of bubbling effervescence that comes from feeling good all over. This may be the joy of the world, but it is not the joy of the Lord. The joy of the Lord comes from the enlightening of the soul in the knowledge of the eternal plan. The joy of the Lord endures forever. It is never affected by trial and tribulation because it sees hope in the end. It knows that after the pain of travail a son will be born and that he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

If we realize the truth of this text, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world," it will give us a confident assurance such as nothing else can. Nothing ever comes upon the plans of God unawares and, in my opinion, it is blasphemous to suppose they do. For centuries learned men have looked upon the events of the garden of Eden as something that came upon God unexpectedly. They willingly admit that God is all-wise, but somehow beyond understanding Satan slipped in unawares and spoiled His whole lovely plan so that even God was hard put to it to find a way out. In the light of what God is, nothing can be so nonsensical nor could anything create greater distrust in Him than a thought like this. The fall of man and the separation of male from female was part of a purpose that was to bring forth a creation that would know both good and evil that the universe might be purged from sin unto endless ages.

The fact that you are a Christian today is not a matter of chance nor of your being wiser than any other man, nor more tender-hearted nor more susceptible to the truth. It does not even depend on whether your parents were good or bad. It all rests on this one thing - that God, before the ages were formed, chose you to a certain place in Himself. Thus did Paul teach the Ephesians when he said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." **Eph. 1:3-4.**

It should be a very humbling experience, but a very confirming assurance, just to know that on that blessed day when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy you were chosen to be among the first fruits unto Him. It is no grace or goodness on your part or mine, but it is the plan of God that unerringly guides the course of all things and all people. Peter also took up the knowledgeable refrain when he said, "For ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." **1 Pet. 2:9.** And the Lord Jesus Christ also said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." **John 15:16.** There was great understanding in the saying of Jesus, "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen." **John 13:18.** This choice was not made casually on the spot. It was a choice made before there was a man on the earth or ever an age was formed.

Men were chosen not only to noble purposes, but to ignoble also. In a great house there are vessels not only of gold and silver, but of wood and earth, some to honor and some to dishonor. Judas Iscariot did not just happen along among the disciples. His treachery was known and ordained from the beginning and foretold by the prophets long before his birth. Cf. Zech. 11:12-13 with Matt. 27:10. He was a necessary part of God's plan, however ignoble his purpose may have been. The whole story of the crucifixion of Christ as it concerned both Jews and Gentiles was arranged before the ages began so that nothing was missing when the great offering of Christ for the world was to be accomplished. See how carefully God ordained this purpose and how well it was understood by the apostles of the Lord when they said, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." **Acts. 4:26-28.** Rest assured, then, that the Almighty God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

The Lord has said, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." **Rom. 8:29.** Jesus Christ is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3), and it is by union with Him that we come into the likeness of God. As the side of Adam was opened that the woman might be taken from him, so the side of Jesus Christ was opened that we might be grafted in, thus to become bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His Spirit, mind of His mind and wisdom of His wisdom. Both the sons of God and the bride of Christ are to be endowed with all the attributes of Himself that we may be the likeness, the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. Thus the saying is fulfilled, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." **John 17:22-23.** Even now today the Spirit of truth is in the world speaking to the faithful and longing heart saying, "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." **John 14:19-20.** Thus the light that shined out of darkness has now shined into our hearts, flooding them with eternal light, illuminating men with the knowledge of God as it shines from the face of Christ. Cf 2 Cor. 4:6.

"It makes me sigh, indeed, this yearning to be under cover of my heavenly habitation since I am sure that once so covered I shall not be naked in the hour of death. I do sigh within this tent of mine with heavy anxiety, not that I want to be stripped, no, but to be under cover of the other, to have my mortal element absorbed by life. I am prepared for this change by God who has given me the Spirit as its pledge and installment." **2 Cor. 5:1-6.** (Moffatt).

Long ago Moses, the servant of the Lord, was called of God to go up to the top of Mt. Sinai. The mountain burned with the fire of God. There was blackness and darkness and tempest, the sound of trumpets and the voice of words, and so terrible was the sight that Moses said, "I do exceedingly fear and quake." **Heb. 12:21.** There in the mountain of God's presence he remained for forty days, and when at last he descended, his face so shone with the glory of God that he hung a veil over his face that Israel should not behold the glory. Now Paul, in writing of this wonderful thing, makes plain the fact that the veil was not hung over the face of Moses with the purpose of hiding the glory, but rather that the children of Israel might not see that the glory was fading away. No man ever likes to feel that the glory of God is fading, decreasing, and becoming less in his life as the time passes. Thus it was because of this decreasing glory that Moses hung the veil over his countenance that the fact of the fading glory should be hidden from them. 2 Cor. 3:12-13. Goodspeed translates this passage thus: "So, since I have such hope, I speak with great frankness, not like Moses who used to wear a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at the fading of the splendor from it." It was natural that the glory given under the law should fail and fade away, for the law is death to unspiritual men. But now that Christ has died and has risen again and has sent forth the Holy Spirit into our hearts and the very law of God has become part of us, being written not on stones but in our hearts even as it is in God's heart, becoming our very nature even as it is the nature and essence of God Himself, therefore the veil is removed from our faces, for the glory is not fading but increasing as we behold, not cold tables of stone, but the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore Paul wrote, "But we all, with open face, (unveiled face), beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18.**

Over and over again in these writings we have tried to make all men see that it is in union with Jesus Christ that all our hope is embodied. Our hope of sonship is in union with Him. Our hope of glory is in Him. Our washing, our salvation, our sanctification, our sonship and every detail of our eternal redemption depends upon our personal relationship with Him. Beholding His face we are changed into His image and transformed into His likeness, even by the Spirit of the Lord. It is in communion with Him that His mind becomes our mind, His thoughts our thoughts and His ways our ways. In union with Him Christ becomes all and in all. He is the way, the truth, the light, the life, the resurrection, the ascension and the glory. All who rise with Him sit with Him in heavenly realms far above principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named.

When will Christians stop this wickedness of making heroes of men, following this man and that man, this woman and that woman? God's people have become idol worshippers and followers of men whose breath is in their nostrils, who lead men as sheep and perish, leaving them to look for some other to lead them. Have we not heard the words of Christ, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?" Change and decay is everywhere about us. Men come and men go, but Christ abides forever. He that puts his

faith in man will certainly decay and perish with man, but he that beholds the face of Jesus Christ will be changed into that same image from one glory to another.

The first statement ever made concerning man is this: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." **Gen. 1:26.** This is the first purpose of God for man, and this first purpose is in preparation for the second purpose. "Let Us give him dominion."

Everything from the beginning of the world to the end is working together for good to bring man into the very image and likeness of God, and it shall come to pass as God has ordained: As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. As the first man (Adam) is of the earth earthy, the second man (Christ) is the Lord from heaven... And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor. 15:47,49. It is impossible for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom of God and impossible for corruption to inherit incorruption, therefore God is preparing us now for a marvelous change, a transfiguration, and He who has wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:5.

For this reason a mystery of God is about to unfold, and the power of the resurrection, even the power that raised up Jesus from the dead, will be manifest that that which is corruptible may be transformed into incorruption and that which is mortal may put on immortality. "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality." **1 Cor. 15:51-52.**

The time of the fulfilling of this great mystery is the time when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the mystery of God is finished and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. John saw a mighty angel stand upon the sea and the earth who lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by Him that liveth forever and ever that time should be no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. Rev. 10:5-7. "And the seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." **Rev. 11:15.** The sounding of the seventh trumpet by the seventh angel is the last trump of which Paul spoke. 1 Cor. 15:51-52. In it the great mystery of God is finished.

Corruption puts on incorruption and mortality puts on immortality and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. He that is preparing us for this great change is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. Wherefore comfort one another with these words, for the time is near at hand.

CHAPTER THREE THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

From the days of our infancy we have been children of tradition. Ideas, beliefs and teachings have always been handed down from generation to generation. Our culture, our codes and our beliefs, as our language, are handed down from family to family for many generations without any noticeable change. This can be a very good thing in the natural realm, but it can also lead to centuries of stagnation and even opposition to progress. There are places even in the spiritual realm where tradition can be a good thing, but sooner or later we will be brought face to face with the indisputable fact that Almighty God is not one who can be held within the narrow confines of human tradition nor can His eternal and ever expanding purpose be held in captivity by the ball and chain of human ways of looking at things.

The man or woman who believes that God is static, set, immovable, retired, without ambition and having no further purpose to attain has altogether the wrong idea of God. Everything that God is and does in all His universe shows that His purposes are progressive and expanding. God's purposes expand as the days of His weeks. He has one week in which every day is twenty-four hours long. He has another week in which every day is one year long. This grows into another week in which every day is seven years long. This grows into another week in which every day is one thousand years long. This in turn grows into another week in which

every day is seven thousand years long, and there is reason to believe that this vast week grows into another week in which every day is forty-nine thousand years long. You may not understand this by casually reading about it, but it is so, and a little study of the scripture reveals in part the truth contained in the inspired words of Peter, "A day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day." **2 Pet. 3:8**. We often hear of nations who undertake five year plans or seven year plans to further their prosperity. No doubt it is a good idea, but God first originated the thought of conducting all His work on a seven-day plan, each day of which may be twenty-four hours long or seven thousand years long as He in wisdom deems necessary to fulfill His eternal purpose.

I once listened to an astronomer lecture on the magnitude of the heavens. In the course of his address he spoke with great conviction of the expanding universe, but after using the word 'expanding', he paused and said. "The word 'exploding' would be more appropriate, for many stars of the heavens are traveling away from the earth and out into space at the rate of fifty thousand miles per second." Since all these things are so and since even the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, who is the author of all these things, how dare puny man with his frail, worm-like, fallen mind try to incarcerate the Almighty within the paper walls of his human traditions? "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy finger, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honor and madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet... O, Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth." **Psa. 8:3-9**.

I have no hesitation in saying that the moment men come to know God they immediately become non-conformists. They see God far greater than the tradition of their fathers, greater than the law of Moses, even as he which buildeth the house is greater and more honorable than the house. Christ is greater than the gospel we know, greater than the kingdom we teach. His power is beyond omnipotence. His wisdom is beyond omniscience, His faithfulness beyond immutability. His loving kindness and tender mercies reach unto all generations and His grace beyond the length, the depth, the breadth or height of all understanding but His own.

There was a man two thousand years ago called Saul from the city of Tarsus. He was as steeped in the time-honored customs of the fathers and elders of Israel as it was possible for a man to be. He was as bound by the blinding traditions of an Israel that had crucified the Lord as millions today are bound by the doctrines and traditions of a backslidden, apostate Babylonish system that has the audacity to masquerade as the church of Jesus Christ without spot or wrinkle. Listen to this Saul as he boasts of his glorious past: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, / more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church', touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." **Phil. 3:4-6**. To a Jew who reveled in his past and in his strict adherence to the doctrine handed down from the days of Moses all this must have seemed very commendable. But, when he saw the whole thing in the blazing-light of God's revelation of Jesus Christ, he saw all the things of which he boasted as nothing but common dung. He was ready to load it all on the garbage wagon and cart it off to the nuisance ground as a thing that hindered rather than helped his progress. "What things were gain to me," he said, "those I counted loss for Christ; Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him..." **Phil 3:7-10**.

"That I may know Him!" That is where the difference comes in. Knowing Christ makes the difference between Saul and Paul though they were the same man. Saul is tied to doctrines, traditions, priests, people and things, but Paul is swept by the knowledge of the revelation of Jesus Christ into the infinity of an infinite God. He who formerly adored Jews and hated Gentiles was swept into a realm where neither Jew nor Gentile exists, but all are one in Christ. He who slavishly adhered to a written law was transported into the very being of the lawgiver Himself. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For from Him

everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him forever! Amen and Amen! Rom. 11:35-36. (Goodspeed).

How then would it ever be possible for a man who has thus been swept away on the fathomless ocean of divine revelation to ever again be content to puddle about in the muddy waters of Jewish tradition? Neither now is it possible for those who are walking in the brightening light of the Sun of Righteousness to conform to the rotting creeds of a church system that walks in the flickering light of the candle of modern tradition.

Paul was forever reminding us that the gulf that lay between the tradition of the elders and the revelation of the Son of God was as fathomless as God Himself. He likens the first to dung and speaks of the other thus: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory; yet of my self I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." **2 Cor. 12:2-5**. That is what he wrote to the church at Corinth, and to the Galatians he wrote, "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it: And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers, but when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace, to reveal his Son in me... immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again to Damascus." **Gal. 1:13-17**.

Whenever a man begins to seek to know Christ, he will find to his amazement that he is coming into variance with the age-old traditions of the church, which, though held high in honor by the multitude, are serving only one purpose, and that is to make the truth of God of no effect. Such a seeker will soon find that he will be at variance with his best friends, for they will regard him as a peculiar person who holds as precious truth many things which they call error. Paul once said, "This I confess, that after the manner which they call heresy so worship I the God of my fathers." **Acts 24:14**. If you continue to seek to know Him, you will find yourself becoming ostracized and not wanted. You may even be dishonorably dismissed, as I myself have been, but this should neither defer nor hinder your search, for it would seem to me to be impossible that one who has heard the unspeakable words of the third heaven should have anything in common with the kind of men who waste their time in tradition, always trying to patch up the riven veil of the temple.

HIS WAYS

There is a verse of scripture in **Psa. 105:7** that reads thus: "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." This verse of scripture clearly shows the vast difference between men who know God and men who only know about God. There were countless thousands of people in the days of Jesus Christ who saw the acts of God as Jesus went about preaching the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and disease, raising the dead, casting out demons, even restoring the maimed, giving them new limbs again. There was no question too hard for Him to answer, no miracle that He could not perform. Even death itself had no power over Him, for no one could take His life from Him, but He laid it down Himself. Such were the mighty acts of God, which were by no means done in a corner, but openly for multitudes to behold. Yet for all their marveling at His mighty acts, they still did not know Him. The majority of them, though doubtless convinced that He was the Son of God, still knew Him not. I could be wrong, but it seems clear that at the time of Jesus' death the fingers of one hand could number all the people who really knew Him. They knew His mighty acts, but they understood none of His ways. They did not understand anything about His death. Did Peter not say, "This shall not be unto Thee!" To which Jesus replied, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou savorest not the things that be of God." **Matt. 16:23**. Did they understand the rising from the dead (Mk. 9:10) or any other of the real purposes for which He came?

As it was with the multitudes of Jesus' day, so also it was with the children of Israel in the days of Moses. They had all seen the mighty acts of God in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea. They had seen His miracles in the desert. They drank of the water that gushed in a torrent from the smitten rock, and they ate the heavenly manna full forty years. No feeble person walked among their tribes. Their garments waxed not old upon their

bodies. Their eyes beheld the pillar of fire every night and the cloud of God's presence shaded their camp every passing day. They saw Mt. Sinai in billows of smoke from God's presence and they feared exceedingly with much trembling as His voice then shook the earth. See Ex. 19. If God ever made His mighty acts known to any people, He certainly made them known to those wilderness wanderers, yet for all this they knew none of His ways, but grumbled and fretted and rebelled until they were overthrown in the wilderness. And Moses, recounting their experiences before them, made this almost incredible statement. "Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles: Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see and ears to hear unto this day." Deut. 29:2-4.

But with Moses it was all different. God made known His ways unto Moses. He knew the Lord face to face. He spoke to Him face to face. He knew the inner workings of the great plan of God. He understood what was in the mind of the Lord when He called this rebellious people. He knew what the glorious end of it all would be. He prophesied of the coming of the Messiah in these words: "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me. Him shall ye hear." Deut. 18:15. He knew God and he knew God's ways. He did not marvel at God's acts nor did he seek them, for he knew God face to face.

So also it is in our day. Multitudes of men and women have seen the acts of God. Millions have been eye-witnesses of a healing, a miracle or a baptism of the Spirit, and in their zeal to behold these acts of God they willingly run from meeting to meeting, from coast to coast and often from country to country. The moment they hear of a miracle worker here or there, they are ready to run, hoping fervently that they will be able to feast their inquisitive eyes on some mighty act of God. Though they have been deceived times without number by some self-styled modern Moses whose wonders are all in his handbills, still they run again and again like inquisitive little boys to a fire or an accident. But for all their running and hearing and seeing they still do not know God. To be sure many can recount with indisputable proof instances of the acts of the Lord, still for all this they do not know God's ways. It is an indisputable fact that scarcely one Christian in a thousand has ever seriously considered what God's eternal purposes might be. The vast majority of Christians are surprised beyond measure when one ventures to tell them that God had a purpose before the world began, that he is now fulfilling it with infinite care, and that all things, including man's fall, are part of the eternal plan.

Do men come to know God by listening to the endless preaching of sermons from week to week? Can a man ever come to know God by this means? I declare he cannot. He may learn something about the acts of God. He may learn man's tradition about God or he may imbibe man's ideas about the doctrines of God, but he never comes to know God in this fashion. Those who know God must be with Him, not with the multitude, but alone. It is not enough to receive the initial filling of His Spirit, but all who would walk with Him must walk with Him into the wilderness of life to willingly suffer the temptation of the devil. They must walk with Him in fasting - not only from food, but from all other things that strengthen and build up the natural man at the expense of the Christ within. They must not only stand with Him in the glory of the transfiguration, but endure the desolating agonies of Gethsemane. They must willingly follow Him to the cross, yea, willingly bear it through all their earthly life that they might say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Did not Jesus say to the rich young ruler, "Come, take up thy cross and follow Me?" It is the cross of Christ that separates men from this present evil world with all its human lusts. It is here that we not only turn our backs on this present evil age, but die to it, and in dying we discover that all who have thus died in Him are unconscious to this present evil world and totally unaffected by it. They are not, however, unconscious to the spiritual world, for, having followed Christ in death, they have become part of His resurrection. They have discovered that all who partake of His resurrection have been awakened to a new world, even the world and realm of God. They are not raised, as was Lazarus, to the natural realm, but raised as was Jesus to a spiritual life.

During the centuries there has been much teaching emanating from the carnal mind. Everywhere today the theory is propounded that God wants His people to have the best of everything in this life. The truth is that those who seek after the best of everything in this passing world find, when it is too late, that their souls are poverty-stricken, their spirits devoid of God's grace, and their minds separated from true wisdom and spiritual understanding. While they feast on the things of this earthly realm, they have become spots in the feast of charity (love), "feeding themselves without fear. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds

(doctrines); trees whose fruit is withered, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom is reserved the mists of blackness for the age." **Jude 12-13.** Certainly she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

These teachings have caused the people of God to commit the three great sins mentioned by the apostle Jude - the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Core. Jude 11. The way of Cain is envy and hatred against those whom God has accepted. The error of Balaam is the willingness to use the gifts of God for profit and earthly gain, a sin that is rampant in the professing church, glaring and blatant in almost every religious broadcast. The gainsaying of Core is rebellion and resistance against the authority of God and those whom He has set. See Num. 16.

We are well past the time when all God's people should take leave of the confusion and trickery of modern religion. It is time to take your Bible and separate yourself from people, from sects and from the opinions of men. It is time to find some convenient Jerusalem - your back bedroom, your attic, or a quiet mountain stream where you can seek God in fasting and prayer that you might hear His voice, know His will and receive of His understanding. Do not go before God seeking power. He knows how much power you need. Do not go before him seeking gifts of healing and working of miracles. God knows whether or not He wants a miracle worker. Do not seek to be a mighty man of God before the people. Seek to be acceptable before God, one who knows His voice, knows His will, loves His command and follows implicitly the gentlest movings of His Spirit.

While we seek to know God, we must always remember that God knows us. He does not depend upon what we say or testify. He did not depend on Peter's determined declaration of undying fidelity. He knew Peter would deny Him. He knew Peter much better than Peter knew himself. He knows well those in whom He can put His trust. He once said of Abraham, "For I know Him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." **Gen. 18:19.** God knew His people Israel and said of them just before they entered the land of Canaan, "For I know their imaginations which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear." **Deut. 31:21.** Never deceive yourself by believing that God accepts every word that you speak by way of consecration, for He will try you and weigh you and apply the torture test of temptation and disappointment until He knows that your profession is real, that there is no wedge of silver or Babylonish garment hidden in the tent of your heart.

MY SHEEP KNOW MY VOICE

No man can come to know the voice of Christ by listening to sermons. Though you listen to them twice every day for the remainder of your life, you may still be a complete stranger to the sound of His voice. Though Samuel had been brought up in the temple of the Lord from infancy, he knew not the voice of the Lord. He was unable to discern between the voice of the Lord and the voice of Eli. But when he listened to the voice of God, the message he heard made him afraid, for it was spoken against Eli, his teacher. 1 Sam. 3:11-21. All too often sermons are only sermons. Have we never realized that for every one sermon that is spoken from the very heart of God there are perhaps a thousand others that are contrived or re-hashed by the aid of Homiletics? Texts of scripture are often used as a sort of springboard from which the preacher launches his personal notions or dives into a pool to emerge breathless at the conclusion of his address. You cannot come to know the voice of the Lord after this fashion.

Jesus said, "My sheep know My voice, and they follow Me; and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." If we but meditate on these words, what conviction they bring to our hearts, for we are living in an hour when God's people seem to know the voice of every stranger and follow them, but the voice of Christ they do not know. The Lord has not called me to rail against people, nor has He sent me to slay the prophets of Baal, but I must say that any man or woman who can absorb the trash that is presented in many pulpits and on the airwaves in the name of the Gospel, never recognizing that it is the voice of strangers, surely has never heard the voice of Christ. Every grasping, grabbing scheme, every shifting, deceiving device is presented to wheedle the unwilling dollars from the purses of the people. The presentation of each grandiose scheme for reaching the heathen ends with an appeal for money. Pretentious prayers for the sick usually conclude with a touching appeal to the sick to write immediately to tell of the miracle God has wrought

"because we need your letters. They are the life-line of our ministry." Even the frequent offer of a free book is a wily device to secure another name to whom self-addressed pledge envelopes can be sent. I do not hesitate to say that this is not the voice of Christ, but the voice of big business. Well did Paul the apostle write, "That ye be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, (the Greek word kubeia translated 'sleight' means as in playing dice or cheating), and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." **Eph. 4:14.** Why do people not wake up and see that this playing dice with the gospel is the work and voice of strangers! It is a misrepresentation of the true facts. If God's people would take even a moment to compare this modern racket with the beautiful methods of Jesus, they would soon realize that they are not listening to His voice, but the voice of men who are strangers to His ways.

YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH. John 8:32

Truth is fidelity, sincerity, and punctuality in keeping promises. When truth is used with reference to God, to these are added mercy and kindness. For millenniums of time men have diligently sought for truth. They have burned the candle low as they have searched through the night, spending both youth and old age in their search for truth, and, when at last through elaborate calculations they arrive at their conclusions, they do so only to find in later years that some new discovery has upset their theories and sent them puzzling and searching again. Twenty-five centuries ago Socrates sagely remarked, "One plus one makes two, but I have never been able to decide whether it is the one that was added that makes two, or the one to which one was added." Thus man goes forever on seeking truth and is never quite able to find it.

Twenty centuries ago two men talked together in Pilate's judgment hall. Pilate was the judge and Jesus, the Son of God, was the accused. "Art Thou a king then?" Pilate asked. To this Jesus replied, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." Pilate saith unto Him, "What is truth?" Then without waiting for a reply he went out. **John 18:37-38.** But had he waited for Jesus to answer, what do you think the answer would have been? Would He not have given the same answer to Pilate that He gave to Thomas? "I am the truth." If Pilate had found Jesus, his search for truth would have been ended, for He is truth. He does not merely preach truth and speak truth. He is truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." I have heard men speak of the liberating effects of truth, and all they said was perfectly right, but you will leave all your listeners hanging in mid-air unless you are able to point them to Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate. Truth is not a thing. Truth is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ, the first begotten of the Father.

What a battleground the world has been as zealous men in search of truth and in defense of what they believed to be truth have flung into the raging war all the armaments that human wisdom could devise! What wars have been waged over doctrines and creeds, what battles over baptisms and sacraments as men of varied faiths have thumped the Bible in defense of their petty conclusions until Christ, who is the very Spirit of truth, has vanished from their carnal presence and hate and animosity flourish where Christ should have reigned supreme.

There was a time when I thought it was my sacred duty to be able to answer every question that was asked me. It seemed to be right to know where one stood on all the endless doctrines that have arisen. It seemed to be necessary to be ready to do battle immediately to defend one's ground on any issue. Well, all that has changed now, for I have found that truth is not a creed, not a doctrine, not a belief nor a faith. Truth is Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is truth. He does not need that I should draw my sword as did Peter in His defense. Better far for me to attempt to defend a lion. Truth needs no defense. It is the greatest force in the universe. It opens the prisons and sets the captives free. It restores the sick to health and makes all the blind to see. It defeats the fraudulent claims of enemies. It fills the whole earth with righteousness, and it will abide when worlds are burned away. To know Him is to know truth and to know truth is to be set free.

Our Lord told His disciples long ago that truth would come from heaven to dwell in their hearts. They were not to learn it from a book nor from the lips of men, but truth would come from heaven in the form of the Holy Spirit of God and he would dwell in them and they would know the truth thereby. "I will pray the Father," He said, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom

the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you... at that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and I in you" **John 14:16,17,20.**

Oh, if men would halt their vain debating that can only produce malice and envy, and, instead, come to know Him who is the very Spirit of truth that He might dwell in their hearts by faith, for then would even the unbelieving see the light of truth and believe on Him who alone sets men free. He that is born of God cannot commit sin, for His seed (Christ) remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God. Since God cannot sin, should it be thought a thing impossible that he who is born of God should also be totally free from sin? For if God, who cannot sin nor be tempted with sin, dwells within a man, how then could that man sin? It is wrong to argue that a believer who sins is born of God, for that which is born of God cannot sin. 1 John 3:9. The same applies to truth, for he who has the Spirit of truth abiding in his life can neither be a liar nor believe a lie. As deep answers to deep, so he who is of the truth will respond to truth when he hears it and will be readily repulsed by the spirit of error. Error clothes itself in attractive garments. It often appears inviting, acceptable and to be desired, but there is always something about its spirit that is off key and to which the deep chords of Christ within refuse to respond. When anyone feels this way, he should never try to persuade himself to accept either what is taught or the person who taught it, for it is certain to be wrong. Truth, though not understood, will ring true, but error, though understood, will pall the spirit. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

My heart goes out in prayer that the God of all wisdom and understanding will open the hearts of all who read these things that they may see that none can ever know God or understand His ways until God comes to him personally to uncover the truth by a revelation to his heart. Even those who, as Moses, have met God face to face possess no ability to describe His glory so that others might see and be transformed, God must reveal Himself in revelation to each individual heart or all will fail to comprehend His truth or understand His ways. Though Peter, James, and John should stand before me patiently explaining the effulgent wonders of the Mount of Transfiguration, their words would be wasted, for I can never hope to know the transforming power of that holy experience until I myself have stood where they stood to behold His glory, seeing and hearing those wonders that charmed and transformed their beings. It was for this very reason that Jesus charged them saying, "See thou tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead." Neither you nor I, my brethren, are in a position to waste even five minutes of our time in criticism or condemnation of anyone, for we all are devoid of truth and stripped to nakedness of understanding. It is time to confess our sins in sackcloth and ashes. It is time to rend our hearts and not our garments. It is time to repent of our waywardness and our hard speeches and confess that we know nothing yet as we ought to know.

TRUTH AND REVELATION

There is something about truth and revelation that no one ever really knows until it becomes a personal experience. While this is especially true in the spiritual realm, it is also true in the natural realm. The only persons on earth who really understand our sorrow are the persons who have traveled the same valley of despair. Only those who have been bereaved know what bereavement really is. They alone can shed the sympathizing tear, for they alone truly understand. Others may kindly and with feeling offer their condolence, but they can do little more than that, for they have not experienced the pain and loneliness of our loss. The reason our blessed Lord is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15) is that He knoweth our frame.

He remembereth that we are dust. He Himself was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He knew what it was to be despised, afflicted, and rejected of men. He knows what it is to be misunderstood, to be dragged from prison and judgment with no man to declare His generation. He knows what it is to be tempted in all points as we are tempted, and, though He knew not sin and no guile was found in Him, yet the sympathizing tears flow from His eyes as He extends His nail-pierced hand to lift us from the shades of our gloomy night to the ineffable light of the plane on which He dwells.

How are we to explain the blessedness of justification to those who have never experienced its joy or the peace that comes to the heart with the knowledge of sins forgiven? For many years I heard the story of men who were saved. They told of the wonderful goodness of that experience in God. They spoke of burdens that

rolled away at Calvary, of blood that made sinners whiter than snow, of peace that flowed like a river, and of lives that were transformed by grace divine. It all sounded very wonderful, indeed, but one day of experience in that blessed realm taught me more than all my teachers through many a bygone year. I also learned of many things which none had ventured to tell me. I learned that there was far more to being a Christian than reclining on flowery beds of ease while waiting to be transported to the skies. I learned by experience that there were heartaches and crosses, narrow roads and slippery paths. Robbers and traitors lay in wait by my pathway and temptation sought to destroy my soul.

I asked for life and this is what He gave me.
My lot is hard; my tears flow like the rain.
I asked for hours gay with sunshine spattered,
But, lo, my waking hours are filled with pain.

How could I know that crushing brings forth fragrance
Like perfume from some crushed and bleeding rose,
That in the process of my better making
God used the methods He approved and chose?

It is a shocking revelation to find that after lifetimes of instruction in doctrines men still do not know the Lord. Men may learn the theories of justification replete with scriptures and theological argument, but they never know justification until it becomes an experience within them. The various theories of water baptism have been propounded for centuries, but perhaps there is still no man on earth who has experienced the transformation that will come to those who are truly baptized into His death and resurrection. We have been content with forms and ceremonies, but devoid of experience. Mary and Martha knew there would be a resurrection in some far off day, but they did not know that the resurrection was the Christ who stood by their side longing to dispel their darkness and open their understanding that He might become both resurrection and life to the living as well as the dead. "I am the resurrection and the life," He said. "Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Yet they wept on, for the light of revelation had not penetrated their sorrowing minds. Jesus wept with them, not from a sense of despair, but because of the blindness of the natural mind. The natural mind understands not the things of the Spirit of God. It never, never can know them, for they are spiritually discerned. God must reach beyond the shadows of the natural mind, causing the light of His glorious revelation to flood upon our slumbering spirits before we can understand or know Him as He is.

To some people the voice of the Virgin Mary was the voice of a fornicator, an unholy young maid who had sinned during her betrothal, but when the voice of Mary sounded in the ears of Elizabeth, the babe leaped in her womb for joy. Thus the Spirit of God reveals the truth to the spirit of man, for, **"when He the Spirit of truth has come, He will take the things of God and show them unto you."** **John 16:13-15.** That is true revelation.

A true revelation is an experience from God. Any professed revelation that does not bring an experience to those who receive it is not a revelation from God at all, rather some figment of man's imagination. When God reveals Himself to man in any way, there is always transformation. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. I would not give a wooden nickel for any revelation which wrought no change in my life, that produced neither repentance, nor holiness, nor awe. If we could stand with Job in God's presence, we would hear him say, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." If we could stand with Isaiah, we would hear him say, **"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and lifted up and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims, each having six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly; and one cried to the other, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts: The whole earth is full of His glory, and the posts of the door were moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth, saying, Lo, this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is purged and thy sin taken away."** **Isa. 6:1-7.** Those who come face to face with true revelation are coming face to face with God, for they, **"beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."** 2 Cor. 3:18.

You may have seen men claiming great revelation from the Lord who were as puffed up as a toad, whose very being reeked of self-confidence and conceit. I do not believe in their pretended revelation but abhor their pride and turn away. When Gideon saw the angel, he cried, "Alas." Jacob, awaking from his dream at Haran, was afraid and cried, "Surely the Lord is in this place; how dreadful is this place. This is none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven." **Gen. 28:16-17.** And Peter, seeing the miraculous draught of fishes, begged in amazement, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Luke **5:8.**

The hour is certainly at hand when all who will be sons of God must come to know Him. Let me therefore say with the utmost emphasis that you will never come to know Him by listening to sermons, attending meetings, reading articles, joining in great schemes to advance the gospel or any of the other things that occupy the time and thought of the modern church goer. You come to know Christ by being with Him where He is. "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." **John 17:24.** You come to know Him by speaking often with Him and listening as He speaks to you. You come to know His will when you have no will of your own. Man's will is very strong and his heart very deceitful, but when at last your will is completely laid down in your Gethsemane as His was in the garden, then He will reveal His will and begin to lead you in His own paths. You have prayed that the mind of Christ would dwell in you. Seek then to have no mind of your own, for that which above all else hinders the mind of Christ from dwelling in you is the dominating presence of your own mind, your own ideas, your own thoughts and your own desires. The moment Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road realized he was face to face with Jesus Christ and that his whole mind and will was contrary to Him, then in utter abandonment he cast his own mind away and cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And from that moment the Spirit of God took over.

Learn now the words of the Lord. "My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts My thoughts; for as heaven is higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." It is time to stand still before God and give an earnest ear to His speaking, for all the world and the professing church with it has turned every man to his own way. They have forsaken the ways of the Lord. They do not know His voice nor follow Him. They have invented all manner of work, is which appear wonderful on the surface, but they are not the ways of Christ. They are the works of their own hands. Never in the history of the world was there so much preaching and prophesying, so much idle talk about faith, so many claiming miracles and healings, so many great works and extravagant programs, but never was there such a dearth of truth, such lack of the mind of God and such abandonment to the will of man.

Above the tumult of tradition, above the strife of doctrine, above the cries for universal unity, the Spirit of God is calling a people who will hear His voice, walk in His will, know His mind, experience His presence, feel His life. They shall not walk as others walk, for leaving all others they cleave only to Him. They are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people to show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

CHAPTER FOUR BECOMING GOD'S WILL

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH

The hour is at hand when the glory of the kingdom of God will cast its gladdening rays over the entire earth, for the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings will have arisen forevermore. "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." **Isa. 60:20-22.**

The hour is at hand when Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords will take His seat upon the throne of David His father in Jerusalem, the city of the great King. Matt. 5:34-35. Upon His right hand will be the one hundred forty and four thousand chosen sons of Israel, each with the seal of the living God in his forehead, and upon His left hand the one hundred forty and four thousand chosen sons of Zion, each bearing the name of

God in his forehead. By those who minister at His right hand shall all the earth be covered with truth, and by those who minister from His left hand will all the earth be governed in righteousness, for "the law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

The hour is at hand when the will of God shall be done in all the earth below as it is done in all the heaven above. For six thousand years the inhabitants of the earth have drunk deeply of the cup of bitterness, bondage and oppression of a realm governed by the will of man. Judgment, justice, truth and equity have been banished from the land while kings and conquerors, dictators and despots have sought to establish their human wills, rejoicing at the sighing of the needy and ignoring the groaning of those they oppressed. But the kingdom of God will not be governed by the craven will of self-centered men, who know nothing as they ought to know, but by the will of Him who created the universe for Himself, who knoweth all things and loveth all His creatures. Those who shall be counted worthy to share His kingdom must first depart forever from their own will to become one with Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

That the will of God should be done in earth even as it is done in heaven was the prayer of Jesus Christ, the Lord. In heaven the will of God is always done. Those peaceful shores are never cursed by the carnal mind. No distorted vision blights their habitation. No selfish purposes disrupt the calm of that realm. There angels resplendent in wisdom and strength always behold the face of our Father in heaven. With sacred joy they bow their heads before Him to worship, or speed away as on wings of light to carry His edicts to the uttermost universe. In heaven the seraphim, covering their faces with their wings, cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" The heavenly hosts forever hymn His praises. There the sun and the moon and all the stars of light praise Him. The heaven of heavens praise Him and the waters, which be above the heavens, for His will is always done in that celestial realm. Psa. 48. But now let God be praised, for the hour is at hand when His will shall be done in earth even as it is done in heaven. A new sun is about to rise over all the earth. "Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance: Let them sing praises unto Him with timbrel and harp. For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written: This honor have all His saints." **Psa. 149.**

We must through great tribulation enter the kingdom of God, but, when that tribulation is past, all nations will walk in the light of the Lord. Therefore, "praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps: fire and hail, snow and vapors, stormy wind fulfilling His word: mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl: Kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth: Both young men and maidens, old men and children: Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven." **Psa. 148:7-13.** Thus in that day it shall be that all things in earth, whether fire or wind, snow or vapor, mountains, hills, trees and forests, beasts and cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, young men, maidens, old men and children, all will live in praise to the will of Him who created them. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

If I were asked to name that which in all the universe is of greatest importance, I think I should have to name the will of God, for in the will of God all else that we might seek of Him lies eternally hidden. Apart from the will of God there can be no possession of the mind of Christ. Outside the will of God there can be no knowledge of the purpose of God. All those who shall be accounted worthy to share the glory of Christ's kingdom in the age to come must first experience in this age the wonderful knowledge of God's will, for before the will of God shall be done in the earth where we are, it must first have been done in the earth which we are.

The following teaching concerning the will of God is to me a matter of special revelation. If you will ask God to enlighten your mind, you will find an entirely new conception of what the will of God really is. I think you will be able to see clearly that the will of God has nothing whatsoever to do with many of our former conceptions of it, such as, "Is it the Lord's will for me to do this or that," or "Is it the Lord's will for me to go here or there?" God is no longer interested in slavish servitude, but sonship. He is interested in the will of God as it springs spontaneously from the hearts of His sons. We are becoming what He is and what He is we are becoming. He who formerly called us servants later called us friends, because a servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth.

Later still He called us brothers, (Matt. 12:49, 28:10), for brothers are sons of a common Father. They have the Spirit of sonship. They do the will of God as it springs spontaneously from what they are.

Many centuries ago Moses with head bowed, feet bare and heart trembling stood before the God of the burning bush. The zeal and fire of former years had ebbed from his spirit and he wanted nothing more than to be left alone with himself and his sheep. This, however, was not to be, for God was speaking to the old man, telling him of a work that was yet future and of a ministry of deliverance that was soon to begin. He must go back to visit his enslaved brethren in Egypt and bring them the blessing of the greatest emancipation ever known. He did not want to go, and we can scarcely blame him, but when finally he reluctantly consented to do the will of the Lord, he dubiously asked, "Who shall I say has sent me?" And God replied, "I Am that I Am. Tell the people that I Am hath sent you." It seemed a strange name and surely it was one that would bring misunderstanding to those who heard it, yet the magnificent truth wrapped up in those two words has never yet been fully told or understood. Centuries later when the Pharisees disputed with the Saviour about His authority and divine origin, He told them, **"Before Abraham was, I Am." Jno. 8:58.**

No name known to the human tongue can describe the Saviour like this name. No sentence ever spoken by eloquent orator, no phrase ever written by sage or philosopher, no song ever sung by angel or seraphim can describe in such all inclusive excellence the almighty magnitude of what He really is. I Am, I Am, I Am. That is His name above all names and includes in itself all that He is and shall be forever.

"Lord, we know not whither Thou goest and how can we know the way," complained Thomas. "I am the way," Jesus replied, "I am the truth, I am the life."

"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," sobbed Martha sadly. "I am the resurrection," Jesus answered, "and I am the life."

"I am the vine. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the light. I am the Alpha. I am Omega. I am the first. I am the last. I am the beginning. I am the end. I am thy redeemer. I am thy strength. I am He that liveth. I am He that was dead. I am He that shutteth and no man openeth and openeth and no man shutteth. I am the root and the offspring of David. I am the bright and morning star." There is no end to what He is, for He is everything. He is the Christ. He is the Lord. He is the redemption of the entire universe.

Jesus Christ is the will of God. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. The works that He did and the words that He spake were never His: they were given to Him by the Father. All His wonderful acts were the acts of God. "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." All His mighty statements were the words of His Father. He Himself was "the Word of God." The blessed Christ was not merely a preacher of the Word of God; He was and is the Word of God. The same thing is true of His works. He did not merely perform the works of God, but He is the work of God.

Through suffering and obedience He had come to be the will of God. Nothing He ever did throughout His life was contrary to that divine will. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He asked. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." "In all things" He pleased the Father, and in consequence the Father was well pleased in Him.

It will not be necessary for me to take time here to show that Christ was the first Son in a vast family of sons who were yet to follow. He is the firstborn, the eldest of many brethren, even as it is said, **"Behold, I and the children which God has given Me." Heb. 2:13.** This vast company of children is through suffering and tribulation entering into sonship. They are coming into His glorious image. What He is they are becoming. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them," He said. "As the Father has life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Likewise also the Son has given that glory to us that we too may have life in ourselves through Him. I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." Let us think of any ineffable glory contained in the name "I Am" and wonder of wonders He has given that glory to the Son, and the Son in turn has passed it on to that vast family of brothers who are coming into His glorious image. "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them," He declared; and it is absolutely true. Christ was the visible manifestation of the complete will of God and in Him we are becoming not merely reluctant doers of

the will of God, but we are actually becoming the will of God. "Of His own will begat He us that we should be a kind of first fruit of His creatures."

There has always been a conflict between the mind of God and the mind of man. The struggle between the will of God and the will of man never ceases. In all things Christ pleased the Father. It is impossible to please the Father and to please yourself at the same time. Even Christ pleased not Himself. Not my will but Thine be done will be the theme of your life. It will be your meat and drink and the breath you breathe. "My meat," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent me and finish His work." You cannot serve God and Mammon, for if you obey the will of one, you will hate the will of the other, because God's will and man's will are the antithesis of each other. Paul declared, "If I yet please men I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ." There is no concord between Christ and Belial, and there is no communion between the will of God and the will of man. To love the one is to hate the other and to serve the one is to despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon.

The very moment Jesus Christ proclaimed, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, oh God!" the heavenly Father openly declared that He would take away the first (which is the will of man) and establish the second (which is the will of God). The sacrifices and offerings dragged from man's unwilling and rebellious heart could never be the foundation and order of the kingdom of God, but when the sons of God come, saying in truth, "I delight to do Thy will, oh my God," then nothing can delay the coming of His glorious reign. His kingdom will have come because His will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The moment anyone delights in God's will, all sacrifice and offering is done away, for how could anything ever be a sacrifice to one who delights in God's will?

There is a path that leads to the will of God. You will never find it by struggling or striving. You will only find it in the great I Am. One day Jesus told His disciples, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." Thomas replied doubtfully, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" What those poor troubled disciples did not know was that Christ was both the way and the destination at the end of the way. It is into Him that we are going, for He dwells in the Father and the Father dwells in Him. Christ is truth. He cannot be anything but truth, because God is truth and He dwells in God. He cannot be anything else but life, for God is life and He dwells in God. Therefore, because we are in the way of truth that leads to life, we become both the truth and the life, for He that dwelleth in Christ, dwelleth in God. When we lay down our will and pick up His, we are becoming the will of God, for Christ is the will of God and we know that He is the way and He is the end of the way.

As Noah in the long ago approached the great tribulation when the whole earth was to be destroyed by water, God called him aside and said, "The end of all flesh is come before me." God is speaking again in these last days, saying, "The end of all flesh is come before me." There is going to be a fantastic and unbelievable change from the will of man to the will of God. I have no hesitation in saying that the last particle of church tradition is about to vanish away, and everything will become completely new. Unknown to us there are still things about us that retain the nasty odor of the old disorder, but these also will have to go that nothing outside the will of the Lord may remain. God is going to make a complete riddance of the flesh during the coming wrath and judgment of the tribulation. The kingdom of God cometh on apace. Then His will shall be done in earth as it is done in Heaven.

We must settle it in our hearts that we are not going to try to please man and we are not going to try to please ourselves. In all the life of Christ His testimony remained true. He pleased not Himself. Oh, how we do love to please ourselves. We love to exact our labors. We like to find excuses to pick up what we once laid down and rebuild the things we once destroyed. We love to pad our shoulders so that the cross will be easy to carry, or else we lay it down altogether. The cup, which we have been given to drink we flavor to our taste to make it more pleasing and less bitter. We exact our labors and change our days of fasting and prayer for comfort and ease. In consequence our spiritual eyes grow dim and we lose sight of the celestial hills afar.

Paul spent a long lifetime in pleasing God. From the time it pleased God to reveal His Son in him until the end of his earthly pilgrimage, he never tried to please men. Many bitter and different experiences had taught him the truth, "If I yet please men, I am not the servant of Jesus Christ." There is only one person in the universe that you can please and that is God Himself. Though you may spend a whole lifetime trying to please men, you

will find in the end you have not succeeded. The first thing you do to displease them will be thought sufficient to cancel out all the good things you have done, and they will turn against you and cry for your blood. Paul found it that way. One day he could scarcely restrain the multitude from offering sacrifice to him, but the next day they were stoning him.

As we come closer and closer to the end of this present age, we hear more and more about the manifestation of the sons of God. Whenever one thinks of the manifestation of the sons of God, his mind begins immediately to dream in terms of ecstasies and glories indescribable. Is it not wholly true that we begin to think of all the marvelous things we will do, of the signs and wonders that will be performed, the miracles done on sick bodies, the raising of the dead, the control of the elements, and the bowing of all men to God? I am quite sure that these in part are the general thoughts of each of us whenever we meditate upon this subject. Have we not longed to break through the barrier that binds us to this present age of impotence so that nothing will any more be impossible to us?

The sons of God are not manifest by what they do, but by what they are. Sonship is not doing, but being. It is quite possible for one to be a Son of God without having any record of works at all. On the other hand it is possible for one to have a long and impressive list of good works and not be a son of God at all. There is a record given in Scripture that has been disconcerting to many people. It tells of certain remarkable people, possessing a magnificent array of good works, who were not permitted into the kingdom of the Lord. They were very, very surprised and disappointed, and with a show of injured pride over the evident mistake God had made, they began to number their mighty works to prove that there certainly was an error somewhere. "Lord", they said, "We have prophesied in Thy name, we have done many wonderful works." See Matt. 7:21-23. These people are not lying; they are telling the truth. They had done all these wonderful things. For years they had been patting themselves on the back in pride. People had looked at them with admiration. They had decided that their works were evident tokens of their acceptability with God. They were appalled when they were told by none other than God Himself, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work in iniquity." I have heard many explanations of this story, which purport to prove that the miracles were false and the people who performed them were everything that is bad, but that is not the answer. The truth is that sonship is not what you do. Sonship is what you are.

Now let me explain what I mean. In the days of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness, many, many offerings were made to God and many things were done to gain the favor of the Lord. I do not mean that they were wrong in so doing, but I do mean it was no evidence of sonship. They offered the blood of bulls and of goats. Their offerings were continual. Every priest stood every day offering sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, trespass offerings, offerings for individual sin and offerings for the sin of the nation. But none of these things made the offerer perfect. Heb. 10:1. In other words, it did not produce sonship.

Then He says, "In burnt offering and sacrifice for sin, thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will. O God. ..." He taketh away the first, namely, all the things they were doing, doing, doing, doing. God had no pleasure in them at all. Neither has He any pleasure in the things that we do for Him. But now one has come to do Thy will, O God; so He takes away the first that He may establish the second. The first means the multitude of works, which we do for God. The second is a very different thing: doing God's will. The first He takes away. The second He establishes. Please read Heb. 10:1-10.

Just so long as we are busying ourselves rushing here and there making a big show of the things we are accomplishing for God, the old order will continue to persist, but when we begin to take sincerely the attitude that "if God does not want the thing, neither do I," then we are approaching sonship. Why should I insist on raising up a big work in some corner of the earth if God does not want it? If He is not going to deal with the Jews or the Gentiles just now, why should I try to do it? Oh, the useless labor and hardship that men have endured because they were bound to accomplish something in which God had no interest.

We are like the legendary wise men of Gotham who, wanting the sun to rise earlier than usual, rolled great stones to the east to make the earth turn faster. Do you think they speeded up the sunrise? I don't think so. It was labor in vain. It is like the men who built a wall around the garden to keep the lark in, and like the man who took the door off his house so the thieves could not break it down. We would call such people morons, but I trow they are no more morons than those who think that the works they do are proof of their sonship.

There is only one attitude of heart that is pleasing to God; "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." This has nothing to do with the worn out phrase, "the Lord led me" or "it is the Lord's will," for there are many who follow the desires and ambitions that spring from their own hearts. They lead themselves to believe that these personal desires are actually the will of the Lord for them. Usually this has nothing whatever to do with the true leading of the Spirit of God. As long as there is any personal ambition, we cannot lay claim to being led by the Spirit of God. God knows whether you are being led by His Spirit or by your own fancy and personal desire. It is those who are led by the Spirit of God who are truly the sons of God.

Please notice now that just as soon as one came "to do Thy will, O God," it is said, "He taketh away the first." A dispensation ends right there and then. Truly doing the will of God springs directly from being the will of God. You can never truly do God's will until you have become God's will. As soon as this happens, you find all the old things are done away. Your ambitions go and His ambition becomes yours. Your ministry begins to change. Instead of worrying about your ministry as you did in the past, you now find that doing the will of God is your ministry. Nothing else. Absolutely nothing else. It is not how abundantly you preach, prophesy, heal the sick or give to the poor. It is how you accomplish the will of God.

All the old ambitions fade out of your life to make way for God's will. You no longer have a will of your own. God's will is your will, God's plan, your plan, God's purpose, your purpose. You kneel long in prayer before Him, but you have no requests to make. Your whole being proclaims, Amen! Amen! Thy will be done! And from the thousand corridors of your spirit echoes the joyful sound: Amen; Thy will be done! Thy will be done! Old things pass away all around you. They must pass away to make room for the new things. Everything changes. Everything becomes new. Your planning, scheming, organizing, advertising until you are in a state of exhaustion is gone and in its place comes the rest wherewith He causes the weary to rest, and oh how sweet is the refreshing! When the body of Christ, like Christ the Head, has no more pleasure in the multitude of works but has come "to do Thy will, O God," then He taketh away the first order to establish the new order, even the order of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the ages.

If you were to ask me where you might find the will of God and in what place does it dwell, I should have to answer, "The will of God dwells in that place where your will does not dwell, and there and there alone will you find it." If for a moment we could stand in that place where no creature dwells, then without a moment's delay we could hear God speak. There are so many voices in the world, all clamoring to be heard. There are so many voices within, all shouting for our attention. Only when we have passed beyond the will of man and the will of the flesh can we become acquainted with the will of God. God is not far away from us, but He can never speak to us because our will never ceases to instruct us and our minds never cease to think of ways and means to gather more things about us. But could we but for an hour cease from our own thoughts and cease from our own will, then eternal hearing, speaking and thinking would begin within us and we would understand and know the will and the mind of God.

If you do not believe this to be the truth, then come before God for an hour and see how your own thoughts drag your soul away from God and your own self-centered will comes into conflict with that of the Eternal. Your own will completely obliterates the will of God within you, and the sound of your own voice speaking its demands within you hushes His voice so it never can be heard by you.

The voice of God is seldom heard in the rush and bustle of life. He seldom thunders His edicts from Heaven, but waits with great patience until all sounds of earth have died away and then speaks with a voice both small and still. Not while we are slaying our Egyptian and burying him in the sand does God speak, but in the back side of some desert where earthly wills have drifted with the barren sands of time, where youthful ambitions have faded, and where the glittering sun of human purpose has cast its last flickering ray upon all earthly resolve. Not while we are riding in triumph to bind the saints does God disclose His secrets to our hearts, but in desolate Arabia, alone and apart from persistent quibblings of scribe and Sanhedrin, He lifts us into the third heaven to hear unspeakable things that concern His will. Let the wicked banish the faithful to some rocky Patmos of the sea, yet there beyond the reach of earthly voices where angels hymn their anthems will one appear like the Son of man, having eyes like lamps of fire and a voice as the sound of many waters. God is not far from any of us, but His will is found in that realm where our will does not come, and His voice is heard only where creature voices are hushed and silent.

If you can come to the place where your will is silent, where even the inner voice of your mind and soul is stilled, there you will be enfolded by His will and become a part of His mind eternally. God existed before any creature, and before the creature there was silence. Only the voice of God was heard; only the will of God was done. When you come to the place where no voice is speaking within you and no will is asserting its demands, then you have come back to the condition that existed before God made a creature. It is God's will that I should exist, not in self-will, but in His will.

When Adam and his wife rejoiced in the effulgent wonders of the heaven blest land of Eden, they knew nothing but the will of God. Every perfumed path they trod was in God's will and all their exalted thoughts were from the mind of Christ. The thought of living apart from Him never once saddened their pure hearts, but they dwelt in Him who possessed heaven and earth and, dwelling in Him, they possessed all things. No gloomy shadows ever darkened their bright minds, for in Him there is no darkness at all. Neither doubt nor fear tormented them, for in Him there is no sorrow nor doubt nor any torment of fear. Want or hunger distressed them not, for they dwelt in Him for whom and by whom all things exist, and there where the perfumed breeze swept through the trees, they basked in His ineffable love and rejoiced in inexpressible joys.

It was a sad day, indeed, for man when the enemy of all righteousness suggested to him that it would be possible for him to have something apart from God. "God knows," he told them, "that in the day you eat of the tree you will be like God, knowing good and evil." For the first time a dismal shadow crossed their pure minds, making them think they could have something by themselves, apart from God - something, they were told, that would increase their wisdom and make them even more like God than they already were. In hope of being more like God our innocent mother stretched out her trusting hand to take the fruit, giving it to her husband as well. In truth their eyes were opened wide and they knew good and evil. They knew good, but it had fled back to God from whence it came. They knew evil, but it pursued them and from it they were powerless to flee. How wretched it is to possess things apart from God. Things! Things! Things! Man is always wanting to possess things. He spends his life collecting things and possessing them apart from God and because they are apart from God he has nothing in the end. He is able to collect only temporal things and all temporal things soon pass away. Therefore, should we possess the whole world or the whole universe apart from God, it would cease to be ours. Like mists before the rising sun, it would soon vanish away and our lives would fade as a leaf and be no more. Poor benighted man goes on in his blindness trying to set up his own frail kingdom which, if a fox should run over it, would be destroyed, or if the wind passes over it, is gone. How often it has been my lot to stand by a tomb listening to the plaintive sobs of broken hearts, while I intoned the words, "Like as a Father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, he is of few days and full of trouble. As the flower of the field he flourisheth, but the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more, but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting to them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." A lifetime of labor is laid in the ravaging dust and all the earthly things once possessed have fled away. Yet we walk away from the tomb and the lesson it taught us to go on as usual collecting the things of our own little kingdom about us.

I believe you will agree to what we now propose. Since the fall of man from the Paradise of God there has been a wicked, carnal mind that has filled him with an insatiable desire to possess things apart from God. Perhaps man imbibed some of that Satanic mind which once said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit in the congregation in the sides of the north; I will ascend into the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:13-14).

We do not realize it, I think, but frail man not only wants to gather things about himself, but he wants to be the center of his own little universe. The more he possesses the greater his universe seems to be and the greater his feeling of confidence and assurance. He never discovers that he has enough for this life, but, because he finds that what he has does not bring him the satisfaction he thought it would, he seeks to add more and more to it, hoping that the extra he adds will bring him contentment and rest from fear. Why do men who possess millions in earthly possessions go on adding more and more to them? There must be a reason. Think it through. Things possessed apart from God cannot ever satisfy.

Man is not satisfied by possessing earthly things. He secretly wants to possess the things of God as well and that for himself apart from God. There is no wisdom in the universe apart from the wisdom of God. In Him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Yet in the Garden of Eden man conceived the idea of possessing the wisdom of God apart from God. Can you imagine that? Man possessing wisdom apart from God? Yet this is what he wanted. The Lord says, "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." What are we trying to do with righteousness? Is there any righteousness apart from God? Yet here is man having a righteousness of his own, trying to possess it himself apart from God even though it is filthy rags. Why did Nadab and Abihu wickedly offer strange fire before the Lord? Did they not want to possess for themselves what only God possessed? Why did Simon, the sorcerer, offer money for the gift that Peter had? He cared nothing for God, but in the gall of his bitterness and the bond of his rebellion he wanted to possess for himself something that belonged only to God and cannot be had apart from Him.

Let me ask one question further. Do you not think that this strange desire exists today? What about spiritual gifts? Do men desire them to bring all glory to God, or do they covet them as a means of self-promotion and self-exaltation? How is it that so many men who seem to have gifts from God soon become the center of a little universe of their own where all roads lead to them and all fingers point in their direction? Let us face it. Men not only want to gather temporal things about themselves, but they also crave to have eternal things for themselves and to possess them in themselves and by themselves apart from God. The carnal mind is an eternal enemy of God. It refuses to become subject to the law of God, and indeed it is powerless to do so. But it secretly desires the things of God, wisdom, righteousness and power, so that it may be as God.

Were it possible for you to possess everything in the world and in heaven apart from God, you would have exactly nothing, but if you have nothing, yet dwell in God, you possess all things. Thus it is clearly made manifest what Paul meant when he said, "As having nothing, yet possessing all things." It does not seem right to me that the wood should possess the fire but that the fire should possess the wood, for the fire cannot become one with the wood, but the wood can become one with the fire. Neither yet is it possible for the ship to possess the ocean, for then it would sink; but the ocean may possess all the ships of the world without one being in sight of the other. For me to possess God or even any of the things of God will destroy me, but if God possesses me, then I possess all things because all things are His.

Is this truth not the one that was in Paul's mind when he declared, "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." **1 Cor. 3:21-22.** All things are yours because you are the possession of God. It is like a beggar maiden who married a millionaire. She could have roamed the dreary paths of life, receiving an occasional pittance of his charity and have nothing. But at the time she gives herself to him to become his bride he declares for the world to hear, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow."

How I wish I could explain with transcendent light the great difference between our possessing things and our being possessed of God. This, my friend, is the problem we are facing now. In the past we have wanted to possess things and have found ourselves desolate and empty, but if we give ourselves to Him, all things will be ours, because all things are His. He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. **II Cor. 5:15.**

When Paul was expressing thanks for the gift given him by the Corinthians, **II Cor. 8:1-5**, the thing that rejoiced his heart most was that they first gave their own selves to the Lord. If we give abundant gifts to God yet withhold ourselves, we have given nothing. Everything is His anyway. It was His before you were here and it will be His after you have gone away. "Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What house will you build Me," said the Lord. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, how much less a house we build Him. The early church had the truth straight when they took the attitude that "none of the things they possessed was their own."

The earth will never possess the kingdom of God as long as eternity shall endure. It must be the other way about. The kingdom of God must possess the earth. Though the kingdom of God is within me, yet I cannot possess it. It must possess me or it will never be seen or known. If I possess Christ, I will be as barren in the

future as I have been in the past, but if Christ possesses me, then I will be hid with Christ in God and God alone will fill the earth with His resplendent glory.

As we consider the following thoughts, may God almighty grant that His Spirit may instruct us in the way of truth and understanding. Let us fervently pray that God will reveal the eternal truth of this subject to our hearts. The spirit's yearning for the will of God is without doubt the true spirit of sonship. Mark well the all-embracing testimony of Jesus Christ to this fact as stated in **John 5:30-37**. "I can of Mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true. Ye sent unto John and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man; but these things I say that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in His light. But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which My Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me; and the Father Himself which hath sent Me hath borne witness of Me."

I challenge you to survey the whole world today and you will scarcely find a man alive either in the church or outside the church who can truthfully testify in the words spoken above. I greatly fear that the testimony in the early church and the testimony of all men today can be truthfully given in the sorrowful words of Paul, "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." **Phil. 2:21**. You would not have to pay a dime a dozen for men who constantly use such worn phrases as "we want God", "we want God's will", or "I'm seeking the will of the Lord about the matter," or "I think it's the Lord's will that we do this or that." But you will have to search the world over for a handful of men and women who have enough of the spirit of sonship to withdraw from every human effort and wait until God instructs them though they should wait a lifetime. It is to this truth that Jesus was testifying when He said, "I can of Myself do nothing," "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true," "I do always those things that please the Father," and many other such wonderful statements of consecration.

At times certain words of scripture strike you like a thunderbolt. They impress you deeply and work a transformation in your life. Did you ever notice the words of Elijah as he stood alone before the prophets of Baal and before Israel and Israel's king? "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word." **1 Kings 18:36**. We have often heard sermons on the faith of Elijah. Certainly he was a man of faith, but his faith did not stand in his ability to believe that God would do what he demanded. Rather it stood in the fact that, long before he asked, God had commanded him and told him what to do. Calling down fire on the altar and the destruction of the prophets of Baal was not a grandiose scheme concocted in Elijah's head. The thing that he did was successful only because he was walking in sonship and listening to the voice of God. For three years he sat in the widow's house seemingly wasting valuable time apparently doing nothing. Why should such a valuable man withdraw himself from a society that needed his ministry so badly? But Elijah had learned that first principal of sonship, "I can do nothing of myself." If we are going to be guided by "what the public needs, what the church system demands, what the people want, what we feel we should do" or any such thing, then we are going to be wrong. We will be found to be opportunists guided by the opportunities of the hour rather than by the will of the Lord.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, the opening request was this: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." These two requests are forever bound up in the hearts of each other. The kingdom of God can never, never come until the will of God is done in and on earth as it is done in heaven. Furthermore, the moment the will of God is done in the earth, the kingdom of God will be here. For six thousand years the earth has been governed by the will of man. We have been governed variously by kings, emperors, dictators, presidents, democracy and communism, but the net result has always been the same, for the will of man always asserts itself, seeking its own purposes, fulfilling its own desires and doing its own will.

Can anyone possibly imagine what would happen to a nation if all the members of its government were completely selfless instead of completely selfish, if they were sons of God who could of themselves do nothing, instead of handshaking, baby-kissing politicians seeking to curry the favor of men for personal advantage, or if judges judged by the Spirit of God instead of the tricky letter of the law? Jesus said, "As I hear I judge, and My judgment is righteous because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." To contemplate such things in this age brings but a sad smile to our faces. We know that in this age of the will of man such things

cannot be, for, whether it be in the world, in Israel, or in the professing church, the testimony is always the same: "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." The end is always the same. Soon men seek to draw away disciples for their advantage. They compass land and sea to make a proselyte. Man's will displaces God's will. So Israel goes to Babylon, the church goes to Babylon, and the world itself becomes such a Babylon of confusion that nothing can save it. The kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His wonderful Christ.

The first principal of sonship then is found in these words: "I seek not Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." The great daring programs of the church systems far too often have their roots, not in the will of God, but in self interest. Like whited sepulchers they look good and commendable on the outside, but within they are full of corruption and dead men's bones. Men have gone a-whoring after physical healing in our day, not because they have any particular love for the sick or compassion for the suffering, but because the whole world has become so bodily, physically, and fleshly minded that they are led to believe that to attain physical healing is a thing of enormous importance. Because of the popularity of this idea, many men in our age have made a vast financial gain, but there has been very little sign of genuine repentance, revival, or turning to God. All too often, if the wealth were not there, you would hear no more of their professed ministry.

In the midst of all this confusion of self-seeking the Spirit of God is calling out a people for His name. He is stripping them of self-interest, draining them of self-will, plucking from their broken hearts all personal ambition, causing them to abhor all self-seeking. From within out of their inner most being as sweet perfume wafted on the winds of God comes the constant sighing of the spirit of sonship, "Thy will be done! Thy will be done!" "And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up to God out of the angel's hand." Rev. 8:4.

The world is yet to be governed by a noble race of sons of God, every one in the image of Christ, every one a brother of Jesus, every one a son who "can do nothing of himself." Adam, the son of God, reigning supreme in his glorious kingdom in Eden, was but a type of the sons of God who will reign in the whole earth at last in the blessed kingdom of the Father. The whole earth, as Eden was, shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Oh, if I by the Spirit of God could but impress upon your holy minds the unspeakable need of entering now into the complete will of God where all earthly, fleshly wills are dead and buried beneath the dust of your crucified selves that you might stand selfless before the throne of His eternal glory! All who hope for sonship and the glory of reigning with Him must first see self-crucified with Christ. In the effulgent glory of the heavenly kingdom all men shall walk in the light and counsel of the Lord. The prayer of Christ shall be answered. His will shall be done in earth even as it is done in heaven. Amen!

CHAPTER FIVE SOME THINGS THAT PLEASE THE FATHER

SPIRITUAL UNITY

There is nothing dearer to the heart of God than unity. But the carnal mind, implacable enemy of God as it is, knows nothing of unity. It is filled with division and maintains an abiding hate for those who seek oneness with the mind of God. The blessed Lord Jesus Christ gained a great deal of prominence through His miracles, His healings, and His teachings, but when He laid claim to complete unity with God, animosity and hate against Him flared into open rebellion. "My sheep know My voice," He said, "And I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man can pluck them out of My Father's hand." They listened to Him up to this point, but when He continued, "I and My Father are one" then the Jews took up stones to stone Him. Jno. 10:30, 31.

We may well conclude that the one thing above all others which incurs the hatred of the carnal mind is its finding someone who is coming into unity with the mind of Jesus Christ. The carnal mind is so deceptive and wicked that it likes to think it is in unity with the mind of God. It loves to think that it is the mind of Christ. But it always rebels to find any mind who is in true unity with the Father, and it will rise up with stones in its evil hand

to crush the head of those who have cast off the works of darkness, discarded the human ways of looking at things, and have earnestly sought to let the mind of Christ dwell in them richly in all things.

I believe I am right when I say that the only true unity in the universe is unity of mind. At first thought this statement may seem to be faulty, for we may think of many things which seem to have unity, but if we meditate a while, we will soon conclude that true unity never exists outside the mind. No unity of the flesh can possibly be said to be true unity. We have the testimony of scripture, saying, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they two shall be one flesh." While this is a precious truth, yet I aver it is not true unity, for the man and his wife will be separated by death. She will no longer be his wife and he will no longer be her husband, for in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage. Then again a man and his wife, though united in the flesh, may be as divided as the nations of the earth both in mind and in spirit. Sad to say many couples thus united are so much at enmity that they have to terminate their partnership and live apart.

The true unity that existed between Jesus Christ the Son and God the Father was not a physical unity but a unity of mind and spirit. How could there be anything but absolute unity when there was unity of mind? The mind that dwelt in Christ was not His own mind but the mind of the Father. Paul exhorted the Philippian Christians in these words. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ." The mind that was in Jesus Christ was the Father's mind. The possession of that mind made Him one with the Father in thought, word, action, and deed. Who on earth can possibly deny the fact that, if the same mind dwells in you or me, we also will immediately become one with the Father in thought, word, action, deed, love, purpose, and being. We will think as He thinks, do as He would do, love as He would love, understand as He understands, and, putting it all together in one grand truth, we would be able to say as our blessed Saviour said, "I and my Father are one."

There is no greater prize than oneness with Him. Only those who have His mind can be led by His Spirit, and only those who are led by His Spirit can possibly come into sonship. The mind of Christ is a priceless pearl, to attain which a man will gladly sell all that he possesses. Beside that precious jewel all human wisdom fades into foolishness, all human understanding bows its head in shame and earthly gain or loss finds itself unworthy of consideration.

There is no wisdom apart from the mind of Christ. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; therefore, the mind of Christ and true wisdom are one and the same thing. The eloquent Job with silver tongued oratory declared. "Where is wisdom to be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, it is not in me: and the sea saith, it is not in me. It cannot be gotten with gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels or fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls; for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." Job. 28: 12-19. And Solomon catching up the refrain exultantly exclaims. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than silver and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honor." **Prov. 3:13-16.** "Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." **Prov. 8:11.**

It is from the mind of Christ that wisdom flows like a pure river of living water. No clouds of doubt cast their gloomy shadows upon its crystal sheen, nor do fears trouble its timeless waves. No rocks of misunderstanding mar its course and those who flow with its eternal current sail in the will of God.

Count not other things to be of value. Make the mind of Christ the thing uppermost in your seeking. For He who has the mind of Christ is one with the Father, a son of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. The wretched teaching of a Babylonish church has made men think that to be busy for God is the important thing. But what on earth is the value in being busy for God, burning up for Him and working your fingers to the bone if you find at the end of your life that your labor was the product of your own mind and your untiring efforts were born of your own will and not of the will of God? It was of this very danger Jesus spoke when He solemnly declared,

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them. I never knew you; Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." **Math. 7:21-23.**

Besides the twelve disciples who were always with the Lord, Jesus had chosen another seventy, whom He commissioned with power and authority and sent forth into the towns and cities where He would later come. These men went forth in the power and glory of the Spirit of Christ. The sick were healed, the cripples rose from their beds of pain, lame men leaped and ran, and demons fled at their command. Never had the Judaeen hills echoed with such praises. Never had the people seen such wonders as throngs came to listen to these heralds of the coming kingdom of Christ. When their ministry was fulfilled, they returned with great joy to report their success to the Christ who had given them such miraculous power. Their faces were wreathed with smiles and their enthusiasms knew no bounds. **Bursting with joy, they proclaimed, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name." And He replied, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke Ch. 10:17-20.**

It is the fact that we are known of God that counts, that our names are on record before Him. The signs and wonders and works are nothing, for they were accomplished ages ago when Christ saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven. They are not done by our power and we deserve no credit for them. But to know God and be known of Him is the source and secret of sonship and the source and secret of His blessed will. Oh! what a universe of truth is contained in the following words of Christ's exhortation! **Vs 21. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight .!'. And no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him ... blessed are the eyes which see these things that ye see."** As many, you see, as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

If any man who ever lived could have claimed miracles and signs as proof of his acceptance with God, it should have been the apostle Paul. But we find him near the end of his wonderful life still murmuring with indescribable passion and in longing, "That I may know Him."

The church today is full of men and women who are the image of those described. They are prophesying, preaching, casting out devils, and doing many outstanding works in many ways. They claim to have a call. They would be angry at the suggestion that they were acting outside the will of God. They point to their outstanding success as proof that they are right, but actually they know nothing at all about the true will of the Lord. They will be the most surprised persons in the world to find themselves left out of the kingdom. With surprise and indignation, they will point to their notable activities, as though God was overlooking something, only to be told that both they and their wonderful works are strangers to Him.

If we want to find the mind of Christ and come to unity with the Father, we are going to have to seek for it as for hid treasure and search for it as men search for gold. God never gives His mind to men just for the careless asking. I am thoroughly convinced that it takes years of enlightenment before we are even ready to see that the carnal mind, which we all possess is the enemy of God and the biggest antichrist in the world. The carnal mind is not only the most monstrous antichrist in the world but the most blatant liar and wily deceiver that ever issued forth from the pit. It makes men think that black is white, good is evil, evil is good. It exalts Satan to God's throne and sits in God's temple showing itself to be God. It was of this double-minded monster that James wrote, saying by the Holy Ghost, **"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners and purify your hearts, ye double minded."** **Jas. 4:8-10.** When you see the situation as it really is, then your laughter is turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness, and, humbling yourself in the sight of the Lord, He lifts you up to partake of His mind and come to unity with Him.

During the last weeks I have thought much of the story of Mary and Martha which is recorded in **Luke 10:38** in these words, **"Now it came to pass as they went that He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman**

named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister, called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, **Martha! Martha! Thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**"

Now I think Martha must have been a wonderful person. I have the idea she was kind, considerate of others, generous, hard working, and full of love for Jesus, whom she knew was the Lord and Christ. There was nothing she would not do to welcome Him and make Him as comfortable as possible. So zealous was she in this regard that she was evidently angered that her sister, Mary, was not doing as she was doing. It didn't seem right that she should have all the work to do while her sister sat and talked. It was with evident peevishness that she asked the Lord, "Dost Thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" With the most merciful kindness Jesus tenderly rebuked her with the words, "Martha, Martha." Now the point is this. Dear Martha could have spent the rest of her life troubling about doing things for Jesus. She could have filled years and years, dashing about, trying to make Him welcome and to show her love for Him, and yet for all this strenuous activity she was not hearing one word that He had to say. And how, my dear friend, can any man or woman ever know the mind of Christ if he does not take time to listen and hear what He says? I think I may boldly say that one could spend his whole life slaving fervently for God and know less of His mind and His will at the end than at the beginning, because the trouble of much serving has taken up all his time and there was no time left to listen to the voice of Jesus. We will certainly find in the end that it is just such busy people who will hear Christ say, "Depart from Me; I never knew you."

We do not know much about Mary, but there were just not enough hours in the day for her to sit at His blessed feet and listen. And when at last He took His leave of them, it was Mary who knew what He had said; it was Mary who was acquainted with His purpose; it was Mary who had His mind and had come to unity with Him, and, when this blessed woman spoke, her lips were filled with His word and her mind with His wisdom. Even after the mighty miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, while Mary and Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus, it is said, "And Martha served." And while dear Martha washed the dishes, Mary broke the sacred ointment on His head to anoint Him for His burial.

You will serve Christ much better if you take days and weeks and months and years to partake of His mind. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done." Oh! what a promise that is! Millions of prayers are made every day, but the answers could almost be counted on your fingers. Why? Because Christians never take time to find out the mind of Christ or to acquaint themselves with His purpose. They have no time for fasting. They are too busy with much serving to quietly sit at His feet and listen to the wisdom that falls as the snow and rain from heaven. But those who take time to listen to His voice and let His words abide in them move in His will and in His mind. They ask what they will and it is done, because they have no will but the will of God.

"My sheep know My voice and they follow Me, and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." There is only one way by which we can know His voice and that is by hearing it. And there is only one way we can hear it, and that is by listening to it. Those who know that joyful sound are never deceived, for they follow Him. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and with their blessed Master they repeat, "I and my Father are one." This is true unity and life eternal.

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification; therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." **1 Cor. 14: 10; 11.**

"The voice of my beloved. Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills ... My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the time of the singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle is in the land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come

away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance
Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." **S.O.S. 2:8-14.**

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To Him the porter openeth and the sheep hear His voice and He calleth His own sheep by name, and when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him for they know not the voice of strangers." **Jno. 10:27, 2-5.**

"And the Lord called Samuel: and he ran unto Eh' and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here am I; for thou didst call me." And Eh' perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shall say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." **1 Sam. 3:1-10.**

Never in the annals of human history were there so many voices in the world, all clamoring to be heard. Every artifice and gimmick is used to gain the attention of the unwilling ear. Silly ditties are sung on the radio advertising every imaginable thing. They sing about pencils and toothpaste, automobiles and washing machines. One would think we were a lot of little children whose minds must be impressed with Mother Goose rhymes instead of intelligent people whose minds are insulted with such childish mediocrity. This clamor of voices is by no means confined to the salesmanship of the world, for I think the clamor of voices in the professing church is even greater. The babble of Babel is age lasting. It ceases not day or night. Solomon must have been seeing the modern Babylonish harlot when he said, "A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither." **Prov. 9:13-16.**

Not only is every voice shouting for disciples to follow it, but every imaginable plan, scheme, idea, and device is put forth to arouse the public interest, capture the mind, and open the pocketbook. The world is full of voices, all clamoring about something, until one would be inclined to liken them to the mob at Ephesus who for two hours shrieked and shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and the most part knew not wherefore they were come together. Acts. 19:26-35.

The only people who will ever reign in the kingdom are those who know the voice of Christ, those who can shut out all other loudly clamoring voices and hear His voice clearly and distinctly. "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers."

There is only one way to come to know the voice of Christ and that is by listening to it and hearing it often. We quoted above the lovely story of Samuel and the voice of God that came to Him. I am sure you must have noticed at once that God spoke to him four times. The first three times the young lad jumped from his bed and went quickly to Eli, saying, "Here I am, for thou didst call me." But Samuel did not know the Lord. Naturally, therefore, if he did not know the Lord, he could not be expected to know His voice. But he soon learned to know the voice of the Lord and the more often he heard it the better he knew it.

If we are going to know the voice of Christ, the first thing we shall have to do is shut out the clamoring voice of the multitude. Where these other voices are concerned, we must become like the deaf adder, which hearkens not to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Psa. 58:5.

There was a time when Saul of Tarsus was smitten down on the road to Damascus. He had never heard the voice of Christ before and when the voice spoke and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul asked immediately, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." This was, however, only the first time Paul heard the voice of Jesus. I am sure He heard Him many times after that, and

never again did he have to ask "Who are thou, Lord?" Behold the great assurance with which he spoke many years later, when for fourteen days the ship had floundered in the teeth of the dreadful storm Euroclydon. After fourteen days of fasting and prayer when all hope of life was fled from the ship's company, Paul stood forth and declared to the crew, "Sirs, you should have hearkened to me and not have loose from Crete and to have gained this harm and loss, and now I exhort you be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of the Lord, whose I am and whom I serve, (Jesus Christ) saying, "Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

We can never, never come to know the voice of Christ until we silence completely all other voices. The voices that cry and clamor from without, day and night seeking to gain our attention and stir us to some activity of human devising, must be shut away from the inner ear of our spirits as when a man, disliking to hear a certain radio program, turns the dial to something else that suits him better. In like manner also we must silence the voices from within, for they arise from the desires of our own heart, and they clamor to be heard. They chide us of lost ministries and lost opportunities. They also coax us to return to old paths and ways from which God led us long ago. These voices too must be silenced and tuned out, that we may tune our spiritual ear to the voice that speaks from heaven. For God is speaking by His Son and we are warned, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven." "Thine ear shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." **Isa. 30:21.**

SEPARATION

Looking back across the centuries that are gone, we can clearly see that God in grace and mercy has sent many great deliverances to the people of earth. But long before these great emancipations were wrought, there were times of preparation. There were times when no voice was heard from heaven, and it seemed that God had forgotten that He had an earth, or that He had a people. Wickedness prospered and men seemed to say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world." But God has never forgotten and, at the moment when men think He has, the Almighty has His man called aside where his ear can be tuned to the wave lengths of heaven, and become deaf to the sound of all voices except the voice of the Lord.

For almost four hundred years the children of Israel had dwelt in a land where they were strangers. For a good part of that time they had been in cruel slavery in the land of Egypt.

Year after year their bondage increased and, as each generation passed away, new oppressions were heaped upon them. Their hands were horny with their toil and their backs were bowed with their burdens. In the nights they groaned out their prayers to a God that seemed never to hear, and in the day the sweat and tears washed the grime of toil from their troubled faces. "Will God never hear?" they wondered. Has He forgotten His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? But Oh! how little they knew that "all their tears were in His bottle" and, as soon as the dross had vanished from their gold, He would lead them forth from His furnace!

What excitement and searching there must have been in the court of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, when one day Moses, that promising prince, was found missing. Suddenly like a whiff of sweet perfume he was gone, and no one seemed to know what had become of him. I need not relate the wonderful story of Exodus, chapter two, for you know it as well as I, but Moses was gone. Where he was, was a total mystery. Frantic search was made in every possible place, but without result. Moses could not be found. Years went by and people began to accept the mystery. Time began to heal the wounds of those who mourned him, and others soon forgot all about him. Life got back to normal again. The shout of the task master, the crack of the whip, and the groans of the people continued endlessly on and on.

But there was One who knew where Moses was. For the God of mercy had not been deaf to the sighing of His people and He was hiding His man in the backside of the desert. His deliverer was being prepared against the day of emancipation, far away from the turmoil of politics, and the earthly wisdom of the Egyptians. The Lord had separated him, and, as the voices of earth began to fade away, his ear became tuned in to the voice of the Eternal, that speaketh from heaven. God cannot speak to those who are filled with the thoughts that belong to carnal minds. He must separate us from it all that we may learn to hear and know His voice. We must learn

that deliverance does not come by our slaying Egyptians and burying them in the sand, but that it comes at what time, from what source, and by whose hand the eternal God has decreed from the foundation of the world.

We need go no farther with the story, for your heart has often thrilled as has mine as we read with awe the wonders of the deliverance that followed, the voice of God at the burning bush and the signs and wonders that followed by the hand of Moses when God's day of deliverance came, and how by a high and mighty hand He delivered His people. But what I want you to see is this: Before God moves according to His eternal purposes, He separates a people whose ears He makes deaf to all voices but His own and whose hearts become dead as stone to all purposes but His purpose.

It is not my purpose to fill up pages in recounting stories, but I know that our God is doing today as He has always done. He is preparing a people in secret in the backside of a spiritual wilderness for the great day of the coming of His kingdom.

There was a young man, Joseph, that dreamer who was so hated by his brothers that they sold him into the slavery of Egypt, and rejoiced in their hearts that they would not have to listen to his dreams any more. But they knew not that they were starting him on a journey into the center of God's will, and into the place where his dreams would all come true. What tears of lonesomeness and disappointment must have wet the face of this lad of seventeen summers, and, when for his righteousness he suffered the fetters of Egypt's cruel dank dungeon, even he did not know that the wheels of eternal purpose were turning and God was preparing a great deliverance for His own people and the whole earth besides. But before the deliverance could come, the deliverer must be separated from all voices of men that he might learn to listen to that voice which alone carries the wisdom of the universe. The weeks stretched on into months, the months into years, until Joseph was thirty. The last tiny grain of sand trickled through the hour glass of the Lord. The moment of deliverance had come, and God's man is ready. Egypt had long forgotten this stripling lad who years before had been cast into prison. His brethren back in Caanan had become even more callous and their consciences troubled them no longer. Even Jacob, his father, now grown feeble, mourned less often the loss of his son. Yesterday Joseph was languishing in the prison. Today, his ear attuned to the voice divine, he is the deliverer and the second ruler in the land.

Nineveh was a wicked city of one hundred twenty thousand souls. Their wickedness was so great that the God of heaven had declared he would rain down fire and brimstone and destroy them. Little did anyone know that God, who had pronounced such dire judgment against a wicked people, was at that very moment preparing a man to deliver them. Who on earth knew where Jonah was at that moment? The last person who had seen him saw him struggling for his life in the angry waves of the sea. Surely he had perished in the raging waters and no one would ever hear of him again. But God was separating His deliverer. Gone now were the voices of men that had clamored for his ear. Silent were the voices from within himself. In the belly of the whale in the bottom of the sea the voice of the eternal God was speaking, teaching His man to answer, Yes! to His will. And when the consecration was complete, the fish opened his mouth and vomited him out on the dry land and the deliverer went forth to Nineveh, clothed upon by the power of the Holy Ghost. Out of his mouth issued forth the two edged sword of the word of God and like corn before the sickle men fell on their faces in repentance. The words that thundered from his lips were not born of human wisdom or eloquence but of the Spirit of God. Like a spear they pierced the conscience. Like a sword they cut the heart until in forty days one hundred twenty thousand repented and turned to the Lord. History records no greater revival than this. Even Pentecost did not surpass it, but before such a mighty deliverance comes, God must separate the deliverer from the pandemonium of human voices that he may hear only the voice that speaketh from heaven.

Time and space would fail us to tell of Elijah whom God hid in a widow's house for three years while famine devastated the land and king Ahab scoured the countries in search of him. But while the famine waxed sore in the land and neither rain nor dew appeared on the earth, God had separated His man. There he sat in lonesomeness and idleness, far away from the preacher, the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the Lord. No need of the people or schemes for deliverance coaxed him to action. He must wait in separation listening only to the voice that spoke from heaven until the hour came for him to go stand before Ahab.

Little is told of John the Baptist, who for thirty years dwelt in the wilderness until the day of his showing unto Israel. God had shut this man away from the voices of scribes and Pharisees, away from the teachers and doctors of the law. No sounds of human wisdom reached his ear. He sat in no schools to hear the wisdom of the ancients, but separated and alone he heard a great voice saying, "Upon whomsoever you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is He that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." And when the great day came, the Father sent him forth like a bolt of lightning to proclaim the message, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Was not Paul separated into the wilderness of Arabia while he received the gospel of the grace of God? In my heart I can hear him saying, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus." Gone were the teachings of Gamaliel; forgotten was his righteousness according to the law, and even the good things of the past were accounted as dung because of the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

I cannot cease until I have mentioned John, the aged apostle, banished to lonely desolate Patmos, where, I suppose, his enemies hoped he would soon die of lonesomeness. But no! It was not for death that God had separated him, but that he might hear the voice of Christ as he had never heard that voice before. There in the Spirit on the day of the Lord came the voice as the sound of many waters, proclaiming, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." The voice of the lonely Galilean he had loved so long ago was now as the sound of many waters, and John, turning to see the face of Him who spoke, fell as a dead man before the glory of His countenance. But why was John on the lonely island? Because God was preparing him for a mighty, marvelous revelation of the things to come. His mind must not be cluttered with the opinions of men but with the truth and wisdom of God. Therefore he must be free of the conflicting confusing babble of earthly voices that he might hear that one voice that speaketh from heaven.

Does your bewildered heart often wonder why you are being separated in these last days? Do you wonder more and more why your earthly associations are becoming less and less? Wonder no longer, for as sure as He reigns in His heaven and sits on His glorious throne the greatest deliverance of all the ages is at hand. God today is preparing a people in His wilderness, in His deserts, in His prisons, on His lonely islands and in the four corners of the earth. They are a people whose ears are becoming deaf to every voice except the voice of their beloved. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." "Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

FAITHFULNESS

There is a very strange story related in 1 Kings, chapter 13 that has puzzled me for many years. It is the story of the prophet who came down from Judah and prophesied against the altar in Bethel. His prophetic words were immediately confirmed in that the altar was rent according to his word, and Jeroboam the king, putting forth his hand against him, was smitten. But the prophet, turning momentarily aside from the command of God, went to eat and drink in the house of another prophet, and for this disobedience was slain by a lion on his journey home. The story is very interesting and one should refresh his mind by reading it.

I do not understand the significance of the account, but there is one thing that is very, very clear. It is this: Once we embark on a course which has been chosen for us by the Lord, we must never allow anyone, whether he be the king of the land or a prophet of God, to turn us aside. This man refused to go to the king's house or to receive any reward of him, but because the prophet was a prophet and told him that an angel of the Lord had spoken to him to bring the man of God to his home, he was deceived by him and went and was slain. That is, indeed, a very sad and strange story.

It is very, very easy to be turned aside from a purpose, and because the purpose, which God puts in our heart is often long delayed, we are inclined to attempt some sort of psuedo arrangement or substitute to bring the promise to pass.

The act of Abraham in taking Hagar to wife to fulfill the promise of God is always looked upon as an act of unbelief and disobedience, but it really was an act of faith. Abraham believed the promise of God and staggered not at it, but like all the rest of us, seeing the promise was long delayed, he began to feel the necessity of taking some action to bring it to pass. That may seem good, but it only serves to bring grief. There are hundreds of men today who know according to the word of God that the kingdom is at hand, but because the promise is long delayed and slow in being fulfilled, they are scheming, organizing, planning and working in a frantic effort to bring the kingdom in. But their efforts will fail and fall to the ground. When God's zero hour comes, all the forces He has prepared from the foundation of the world will be set in motion and nothing will by any means hinder the coming of the glorious reign of Jesus Christ.

With God there is no crisis. With God there is no emergency. Such words are not in the vocabulary of the Almighty. Is there any evidence throughout the Bible that an emergency was ever thrust upon God, or that God was in a crisis and had to rush and hurry to plug some leak in the dam He had not expected to spring? Don't be silly! God is not only omnipotent. He is omniscient as well, and the end of a thing is no more mysterious to Him than the beginning. The only thing God requires of you and me is that we will lend our ear to Him and be faithful where He has put us. If He has given us a ministry to pray, let us pray and be faithful. If our only ministry is to wait, then let us quietly and patiently wait. In my opinion to wait is one of the hardest things God ever gives a man to do. David said, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in the way, because of the man that bringeth wicked devices to pass." Of Abraham it is said, "After he had patiently endured, he received the promise."

It is very easy to become busy here and there, doing this and that, yet all the time forgetting the purpose for which God has set us aside. I think we would all be wise just now to keep the thing God is doing uppermost in our minds. It is not wise at this time to go plunging into the activities of earth. Let us not become busy here and there, trying to bring in the kingdom only to suddenly awake to find the thing God gave us to keep has escaped out of our grasp and we are left with nothing to hope for but judgment.

I always admire good businessmen. Diligent men will stand before kings and not before mean men. But if we go plunging headlong into the swirl and swim of the businesses of earth, making that the main object of life while pushing the purposes of God off into the corner, considering eternal values as a secondary thing to be attended to when we have nothing better to do, we will find we have been proven unfaithful and unworthy of the kingdom.

With all my heart I believe that a man's first consideration in all things should be, "How will this affect my standing with God?" Perhaps your associates require you to do things against which your heart rebels, just because it is expected of you. But you will do well to remember how Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat. He cared not a straw what became of him or his standing with the great king or with the government of Babylon. The one thing that concerned him was what would please the King of kings. Because Daniel was faithful and honored God, God was faithful and honored him, and in spite of all the conniving of all his enemies he rose to the position of the third ruler of the realm. It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

TITHING

I would like to say a word about faithfulness in tithing. I have no intention of trying to settle old stagnant questions about whether tithing belongs to law or grace or the kingdom. But I do say that a better system of giving never has and never will be devised. No method of giving is more simple, more rewarding, or more blessed of God. Those who faithfully tithe have a right to claim the blessing of God, and those who are unfaithful in this matter have no genuine claim to the faithfulness of God. Tithing is a partnership between yourself and God. Nine tenths belongs to you and one tenth belongs to Him. We all like to consider ourselves honest men, and would not cheat or short change an earthly partner. Most people are honest about taxes even though they hate them, yet the very same people think nothing of consistently month after month robbing God of the tenth that is His.

If you have no storehouse to bring your tithes into, that is no excuse. In a world where two billion people are always hungry surely good stewardship would find a way and a place for a tithe. I cannot believe that your responsibility ends by casting your money into the church treasury and forgetting about it, or giving to some

man who writes you circular letters begging tithes for some vision he professes to have. Men who are always begging for money should be on the street corner with a monkey and a tin cup. Usually they are more concerned about themselves than the people they profess to be trying to help. Thirty years of watchfulness has taught me that irrefutable lesson. Nevertheless let us be faithful in tithing and bring them to a store house in which we have confidence, for we would not want to have to account for them when the great bookkeeper makes up the books. It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful.

Read the great scripture classic on tithing as found in Malachi 3:7-15 and see for yourself how it is part of Israel's preparation for the great day of the Lord, and the coming of Christ in Ch. 4.

CHRIST THE EXAMPLE

Jesus Christ took no part in earthly affairs. He hid himself lest they should attempt to force Him to be king, yet He knew full well that He whose life was in union with the Father was ordained to be King of kings and to rule in timeless splendor.

"Art Thou a king then?" Pilate questioned. "Thou sayest that I am a king," He replied. "To this end was I born and for this purpose came I into the world." What value is a kingdom, which God has not given, or one taken by force of arms before the time? Few men are like David who refused to take the kingdom until God gave it to him and whose heart smote him for the mere act of cutting off the skirt of Saul's garment.

Full well Jesus knew the day would come when He would sit on the right hand of power and come riding upon the clouds of heaven. Full well He knew the nations would one day bring their glory and honor into His kingdom, and all nations would crown Him King of kings and Lord of lords and of the increase of His government there would be no end.

He took no part in the governments of earth and spoke no word for them or against them. When they inquired of Him, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?" He replied, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." And when they told Him Herod would kill Him, He answered, "Go and tell that fox, behold, I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

He did not concern Himself about the status of people. Never did He struggle to make the poor rich or the rich poor. He rebuked Judas for suggesting that the alabaster box should have been sold and the money given to the poor. "The poor ye have with you always, but Me ye have not always." There was a certain poor widow who, in giving a mite, had given more than all the rich men. There was a certain beggar who was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And there was a certain rich man that was buried and lifted up his eyes in hell. He did not hesitate to bless the poor or to pronounce woe upon the rich. Full well He knew that both riches and poverty are only temporal conditions that belong to time. Well He knew that the possession of riches was often a spiritual impediment tending to make one careless and forgetful of God. He knew that dire poverty brooked no spiritual impediment, but caused men to put their trust in Him who is the source of both temporal and spiritual supply.

Jesus healed the sick and performed His miracles from the standpoint of what and who He was. Never did He seek crowds but often withdrew from them. Never did He advertise His healings or gather crowds for the purpose of healing their bodies only. More than once He advocated silence by such commands as: "See thou tell no man." Or He conveyed Himself away before He was known as He did at the pool of Bethesda. His wonders were performed neither for show nor fame nor for advertisement, but as His Father directed. "I do only those things which I have seen of my Father," He said. When the disciples came rejoicing that even the demons were subject to them, He warned, "Rejoice not that the demons are subject unto you, but that your names are written hi heaven." No boast was made of any glory. No honor was sought of men. No pride was taken in healings, miracles, wisdom, or wonders, but in one thing only: "I do only those things that please the Father."

CHAPTER SIX WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS

The first four words of the book of Genesis, "in the beginning God", constitute one of the most sublime statements ever written. Herein lies the true foundation of our faith for things past, things present, and things to come. Upon the sublime certainty that God almighty, all wise and immutable was God and Lord of the beginning of all things, all creatures, and all ages rests our certain hope both now and forevermore. Yea, and much more also, for not only was He in the beginning, but He Himself was the beginning as He will also be and even now is the end.

I speak with a heavy heart in saying that God's dear people have lost their vision of the eternal majesty of God, their heavenly Father. They have allowed their horizon to become cluttered with arguments and schemes of men whose eyes see no further than the little stage upon which they are performing where they themselves have become the focal point. The world is filled with people each intent upon his little task, and the religious systems boast disciples by the million, each loudly proclaiming his theory, defending with vigor his doctrines while compassing land and sea to make proselytes to his cause, but you will be a fortunate person, indeed, if during your whole lifetime you are blessed with the acquaintance and fellowship of one man who really knows God. The church system has no lack of learned men whom they honor as theologians, men who spend their lives studying about God, but who seem never to learn that one may spend his whole life and eternity as well studying about God only to find in the end that he does not know Him. One man who knows God because he loves Him is better than ten thousand men who hold theories about Him. One humble little woman, rejoicing in the knowledge that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed her heart from all sin, is more precious in God's sight than all the learned doctors of divinity who dryly explain the intricacies of the doctrine of justification by faith, but in whose hearts the Justifier does not dwell.

Well might we disdain the forms and ceremonies of every sect on earth that we might lay hold on that blessed communion spoken of by Malachi the prophet, who wrote: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." **Mal. 3:16-17**. The God who was in the beginning and the God who is the end can be known to mankind only as He reveals Himself to the heart that fervently loves Him. Man can study about God all his life and still not know Him, and that, alas, is what the multitude of professing Christians has done for centuries. Woe to us all, for even those who have been washed from their sins and who have received of His Spirit may often be included in that vast throng of professors who know the acts of God but do not know Him.

Have you ever meditated upon this scripture, "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel?" **Psa. 103:7**. Read that scripture carelessly and it will tell you practically nothing, but let the light of divine revelation shine upon it and you will see the yawning gulf that lies between God's people who know Him and God's people who know Him not. There is almost a universe of difference between knowing the acts of God and knowing the ways of God. Possibly there was not one Israelite among the hosts that came out of Egypt with Moses who could not have described in detail the wonderful acts of the Lord. With their eyes they had beheld the ravaging plagues with which the Almighty had cursed the land. They had heard the terrifying thunder and had seen the searing lightning as it raced along the ground. They knew of the hail that had devastated Egypt but had left Israel unharmed. They often spoke of the horrible darkness that had filled the Egyptians with dread, even thick darkness that could be felt, while they in their houses walked in light. They had thrilled to see the angry waves roll back to stand in liquid heaps while they walked through on dry ground, and later had stood in awe as those mighty waves rolled back again to halt forever the advancing hosts of Pharaoh. They had eaten of the manna and had drunk of the life-giving water that gushed in torrents from the smitten rock, but, for all that they knew of the acts of God, they did not know God nor understand His ways. They murmured against Him at the slightest provocation and in their hearts turned back again to Egypt - Even the high priest Aaron, the brother of Moses, who had stood with him throughout all the wonders and signs that had been wrought in Egypt, seemed only to know the acts of God but not His ways. Could you believe that a man who knows God and is acquainted with His ways could ever be prevailed upon to fashion a golden calf and condone the worship of such an idol? Yet that is just what Aaron, the high priest, did. Ex. 32. Can you imagine a man who truly knows God murmuring against the Lord's anointed? Yet he and his sister Miriam spake against Moses. Num. 12:1. But with Moses it was different, for God had revealed Himself unto him. He saw far beyond the physical acts and manifestations of the Lord because the Almighty had revealed His

eternal purposes unto him and he had become one spirit with the Father. It was the eternal purpose that lay beyond the physical acts that God revealed to Moses. Thus it is said in a statement of contrast: He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

Not all who read these lines will understand them, but be it known unto you that no man ever truly knows God who is acquainted only with the acts of God. You may have witnessed miracles without number. Your own body may have been miraculously healed of disease. You may have given half your goods to feed the poor or spoken with the tongues of men and angels, but if you have rejoiced in the outward sign and manifestation rather than the eternal purpose, you are yet a babe and have never come to really know Him. Have you ever wondered why it was that Paul, the author of those two masterpieces of inspiration, 1 Cor. chapters 12 and 14 concerning the proper function of the gifts of the Spirit, should halt right in the middle of his discourse to write, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away...!" When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known" **1 Cor. 13:10-13**.

Many of God's dear people in our day are like the elated disciples who, returning from their missionary journey, were full of stories concerning the wonders they had seen done. "Why, Master," they cried, "even the devils are subject to us." And Jesus with that note of mature pity replied, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." **Luke 10:10, 20**. The thing that was of eternal importance was the thing of which they stood in ignorance, while the thing that concerned the acts of God was that which gave them boisterous delight.

Surely no one would ever be foolish enough to say that Jesus did not believe in divine healing or to deny that every spirit was: subject to His word of power. He positively demonstrated His omnipotence in every sphere of life whether of things in heaven, in earth or under the earth. Every form of sickness known to mankind fled before His touch. The most violent of demons were cast out at His word. The elements in all their tempestuous turmoil were stilled at His word of command, and the violent mob who in impetuous fury came to capture Him in Gethsemane went backward and fell to the ground, groveling and helpless before the majesty of His presence. John 18:2-9. But He did not rejoice in any of these things. Rather He rejoiced continually in the knowledge of God's will. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," was the continual consecration of His heart. Where can more sublime consecration be found than was manifest in His prayer recorded in John 12? As He faced the great task for which He came, a strange and troubled uneasiness that often precedes events of great importance was in Him when He said, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say! Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." **John 12:27-28**. And what shall be our prayer in these perilous times? Shall we say, "Father, save me from this hour", or shall we say, "Father, glorify Thy name?"

As days with quickening footsteps slip away into months and months hasten into years, a deep spiritual conviction is arising in the hearts of the elect of God warning them that days of eternal importance are now at hand. It will not be long until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Only a few more shadows will gather before the gigantic injustice of this evil realm of the carnal mind will collapse before the magnificent shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness. The creation that long has groaned beneath the night of oppression, injustice, inequity and sorrow will be emancipated and delivered into the glorious freedom of God's sons. Even now, while we meditate upon these lines, the mighty work of preparation is going on. The beautiful feet are coming forth from the womb. They are being washed that the whole body of sons might be clean every whit. They are being shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. They are climbing the lofty mountain of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and reverence for the Lord. Soon all the world in harmonious chorus will chant in glad refrain, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." **Isa. 52:7**. For "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the

mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass that, at evening time, it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them towards the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one." **Zech. 14:4-9.**

Every word of this prophecy will come true just as it has been written. I for one must plead guilty to being a literalist, yet God has taught me that all natural things have spiritual counterparts. All types and prophecies have at least three fulfillments - one small and local, one greater and wider, and one limitless and universal. One would, I think, need but half an eye to perceive that even now the feet are ascending the mountain. Right now there is a mighty earthquake that is shaking the very foundation of every movable thing. Even now the saints are fleeing from the earthquake to find their refuge in the valley of the mountain of God, where they will hide eternally in Him. Now is the day when it is neither light nor dark, for, though there is light and truth abroad in the earth, it is so mingled with darkness and confusion that mankind is baffled to know which is light and which is darkness. But this day shall be a day different from all other days, for, though all other days grow dark toward evenings, it shall come to pass that in the evening of this day "there shall be light".

When Babylon with her confusion has fallen, when the stone cut from the mountain without hands has smitten the clay feet of the Babylonian image and her power has dissolved into the dust of the summer threshing floor, then shall the stone, the living stone, the stone which was rejected of the builders, rise to become the head stone. It shall increase unto a great mountain that will fill all the earth with the knowledge and wisdom, glory and power of the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. See Dan. 2:31-35.

We are now living in an hour of great consequence. Never in the history of all the earth was there a more important hour than this. As the days have passed by, an almost dreadful solemnity has settled down upon my spirit until I cannot shake off that restlessness which one feels while awaiting events of momentous importance. Do soldiers sleep well before the battle or do visions of tomorrow's strife alarm their dreams? Why, even Jesus amazed His disciples and filled their hearts with fear as in the eagerness of the hour He quickened His pace on that final walk to Jerusalem that would end in His crucifixion and the fulfillment of the purpose for which He came into the world. See Mark 10:32. Even nature itself is manifesting the restlessness of expectancy as the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Since, then, these things are so and all things from the least of earth to the greatest in heaven bear witness in joyful chorus, echoing from heart to heart the blessed refrain of emancipation, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Long ago our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the head Son, lifted up His eyes to heaven and with a sigh of triumphant relief He said, "**Father, the hour has come**". **John 17:1.** Ah, what an hour that was! That was an hour planned in the purposes and counsels of God before the foundation of the ages, before ever man breathed the breath of life and became a living soul. Long eons had He waited for that great hour to come as suns rose and set, millenniums waxed and waned, dispensations came and went, and ages passed away. But now at last the hour had come, the D Day, the H Hour. Of all the hours that had come and gone through time this was the day and this was the hour, for upon this pivot turned the plan of the ages and in it eternal redemption would be accomplished.

But now once more at the end of this age stands another son, even the body of the sons of God, not the head Son but the feet sons, and again the hour has come. The hour in which we now live was planned of God before the foundation of the world. Any instant now, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead in Christ shall rise first to be joined to the Head and we, the feet, which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. The saints who have died through the ages - the breast, the shoulders, the arms, the thighs, and the legs - cannot be perfected without us, the feet, for they without us shall not be made perfect. Heb. 11:40. But when these precious sons arise to stand upon their glorious feet, then shall we be made perfect together. "Father, oh Father, glorify Thy name!" Then came a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and I will glorify it again." Oh, God, grant to Thy people such divine wisdom and understanding that their hearts might assuredly know that the hour is at hand for all these things to be fulfilled.

WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS?

Since, then, these things are so, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of that vast body of sons now being created in His image, was no ordinary person. "Never man spake like this man," said the soldiers. "I find no fault in Him", Pilate declared. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," thundered the Father from heaven. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," wrote the apostle to the Hebrews. And how much more could we testify to the beauty of His life in all patience, kindness, longsuffering, truth, power, wisdom and knowledge, and tell of the marvelous works He did as the multitudes of sick and demon possessed were delivered every one! And what shall we say of His sacrificial death and His triumphant resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His pouring forth of the Holy Spirit that all who believed might be born again and become sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we shine as heavenly lights? No, Jesus was no ordinary man; and the time has come when we who have heard His voice and followed Him shall not live as ordinary men, but as sons of God and members of Christ, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His Spirit, as saviours appearing upon Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (the flesh), and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. Obadiah 21.

How my heart thrills in anticipation of such marvelous grace! We are slowly learning that the light and momentary afflictions in which we often whine and groan are but for a moment and they are working/or us, not against us, yielding a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are only temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

It is with grief that I now confess the fear that many people who have been talking glibly about sonship do not possess the spirit of sons which God has sent forth, crying, Abba Father. Sonship is not a position attained by signs and wonders and mighty deeds but is the Spirit of Christ in our spirits crying, "Our Father, Thy will be done! Thy will be done!" Many have considered sonship to be a sort of reward for their deeds, for their preaching, prophesying and healing, but sonship is not a reward for anything. It is a divine bestowal of God's eternal grace by which men receive the spirit of adoption to walk as sons of God in the midst of a perverse world and an apostate church system.

A SEPARATE PEOPLE

There are some things, which should be a great help to all people who are longing to be delivered from this crooked and perverse age into the glorious freedom of God's sons. Let us first recognize and confess that we have been a people of tradition. We have accepted what we were taught by priest and teacher and that often without question. We have not searched diligently and personally to see if these things were so. We have followed like sheep in the way of Babylon, imagining that her harlotish ways were the ways of God. We have accepted what men had to say, but have not listened to what God had to say. We have prayed and begged for revival in the churches, never considering that God had no desire or inclination to revive that, which always turned men's hearts from Him. I challenge any man to search the past centuries and produce a case where God has ever revived a sect or denomination. Look at every revival of church history and you will see the testimony clearly given that the Lord does not put new wine in old bottles. Did He ever revive the Roman Catholics? Certainly not. He called Luther out from among them. Did He ever revive Lutheranism after it became a system? Certainly not. He called out a people under Wesley who became known as Methodists. Did He ever revive them? No, He did not. He called out another people known and hated as the Pentecostal people. But the moment they began to organize, their glory also began to ebb away until they have a name that icy live, but the glory has departed from them. Even so it is with all people in all ages.

The people who are longing to know the glory of sonship have one great lesson to learn no matter how disagreeable that lesson may be. Should I write a whole book on the subject, I could not express the truth with more concise pertinence than did Paul when he wrote these words: "**Wherefore come out from among them, and by ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty.**" **2 Cor. 6:17-18.** Whether or not we

want to accept such challenge will never alter the truth of it, for the truth is that all who would be received as sons of God must cut their ties with the harlots of Babylon and from that there can be no reprieve. The sublime truth taught by the parable of the prodigal son was that this son - for he was a son - had lavishly wasted his life and is gifts to satisfy self. In prodigal extravagance he devoured his living with harlots; which things are an allegory setting forth in clear light the truth that sons of God shall not waste their inheritance among the harlot daughters of Babylon. After he had squandered all and had come to the end of everything, including himself, joining himself to a citizen of that country, he found himself feeding swine - not sheep, I say, but swine. The scathing type is, I fear, sound, though we dread to admit that in in Babylon system the nature of swine is more prevalent than the nature of sheep. He hungered and thirsted for better days, but the more he hungered the worse things got until he made the momentous decision that all sons must eventually make. "I will arise and go to my Father. I will leave the harlots, leave the swine, leave the citizens of confusion to which I have been joined, and return to become one mind with the Father."

The story of the prodigal son is too familiar to need repetition here. It is not the type but the anti-type, not the prodigal but you and I who are in the spotlight now in this the end of the age. The harlot systems are soon to be destroyed. There must be a separation unto God, a coming out from among them, a being separated, a refusal to touch the unclean thing, for what is more unclean than an harlot? And who can pity you less after she has brought you to want? These are serious days and hours of momentous decision. Not only does the Spirit urge me to write these things, but the steady stream of mail that reaches me continually testifies that God is calling out a people for His name. From America to Australia, from New Zealand to Britain, and from Europe to the islands of the sea sons are arising to return to the Father. He is calling people from among the Jews, His elect from among the Catholics, His chosen from among the Protestants that they may be one new man in Christ, having broken down the walls of partition that were between them.

A CONFIDENT PEOPLE

It is never wise to make changes until one is sure of himself before God. It will not help to come out because I say so, for all truth is a matter of revelation. God's servants may tell you about it, but only God can reveal it unto you. But, when He opens the eyes of your understanding, then you will wonder, "Why did I not see this before?" Our confidence in God must be firmly founded upon the knowledge that God has spoken. God has spoken by two immutable things in which it is impossible for Him to lie. Heb. 6:18. The two immutable things are: first, His promise and secondly, His oath. The promise that He gave to Abraham (Heb. 6:13) He confirmed later by an oath (Heb. 6:16,17) that by these two immutable things, God's promise and God's oath by which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong confidence, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us.

In these the final hours of the dispensation many learned but wicked men are casting doubt upon the word of God, but, if God's word cannot be trusted, then our harbors are whirlpools and all our rocks are naught but clouds. God's word can be trusted, for in the beginning was the word and in the end will be the word. By the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. By the word of God the heavens shall be dissolved and the elements melt with fervent heat. By the word of God we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, for, though the heaven and the earth shall pass away, God's word shall not pass away. The word was made a Son. The word is now being made sons, for God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken by His Son, or, literally, hath spoken in Son. How glorious are Thy thoughts, O God, and Thy ways past finding out!

It is not necessary for us to understand everything that God has said, but it is essential for us to believe Him. His ways are too high and wonderful for us as yet. Many things we do not comprehend, but, believing, we rejoice. I do not know how God looses the bands of Orion, causing the snow and ice to melt and the waters to flow, but I know He does it. I know very little about His promised coming again, but I believe Him when He said, "I will come again." I understand but little of His glorious kingdom, which is soon to dawn on the whole earth, but I know that kingdom is coming, and all the details can be safely left to Him. I know not how He will fulfill His promise that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He will gather together all things in Christ, but I believe Him and it will be just as He promised, all theology and arguments of men to the contrary notwithstanding.

Let us then have strong confidence in God to lay hold on the hope that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Let those who will say, "There is no God." What difference should their blind unbelief make to our strong confidence in Him? Let a mouse defend a lion, but God needs no defense from us. Let those who will declare that God is dead. We need not argue with men whose iniquity has made them completely insensible to the God in whose hand their breath is. Let us rather show that the life we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and died for us and, being raised from the dead, ever liveth within to transform our own lives into His glorious likeness.

Among the many titles and names of the most, high God, one above all others fills the heart with the abiding confidence of His ever present nearness. That name is so simple that it scarcely seems to be a name at all, yet in it we see Him standing in the past, in the present and in the future. It tells us He is there whether the earth is filled with sunshine or immersed in the deepest shadow. It proclaims the wonder of His presence when we with eagles' wings rise to exalted heights of revelation and understanding and assures us (huh He is just as near when the journey is too great and we sit beneath our juniper tree, wishing death would mercifully take us away. It is the name "I Am".

Long ago Moses received a commission from God. He was eighty years old when the angel appeared to him in the burning bush. He was old enough to be free from earthly ambitions, weary enough with earth's bitter disappointments to be content to spend life's evening tending the quiet and gentle sheep in the backside of the desert and sage enough to have learned that of all the creatures God had made none was more unpredictable, unthankful, unmerciful and unkind than that stubborn rebel called man. It is little wonder that this old man was horrified at the thought of returning to Egypt to deliver a people that had already rejected him. Many were his efforts to convince the Lord that he was not the man to deliver them. "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." **Ex. 3:13-14.** I AM! I AM! Not I was or I will be, but I AM. He is ever present. He is always there. He is always here. "Before Abraham was, I AM," Jesus told the Jews. **John 8:58.** "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." **Matt. 28:20.** "It is I; be not afraid." "Fear not, I am with you."

Once there was an atheist who wanted his infant daughter to believe as he did. He did not want her to have any superstitions about God, so to impress her young mind that God simply did not exist he hung a plaque at the foot of her bed inscribed with the words, God is nowhere. The little girl could not read very well, so she sounded out the words to herself. When her father returned from work that evening, he asked her if she could read the words he had written for her. "Oh, yes," she replied, "it says God is now here." So you see, this is the confidence we have in Him. What men say makes no difference. He is the I AM. Let fools preach that God is dead. He is still the I AM, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. Whether the sunshine sheds its radiant beams upon us or the tempestuous waves threaten to swamp our frail bark, the I AM is always present, saying, "Fear not; I am with you." Seventy-six times in the Bible the term "fear not" is repeated to bring assurance to every troubled heart in all manner of circumstances. To those who walk the unfamiliar path that leads us to the triumphant hour of manifestation and the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ His ancient words of assurance come ringing down the centuries to dispel our woes and calm our fears: "**Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**" **Luke 12:32.**

MAKING YOURSELF AVAILABLE

In this the end of the age there is an ever, increasing babble of voices clamoring for our ear, every one with a tongue, an interpretation or a doctrine. Well did Solomon describe this loud mouthed church woman when he said, "A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, knowing nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high place in the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." **Prov. 9:13-18.** Not only are the pulpits filled with voices pouring forth a murky stream of senseless doctrines and dogmas of men, but the airwaves are crowded with religious clamor both in word and picture,

and the mails also are literally stuffed with religious literature, often of such mediocre quality that it is a waste of time either to print it or read it. If we attempt to listen to all the voices that are shouting to gain our ears, we will certainly miss the great plan of God. There is a voice divine filled with the wisdom and counsel of eternal ages that is worthy of the attentive ear of men and angels. But that voice, alas, is seldom heard because we are so busy listening to the paltry observations of men that we never make ourselves available to the voice of God.

It is impossible to over-estimate the infinite importance of becoming personally acquainted with the voice of the Lord. God still speaks to the hearts of men. He is ever instructing them in the way they should go. Seldom perhaps it is that he speaks with an audible voice, but many there must be who are acquainted with the still small voice of the Lord as He speaks to the inner man, making His will and purposes known. Those precious saints who would know the voice of the Lord must learn one lesson above all others. They must learn to make themselves available to God. There must be special times when the sons of God present themselves before the Lord. Job. 1:16. There must be definite times when all other voices are shut out, when all duties are laid aside except the duty of waiting upon Him, when every imagination of our own heart is cast down and every high thought and thing is brought into obedience to Christ. Cf. 2 Cor. 10:5. There must come a season and that season should come every day, when you present yourself to the Lord, not to make demands but to hear and listen to the voice of eternal wisdom, for in the awesome stillness of God's presence the inner man is full of expectancy as he hearkens to the instructions, the reproofs, the rebukes and the commands of the Almighty.

It was in the year that King Uzziah died that Isaiah saw the Lord. Isa. 6:1. It was when Job's comforters had all ceased their talking and Job had ceased from his arguments that he heard the voice of God. See Job chapters 38-42. Oh what blessedness will be yours when you know the truth of the sacred text, "Be still and know that I am God" **Psa. 46:10**. Most of us, I fear, are like little Samuel who had spent his young life listening to the instruction of Eli, but when God spoke to him, he did not know God's voice because he had never heard it. But when Eli told him how to listen to God, then he received instruction from the Lord. 1 Sam. 3. Even so it is today.

It may be that this fact has never dawned upon you, but look about you and you will see that everything, absolutely everything, in modern society is geared to keep us all so occupied with temporal things that there is never time to be silent before God or time to give the Lord opportunity to speak to the heart. Saint and sinner, saved and unsaved are entertained artificially from morning till night. Every spare moment is taken up with the disturbing noise of some sort of entertainment until I suppose it would be thought a singular thing indeed should a man be found alone with his thoughts and with his God. The church system in her backslidden confusion has adopted the attitude of the world, being conformed to the world system in all respects. It is a well, known fact that the pastors of assemblies strain every effort to keep the people constantly busy. All their spare time must be taken up with some church activity. Whether it is of any value or not, it must be done just to keep the people occupied, for it is reasoned that while the people are busy they have no time to look beyond their little realm. It should not be necessary here to recite the numerous activities engaged in, but suffice it to say that in most cases every night of the week is occupied with some kind of meeting with two or three sessions on Sunday. This may be the way to make assembly line followers of a creed, but it is not the path by which men come to know God, for it is possible to chum with friends and associates, subscribe to the doctrines and creeds of your group, and have the whole Bible at your finger tips while your soul remains empty and void of a personal relationship with the Lord.

Sons of God are not made by continual association with religious people. They are made by continual association with their Lord and heavenly Father. They make themselves available to Him to listen to His voice, to read His word, to enquire of His wisdom and to ask of His understanding. "One thing have I desired of the Lord," said David, "that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." **Psa. 27:4**. And let us see the results of such association with God, for he continues, "In time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. He shall set me up upon a rock." **Verse 5**. There is something infinitely different about the man or woman who has been in communion with God. The revelation of the Lord within comes shining through the darkness of all outward coverings. Lack of schooling, inability to speak or explain are things of naught when the heart speaks from the wisdom of the clear shining light of God within His tabernacle.

When Jesus sat by the wayside well with the woman of Samaria, He spoke truths to her heart that had never been revealed to any Pharisee or doctor of the law, and, while she communed with Him, something was born in her heart that never ceased to grow. A lamp was lighted to shine with increasing brilliance forever. The endless wonders of the words He spoke that day have never ceased, and I am sure that during the remainder of her life on earth she bore radiant testimony to the wonder of meeting Him face to face. Could we imagine that even in death such a gushing fountain of life could possibly cease? Far be this from the truth, for in heaven itself the water that quenched her thirst flows as a river from the throne.

I am sure that you have noticed, in reading the Bible, that the greatest truths ever spoken to mankind were spoken to the ones and twos who had made themselves available to Jesus. When Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, turned aside from the teachings and doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees to make himself available to Jesus Christ, truth was unfolded to him such as was never spoken before in all the history of the world, yea, and to my knowledge was never repeated by Him again. Stand with me by the door, if you will, and hear their conversation as understanding is imparted to a troubled heart and light eternal comes to dispel the darkness of the natural mind and death's morbid gloom is displaced by life eternal. "Master, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God," said he, "for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." **John 3:2-8.** "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?" Jesus asked. **Verse 10.** Woe to them, for Israel had many masters who knew not the things of the Spirit. Woe to us also, for the church system with all its degrees and learning knows little of the things of God's Spirit. It is the revelation of the Lord that makes known eternal things to longing hearts who make themselves available to Him.

Was it not to weeping Martha that Jesus spoke the eternal truth, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die?" **John 11:25.** Martha had heard of His coming and had run out on the road to meet him. Her disconsolate heart, mourning the death of her only brother, drew from her lips the complaint, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," and with a note of questioning hope she added, "But I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." "Thy brother shall rise again" He assured her with godly joy. To this she replied, "I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day." "I am the resurrection and the life," our Lord replied, and with this eternal truth He filled the heart of a weeping woman who had run out on the road at the message of His coming to make herself available to Him.

It was Abraham's aloneness that made him a friend of God, or should I have said that it was Abraham's friendship with God that made him a lonely man. Yet he who dwells in God is never lonely or alone, for the promise is ever with him, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Enoch could not have walked with God if he had not made himself available to God to walk with Him and commune with Him while all other voices were shut out and their clamoring denied. The voices of scribes and Pharisees, priests and preachers have become as the clamor of high pressure salesmen who hawk their wares in the public place and sell their trinkets from door to door, and those who buy their wares find them something much less than was represented. I am sick of men who harangue about issues and I am sick of the issues as well. I am weary of doctrines and dogmas, slants and shades of so-called truth. I am tired to death of hearing of who is right and who is wrong, or whether this man or that man is God's man of the hour. I shall rise far above this slimy cesspool of religious debate to dwell where God dwells in the Spirit.

If you, my friend, have looked about you, you will certainly have seen that it is human opinions that divide men from one another. It is the insistent propounding of doctrines that are supposed to be truth, but which in reality do nothing but separate God's children. How often has my spirit bled and drooped in the dust of despondency as some brother or sister turned his heart away because I had not embraced his pet doctrine or had failed to mention it in any of the articles I had written or because I had not been enlightened upon some thing that was

of great importance to him. Such shoddy experience can never be with men who love God and know Him, for instead of devoting their time to senseless pros and cons concerning the resurrection, they will know Him who is both the resurrection and the life. Instead of vain imaginations and explanations about the water of life they will have that artesian well within them, springing up with living water and flowing out to satisfy all who would drink at its Living fountain. What good are debates about the new birth? Is it not much better to receive and experience it?

Is it not much better to know God than to endlessly war and debate about the Godhead as so many do? I am convinced that those who debate about God have neither seen Him nor known Him, for had they done so, there would be no argument. They are like the little girl that was diligently drawing a picture of some mysterious creature, who, when asked by her father what she was drawing, said, "I am drawing a picture of God." "Well," said her father, "you cannot draw a picture of God because no one knows what God looks like." "Well," replied the child, "when I am finished with this picture, they will know." We smile at this and well we might, but is her answer more simple than the vanity of men who, not having seen God, describe His appearance and, not having known Him, take pride in their explanations?

There is not a man on earth who is qualified to teach God's truth until God has revealed it unto him by the Spirit. Perhaps one of our greatest misconceptions is in our understanding of the words of Paul, "[Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,](#)" **2 Tim. 2:15**. This verse of scripture is almost always used as an exhortation for men and women to become students of the word of God or to urge upon them the necessity of attending a Bible School to imbibe knowledge by study. I do not believe such a thought as that ever entered the inspired mind of the apostle. He was not telling us to study books. He was not even telling us to study the Bible, good and necessary as that may be, but he was telling the people that their lifelong study should concern their being approved of God. Did you ever read this sentence? "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God." Acts 2:22. Are we to conclude that God's approval rested upon Him because He was a diligent student of books and doctrines? No! Never! That is not what made Him approved. Even the miracles and wonders that He performed were not in themselves the basis of God's approval, but rather the constant attitude of His life: "I do always those things that please the Father." Well did Paul say, "[The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable with God and approved of men.](#)" Rom. **14:17-18**.

That you might be approved of God should be your lifelong prayer and study that you might know Him well, become acquainted with His eternal purposes, and above all that His will for you as an individual might be manifest unto you that you might walk in it and thus be blessed with His approval. I frankly confess that I am sick to death of preachers and meetings. I am tired of seeing people sit like dumb sheep to listen to the ideas and opinions of men, accept their interpretation, practice their theories, act on their advice, and yet never come face to face with God at all. Why should these religious professionals be allowed to squeeze everybody into their mold or try to fashion all men after their liking? Is not God Himself the Potter? Are we not all the clay in His hands? Is it not God who is working in us to will and do His good pleasure? Why then must I be a follower of this hireling or that when there is one Lord and one Head that is higher than the heaven itself and when there is faith in each one of us to reach beyond the veil and hold the Head that we may be joined perfectly with Him?

There is no value in belonging to a sect. Even the thought of adherence to a denomination is a schism and a division in the mystical body of Christ. It is a separation of joints and marrow, a hindrance to that which every joint supplieth. Flee from these things that you may lay hold on Christ, for all that comes before Him is naught but a thief and a robber that will steal away the precious unity of His Spirit, which alone can make the unity of every member of His body true and glorious. I am convinced in my heart that, the moment men wild women begin to make themselves available to God, at that same moment the bondage and shackles of creeds, sects, denominational, preachers, programs, meetings and all other inventions of man will begin to fall away, for he whom the Son makes free in free indeed.

We have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. We have trusted in our church affiliations to deliver us in the time of the overflowing scourge, but all it has proved to be is a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.

Isa. 28:17-18. But the hour has come in this the end of the age when God is laying in Zion a chief corner stone, even Jesus Christ, the Head of the true body. He is a precious stone, a tried foundation, and those who trust in Him shall not be confounded. Isa. 28:16. Now is the hour when judgment is being laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet (or plumb-bob). Now is the hour for the sweeping away of the refuge of lies that has held God's people in the vice-like grip of the Babylonish systems. Now is the time for God's people to break their connections with the Delilahs and Jezebels, the Catholic mother of harlots and the host of her Protestant daughters. This is the time above all times to lay hold on that tried foundation stone to become one in spirit with Jesus Christ, for all who are one spirit with Him are one body in Him. This is the true church and beside it there can be no other either in heaven or in earth. This is the virgin male, the sons of God, the head of that female bride who will come to perfection after the man Christ Jesus has been formed in completeness, from Jesus of Nazareth, the Head of the body of sons, to ourselves the glorious feet of that same mystical body of Christ. Then shall the sons of God because of eternal unity be called the Son, even as the Lord, when calling the multitudes out of Egypt, declared, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

It is neither good nor necessary to know men after the flesh. That is why I never clutter up the paper with pictures of myself. That is why I seldom encourage people to visit me. Who is Paul or who is Apollos but ministers by whom you believed? And how much less important am I, the least of all His saints! Seek not man whose breath is in his nostrils, but seek Him who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. Make yourself and your whole life available to Him. Wait before Him in silence and awe that He may speak and make His will known to your waiting heart. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 8
PORTRAIT OF THINGS TO COME
BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; and that He was come from God and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Then cometh He to Simon Peter; and Peter said unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, **What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shall know hereafter.** Peter saith unto Him, Thou shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, **If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.** Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, **He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.**" John 13:1-10.

The earthly life of our blessed Lord and Christ was a life of parables from beginning to end. Parable after parable flowed from His anointed lips teaching mankind all manner of truth concerning both Himself and the long awaited kingdom of God. Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom and at the end of this age He will take His seat on His exalted throne to reign unto the age of the ages. So frequent and diverse were the parables He spake that in one instance the statement is clearly made, **"Without a parable spake He not unto them."** **Matt. 13:34.** The disciples, becoming aware of this method of instruction, asked Him plainly, **"Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?"** **Mail. 13:10.** The answer He gave them clearly shows that there are certain elect people who are ordained to see and believe the truth now, while others are left in darkness now to await their time of enlightenment in a coming age. His reply to their question was this: **"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."** **Verse 11.**

The teachings of Jesus were continually filled with parables, understood only by those elect to whom God has given eyes to see and hearts to understand. And it must further be stated with the greatest possible emphasis that not only in word were His parables given, but every act of His anointed life contained in itself some great parabolic teaching concerning the coming kingdom of God. Consider, for instance, His miraculous birth, which made God alone to be His Father and Himself the Son of God. Does this not teach us all that unless a man be born from above, born again and renewed in the image of the great Creator, he is not a son of God at all? How then would it be possible for one to see the kingdom of God until that blessed birth from above takes place in response to living faith in his own heart?

The wilderness experience of Jesus Christ, in which he overcame Satan and all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh (appetite), the lust of the eyes (avarice), and the pride of life (ambition) - is surely a parable, teaching every prospective overcomer not only the way he ought to go, but the way he must go. We well know that Jesus paid it all. We are confident that He died for us and took upon Himself all our sins. We are assured that He is our victory and that He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows and our cross, but what Christian has not found that there is a cross for everyone? What victorious Christian has not discovered that, before ever he came into victory, he also walked the dreary wilderness where at times it seemed that even God had forsaken him? What victorious Christian exists today who has never been faced with the evil of temptation and through many failures made the discovery that victory only comes by believing on Him? Do not tell me you

have never faced the wilderness in your Christian experience, for you have, and if you have not, you will. Do not boast that you have never been tempted, for you have and you will be. The same temptations that were placed before the first Adam in the Garden of Eden were placed before the last Adam in the wilderness, but where the first man transgressed under the most favorable circumstances in God's lovely Eden, the last man Adam was victorious amid the hunger, thirst, and loneliness of the wilderness.

We mentioned above the three words appetite, avarice, and ambition. All that is in the world, said John, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lust of the flesh is appetite - any appetite whether it be over-indulgence in food, over-indulgence in strong drink, promiscuous sex, or a hundred other appetites, which are common to mankind. Satan appealed to the appetite when he showed the woman the tree and she saw that it was good for food. The same Satan was appealing to the appetite when he said to the fasting Saviour in the wilderness, "Make these stones bread." When Satan showed the tree to the woman, Eve, she saw that it was a tree to be desired. In this temptation he was appealing to one of the world's most powerful passions, the desire to have and possess and make all things our own. Avarice, or greed, is the desire to possess the world. This passion is manifest universally in the world today and is, perhaps above all else, the source of the world's dilemma. When therefore the last Adam was in the wilderness, Satan took Him to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, saying, "All this will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Many a man through the ages has set out to conquer the world and possess all things and make them his own. Twice in this twentieth century mighty armies have marched with this in mind - to conquer the world, and yet once more will they march, violently destroying at least two-thirds of every living thing, hoping to gain for themselves all things.

Once again in the garden the woman saw a third thing - that the fruit of the tree would make her wise. This is the pride of life. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, but worldly wisdom is the pride of life. Oh how men boast of the things they know and the things they think they know! Only yesterday I received a circular, requesting that I subscribe to a certain magazine that would take us back two million years into the past, showing where we came from and what we came from and the process of development through the ages. All this sounds very fascinating, a tree to be desired to make one wise, but why should I give heed to worldly wisdom and their theories of evolution, since the Lord Himself has told me from whence I came and from whom I came? More than that He has told us whither we go. The pride of life is expressed in ambition to be somebody special and to know and possess apart from God, to be the greatest man or woman in any given realm, the world's best orator, the world champion boxer, the greatest preacher, to prove that one is non pareil. It was with this in mind that Satan, having placed Jesus on a pinnacle of the temple, challenged Him with these words: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest [^]at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Prove now that you are the Son of God, the greatest man on earth. Show by this miracle that there is none your equal. But had the blessed Lord yielded to such a temptation, He would have yielded to that same ambition that Eve yielded to in the garden. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. There is nothing more, and from these three sources all temptation springs forth.

You have surely noticed how frequently Jesus performed miracles on the Sabbath day. The millennial kingdom, my brethren, is the Sabbath day. It is God's day. When Jesus therefore went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and found there a man with an unclean spirit and cast it out, He was showing by a parabolic miracle that in that wonderful kingdom Sabbath mankind will be delivered from the bondages of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now rules in the hearts of them that believe not. It was on the Sabbath day that He healed the man who was born blind, showing by this miracle that in God's great Sabbath day there will be no blind either literally or spiritually. In all past ages the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, but in God's great Sabbath day no blind shall be there and no veils of darkness will becloud the minds of men, for God shall lead the blind by a way they knew not. With open vision they will behold the glory of the Lord. The whole world is full of unbelievers and in this our day the god of this age has blinded the eyes of them that believe not. The church system is a seething mass of unbelief. Christians will believe God for justification, then refuse to see one step further than that. Well spake the prophet Isaiah of multitudes in our day, saying, "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." **Acts 28:27.**

Jesus is all this poor world needs today.
Blindly they strive, for sin darkens the way.
O to draw back the grim curtain of night!

One glimpse of Jesus and all would be bright. So Jesus healed the lame man on the Sabbath day to show that in His great kingdom Sabbath there will be none who cannot walk. It is a blessing to be able to walk, but there are those who cannot walk; neither dare they run the race that is set before them, but in His Sabbath the lame man will leap as an hart and all will be whole. He healed the withered man, too, on the Sabbath day, and there are many Christians whose experience is withered and dried up by the roots. He raised the dead on the Sabbath day, because he is the resurrection and the life of that day. Of the many other wonders He performed we have not time to write, but if we will meditate in the Spirit upon each and every act of His eventful life, we will see in His works as well as in His words a parable of the glory of the millennial day when He shall reign as King of kings in the glory of His Father's kingdom and we shall reign with Him.

In the scripture quoted at the beginning of this message we see a most remarkable picture of Jesus folding up and concluding all the things that belonged to the ages past and preparing Himself and His people for an entirely new era. The sacred record states that Jesus knew His hour had come that He should depart out of this world, that Satan had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him, and that the Father had given all things into His hands. These words speak volumes to us. They bid us see that all the work of the past is at an end. Now preparation is to be made to enter into a new realm. In preparation for this He had broken bread, saying, "This is my body," and He had given of the wine, saying, "Drink ye all of it," or "All of you drink it." The tabernacle of the past was folded up and the sacrifices done away. A new tabernacle, which is the body of Christ, was to be built and a new, incorruptible blood was to be given for an entirely new age. Well did Jesus know the things that were shortly to come to pass and in preparation for them He closed out the past and prepared Himself and His disciples for that which was at hand.

To the faithful in Christ Jesus we now proclaim this message. We are now at the end of the age that is known as the dispensation of the grace of God. The Lord is now phasing out the things of this present age. He is folding them up like a garment to proclaim the things, which are immediately at hand. The message in the following pages is to advise the people of God concerning those things we may now expect and the things that must shortly come to pass. The kingdom of God is at hand and that kingdom is sure and certain to us, but before the glory of its beauty appears, there will be yet one brief struggle twixt old systems and the Word in the darkness before the light shines that will know no darkness forever.

The study of the scripture clearly shows that every age from Eden until now has ended with some gigantic calamity and each new age was born in travail as the death pains of the former age became the birth pangs of the new. Now at long last we have come to the end of the six days of man's labor and travail, but the seventh is the Lord's Day of rest. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. The lame shall leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. In the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon. It shall not be found there. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. See Isaiah 35.

We are now seeing the old age passing away and it shall be no more, but its thrashings are like unto those of an infidel who, having walked this life in defiance and unbelief in God, now sees the damning vision of his own reward while he struggles to hold on to a few more minutes in this kingdom of darkness and unbelief. This age is rapidly passing away, but evil men and seducers will struggle as with the terror of perishing men to maintain their perilous hold on this realm of the shadow of death. Of the brief and awful struggle that is to come and that even now holds the world in its vise-like grip the scripture twice records that it will be a time of trouble such as the world has never known in all its tragic past and will never know again throughout the ages of the ages. As Daniel sought to know the meaning of the end time visions that had flooded his searching soul, he was told, "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and at

that time thy people (that is, Israel) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Dan. 12:1. Likewise our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of the days in which we live, said, "For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. 24:21-22.

There seems to be agreement among almost all students of the word of God that the end time tribulation will be seven years in length, and I see no good reason to disagree with this understanding. Because seven years is but a very short period of time and because many ancient prophecies must be crammed into so short a space, we may now expect a great acceleration in the pace with which wickedness, rebellion, and unbelief will advance and manifest itself. Every saint should now remember the words of the Lord and of His apostles, who with much concern taught us all to watch and be sober. "For," said they, "if the good man of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not in what hour your Lord doth come."

Through the past decade or so great and ever increasing evil has moved like a sullen cloud over all the nations of the earth. Because people have not been watchful, they have allowed themselves to become partakers of many harmful and hurtful things. Evil teachings, incredible in their filth and degradation, have crept into the schools on every level. Prayer and the Bible have been thrown out and openly ridiculed. Children have been taught by the teachers that parents are old fogies and that they should rebel against them and the restraints of home. Under the guise of sex education in schools young people have been encouraged in all manner of promiscuous living. They have been told that their parents do not understand sex and homosexuality. The result of this corruption is that a generation has arisen who know not God, who have no respect for law and order and who seek only to partake as fully as possible of all the corruption of the flesh.

Not only have these corrupt influences come into the schools and into the text books, but television is systematically used to corrupt the morals of all people until we have a violence unparalleled in the history of the world, increasing every day in its ghastly horror. People have become so accustomed to hearing of murders, kidnappings, rapes, shootings, poisonings, guerrilla warfare, drunkenness, drug addiction, illicit sex, and every imaginable wickedness that they begin to take a ho-hum attitude toward it all. The police forces of the world, unable to get any support or backing from the law of the land, have in many cases thrown up their hands in despair, looking the other way when evil occurs and in a multitude of cases joining in with the corruption, accepting bribes and pay-offs in hope of gain. In all fairness to the police we must admit that much of the time they are the most abused people in our society. They are discouraged from carrying out their duties because of the weakness and corruption among judges and lawmakers in the land. We now see the horrible sight of criminals and thugs being turned out on the street to become a menace to society simply because there is no more room in the jails to hold them.

Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, and now that the tribulation is upon us and a time of trouble such as the world has never known is with us, we must expect a great acceleration of evil right up until the hour of the coming of Christ, when He shall come with the armies of heaven to put down all rule and authority and take the throne of David and reign over the house of Israel and the whole world for a thousand years in righteousness and peace.

This is not the time for God's people to join in with the wickedness of the day, but it is time to watch and be sober and know that each succeeding vice and calamity that falls upon the earth is just one more infallible proof that the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the just is at hand, even at the doors. The hour in which we live should be a time of watching, watching with diligence every sign of His coming, watching that our garments be kept clean and unsoiled by the vomit that fills all tables in our day. To the saints of God this must be a time of sanctification, of laying aside every weight and the sins that do so easily beset us. This is a time when all hatred, malice, envy, jealousy and evil speaking should be put away from all who name the name of Christ and who profess to be His disciples. This is a time when men and women should make sure they have repented of their sins with a godly sorrow that need not be repented of. It is a time when men should make sure they are born again. It is a time when every believer in Christ should search his own soul. See if you can find hatred in your heart. Go to your brother and do what you can to be reconciled to him. Do not even retain a dislike for people. We should realize that we ourselves would be as they were it not for the goodness of God.

In this time of waiting and watching for the coming of the Lord let us see to it that the lamp which we are filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit and that our lamps are trimmed and burning brightly. My brethren, I want to warn you before it is too late. I want to tell you that it is impossible to maintain oil in your lamp and a high and blessed Christian experience if you insist upon joining the world to sit watching all manner of violence and filth on the boob tube. Your time is too precious for that kind of thing. If you thirst for an experience in God where living waters flow from your belly, then you must spend hours in prayer. You must read God's word and meditate upon the things that concern Him and His kingdom. It is largely true that we are what we eat, and it is just as true that evil communications corrupt good manners. It is perfectly true that where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. By these evil means of communication good manners are corrupted, people learn violence, and hear the foulest of language and blasphemies against God. They are taught to believe that immorality is the new morality. They are forced to think that divorce, fighting, and every evil triangle is the normal way of life. The present evil age offers a flood tide of filth, often in the name of education and always in the name of entertainment, but those who are defiled by it will miss the greatest prize of all the ages - sonship and the hope of reigning in righteousness with Christ.

This is the hour, my friend, when the cry is ringing out through the corridors of the world for all mankind to hear, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether it be the world with its corruption or the Lord with His purity, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Let all those who have hope in Christ give heed to the apostles fearful cry, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

In the articles concerning the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse we spoke of the awful overspreading of false religion and false teaching that would settle like a dark mantle over the earth in the closing days of this age, a fact that is everywhere evident. We saw the red horse of war, bloodshed, and violence sent forth to slay the third part of mankind. We saw the black horse of famine ride forth with the measuring scales in his hand and heard the pitiful cry, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and two measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Now, as if the prophetic message were receiving an answering echo, we read that in 1974 eighty million people were crushed to death beneath the awesome hoofs of the black horse of famine. This black horse of famine was followed by the pale horse of death, and following hard on his heels come death and the grave to consume two-thirds of the world's population. Even while we write, mankind is wrestling with the problem of what to do with the burgeoning populations of the world, but I tell you in sorrow that they will not need to worry much longer about that. There are certain inevitable calamities soon to appear on the world's horizon, which will bring into focus many formerly obscure things that are recorded in the word of God.

Two great beasts are mentioned in the book of Revelation. Both of these are vitally connected with the present Babylon of the world system. Babylon is a great mystery never to be completely solved until the last days. There are two vital and integral parts to the Babylon system and these two vital parts form one system. They are not two separate entities. They belong as much to each other as the two arms of a man belong to his body, both working together for the good of the man. Of these two beasts of Babylon one is the political arm and the other is the religious arm, so that the final upshot of the Babylon system, which is the world system, will be one government and one religion, both forced upon the people in the same manner that the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's image was forced upon the inhabitants of Babylon in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

It seems very evident to me that this is the teaching of **Revelation, chapter thirteen**. Of course, there is much we do not understand and many details are hidden from our eyes, but he who will take time to search will clearly see that two great beasts are revealed in this chapter. The first beast was a many-headed creature (verse 1) which rose up out of the sea. (The sea here represents the masses of humanity.) You will notice as you read that this beast received his power from the dragon, which is the devil (verse 3), and that this beast was worshipped (verse 4). Furthermore, "there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." (Verse 5.) "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and

His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them... and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life..." (verses 6-8). If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. I do not know how better one could visualize false religions than is here pictured by the first beast.

As John watched, he saw another beast, a second beast, rise up out of the earth. He had horns like a lamb and a voice like a dragon. This in our day would seem to be a very significant statement. Like the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing he causes the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast (verse 12), forcing the people to make an image to the first beast as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had done. In verse 16 we see the political nature of this second beast in that, after he had forced all mankind to worship the first beast, he then caused "small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Verses 16-17.)

Many things have been written concerning the mark of the beast. We are plainly told here that a day is coming when no man will be able to buy or sell unless he has the mark of the beast in his right hand or in his forehead. Any thinking person must realize what a serious matter this will be. All that a man hath will he give for his life and it is certain man cannot live if he is unable to buy food, unless of course, that man is sustained by the power of God as Israel was sustained in the wilderness. In Revelation, chapter fourteen, three angels are seen flying through the midst of heaven, the first having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth, and the second proclaiming the fall of the Babylon system. The third, as he flew, proclaimed this message: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." Rev. 14:9-10. We may not be certain as to the full meaning of this verse, but it certainly is a solemn warning, and all mankind must consider well how fatal a mistake it would be to worship the beast system or receive its mark. I trust that all God's people will remember that there is a God in heaven who delivers His faithful saints. He who provided a table for two and a half million Israelites in the burning wilderness long ago will also deliver His people and preserve their lives when the hour comes that no man can buy or sell unless he receives the mark of the beast or the number of his name. This prophecy, brethren, is not a myth to be taken lightly, for as God is true and cannot lie, so this dread wonder will appear at the end of the age.

Now I will tell you briefly how this will come about. This is my own opinion and in writing this I am not laying claim to any special inspiration, but as the mystery unfolds, we will be able to decide whether these are mere human opinions or whether there was some inspiration from the Lord.

Though this is a most disconcerting thought, there is much evidence that the world is now heading toward what may be called a cashless society, the idea being that money as we have known it will soon be out of circulation altogether. Each person will have a bank account. All dealings will be done by computer and accounts will be debited and credited as the occasion demands. Every person will receive a card like a social security card upon which his number will be stamped. No other person in the world will have the same number. This card will be presented whenever a purchase of any description is made. The card will be placed in a computer and your bank account debited accordingly. What we are saying here is not news. There are many communities in America where this method of transaction is already in operation. It is a most amazing procedure to behold. The reader will have noticed that even now scarcely ever a purchase is made but the clerk asks the question, "Is this cash or credit!" The credit card system is rapidly taking over the business of the nation.

The remarkable thing about all these evils is that there is a certain amount of benefit with them. If men and women do not carry money, it cannot be stolen. If supermarkets do not have a till full of cash, they cannot be robbed. But let us never forget that the credit card system is slowly but surely preparing the people for the mark of the beast, which presently will come and which the vast majority of people will accept without question as a most useful and handy idea.

When the credit card and computer system becomes universal another problem will present itself, which the authorities will very easily solve. It will be found that thousands of people are either losing their credit cards or

having them stolen. To solve this problem it will first be suggested, then tried, and finally enforced, that a person's number be indelibly imprinted with invisible ink upon the right hand or forehead of every individual, thus insuring that no one will ever lose his number and that it can never be stolen or used by any other person. This in my opinion is the manner by which the mark of the beast will be brought in. Without doubt there will be other complications. The Bible is very clear in the thought that, before being thus stamped with the mark of the beast, the receiver must first swear allegiance to the beast. While this statement is not made directly in the Bible, it is certainly implied. If we compare Rev. 13:16 with Daniel 3:1-7, we will plainly see that the worship of the beast and his image is more than merely implied. It is not easy at present to say just how the number 666 will be incorporated into every person's number, but no doubt this will be evident in its time.

As time goes on, there will be more evidence that the whole world is drawing nearer to these conditions. Not only are we coming closer to a cashless society, but more and more the frustrated leaders of the world are looking for a super-dictator who will be able to extricate the nations from the dreadful mess into which they have fallen through their own greed, corruption, and rejection of God. More and more we hear the thought expressed that we are citizens of the world.

In the light of the fact that the sixth chapter of Revelation plainly teaches us that war and violence will fill the earth in the last days and that this will be accompanied by the death of perhaps two-thirds of the earth's population, we are perfectly safe in saying that we are now facing the worst depression the world has ever known. This depression will not be altogether like the great depression of the 1930's. In that great calamity plenty of commodities were available at very low prices, but there was so much unemployment and shortage of cash that it was impossible to buy anything but the barest necessities of life. Many people were known to eke out a whole month's existence on \$5.00, and I myself often lived, paid tithes, and drove my car on \$3.00 a week. It sounds impossible, I know, but that is the way it was. The depression into which we are now moving, however, will be accompanied by many shortages, unbelievably high prices, and much unemployment. It will be far more severe than anything that has ever been before. It will be as Daniel and Jesus plainly told us - a time of trouble such as the world has never known or ever will know again.

In the depression of the 1930's there was very little violence. People maintained a much higher moral standard. Many revivals took place in those dark years and tens of thousands of people were added to the Lord. But, sadly, we are entering into the coming time of trouble with the lowest moral standards since the days of Noah, coupled with the highest crime rate and the poorest law enforcement ever known. Furthermore, the leaders of the nations, having become exceedingly corrupt themselves, are promoting lawlessness and corruption world-wide.

Make no mistake about it. Both the elected and non-elected governments of the world are purposely bringing about the present conditions of violence, drugs, depression, and lawlessness in the hope that it will bring both themselves and the world banking interests tremendous financial gain. But their greed and gain will be short lived, for it shall come to pass at the end of this age that rich men shall weep and howl for their miseries that shall come upon them. God has said, "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." **Jas. 5:1-3.** Powerful international corporations whose wealth simply cannot be computed are bringing on world-wide depression, war, and famine in the hope of reaping further enormous wealth and bringing all mankind into slavery. But in their pitiful blindness they do not know that the very gold and silver that has become their idol will in the end burn up their own flesh as with fire. The great prophet Isaiah saw this same dreadful circumstance at the end of the ages and cried, saying, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols He shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth." **Isa. 2:17-19.**

In the next two or three years there will be a series of wars and more or less minor skirmishes, but the great depression into which we are now moving will be followed by World War III, a war in which the whole world will be involved and which will be terminated by the coming of the Lord. This conflict is vividly described in Rev. 19:11-21.

In closing this brief and somewhat disconnected chapter, there is a thought which all people who dwell in North America should seriously consider. We read much in the scripture of the king of the north - the king of the north, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, which are the present clay cities of Moscow and Tobolsk. Beyond any possibility of doubt we must therefore conclude that Russia and all her hordes are referred to here. In the book of Daniel, chapter 11, we have an account of the many exploits of this great power, and we see him entering peaceably into the Holy Land and becoming possessor of its great wealth. In Dan. 11:44 we read these strange words: "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and to utterly make away many."

Though the east has always been reckoned to be China and the north Russia itself, I would bring to the attention of every reader that there is another east other than China and another north other than Russia. There is the Near East where all the vast resources of oil are found and where also the wealth of the nations is steadily going. There is another north, which is vitally opposed to Russia, and that north is North America. These two places - the Near East and North America - are now a trouble to Russia, and it is North America above all others and the United States in particular that now stands in the way of the chief prince of Meshech (Moscow). Otherwise he would trample the world under his feet immediately. A few years from now the opposition from these sources will become such a trouble to him that, in my opinion, he will launch an atomic attack against Canada and the United States with the intention of utterly making away with them. Dan. 11:44. This, of course, will bring unbelievable retaliation.

Several times in these writings I have mentioned that the Anglo-Saxon nations are to be identified with Israel and that the United States is definitely an Israel nation. If this be so - and for my part I am certain that it is - then the attack on Israel, spoken of in Ezekiel, chapter 28, is in all probability made not only in the direction of Jerusalem, but in the direction of all the hated Israel nations.

From time immemorial it has always been found that the Israel nations, when wandering far away from their God, will turn in repentance and call upon His name in their times of great trouble and distress. So also will they do when this final time of unspeakable trouble comes upon them. When all is lost and they are completely defeated, they will call upon God as the prophet Joel has said. "Then will the Lord be jealous for His land, and pity His people... I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he hath done great things." **Joel 18:20**. Thus shall he come to his end and none shall help him. Dan. 11:45. The prayer of God's people will be answered by the coming of Christ, who will then set up His kingdom and reign with His faithful saints in peace and righteousness for one thousand years. These are things which must shortly come to pass.

CHAPTER TWO SOME THINGS THAT CONCERN US ALL

Many centuries ago Solomon said, "Of the making of many books there is no end," **Eccl. 12:12**, and it was John the apostle who stated, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." As surely as the Lord is omniscient, there is no end to His understanding and the revelation of His truth. Month after month-and year after year truth flows like an ever widening river of life making the words of Jesus literally true: "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given." John 7:38. In this natural world "all the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full." **Eccl. 1:7**. But in the spiritual world the opposite is true, for the boundless ocean, which is God Himself flows into all the rivers, filling them to the brim with an inexhaustible supply of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and reverence for the Lord. This is exactly what Jesus told us, for the rivers of living water that were to flow forth from the belly of believing man were to be the direct result of the indwelling Holy Ghost which was given to man, for He spoke of the Spirit which had never before been given in any measure of fullness, and even unto this day we have received but the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

We felt it to be the mind of the Lord to write a simple exhortation to all whom it may concern that by God's grace we might better find our way in this most important hour when all the diseases, both physical and

spiritual, of a sick, confused world are swelling up like a painful, malignant boil to fester into one diabolical head — antichrist himself, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is of God or that is worshipped so that he, as God, sitteth in the very temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 2 Thess. 2:4. Any man today with an ounce of understanding must certainly be able to see that the systems of this world, both political and religious, have been caught in the throes of an irresistible force that is sweeping them relentlessly on like dust and corruption caught up in a cyclone, that all the world might worship the beast that had the deadly wound and did live, and that no man might buy or .tell except he has the mark of the beast or the number of his name. This dread climax is sure and unalterable. No force of arms can stop it nor prayers of saints delay it, for God, in whose hands the nations of the world are but dust in the balance, has declared that thus it shall be. Let us not, then, waste our time trying to delay and hinder that which omniscient wisdom has declared must be, but let us rather take fast hold on that calling and election to which we are ordained that we may have one head, even the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath appointed the heir of all things, whose kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

We have lived so long as natural men in a natural world with a natural environment that to be converted and begin to live as spiritual men requires nothing less than a birth from above, for, if we have spoken of earthly things and men believe not, how shall they believe when we speak of heavenly things? Nevermore shall we enter the womb of our mother to be born a second time of the flesh, but the Spirit of God, that bloweth where it listeth, moves even now upon the face of the deep, rousing men to resurrection and life, unlocking the closed mind, and giving the mind of Christ to those who adore Him that men might speak the wisdom of God, which none of the princes of this world know, and dispel the dim shadows of night from men's eyes that they might see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Then the lips of them that sleep shall speak, for from the cocoon of our death comes forth a new creature that no longer crawls as a worm upon its belly but, borne up on the winds of the Spirit, it inhabits a new and heavenly realm henceforth to live as spiritual men spiritually and not as natural men naturally.

Though some may disbelieve it, the truth is that all spiritual men must and will appear to be mystics. It is not because they try to be so, but it is because they are so. They cannot help being oddities and misfits here because they do not belong to this world. Jesus said, "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." Therefore, because you are not of this world, you will always be a stranger to it. You are a foreigner and a wanderer in a strange country. Your speech will always betray you. Your actions and customs will always reveal you. Your communications with the spiritual realm will mark you. The things you love will unmask you. Your lack of interest in all that belongs to this present realm will give your identity away. You will always feel that you do not belong in this realm and that you neither can belong nor wish to belong. **"They that speak such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." Heb. 11:14-17.**

There are several definitions of a mystic, but the one I like best is this: One who has been initiated into a mystery. Now when we realize that a mystery is something incomprehensible in its nature, something that can never possibly be understood apart from divine revelation, then consider how wonderful a thing it is to be "initiated into a mystery." Blessed be the man who has thus been enlightened by the Spirit of God! But such a man has no ability to disclose the truth revealed to him until the Holy Spirit in loving kindness draws aside the darkening veil and reveals the hidden truth that those who hear might understand. It is said of Jesus, **"Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." Luke 24:45.** The heavens are closed because our minds are closed. Thus we grope in darkness and thus we remain until by the miracle of divine revelation our understanding is enlightened. We have tried to teach, educate, instruct, and explain, but, whether we know it or not, we miss the mark, for nothing is revealed until the Lord reveals it and nothing lives until the Lord makes it live. We may earnestly preach that man should repent, but no man can feel his need of repentance until God reveals his sin to him and grants him a spirit of repentance. We have tried to make men believe, but a man cannot believe unless God gives him believing faith, for faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. Eph. 2:8. We have been exhorted to turn our faith loose, but we have no faith to turn loose unless and until it is given of God. Then nothing can withstand it.

A spiritual man will always be an oddity in this world, not because he tries to be so as some have foolishly done, but because he is different from all other men. While the world and most of the Christians walk after the dictates of the flesh, the spiritual man walks after the dictates of the Spirit. His whole life on earth clearly testifies that, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Such a man no longer seeks to please himself as others do, but his constant prayer both night and day is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He does not have a multitude of requests to continually present to God, for he knows that even the prayer that sounds best may have come from the selfishness of human desire, but, having brought himself into complete harmony with God's will, he prays, "Not my will but Thine be done."

The natural mind does not know what is good or what is evil. It does not know that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting, or that sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. If such an evil as pain or sickness brings us nearer to God, then it is no longer evil, but good and is no more worthy of rebuke. To the spiritual man the will of God is not a cross but a crown, for it is his daily delight. It is his meat and drink, his joy and satisfaction. Withhold such a man from the will of God and he would die of utter longing. He has learned the meaning of the text, "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, Oh God." He has found that the soul who thirsts after God's will does literally pant after God. He thirsts after the fountains of living water and hungers for the righteousness of the Lord. His soul is often sick with longing and he breaks out into all manner of exclamations even as Solomon who cried, "Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love (love sick)." **Songs of S. 2:5.**

As a spiritual man progresses in the will and understanding of God, the realities of Gethsemane are borne in upon him. No longer with eloquent oratory does he describe the crushing hour Jesus endured in the garden but, having himself borne some of its agonies, he is loath to speak of it at all except to those who understand, for, if he ventures to speak of such sacred things to those who understand not, his words will seem but idle tales and his voice, echoing from the hollow emptiness of their stony hearts, will return void in his face. Few men know the bitter agony of the crucifixion of the human will and neither do they see that from its dead and crucified self has one in the very image of God risen within henceforth to love and embrace only those things that belong to His divine purpose. Well did Paul say, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Let not those who enter into the secret of God's presence imagine even for a moment that other Christians will understand, for they will not. Tell them ever so earnestly, but they cannot hear. From this day forth the spiritual man will be a speckled bird. Jer. 12:9. Even while he tells them, their eyes will be heavy with sleep and he will seem to them as one who has taken leave of his senses. This in a measure is true, for the celestial realm is beyond the realm of time and sense. The people who listened to Paul cried, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." To which he replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." **Acts 26:24.** Perhaps Paul had this same accusation in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians, "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God." **2 Cor. 5:13.**

It is undeniable truth that all the world lives after the flesh. We have already pointed out in the book Two Realms that the flesh and the flesh alone is the motivating power of the present world order. Everything from pins to battleships is for the sake of the physical body of flesh and not one thing devised by man exists except for the satisfaction of one or all of the five senses of the human body. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of the lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not. Ye kill and desire to have, and cannot attain." The banquetings, feasts, and abominable idolatries of the heart are all for the sake of the five senses of the body, and who is so foolhardy that he would dare to deny that the physical, corruptible body is a body of flesh?

All the gold on earth is not enough to buy a spiritual experience. Therefore, all the wealth possessed by man is laid up for the flesh and the flesh alone. Wealth can cater so much to the comfort of the flesh and the poverty of the spirit that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. All the diamonds of Africa could not atone for one sin nor bring one moment of the peace that comes from faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

Let us not imagine that it is only the unbelieving world that lives after the flesh. The undeniable truth is that the vast majority of believers live far more after the flesh than after the Spirit. They hate to hear it and the majority of Christians refuse to admit it, but it is so. They sing "Sweet hour of prayer," but most believers neglect to

even hold family worship. They are conversant with their business affairs and even church affairs, but strangers in communion with God. They sing, "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my Saviour's praise," but their minds are filled with the latest hits, and while they sing, "Blest be the tie that binds," they allow the least offence to sever them.

A man is not spiritual because he has quit all worldly pleasure. The reverse is true. The natural, the carnal, and the sinful have departed because of the abundance of his spiritual life. When his time becomes absorbed in the realm of reality, which is the realm of the Spirit, he does not have either stomach or heart for the weak and beggarly things of this life. If he tries for a moment to enter into them, he finds his heart drifting away from them because he belongs to a different realm and a different country, even an heavenly country. These light and frivolous things of the passing fail to interest him because they belong to the natural while he belongs to the Spirit. All his hopes and aspirations have fled from this world to lay hold on the things that belong to the realm of reality where he shall abide forever. Both the world and worldly Christians will think it strange that he runs not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of him, but they must give an account to God who is ready to judge both the living and the dead. Even the memory of the days in which we did the will of the flesh should be sufficient for us, for then we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. See 1 Pet. 4:1-4. People who spend their time feasting their minds, their eyes, their stomachs, and their ears on the sordid things of this passing age are unaware that the man who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. The worldly minded find much of their transient pleasure by dishonoring their own bodies in every possible way, in eating and drinking to excess, by enflaming the body with strong drink, by doping it with foul-smelling tobacco, or by adventuring upon all manner of sex orgies. These are all enemies of the soul that endlessly and unremittingly WAR against the spirit. The man of God must purge himself from all these that he may be a vessel fit for the habitation of the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual man is peculiar because he has meat to eat that others know not of. So real was that heavenly meat in the experience of Jesus that, when weary and hungry He sat on the well in Samaria, He refused natural food, for His communion with God had supplied His need for both food and drink, and, when at last they offered Him food, saying, "Master, eat," He needed it not, for hunger, thirst, and weariness had departed from Him as the indwelling Spirit of God quickened His mortal body. The life-giving Spirit was to Him both food and drink, though other men had still not discovered the truth of the words, **"My Father giveth the true bread from heaven". John 6:32.**

The hour is coming and now is when the sons of God who are coming into the image of the firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, will find themselves living in a spiritual realm completely independent of the bondage of all that is earthly. It is clear to be seen that Jesus, even while He lived among men being found in fashion as a man, proved that sons of God are in all things independent of the bondage and power of this present world system. Always, after the hour of His baptism in the Jordan, the heavens were opened to Him and all the lasting and eternal benefits of that realm were His, never to depart from Him. When He ministered, the angels of God ascended and descended upon Him. Is it any wonder that no power of man or devil could stand before Him? He manifested His authority over every disease known to humanity. The might of the most terrible demons was overcome with no more than the touch of His finger. Cf. Luke 11:20. Howling winds were calmed to gentle breezes at His rebuke, and violent raging seas whimpered like babies and fell asleep at His bidding of peace. He paid not His taxes by the labour of His hands. The wild beasts of the wilderness were as pets in His presence. The soldiers who were sent to fetch Him returned without Him, saying, "Never man spake like this man!" The violent mob who accosted Him in the garden fell helplessly before Him, obeying His command to let the disciples go free. **John 18:2-9. And, when at last Pilate demanded, "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee", He made him tremble with the words, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above."** **John 19:10-11.** Of death also He said, "No man can take My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself," and, though death was permitted to hold Him for a little moment, He arose in exaltation, bearing in His omnipotent hands the keys of both death and hell. Now with triumphant voice He cries, "I am He that liveth and was dead and, behold, I am alive forevermore!" Was there ever a question He could not answer! Was there ever a cunning plot He did not discern? Did ever thoughts live in the hearts of men unknown to Him? No! He knew them all, for He was the Son of God. This, then, is the heritage of sons, and it is high time we ceased to grovel about as other men, living in bondage to all manner of corruptible things. It is time to

realize that there is an heavenly realm where sons of God may live far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come.

The unspiritual Christian struggles to keep alive all the things that God has ordained must die. He lays fast hold on the temporal things of this passing world. He hates to be reminded that his years are passing and that age is increasing because he unconsciously knows that each passing year will mean a shortening of his stay in the realm of the flesh, which he dearly loves. He hates the thought of death because to him death is the end and not the beginning. Even Solomon himself could not convince such a man that the hour of death is better than the hour of birth. Neither could such an one be persuaded that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting. Eccl. 7:1-2. His life after the flesh has convinced him that youth is better than old age and folly is better than wisdom. Ecc. 7:3-4.

In meditation I have come to the conclusion that the spirits of all men were with the Father before they came forth from the womb. When a tiny baby is born into this world, his spirit has recently come forth from the presence of the Lord, but he remembers it not because a veil has been drawn over his mind. Heaven has been closed to him by his incarnation or en-flesh-ment and he sees the realm of spirit and reality no more until his days of travail in the flesh are done and his spirit through death returns once more to God who gave it. Eccl. 12:7. See then how much better is the hour of death than the hour of birth, for in birth we come forth from God's presence, but in death we leave the world to go to the Father. John 16:28.

As long as our eyes remain closed to the celestial realm, we will always lay fast hold upon the fleeting things of this temporal world. Seeing nothing beyond this realm, we will struggle to hold fast to it. We will dread the appearance of every gray hair, knowing not that the hoary head is evidence of increasing wisdom and that the wrinkled face is the evidence that we have borne His yoke upon us, having passed through our wilderness, our Gethsemanes, and our Calvaries. The afflictions of this life leave upon our flesh and our spirits as well the marks of the Lord Jesus. The beloved Paul knew they were the marks of the Lord Jesus and he made no effort to hide or to erase them, but, bearing them with great pride, he said, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." **Gal. 6:17.**

When king Solomon described the heavenly bridegroom, he said His hair was as black as a raven, Songs of S. 5:11, but, when John beheld His glory on Patmos, he said His hair was white as wool. Rev. 1:14. How glorious that is, for between the vision of Solomon and the vision of John lay Gethsemane and the cross, a life of sorrow and acquaintance with much grief. Recently in our journey we stopped for lunch at a restaurant. Three women sat at a table nearby. From their appearance we judged that they were a mother and daughter and grandmother. The daughter looked young because she was only about eighteen. The mother looked matronly because she was, perhaps, fifty. But the grandmother looked ridiculous because she was evidently trying to look as young as the granddaughter. Her wrinkled face was smeared with rouge and lipstick to simulate youth, her gray hair was dyed, she had plucked and arched her eyebrows and used eye shadow in profusion. The clothes she wore were suitable for a twenty-year-old lass, and her efforts at animated and youthful conversation were sickening to behold. She deceived no one but herself, poor lady, and I am sure she did not deceive herself either. But that is what I mean. Not knowing the realities of the Spirit, mankind, believers and unbelievers alike, are loath to see the visible and unreal slipping away. If indeed there were any truth to the frequent tales of ghosts that inhabit cemeteries, I suppose it would be because these spirits, having known naught but the unreality of the flesh, desire to return to it again. Even the flesh of swine was more acceptable to the demons at Gadara than no flesh at all.

A wonderful experience awaits the child of (Jod when for the first time in life he sees that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." As long as man sees every difficulty, every adversity, set back, sickness and bereavement, or failure as nothing more than the wicked hand of the devil hindering his progress in life, that man will always be a disconsolate, miserable, faithless, and unbelieving Christian. Hut, when he learns that these afflictions are set in mercy and love from the hand of God and that they are not against him but for his eternal benefit, then the golden gates of a whole new realm of spiritual understanding and experience are wide open before him. There was a vast difference in the understanding of poor sorrowing Jacob and the oft stricken Paul. While Jacob mournfully wailed, "Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away also and bring down my gray head with sorrow to the grave; all these things are against me," **Gen. 42:36**, Paul, who knew affliction as few other men have known it,

triumphantly exclaimed, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are the called according to His purpose." **Rom. 8:28.**

To see that your affliction is working for you and not against you is a most valuable revelation of truth. It is something that all people should learn and especially those who are the called in this particular hour. I suppose that many Christians were dismayed that such an indispensable man as Paul should spend years shut up in a dingy jail. Then, as now, no doubt the people thought this a master stroke of Satan to hinder the gospel, but it was not so. Paul's frequent imprisonments were from the hand of God and not from the hand of Satan. It was from these dank prison cells that his choicest epistles were written to bless and enlighten the saints and leave a heritage of spiritual truth for all ages to come. Paul did not fear his years in prison, for he well knew that, when evil men fastened him securely in the inner prison, binding him with chains and putting his feet in stocks, the angel of the Lord would bring him out if that were God's will, or that, when men left him for dead, God could raise him up again.

It is the visible things that are temporal. It is the invisible things that are eternal. Things, however thin, have two sides to them - the visible and the invisible. The visible side is what we see now - the pains, the tribulations, the distress, affliction, sickness, persecution, misunderstanding, and a thousand difficulties. But the invisible side, the thing that is hidden from us now, is the thing that affliction is producing. The invisible things are eternal things. While the outward man is suffering wear and tear and pain, the inward man is receiving fresh strength from God every day. The transitory troubles which we suffer are winning for us a permanent, glorious, and solid reward out of all proportion to our pain, for those who understand are looking all the time not at the visible things but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory, passing, and unreal, but the invisible things are permanent, enduring, and real. The man who spends his life bemoaning his afflictions is a loser, but the man who has learned that this affliction is producing an eternal weight of glory is a victorious winner indeed.

Evil cannot come to a good man either in life or in death. Evil only seems to come. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." The damning condemnations that men of ill will intend should do him harm, God intends for good. By His hidden and eternal wisdom God is ruling over all the forces of darkness, making the wrath of man to praise him, proving to such a rebel as Pharaoh that even he was raised up by the Lord for his ignoble task. Exod. 9:16. "What can ever separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? It is for God's sake that we are killed all the day long and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay! In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." **Rom. 8:35-39.** Phillips Translation.

Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unresearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed to him again? For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends; glory to Him forevermore. Amen and amen!

It should not be necessary at this hour to have to prove to any man that we are living in momentous days. All men instinctively know this to be true whether they be men of God or men of the earth. As the stirrings of spring come to the trees of the wood and as the urge of migration comes to the birds of the wild, so the awesome sense of a coming age is settling down upon all mankind. The feeling that "something is going to happen" is expressed so often by many who make no profession of godliness whatsoever. It is like the troubled feeling that gripped Jerusalem at the time Jesus was born in the manger of Bethlehem. Matt. 2:3. Turmoil is everywhere. Like some phantom and evil spirit it has crept into all phases of life on a universal scale. The individual is confused. The homes are confused. The governments are confused. The United Nations is confused and has no more true unity than oil and water. Distrust, intrigue, and suspicion are rampant among them as they sit together and tell lies at one table, Dan. 11:27.

For the past years we have continually pointed out that the present visible church system with all its vast confusion of sects, denominations, ists and isms is not the true church at all, but is the confusion and disorder of Mystery Babylon, into which confusion the saints of God have been carried captive even as Israel was carried captive to Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon long ago. We have also pointed out continually that, as the end

of this age draws near, more and more efforts will be made to unite all religious systems. The so-called Protestant denominations will find a confused and unholy union with Rome, that mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. This union is taking shape with ever increasing haste before our very eyes. Day after day new innovations will come until the day the sordid union is complete. Almost every day now one may read of united meetings, ecumenical councils, or papal pilgrimages in which countless throngs bow before this modern Belshazzar of Babylon. Small wonder Jesus said, "I have come in My Father's name and ye received Me not. Another shall come in his own name; him ye shall receive."

Not only do we hear of united gatherings, but already the harlot and her daughters are building temples together. Only recently I received a clipping through the mail which we here quote in full: "Britain's first inter-religious church with facilities for Anglican, Free Church, and Roman Catholic congregations will be dedicated next June at Keele University in Staffordshire. A similar "Unity Church" for the three bodies is also planned for London Airport at a later date. The Keele University church will have three chapels grouped around a central altar. The work is already well advanced on the building, which will cost about \$235,000. Each church will contribute toward a University special fund which will finance the project." We are not only to see union between Protestants and Catholics, but already overtures are being made to bring in the other religious systems of the world that they all may drink from the same cup of confusion and all commit fornication in one unholy bed.

Many Christian people who have had a real experience of justification and many more who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit are deceived into believing that their little group will escape the arms of this great octopus. But this is not so, for the whole visible religious system is going to be swept into the seething cauldron. Many of the so-called Full Gospel people will enter into this union because they will soon hear of high-ranking churchmen laying claim to all manner of miraculous power. They will profess to speak with tongues, heal the sick, and perform miracles. Bishops, cardinals, and perhaps even popes will make all manner of apostolic professions so that many thousands will be deceived, thinking a great revival has come, and thereby, if it were possible, even the elect themselves would be deceived. Christians, alas, have become so miracle minded that they imagine that anything supernatural is necessarily of God. Do not be deceived by this, for, when antichrist is revealed, he will be a miracle worker, and he will come with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they did not love the truth. 2 Thess. 2:6-12.

We are living in an hour of great deception. We are in a time when the world and the professing church system is stacked full of false prophets, false teachers, false apostles, false evangelists, false shepherds, and false miracle workers. Men with false gifts, claiming to be some great ones, are abroad everywhere. There is no end to their abominable claims. False prophets are forever predicting things that do not come to pass or prophesying in such a way that they would appear right whatever may transpire. False deliverers who are themselves helpless captives of some besetting sin are professing to deliver people from all manner of evil.

Did not Jesus tell us that in the last day there would be false prophets and false christs and that many would come in the name of the Lord, saying, "I am Christ?" Did He not tell us that they would say, "Lo, here, and Lo, there?" Did He not warn us that they would say He is in the wilderness, or He is in the desert or in the secret place? And did He not say, "Go not after them?"

Matt. 24:23-26. I am frankly amazed that I have heard of a number of different places being prepared in the United States and Canada as refuges for people in the great tribulation. The strange thing is that many are preparing to go to such places. Go, if you wish, but you will find it a farce in the end and no refuge at all. David had the true secret when he said, "God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (tribulation); therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed..." **Psa. 46.** And again he said, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." That is where no evil will befall you nor plague come nigh you. That is where ten thousand will fall at your right hand and a thousand at your left. That is where the terror by night will not alarm you nor the arrow by day slay you. Only with your eyes shall you behold the reward of the wicked. Psa. 91. Elisha knew this refuge when the hosts of the Assyrians came to take him. Jesus knew it, too, when He said. "Know ye not that I could now pray to My Father and He would send more than twelve legions of angels." This is refuge we must have. Learn to dwell in the secret place of

the Most High God and you will not be running to some false refuge in the desert when trouble starts. Remember the words of Jesus! When they say He is in the desert, go not forth.

In spite of all the years we have been in the church system, strangely enough very, very few people even remotely understand what the true church really is. We have been writing concerning the visible and the invisible, and we have considered at some length the words of Paul when he said, "The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." This same truth applies to the church. Man has been prone to see the visible thing upon which is inscribed the letters C-H-U-R-C-H. This he divides into endless segments, giving each segment a different name until there are so many names that we would be hard put to it to count them all. This vast visible confusion man calls the church. But the thing which man calls the church is by no means the thing that God calls the church, for, while man is looking at some visible temple he has built, God sees the true church rising on the foundation stone which is Jesus Christ Himself.

The true church always has been a mystery, invisible to the eyes of man but clearly seen by the eyes of God. The word 'ecclesia' from which the word 'church' is derived simply means 'called out'. It is called out of the world; it is called out of sin; it is called out of Babylon; and it is called out unto Christ. When Jesus said, "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me," it should be perfectly clear that the ones who are the 'called out' are the ones who know His voice and who follow Him. The true church consists of the called out ones, the people who know the voice of Christ and are following Him and Him alone. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel, but in Isaac shall they seed be called." Even so they are not all church who appear to be church, but those who are disciples of Jesus Christ. Until we see the church as a wheel within a wheel, we will never discern the true church nor the true body of Christ. The visible system means nothing. It is our hidden relationship to Christ that really counts. Man has placed tremendous emphasis on his association with sects, which erroneously called themselves the church. To be joined to them means absolutely nothing. If you could make yourself a member in good standing with every one of them at once, it still would mean less than nothing. The only thing that counts for anything is your union with Christ in the Spirit. Make certain of this above all else. Those who are united to Him, whether still in bondage to a system or whether they be free men, are the one true ecclesia, the one true church.

Jesus said, "I know My sheep and am known of Mine." It is to them that eternal life is given. They alone have the promise that "no man can pluck them out of the Father's hand." Great blindness has come over the world in that only a very 'little flock' discerns that the true, mystical, and invisible body of Christ is a separate entity from all the man-made systems that parade under the banner of the church. So degenerate has the understanding become that it is commonly believed that, if a person is not a member of one of these organizations, he is no better than a heathen and is completely outside the pale of the church. My spirit, soul, and body fiercely rebel against all such crude and uninspired understanding, for the opposite is the truth. All who are made free by the Spirit of God, who know His voice and are joined to Him in the Spirit, are the church of God in truth. These are moving farther and farther away from the confusion of all human systems and human understandings which bind men in chains of traditions and blind their eyes with scales of unbelief.

Whether we wish to receive it or not, the hour is coming and now is when even the angels of God will proclaim through the heavens, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues." While man is building great Babylon on the one hand and mysterious power is rising to hitherto unheard of heights, God on the other hand is preparing her terrible judgment. All nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. It is in this tremendous hour of her great triumph, when the religious leaders of the earth imagine in their carnal minds that they have at last solved the religious differences of the whole world by casting them all into a common melting pot, that God is calling to His people even as He called to Lot in Sodom, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she has rewarded you and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her, for she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." (Rev. chapter 18 deals with the fearful destruction of the system that is so rapidly coming to its fullness in our day.)

In the world system and the existing church (I fear the two are wed) the day of the individualist is gone. Every body, every nation, every religion, is being thrown into one melting pot to be either melted together or frozen together in one vast sea of humanity from which the beast himself shall rise. But let us not forget that, while all this is going on, God has a chosen people, a peculiar people, an elect people who are joined to Him in perfect unity of spirit and mind, and who are joined to each other, not by physical presence, but by this omnipresent Spirit. Most of the people have never seen each other's faces, yet they are one, for spiritual unity does not depend on the close proximity of physical beings but upon the unity of the Spirit in Christ. All who are one mind with Him are one mind with each other, regardless of distance. Paul once said to the Colossians, "Though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith." **Col. 2:5.**

In the days of Elijah the prophet all Israel was following the prophets of Baal, but unknown to Elijah and all unknown to each other there were seven thousand people who had never bowed the knee to Baal, but were sincere servants of the Lord. With which one of these two companies did Elijah belong? Was he one with that vast visible confused religious system which was preaching and prophesying all about him, or was he one in heart and soul and spirit with that hidden seven thousand whom he had never seen nor heard of before? Well do we know the answer to that question? Elijah was one heart and one soul with that invisible number in whose presence he had never been, for they were one spirit with the Father and therefore one spirit with each other. The physical unity of crowds and congregations means nothing. The unity of the spirit means everything.

We must now consider a matter of supreme importance. It is the truth concerning our harmony with God. The Lord is the author of all harmony. His whole majestic universe is a harmony far exceeding all earth's symphonies. "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?" **Job 12:7-10.** "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." **Psa. 19:1-3.**

That we may have some idea of the vastness of the heavens, astronomers tell us that on a clear night the naked eye can detect only some three thousand stars from a given point and, though the great telescopes have discovered several million stars, astronomers estimate that there are enough galaxies in the celestial expanse to give one to every man, woman and child that ever was born. There is no way the human mind can begin to comprehend or imagine the vastness represented here. The nearest of those stars, Cygni by name, is more than thirty-six billion miles from earth, so that the light from the nearest star takes six and a quarter years to reach us. Other stars are so far distant that the mathematicians' figures fail to describe the awesome distances. Our imaginations reel at the thought of light with its speed of one hundred eighty-six thousand miles per second taking a thousand years to reach us.

There was a day in the long ago when the eloquent voices of Job and all his counselors fell silent as the Lord began to speak. At the presence of the Lord Job himself repented in dust and ashes (Job 42:1-6), because he found himself unable to answer any of the forty questions the Lord demanded of him. Among the baffling queries that came from the lips of God was one that even the astronomers in our day cannot answer with perfect satisfaction. It was this: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" **Job 38:31** Pleiades is the name given by the Greeks to what is known as the seven stars, clearly visible in the heavens on a cloudless night. The name comes from the Greek word pleen, which means to sail. The appearance of these stars in the heavens indicated a favorable time to begin a voyage at sea. In the Chaldaic language the word for the seven stars of the Pleiades is chimak, meaning a hinge or a pivot. The astronomer Bradley in 1748 discovered that Alcyone (pronounced al-si-O-ne), the brightest star among these seven, is as far as can be determined the center of our entire solar system. It is the hinge or pivot around which the sun with all its attendant stars and planets is believed to revolve. If we now comprehend that our sun is three thousand billion miles from Alcyone, then we may have some idea of the sweet influence of Pleiades, which as a hub or axle of our universe swings these millions of heavenly bodies about itself at the rate of more than one hundred and fifty million miles a year in a circuit so vast that it would take thousands of years to complete it.

As the ages roll on endlessly and all the heavenly bodies are continually in motion - the moon revolving around the earth, the earth revolving around the sun, the sun with the entire solar system revolving around Alcyone, and Alcyone with its billions of attendants revolving around some still greater center, and these in turn revolving around that center of all centers, the throne of God -we can contemplate to some small degree what must be meant by the sweet influence of Pleiades. Engineers use the word sweet to describe the smooth working and humming of perfectly tuned machinery. Is it any wonder then that the perfect harmony of this perfectly timed universe is here described as sweet?

You will say this is all incredibly wonderful and I will certainly reply, Amen; but may I suggest that, wonderful as is this sweet influence of a perfectly tuned universe, all this is but dust, and sentence has been pronounced that the heavens will pass away as a body goes down to the dust of the grave. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return." While the Lord is speaking to us of things far transcending our understanding, He has not failed to tell us that even these will one day pass away and that, though the natural heavens will one day disappear, our Lord is building for Himself a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which filleth all in all. Eph. 1:23. Weymouth in his translation expresses it thus: "God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:22-23.** (Weymouth). Ah, what unimaginable harmony that will be! A universe filled with living stars who shine as the brightness of the firmament forever, all in sweet accord with the sun of our souls, our Saviour dear, and all motivated and controlled by the sweet influence of God's eternal throne!

If we are to love God as we ought to love Him, we must begin to understand and be gripped by the eternal purposes of God. It is not sufficient to say to a man, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God." We are no more capable of loving God because we are told to do so than we are capable of loving some human being because we were told to do so. There are millions of people in the world today who know the scripture, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart...", yet they have no love for God at all, and, though some are able to say, "I love the Lord because He saved me," even that falls far short of perfect love because in this they are loving the Lord, not for who He is or what He is, but because of something He did for them.

Though I was a denominational minister for some thirty years before the command of Christ, "Come out from among them and be separate", reached my ears, and though I preached fervently all the doctrines and traditions of the elders as they had been taught to me, I am now one hundred percent convinced that, if any man is really going to come to the knowledge of the Holy, he is going to have to depart physically and spiritually from the presence of this association of blind guides and he will have to be taught of God concerning those great universal and eternal purposes which God, who cannot lie, who cannot change, and who cannot be deterred, purposed in His holy mind of wisdom and understanding before ever the ages were formed or time began.

It is beyond my ken and understanding how the existing church systems can possibly pretend to be bringing the good news of the gospel to the people who dwell on the earth. In spite of the plain teaching of scripture, which clearly states that God hath reconciled all things to Himself, the preachers shamelessly tell the people that ninety-nine people out of every hundred will be lost and go to a burning hell to suffer its raging fires and agonizing tortures ceaselessly, endlessly and eternally, without hope and without God for time unimaginable, for what creature of time can possibly imagine eternity? This they call gospel and this they call good news. I cannot possibly imagine any news that could be worse than this, no, not if my imagination were to run rampant day and night forever! And what is even worse, they willingly admit that God, being omniscient, must have foreknown all this harm and loss, and yet for all His love and omnipotence He did not deter or hinder it.

Furthermore we are asked to believe that the ignorance of the masses of mankind has no bearing on their fate. We are supposed to believe that, though billions of Chinese, Indians and Africans through no fault of their own have lived and died without knowing anything at all of God's Son, still they are inexcusable. Then these poor, blind leaders of the blind try to tell us that this is the good news of which the angels sang at His nativity. It is not good news. It is dreadful news. It is completely out of harmony with all that God is and all that God does. He who said, "Thou shall not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," must surely have some concern for an even higher creation. If no sparrow falls without His notice, are we not better than many sparrows?

Some three thousand years ago the world's most eminent sage wrote, "Every purpose is established by counsel", **Prov. 20:18**; and "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." Eccl. 3:1. Isaiah, taking up the theme centuries later, wrote these harmonizing words: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." Isa. 14:23. Our Lord and our God is a God of purpose. He who said, "Every purpose is established by counsel," must certainly have taken counsel Himself. He who said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion..." must certainly first have taken counsel in His own heart as to how this mighty edict was to be accomplished. How hateful is the teaching that pictures man's transgression and fall as an accident that the all-wise God had not foreseen! How I despise the insinuation that envisions Satan slyly slipping in a back door to bring ruin to God's plan! I have heard world renowned preachers harping this kind of discord. If Satan was able to slip into Eden unnoticed by God, what fools we must be to affirm that God is either omniscient or omnipresent! How can omniscience fail to know or omnipresence fail to see? Furthermore, if our Lord was unable to hinder Satan, then He can no more be said to be omnipotent. The preachers of these falsehoods belittle the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, and the Omnipresent by teaching such abominable incongruities to be the doctrine of the Lord. Such contradictory humbug as this has no foundation either in truth or in fact. It is foreign to God's word and a horrible caricature of God Himself. How much better it is to heed the blessed words of the apostle Paul, who in preaching the truth unashamedly described the lowly path that leads to sonship in this profound sentence: "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." **Rom. 8:20-21**. Ah, there is truth. There is the revelation that fully explains the purpose of the fall of man. I know it is a staggering truth - meat indeed for men of full stature. Should these profound words stagger your imagination as they once staggered mine when first their truth burst upon my understanding, you will never recover from their profundity. Well do I remember when first the Spirit made them shine from out the sacred page? In astonishment of heart I cried out. "Lord, do you mean to say that you are taking responsibility for the fall of man?" And that is just exactly what is stated here. No accident here nor trick of a sly, unrelenting devil! Oh, no! Man's subjection to the vanity of the fall was part of God's infinitely wise counsel from the beginning. Through this awesome valley of the shadow of death He planned to lead His appointed sons along the path to perfection, by which the entire world would eventually come to the knowledge, not of evil only nor just the knowledge of good, but the knowledge of both good and evil.

Oh, how our love for God grows when once our eyes envision the wonders of His marvelous purposes, which were purposed in Christ before the world began! Have you noticed the precious understanding of Peter as he preached on the day of Pentecost, full of the Holy Ghost, his soul aflame with fresh anointing, and how he made known the way of God to his massive audience? These are his words: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

Acts 2:22-23. Take heed to those words, if you will - "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." This crucifixion was not the doing of man. This was the work of God. This was God's determinate counsel. The death of God's Son by crucifixion was planned and determined beforehand. This blessed Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. It is true that wicked men stretched out their violent hands to kill the Son of God and it is true they accomplished their evil design, but it was God who determined before the foundation of the world that it should be done. As Samson found honey in the dead carcass of the slain lion, so this Lion of the tribe of Judah has brought forth from His predetermined death the honey of everlasting life. Jesus Christ the Lord is eternal life. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. While He walked among us as a man, He gave eternal life to no one, but when by death He released His life, for the life is in the blood, He shed life abroad that all mankind may freely drink of its blessed fountain and never thirst again.

Some time ago I listened to a radio preacher bemoaning with plaintive voice the death of Christ. He told the people how sad it was that He was crucified by wicked men and that it need not have been. What? It did not have to be? Has not the Holy Spirit said that God determined before that it should be done? Jesus could have saved Himself at any moment during the whole tragic scene. At any time He could have called a legion of

angels to His side and, were that not enough, He could have called ten thousand legions, but His reason for not doing so was manifest in that one meaningful question, "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, and thus it must be?" **Matt. 26:54.** "As I (God) have purposed, so shall it stand," Isaiah said, **Isa. 14:23**, and again "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" **Isa. 14:26-27.**

The Jews have often been blamed for killing Jesus and, whatever the pope or the ecumenical movement may have to say to the contrary, Paul affirmed that it was true when he said to the Thessalonians, "Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men." **1 Thess. 2:14-15.** Though that statement is harsh, it is true, even to this very day. But Peter opened up a whole new realm of understanding when he said to the Jews, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead. ... And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." **Acts 3:13-15, 17-18.** Then, after the apostles had been evil entreated and beaten, they gathered together for prayer and, having received a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit, they lifted up their voices with one accord and said, "Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" **Acts 4:24-28.**

Is it not plain to be seen that there is a marvelous harmony running through all these things? Not only are all things - even the worst of things - working together for good, but they are working for good according to a purpose. Therefore, whether a thing appears to be good or evil, it is good, because it is working for good. Tribulation may be an evil thing, but, if it is true that tribulation worketh patience and patience, experience and experience, hope and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, then it certainly has worked for good, for, though the tribulation was an evil thing, the patience, experience, hope, unashamedness and the resultant love of God that was shed abroad in the heart made the evil of tribulation work for eternal good. Furthermore by this we come to a more advanced knowledge of good and evil, even as it is written, "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." **Heb. 5:14.** "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" **Job 2:10.** Verily I would say that such would seem almost to be impossible, since we know not good until we know its opposite, which is evil.

Because Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," I set myself earnestly to seek how I might let the mind of Christ dwell in me. Somehow I seemed to expect that this would be an experience that would suddenly overtake me, wherein I would be conscious of a new mind dwelling in me, thus displacing my own. To have the mind of Christ is to have a renewed mind and to have a renewed mind, the scripture says, is the secret of having a healthy body, and, if my understanding is not amiss, it is the secret of incorruption as well. For this reason Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: (as almost all Christians totally are, taking their medicines and running to their doctors): but be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind." **Rom. 12:1-2.** What a tremendous statement this is! The word transformed is from the Greek metamorphoo and is the same word used in Matt. 17:2 and translated transfigured. It is also the same word that is translated changed in 1 Cor. 15:51-52. If we can grasp the truth that is set forth here, then the Lord has put something in our possession, which will make a world of difference to us, not only spiritually, but physically as well. How good it would be if, when God's people fall ill and the evil of sickness overtakes them, they would refrain from immediately seeking to be anointed with oil for healing! James has said, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." Do not pray at once to be delivered from your affliction. More than likely God intends to work some great thing in you, if you will but hearken to His

voice. Pray rather, not that you may be healed immediately, but that by prayer and reading and waiting on the Lord you may come to know the mind of Christ, and, Christ having revealed His mind to you, and you having your mind renewed, a transformation begins to take place. The renowned Dr. Charles S. Price, perhaps the greatest preacher of the twentieth century, a man who saw tens of thousands of lasting healings in answer to prayer, always taught the people to seek the Lord rather than to seek healing, and, because of this wise counsel, the most stubborn cases of infirmity were healed. Through his advice seekers usually became more concerned about their low spiritual estate than about their physical healing. Then, when God had adjusted their spiritual need, they found health and healing for their bodies as well. Dr. Price's book, *The Real Faith*, written shortly before his death, is a gem that should be read by every Christian.

While in earnest prayer and meditation some days ago, the Spirit of the Lord made it clear to me just how simple it is to let the mind of Christ dwell in me. As the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray was going through my mind, I was forcefully impressed with the words, "Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." Right there in these blessed words lies the sacred secret of having the mind of Christ. My dear brethren, why is it that, when Christians pray today, they still make long prayers as the Pharisees did in the long ago, thinking they will be heard for their much speaking and asking? But their prayers still go unanswered. We pray God to bless our church when God has no intention of blessing it. We pray God to extricate us from the mess in which we are involved, but God may intend to leave us there for years to come that we might learn some never-to-be-forgotten lesson. We plead with God to remove our physical affliction when He is far more concerned with our spiritual need. He does not afflict willingly, but "the curse causeless shall not come." When Miriam spoke against Moses and was smitten with leprosy, Moses cried to the Lord, "Heal her now." But the Lord said, No! Let her go outside the camp for the days appointed and then offer the proper sacrifice. Then she may come in. In other words, even though she was Moses' sister, she needed to learn both her lesson and her manners.

If a man or a woman would have the mind of Christ dwelling within, the first requisite is to have no mind of one's own. People who come with a program, which they present to God and then ask Him to bless it and to finance it, are defeated before they ever start, first because it is their program and second because it originated in their minds. Never present a program to God and ask Him to bless it. Let Him present His purpose to you. His purpose is His mind. Thus you will have good success. You may sow and you may water, but it is God who gives the increase.

The man or woman who hits on some big idea, then rushes out and tells people over the pulpit, through radio and by letters that God gave him the plan, that it is a great work of faith and therefore he must have your dollars to carry it out, is a deceiver, and the person he is deceiving most of all is himself. It is amazing to find how many people are daily deceived by this enthusiastic line of the self-styled preachers of righteousness. All letters that come through the mail begging for money to carry out some grandiose scheme should be thrown in the wastebasket and burned as soon as possible. All urgent appeals by radio, T.V. or magazine soliciting funds to finance great programs should be completely ignored. This is not God's way and it is not God's mind. It is not of faith and it is not God's way of propagating His gospel.

So often people ask me this question: "What would happen to the world if it were not for all the denominational churches?" Well, I'll tell you what would happen. God would then raise up true ministries as He did during the first three hundred years of this present age. Those mighty ministries who spurned all of our modern striving spread the marvelous gospel light all over the then known world until by 300 A.D. there were more Christians in the Roman world than heathen. It was only when the church became organized and a pope was set at the head that the fearful darkness of the dark ages began to cover the earth. The world is once again in dark ages, for darkness now covers the earth as it did in the days of Noah, when the people knew not until the flood came and took them all away.

So you see, to have the mind of Christ is to allow God to reveal His mind and purpose to you. Then when you act on that, you will find His mind dwelling in you, leading you and revealing His way, for thus saith the Lord, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We have already made prominent the point that all God's purposes are predestined, pre-arranged, and foreordained. Therefore if any man will seek to discover His purposes and walk in them, he will have the mind of Christ dwelling in him.

One of God's purposes, possibly the greatest at present revealed, is His intention to restore the whole of His creation to Himself. I make no apology whatsoever for boldly asserting that according to God's own word it is

His will and intention to eventually restore the whole of creation. It is not His intention, however, to complete the work now nor in this dispensation nor yet in the age to come, but He, like a master craftsman, accomplishes one thing at a time. First He presents Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, perfected through suffering that He might be the merciful high priest of us all. Next He prepares and perfects the sons of God, a people for His name, and, having perfected a vast family of sons in the exact image and likeness of Jesus Christ insomuch that He speaks of them as in Christ, He will return to earth a second time to rebuild the tabernacle of David or, in other words, to set up the kingdom of God on earth, that the residue of men might seek the Lord and that the glorious bride, seen perfected in Rev. chapter 21, may be prepared. Then finally the gates are opened to all the nations. This marvelous plan was laid out in detail by the inspired apostle James when at Jerusalem he spoke these illuminating words: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." **Acts 15:14-18**. Since it is the purpose and intention of the Lord to accomplish all these wonders, each in His appointed time, until the whole creation is restored, then why do energetic men, especially the preachers who should know better, insist on trying to save the whole world now? God will bring in each appointed number in its own appointed time and all the striving of men will not and cannot alter His purpose one iota. To know God's plan and walk in it as He directs is certainly to have the mind of Christ. Thus to be led by His Spirit is to be a son of God.

I say again - I repeat it with the assurance of His word of truth - that it is God's intention to restore the whole creation to Himself. If there were no other verses in the New Testament but those given in Ephesians 1:9-11, we would have abundant assurance that it is God's intention in His own time to restore the whole creation to Himself. Because of the exceeding importance of this scripture as it displays the purpose of God, the intention of God and the counsel of His will, we take the liberty here to quote from several translations the beauty and forcefulness of this revelation. Eph: 1:9-11.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (King James Version.) I ask all who read to dissect this passage clause by clause and phrase by phrase. As you do so, you will see clearly that a certain mystery of His will is spoken of, a certain good pleasure, a marvelous universal purpose, which He has purposed in Himself, and that mysterious purpose and good pleasure is to gather into Christ everything on earth and everything in heaven, and that this purpose and intention will be completed in all its wonderful entirety in the dispensation of the fullness of times. For our information this is the dispensation that follows the millennial kingdom. You will further see that this mighty, all-inclusive program was predestined before the ages began and is now working as the ages pass by according to the counsel of His will. Not the will of man, not the will of angels, but the will of God, who planned it before ever the ages began.

Let us now give earnest heed to the translation as given by the learned Richard Weymouth that our souls may bask in that blessed hope that is laid out here in the vivid words of his translation. "It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it — the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him. In Him, too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will..."

No less vivid are the translations of Goodspeed, Phillips, Young, and others, making assurance doubly sure that it is the intention of our all-wise heavenly Father to gather into Christ in the ages to come the "all things in heaven and on earth."

Finally we quote this passage from the translation by Moffatt. "So richly has God lavished upon us His grace, granting us complete insight and understanding of the open secret of His will, showing us how it was the purpose of His design so to order it in the fullness of the ages that all things in heaven and earth alike should be gathered up in Christ — in the Christ in whom we have had our inheritance allotted to us as was decreed in the design of Him who carries out everything according to the counsel of His will..." Ah, what tremendous assurance is given here!

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, "the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." **Col. 1:15-19.** And now Paul, having spoken of things visible and things invisible, of thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, all of which have tasted the bitterness and curse of the fall, makes this all inclusive statement: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." **Col. 1:20.** It is well worthwhile for anyone to count the number of times the term all things is used in the book of Colossians.

I have written these assurances with the hope and prayer that God's dear saints may be made aware of the infinite harmony of His merciful purpose. If we will take time in reverent meditation and prayer to read His word and listen to His voice, we will become strangely acquainted with the secret of His will, not only for the ages to come, but for the present age and the things that concern our daily walk with Him. In the secret of His will we walk in the Spirit. When we walk in the Spirit, we are led by the Spirit, and, when we are led by the Spirit, we are the sons of God.

Nowhere in a thousand universes could a harmony be found like the harmony of God. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. He is the master planner, the master architect, the wise master builder, the author and finisher of faith. He is the mighty maestro of a symphony whose well, tuned harmonies swell to the utmost reaches of His universe. He is the leader of a heavenly choir that is filling heaven and earth with the harmonies of God.

Men wrap themselves in smug cocoons
Of dogmas they believe are wise,
And look askance at those who see
In worms potential butterflies.
Eloise Hackett

CHAPTER THREE THE LAST DAYS

The holy men of God who by divine unction and verbal inspiration wrote the word of the Lord have given mankind a prophetic message that describes in great detail the works of God with man, His creation, during the "seven thousand year day" which extends from Adam in Eden to the end of the millennial kingdom. It was the sixth day when God said, "Let us make man in our image." Five vast days, each seven thousand years long, had passed into history before Adam came. The sixth day now is and will continue until the end of the millennial kingdom. The seventh day is yet to come. Like its six predecessors it, too, will continue for seven thousand years. It is the dispensation of the fullness of times, spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 1:10. That will be the crowning age of all ages. It is in truth the age of the ages. In it God has promised to gather together all things in heaven and earth in His blessed Son, Jesus Christ. Eph. 1:10.

Fifty thousand years of time, lying in the heart of eternity, were determined upon this earth to create all things, to bring man, the predestined lord of the universe, to the image of God, and to restore all things and gather them together in Christ. This fifty thousand years is divided into seven days, each day being seven thousand years in duration. When this has been completed, then will follow the jubilee, the fiftieth day one thousand

years long. In that day all things will return to their rightful owner, who is God Himself. This immense and wonderful plan of the ages is set forth in type in Leviticus 25:1-13. The man who lacks an understanding of God's plan for the ages can never hope to comprehend God's purpose. The days of the week are very typical. For this reason the apostle Peter emphasized the importance of days, saying, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." **2 Pet. 3:8**. His divinely inspired statement embraces God's plan for vast ages and for days, whether they be days twenty-four hours long, days one thousand years long, or days seven thousand years long.

The Spirit of God inspired His prophets and apostles to leave with us irrefutable evidence of the approaching end of our time. The last days of this our age are referred to in many and unmistakable terms. It was none other than Paul who wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times will come," **2 Tim. 3:1**, of which we shall speak presently in greater particular. We may say with certainty that the greatest portion of the Bible is prophetic and was written for men who will live in the last days. If the wise of this world who waste their time trying to disprove the Bible would take time to compare the statements of 2 Tim. 3:1-7 with the events of the hour in which we now live, they would know for certain that God, who knows the end from the beginning, had spoken with infinite wisdom and prophetic exactness. As far back as the book of Genesis the Spirit of God undertook to tell us what would befall us in the latter days. Jacob, with the spirit of prophecy mightily upon him, called unto his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." **Gen. 49:1**.

The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, said, "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come." Well may we who live in the last days of the twentieth century say with certainty, "Perilous times have come." It would be a weariness to the reader should I now begin to recite those universal evils which encompass us. We are well aware of the international and world-wide confusion of our day, how nation rises against nation in accusation, misrepresentation, lies, and innuendo until the smoking flax of ever increasing hate and bitterness flames into open conflict, devouring culprit and innocent alike in its relentless inferno. It would be a waste of time and a heaviness to the spirit to repeat the weird stories of sadistic, senseless violence daily perpetrated on the streets, in the homes, on the highways, on fields of battle, and in the secret places of shame and despair. A few years ago the word violence was scarcely ever heard in the newscasts or seen in newspapers, but now it is used with ever increasing frequency, telling us with unmistakable voice that, as the earth was filled with violence in the days of Noah before the flood, Gen. 6:13, so also it is filled with universal tribulation that will leave nothing outside its engulfing wake. Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the heavens with power and great glory. Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, for He shall come to put down all rule and authority, 1 Cor. 15:24, and set up that kingdom of God for which all creation has been in travail.

Violence is everywhere. It is safe to be neither on the street nor on the highway. Jer. 6:25. Even the privacy of homes is invaded time and again by muggers and thugs and bandits who without regard to age or sex leave old and young alike beaten, bound, robbed, tortured, or dead, and all this for no reason at all. What more can we expect when violent scenes are continually enacted in the living rooms of millions of homes? We see soldiers being killed in battle. We see men being bound and bludgeoned, kicked and shot right on the newscasts, until the whole nation becomes violence conscious and accepts violence as our way of life.

Paul by the wisdom given unto him wrote, "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient." **Rom. 1:28**. Something very terrible has happened to the minds of the people. There is a sort of mental block that turns the thoughts of the wise from the paths of wisdom to the channels of foolishness and error until all their thinking is becoming reprobate and wrong, completely backward and upside down. Authorities are becoming possessed with the ridiculous notion that people should see crime to prevent them from becoming criminals. They imagine that people who watch will be informed and so turn away from it. Their corrupt minds reason that if people, young and old, see filth they will become pure-minded. Only recently one advocated that men and women should go nude on the bathing beaches to abolish the crime of rape. Others declare emphatically that LSD should be legalized so that people won't be bothered experimenting with it. You see what I mean by a mental block? Why, that kind of reasoning is as foolish as would be the imagination that cigarette advertising encourages men to kick the habit, or that liquor advertising would produce abstainers. Because men do not want to retain God in their knowledge, they have inherited a reprobate mind and the Lord has turned all their wisdom to

foolishness and hurt. When nations who once worshipped and honored the true God come to the place where they no longer want to retain God in their knowledge, they heap to themselves endless trouble, and the heavy hand of divine chastisement will be continually laid upon them in awesome blows until they are consumed.

The tragic trend that places men's feet in the devouring quicksands of the reprobate mind begins with this attitude: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." **Rom. 1:28**. The initial wedge of this folly began with the teaching of evolution, a teaching which not only contradicts the sacred word of the Creator but which in all the world has no foundation in fact. In all the entire creation of God we are unable to point to any creature that today is in the process of evolving. If man evolved from monkeys, how does it happen that all monkeys have not evolved until that species is extinct? It is not because men do not know the truth, but because their wicked hearts delight in denying it. Man cannot play with God for long, for, though His mercy is patiently extended toward us, those who dare to play on the quicksands of unbelief will certainly be swallowed by them. The inspired statement of the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul can scarcely be enlarged upon. Those who read it should certainly be advised and warned by it that they may flee from the vanities of unbelief and doubt to lay hold upon God, who not only tells the truth but who Himself is truth.

The translator, Phillips, has rendered Romans 1:18-32 in words so vivid that they seem to numb the mind with the certainty of their real and awful parallel in our day. "Now the holy anger of God is disclosed from heaven against the godlessness and evil of those men who render truth dumb and inoperative by their wickedness. It is not that they do not know the truth about God; indeed He has made it quite plain to them. For since the beginning of the world the invisible attributes of God, e.g. His eternal power and divinity, have been plainly discernible through things which He has made and which are commonly seen and known, thus leaving these men without a rag of excuse. They knew all the time that there is a God, yet they refused to acknowledge Him as such, or to thank Him for what He is or does. Thus they became fatuous in their argumentations, and plunged their silly minds still further in the dark. Behind a facade of "wisdom" they became just fools, who would exchange the glory of the eternal God for an imitation image of a mortal man, or of creatures that run or fly or crawl. They gave up God: and therefore God gave them up - to be the plaything of their own foul desires in dishonoring their own bodies.

"These men deliberately forfeited the truth of God and accepted a lie, paying homage and giving service to the creature instead of to the Creator, who alone is worthy to be worshipped for ever and ever, amen. God therefore handed them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged the normal practices of sexual intercourse for something, which is abnormal and unnatural. Similarly the men, turning from the natural intercourse with women, were swept into lustful passions for one another. Men with men performed these shameful horrors, receiving, of course, in their own personalities the consequences of sexual perversity.

"Moreover, since they considered themselves too high and mighty to acknowledge God, He allowed them to become the slaves of their degenerate minds, and to perform unmentionable deeds. They became filled with wickedness, rottenness, greed and malice; their minds became steeped in envy, murder, quarrelsomeness, deceitfulness, and spite. They became whisperers-behind-doors, stabbers-in-the-back, God-haters; They overflowed with insolent pride and boastfulness, and their minds teemed with diabolical invention. They scoffed at duty to parents, they mocked at learning, recognized no obligations of honor, lost all natural affection, and had no use for mercy. More than this - being well aware of God's pronouncement that all who do these things deserve to die, they not only continued their own practices, but did not hesitate to give their thorough approval to others who did the same." **Rom. 1:18-32**. (Phillips).

This, then, explains the awesome progression of ever increasing wickedness that in these closing days of the age ascends as a blinding smoke from the bottomlessness of the bottomless pit. Because the high-mindedness of man has brushed aside the wisdom and truth of God, he has become vain in his imagination and his foolish heart is darkened. Professing himself to be wise, he has become a fool, and God has given him up to a reprobate mind. Man has sported with the wind and been carried away with the whirlwind. His intercourse with unbelief has conceived and brought forth the reprobate mind, and it in turn has filled the world with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, murder, deceit, back-bitings, boastings, evil inventions, disrespect for parents and all authority. It has produced a people devoid of natural affection for

families or children, a people implacable and unmerciful who worship and serve the creature and not the Creator.

Do you know that divorce in England has increased fifty percent in the last five years? Do you know that in the last one hundred years the population of the United States has increased four hundred percent, but divorce has increased twenty-eight hundred percent, until today there are four hundred thousand divorces a year, leaving an indelible scar on the minds of millions of children that can never be healed or erased through life? Do you know that pregnancy is the number one health problem among teen-age girls? Do you know that every day fifteen hundred young people in the United States alone, mostly in their teens, are affected with venereal disease and that each year there are one million seven hundred thousand new cases? Do you know that the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke in the British House of Lords in support of the bill to legalize homosexuality? Do you know that homosexuals are organized and are actually procuring young boys for their illicit use?

This filthy disease that springs from the reprobate mind is engulfing millions in our day, and I would be an unfaithful servant of Christ if I did not warn every man and woman who will be warned that homosexuality was the final sin that brought the fire of God on Sodom. And every sodomite throughout all generations has been the namesake of that corrupt city. If you will read the account of events that preceded the flood in the days of Noah, you will find that every corrupt and harmful perversion was prevalent to bring the wrath of God upon an age so evil that it repented the Lord that He had made man. These are the last days, and they are days so terrifyingly perilous that only those who reach out for the mind of Christ will ever be able to escape them.

Queen Victoria of England, when asked by the German Kaiser to explain the secret of the world-wide power and success of the British Empire, is said to have handed him the Bible. This remarkable testimony, given by the reigning monarch of the greatest Empire the world has ever known, and the only commonwealth (or multitude) of nations the world has ever known, was also given by the fathers and great men of the mightiest and greatest individual nation the world has ever known. See Gen. 48:19-20. No less a person than George Washington, the father of the American Republic, declared, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." And that other immortal, American president, Abraham Lincoln, said, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book." Also that man whose name is now a household word throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, Daniel Webster, declared, "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how suddenly catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury us." Those last three words, "and bury us," are certainly prophetic as a voice from God, speaking out of the distant past and uttering the very sentence of the ungodly Khrushchev, "We will bury you."

Woe to us that the leaders of our nation no longer honor the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but honor the god of forces, of armies, tanks, and bombs. It is unconstitutional for a Roman Catholic sovereign to reign on the throne of the British Commonwealth. The monarch must be a protestant, and it is not the will of God that the United States should have a Roman Catholic president. The moment this happens, the nation is brought under the control and authority of a foreign potentate, that power of Rome which in centuries past reigned over the kings of the earth and is preparing to do so again. This is the power that would deny the people the right to read the Bible and worship God as individuals. This is the power that during its brief reign from 1960 to 1963 took the Bible and prayers from the American classroom, turning a well-ordered, well disciplined educational system into one of confusion and anarchy, rebellion, insolence, riot, and licentiousness. How well did Theodore Roosevelt say, "Mere education without divine guidance is like handing a gun to an irresponsible man." Lyon Phelps said, "I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible." We might all well shout amen to these remarkable statements, for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The underlying cause of all the abominable confusion in the world today is that man has tried to forget God. Our nation, once God-fearing, has come to the place where it does not want to retain God in its knowledge. The greatest criminal of them all in its godless thinking and rejection of truth is the system that is everywhere falsely known as the church, that desolating abomination whose puppeteers cry, "God is dead. The Bible is a myth. Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. Man came from a monkey. The miracles of the Bible are fakes.

Jesus did not die; He only fainted." With them it has come to pass that "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God has given them up to a reprobate mind" to do all manner of things that are not convenient.

Now when Paul wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come", he gave a very definite reason for their coming, "For," he said, "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3:1-5. These, then, are the reasons that perilous times have come upon us! The opening statement, "Men shall be lovers of their own selves," is the key note of the whole prediction. While love for God has grown cold and dead, love of self abounds on every hand. Though man is generally a lover of self, he hates to admit that he is basically and fundamentally selfish. But who can deny that selfishness and the love of self are one and the same thing? It is a deplorable testimony, but a true one nevertheless, that in our age it is a most difficult thing to find a man who has more concern for others than he has for himself. "How does this affect me?" is the question in the mind of every man. Where do "I" come out in the bargain? The same people who delight in willfully damaging the property of others, vandalizing, breaking, burning, stealing, always squeal like pigs the moment harm befalls them.

But let us not speak only to the riff-raff, the thugs, and the plunderers. Let every man examine his own heart. Time and experience is a great teacher, teaching us lessons we often hate to know. I was seventeen years old when I gave my heart to Christ and I have been walking in His grace and mercy ever since then. Vast and varied beyond all expectation have been the experiences of the way. With great joy I can testify to many miracles of God's grace and power wrought in the lives of men and women, but with great sadness of heart and with deepest sorrow of spirit I must confess that a truly unselfish man is hard to find. If in my pilgrimage I have found one or two unselfish people that would be good indeed, for they are scarcer than the jewels of wisdom and knowledge. Many people have listened to sermons about the cross, but far too few have ever faced it or embraced it for themselves. Many have heard sermons about Gethsemane, but few have ever waited there in the deep agony of its shadows until their own will, their own self and selfishness drifted away like an evil spirit into obscurity to be replaced by the will of God that henceforth the "I" element should no longer be a consideration, but an eternal loss.

Men have said to me, "We want God, brother; we want God. We want God's will", and many other such high-sounding phrases; but when the test comes and their "self faces the cross, they show in no uncertain way that, should God's will be found to conflict with their own, then they want no part of it at all. The loud affirmations of devotion to God's service and God's will made by countless preachers in their pulpits usually is as meaningless as the squeaking of a door on its hinges, for lurking behind the statements of utter abandonment and devotion is the crafty old enemy of self, deceiving the people and above all deceiving self. Search in the dark and secret places and you will find self there. You will find him like Judas, valiantly stating the case of the poor, while he covets the money that was put in the bag. You will see him like Simon the sorcerer, coveting the gifts of the Holy Spirit that he might himself be a great one. Or perhaps you will see him as the rich young ruler who, finding that eternal life would affect his prized possessions, went sadly away. The old Jacob nature, that treacherous supplanter called self, must, must, be taken to Gethsemane and from thence to the cross, never to be considered or heard of ever more.

If there was ever a day when men were saying, "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" surely that day is now. But unto them it shall be spoken." "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." "Men shall be lovers of their own selves," said Paul. Therefore, whether it be in politics where men climb to power over the assassinated characters of their opponents, or whether it be in the homes where natural affection and love has fled away, leaving behind only flophouses devoid of love, affection, and unity, or whether it be in the confused system that calls itself the church where hireling professionals vie for sheep and for prominence, self sitteth in every temple of God, claiming man's heart as its throne and showing itself to be his God.

The prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. 17:9. It is always putting on a false front. It is always acting with ulterior motives. We cannot understand

the deceitful working of our own hearts; how then can we understand the heart of another? "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, he boasteth." **Prov. 20:14.** "It is good, it is good," saith the seller; and when you have bought, he winketh! We are living in a deceitful age when men are lovers of their own selves, and it is extremely hard to find a man who, taking no thought for himself, has dedicated his life to the will and to the glory of God. It is love of self that has brought the perilous times upon the world, nor will there be any change until the day that Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can no longer say the last days are at hand. We can only say we are now living in the last days. Let us watch, therefore, and be sober!

By His question, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" our Lord Jesus Christ made it abundantly clear that in the last days there would be little true faith on the earth. We may well ponder the Lord's meaning, but the question leaves no doubt that faith will be very limited and almost non-existent. Faith in Christ, so important for our justification, is in the final analysis simply believing God, believing that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all who seek Him, believing that everything He said is true and that He will stand faithfully behind His word. The only important element in faith is believing, and the only important element in believing is the will or mind of God. The man who truly walks in God's will need scarcely ask anything of God since God has obligated Himself to fully meet the needs of those who walk according to His bidding and His will. Christians who imagine they are in the will of God while they continually solicit the aid of men to carry on their affairs are deceiving themselves. Loath I am to say it, yet truth demands the sorry confession that the church system is overflowing with this artificial and useless faith. The man who with his right hand raised to heaven loudly proclaims his faith in God while with his left hand he begs from the public is not only a deceiver of the people, but a deceiver of himself as well.

There was faith in the earth on that memorable day that Noah entered into the ark, even as the Spirit testified, saying, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet (rain), moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." **Heb. 11:7.** Faith there was, but it was very, very scarce. There is little reason to believe that faith was present even in Noah's family, but that his faith was the salvation of his household. There was faith in the earth on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, but it was so scarce that in that whole city there could not be found ten people who had faith, that Abraham's prayer could be answered. **Gen. 18:32.** Yet He delivered "Just Lot" whose soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. **2 Pet. 2:7.**

Abounding faith will not be found on the earth when Jesus comes. In the elect of God alone will faith be found. When Jesus comes, even the elect will no longer be found in companies or congregations, but they will be found scattered to the four winds of heaven, whence the Lord will call them on that day. **Matt. 24:31.** I most seriously doubt that in all the world there will be any group of people gathered together on any kind of scriptural grounds. Those who in the end of the age vividly discern the mystical body of Christ will not see it in the groups or sects or congregations, but as a mystical, many-membered body on which rests "the Head", rising like a spirit from the four winds of heaven to take its place in Him. There will, indeed, be faith on the earth when Jesus comes, but only in the elect, and the elect have always been few. The systems of earth are a faithless lot, sinking ever deeper in the morass of unbelief.

With the ever, increasing unbelief of this hour, there has arisen an abundance of false teachers, false prophets, and false christs. We will certainly see, if we trouble to look, that in our day that which is false greatly outweighs that which is true. Jesus further stated that the false teachers and false prophets of the end of the age would deceive many. We need little more than the natural mind to teach us that those who are deceived would be unlikely to know that they are deceived. Thus it is that thousands and millions walk in error. Neglecting their relationship to Christ, they follow men who in their pride have deceived even themselves.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," said Jesus. We may conclude from this that only those things to which the Holy Spirit bears witness and which come forth from the Spirit can possibly be truth. You may find it difficult to receive this, but I am convinced that truth cannot be spoken except by the Holy Spirit. Thus we must conclude that those people

who make correct statements and say correct words, yet being devoid of the Spirit, are indeed false prophets or false teachers and the words they speak, though technically true, bring forth fruit unto death rather than unto life. Why should anyone imagine that Satan could not speak the truth? But could you dare to believe that truth, coming from him, would bring forth fruit unto life? That is impossible simply because he is devoid of the Spirit and truth is not in him, and it is the Spirit that quickeneth. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the account of a girl who was a soothsayer, who followed the apostles for several days, crying to all, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation." **Acts 16:17**. Now dare we say that this statement was untrue? Certainly not. It was as true a statement as could possibly be made. Why was it, then, that Paul, a man full of the Holy Spirit, was greatly grieved in spirit and, after suffering her words for some days, turned and rebuked the spirit and commanded it to come out of her? The answer is very clear and should be a tremendous lesson in our day. It is simply that her words, though correct, were not of the Spirit. Thus one who speaks, having not the Spirit of God, is a false prophet, bringing forth fruit unto death. Are we to believe that God is pleased that Satan should proclaim the cross or the blood or the Holy Spirit? Would not such a proclamation be an abomination in His sight? And dare we think that the Lord Almighty is pleased that the carnal mind of man should proclaim the cross, or the blood, or the Spirit, or that he should attempt to explain the truths of the Bible? The truth therefore remains that all men who dabble in the things of the Spirit, they themselves having not the Spirit, are false prophets, false teachers, false apostles, and false christs.

Not long ago I listened to a sermon by radio. The things being said were correct. The presentation was excellent, the diction good, and the English perfect. There was evidence of zeal. But, when the sermon was finished, it left my spirit dead, untouched, unmoved, and unfed. The listeners, it seemed, were left far more impressed with the ability of the speaker than with the Christ or the truth he presented. One thing was lacking; it was the Spirit, who alone can quicken and make alive. Because of this lack the sermon produces death rather than life. Have you not listened to sermons like that? - sermons which apparently were true and well presented, but which, when they were finished, left you spiritless and wondering what was missing? Time and again men and women have written enquiring, "What is the matter with me? Why is it that these sermons leave me feeling dead?" The only answer I can give is that, because they do not come forth from the Spirit of God, but from the spirit of man, therefore they bring forth fruit unto death. In our day there are many such preachers. Because a man stands shouting, "Thus saith the Lord", until his voice is so husky he can hardly speak is no reason to believe he is speaking by the Spirit. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of men and women in our day crying, "Thus saith the Lord", yet God has spoken nothing.

In 1963 someone sent me a book entitled "Prophecy on the March". It gave what was supposed to be a year-by-year prophetic preview of events from 1963 to 1968. Those predictions consisted mostly of earthquakes and violent storms in such varied places of the earth that almost any good guesser could have hit some of the things right. But all the great, important things and world, shaking events were never hinted at nor mentioned in any way. Had the prophet (??) told us that in 1963 the President of the United States would be assassinated, almost any of us would have been forced to give heed to his words. Had he foretold the dreadful war in Viet Nam, what man in the Christian world would have doubted that he spoke by inspiration? Or had he mentioned that great world-shaking event of 1967, the six-day war in Palestine, I for one could not have doubted his spiritual insight and understanding.

Let us conclude, then, that all religious functions and all religious talk - in fact, all things coming forth from the mind of man — belong to the realm of the false, whether it be in teaching, in prophesying, or in any other way. The false prophets and false christs, which Jesus warned would be many, are with us today. They are legion. If you will closely examine that which in our day is heralded as revival, you will find that the results in most cases are completely artificial. Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Mercenary-minded men, hungry for quick wealth, have grasped the spectacular atmosphere of the meeting as a fitting place to proclaim their pseudo miracles and their imaginary signs and wonders before a gullible public, who in turn have loaded them with excessive financial benefit, vainly imagining that their idol will and my work is in His plan and purpose for me, then God is enough. He will supply all the need according to His riches in glory without my begging for a penny. If God is not sufficiently interested in the work you are doing to carry it on without your financial machinations, then let the work die. It isn't worth the doing and God is preacher will use the wealth to convert the world. Every man who has big programs for your money should be regarded as false. However big the project may be, a life-time of experience has taught me that if I am in God's not concerned about it.

We are indeed living in perilous times. The times are perilous because of the explosive situation in all the world, because of the violence on every hand, because of the incredible and phenomenal rise of false ministries and false christs. Our lives are in jeopardy everywhere we go and in everything we do. We have never had so much talk of peace and never so many wars. We have never had so many doctors, medicines, and hospitals, and never so many sick, insane, and infirm. Never so many schools and universities and never so much ignorance. Never so much food and never so many hungry. Never so much preaching and never so much godlessness and false religion. Is it any wonder that the Spirit warned us with no uncertain voice, saying, that in last days perilous times should come, that, as it was in the days of Noah, so should it be when the Son of man came, that evil men and seducers should wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, that men should be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and that when the Son of man came, would he find faith on the earth? We are living in perilous times. It is best that we believe it. Is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit, seeing our day with all its Babel of confusion, sent forth this message to His people, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." **Rev. 18:4.**

There is but one place of safety. It is not in the systems of religion. It is in our Lord Jesus Christ. The blood that He shed for the remission of the sins of the whole world is available in our day to all who will believe in Him. It still retains its ancient power to cleanse from all sin. It still is efficacious to deliver from every abominable sin of the past. It is able still to give victory for the future. The blood of Jesus Christ is better than the blood of Abel, better far than all other sacrifice and offering. It is able, not only to sprinkle the unclean, but to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God, making pure as angels the vilest sinner who believes in its power.

The hour has come to turn from the vanities of earth's religions and all the masquerading they have done in the name of church. "Behold," saith Christ, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. He that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." **Rev. 3:20-22.**

CHAPTER FOUR THE END OF THE DAYS

That we are living in the final days, if not the closing hours, of this age there can be no reasonable doubt, and as we see the long awaited day approaching, our hearts are mightily stirred to reveal from scripture just how near the end of the age must be.

It will not be my purpose here to recount those oft repeated signs which God's word sets forth as evidence of the last days, such as the recurrence of the universal wickedness of the days of Noah or the abounding sin and lawlessness which Paul sets forth as clear evidence of the last days. 2 Tim. 3. I will endeavor, however, to set forth as clearly and simply as possible a form of evidence which to most Christians has become almost an anathema to be avoided as much as possible by those who endeavor to expound the mysteries that concern the end of the age.

The understandable apprehension we justly display concerning any form of date setting has, I fear, become somewhat an obsession with most of us, causing us to immediately shun any effort to estimate the time of His coming as a totally unscriptural endeavor that should not be countenanced, even in the least degree. Whenever reference is made to the time of the Lord's coming, we are promptly reminded that "No man knoweth the day or the hour when the Son of man cometh." That one statement is supposed to preclude and abolish every honest attempt that might be made to interpret those very definite prophetic utterances which concern the end of the age, the time of the Lord's coming, and the resurrection of the just.

In my opinion there is not a man on earth who knows the day or the hour of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I will certainly not try to solve the riddle in this message because I frankly confess I do not know. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul wrote to the saints of God in these words: "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so

cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." **1 Thess. 5:1-6.**

If these solemn words mean anything at all, they must certainly mean that in the world today there are children of light who are not asleep, but wide awake and fully aware of the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Just as some watchful, well-informed person might know the hour in which a thief would come, so these enlightened ones should also know the time of the advent of Him who likened His coming to the stealthy approach of a thief in the night. Let us then ask ourselves one very important question. If the Lord did not want us to know almost the exact time of the end of this age and of the resurrection of the dead, why did He inspire the prophet Daniel to fill so large a part of his marvelous prophecy with days, weeks, years and times, which, when carefully reckoned, bring us to certain exact dates which, if correctly computed and properly understood, point with unerring certainty to the time in which this present age will end?

As in the fear of God we examine the scriptures given by Daniel the prophet, foretelling the time of the coming of Christ, the end of the age and the resurrection of the just, it will surely become evident that the Lord on several occasions has placed in His word the exact date of the end of the age and the resurrection of the just. It may very well be that our understanding of the scriptures is painfully faulty; thus would our understanding become misunderstanding. Nevertheless, regarding this momentous event of the ages, the prophet Daniel was clearly told, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." **Dan. 12:10.**

There is a holy wisdom that is always hidden from the world of the ungodly and the realm of the careless. It is a secret wisdom, which God imparts to those who are possessors of His mind. The wicked and the careless cannot partake of the riches of this spiritual understanding because it is a secret wisdom, the priceless gift of the Holy Ghost. Concerning this hidden wisdom which God imparts to His mature saints, a very vivid description is set forth in the Revised Standard Version of **1 Cor. 2:6-14.** "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." Is it any wonder, then, that the apostle said we have no need to be in darkness that that day should come upon us unawares?

Never in the history of the world was there an age of greater self-conceit, materialism, pride, arrogance, selfishness, greed, corruption and false religion! Mankind in our day is filled with all unrighteousness, which is manifest in all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, gossip, slander, hatred of God, insolence, haughty pride, evil inventions, disobedience to parents, lawlessness, foolishness, faithlessness, heartlessness and ruthlessness, and with all this disregard for all righteousness, women are changing their natural relations with men for that which is unnatural and men in their degradation and corruption are leaving their natural relations with women to burn in their filthy lusts one for another and are receiving the just judgment of God, which manifests itself in diseased bodies and reprobate minds that delight only in evil.

Our Lord Jesus Christ likened this wicked generation in which we now live to the days of Noah, saying, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and took them all away. Vivid as was the description Jesus gave concerning the corruption that is to abound at the end of the age, it was not more cogent than the words written by Moses concerning the universal corruption that abounded in the days of Noah. The conditions extant in the pre-flood world are forcefully left for our learning in these vivid words of instruction: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Gen. 6:5, 11-13.

The signal for the downfall of the Adamic race, the rampant sinfulness, the degrading corruption and defiance of God that followed was manifested when the sons of God began to intermarry with the daughters of men. Gen. 6:1. The sons of God referred to here are not fallen angels as the preachers are so fond of saying. Angels, whether fallen or otherwise, are sexless beings and cannot co-habit with humanity. The sons of God here mentioned are the Adamic race. The scripture distinctly states that Adam was the Son of God. Luke 3:38. Therefore his descendants were also sons of God. The daughters of men were the people of the pre-Adamic races. It was among these pre-Adamic people that the wicked Cain found his wife. All forms of intermarriage with any of these other races are strictly forbidden time and again in scripture. This "going after strange flesh" (Jude 7) and taking strange wives from other races is always condemned by God and brings the participants under wrath and condemnation. Nowhere in all the scripture do we ever find justification for intermarriage among the races. God separated them and commanded kind to produce after his kind. Those interested in the subject should study 1 Kings 11:8; Ezra 10:2,10,11,14,17,18,44 and Neh. 13:27. When the prophet Baalam could not find a way to curse Israel, but only bless them, he slyly cast a stumbling block before them and taught them to sin so that the wrath of God would come upon them. This diabolical and crafty stratagem of his is clearly disclosed in Christ's message to the church of Pergamos: "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Baalam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." **Rev. 2:14.** Now it is evident from the Genesis account that their fornication was not illicit intercourse between Israelitish men and women, but they went after strange flesh, intermarrying and committing fornication with the Canaanitish women round about them. The Old Testament does not tell us that this promiscuity was the result of Baalam's teaching, but Jesus discloses that sordid fact in His message to Pergamos.

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifice of their gods: and the people did eat and bow down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand." **Num. 25:1-9.**

I do not ask what your opinion may be concerning the intermarriage of Adamites with non-Adamites, for neither your opinion nor mine is of any importance. The only opinion that is worth a moment's consideration is the opinion of God. He it was who said that kind should be after his kind and, though I personally have the deepest respect for all races of men as also has the Lord, our intermarriage with them is always the beginning of sorrows. The blatant disregard for this fact in our day is one of the chief contributing causes for all the turmoil, lawlessness and violence we find among us. No Christian should ever consent to such a union. It is not only a sin on the part of the Adamite, but it is a grave sin against the non-Adamite and the chief sufferers in the days to come will be the mongrel children of such a union. Flee from all thought of such intermarriage, for God's word everywhere condemns it. It was Solomon's intermarriage with the heathen princesses of the nations round about that not only turned his heart away from God, but also brought the idolatrous worship of these women into the nation Israel.

I am one hundred percent convinced that we are an Israel nation, possessors of all the promises given to our father Abraham. Because of this it is one hundred percent wrong to invite heathen people of other nations to come to our country to teach our children in our schools and universities and to introduce their heathen gods and practices into our midst. What blessing has Mohammedanism ever brought to the world? It has brought nothing but filth, squalor and desolation. Has Buddha ever lifted the deep darkness from the begging, benighted millions of India? The more this evil in going after strange flesh is practiced in our land the greater will become the depravity of the human mind, Rom. 1, until even now in our day men do not want to retain God

in their knowledge at all because they know that everything that God is or does condemns their evil practices and brings them into judgment.

When the prophet Daniel with much fasting and prayer earnestly sought the Lord for a clear understanding of the visions that had been entrusted to him, the Lord gave him no reply that he could understand, but said, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shall rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." **Dan. 12:12-13.**

Every honest heart, seeking for truth, will face the very evident fact that in verse 11 the Lord spoke of a period of one thousand two hundred and ninety days and in verse 12 He spoke of one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. Then Daniel was told that he would rest, evidently in death, and "stand in his lot" or be resurrected at the end of the days. It must surely become evident that, if the Lord told His servant Daniel that he would rest and after thirteen hundred and thirty-five days (years) he would stand in his lot, the Lord was certainly telling him the exact time of his resurrection. Since the just shall be resurrected at the time of Christ's coming, then the Lord was telling us all what time the resurrection would occur, that is, at the end of the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days. This knowledge increases the forcefulness of the words of Paul: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." **1 Thess. 5:4.**

The twelve hundred and ninety days of Daniel 12:11 and the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days of verse 12 are not the only days given us in this great prophetic book. In chapter 8:14 we are given another period of twenty-three hundred days, after which the sanctuary would be cleansed, and again in chapter 9:24 we are told of a period of seventy weeks that were to pass, encompassing the entire history of Israel up to the time of the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, which undoubtedly refers to the kingdom of God. Then once again we are given a period of twenty-five hundred and twenty days, during which Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles and after which Jerusalem would once again become the possession of the Israel people.

When we consider all these "days", described with such emphasis in Daniel's prophecy, it becomes quite easy to see that, when the Lord told Daniel he would stand in his lot at the end of the days, it was to the above mentioned days he was referring and to none other. If, therefore, by the help of God we can discover what these days mean, where they begin and where they end, we will certainly not be ignorant as to when the end of the days will come and when the end of the present age will arrive. If your friend should tell you that he plans to visit you twenty-five days after Christmas, then it should be a simple matter to count the days on your calendar and conclude exactly what day he will arrive. In like manner, when the Lord tells us He will come twenty-five hundred years after a certain date or thirteen hundred and thirty-five years after another date, we also should be able to compute almost exactly the time of His coming.

No one on earth realizes more than I do how easy it is to make mistakes or be found wanting in our understanding of these things, but of this I am certain: The Lord in His faithfulness caused these days to be recorded for our edification that the wise might understand. Dan. 12:10. If, therefore, we understand these days correctly, we will be aware of the time of the Lord's coming and, should our understanding be found faulty, sooner or later God will reveal the correct interpretation. It is well for us to remember that, when Daniel sought to know the meaning of these time visions he had seen, he was refused the information on this significant ground: "The vision is closed up and sealed till the time of the end". **Dan. 12:9.** Since Daniel lived twenty-five hundred years before the end of the days and the fulfillment of his vision, it would seem to be unnecessary for him to understand the details. The truth is that like all prophets he was ministering to us, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Let us, then, seek to know, not the day or the hour, but most certainly the time when we will arrive at the end of the days.

When architects draw blue prints for a new building, they always use scales of measurement. The scale they use is plainly indicated on the blue print so that the builders will know exactly how to read it. The scale he uses may be one inch to ten feet, or for greater detail he may make an inset using a larger scale. For instance, on a map of the state of Illinois the scale may be an inch for one hundred miles, but on the same there is an inset of the city of Chicago with a scale of one inch for a mile.

In exactly the same manner as an architect uses a convenient scale of measurement to represent the dimensions of a building, so the Holy Spirit uses time scales to represent the length of time that will pass before certain prophecies are fulfilled. Perhaps the simplest example of a time scale may be found in the

prophecy of Ezekiel. Here the prophet was told to lie upon his left side three hundred and ninety days to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel and then to lie upon his right side forty days to bear the iniquity of Judah. Then in **Ezekiel 4:6** the Lord said to the prophet, "Thou shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year." This then is the Bible time scale wherever days are indicated as a time scale. One day represents one year. Thus, when a period of twenty-three hundred days was indicated to Daniel, the meaning is twenty-three hundred years. When the scale measures twenty-five hundred and twenty days, the time is twenty-five hundred and twenty years and, when the scale measures twelve hundred and ninety days, the time will be twelve hundred and ninety years. Days, however, are not the only time scales given in the Bible. We also have a scale of weeks, which, of course, are made up of seven days. There is also a week of weeks, a week of years, and a week of weeks of years, which is forty-nine years. See Lev. 25:1-13. There is also a week of millenniums, which is seven thousand years. But, as our primary interest now is to deal with the scale of days, we need not confuse our minds by trying to grasp the meaning of these older time measurements.

As the prophet Daniel was earnestly seeking the Lord for an understanding of the great events that would concern Israel before the time of the end of the days, he says, "Whilst I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: ..." **Dan. 9:21-25.**

Two time scales are used here to show the coming of great events. Both are called weeks. In verses 24 and 25 the time week used is the week of weeks of years, that is, a week forty-nine years long, or the jubilee cycle. This seven Sabbaths of years unto the jubilee is clearly stated in **Lev. 25:8-10.** "And thou shall number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years: and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shall thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his own possession, and ye shall return every man unto his own family." It will be seen, then, that we have here a week forty-nine years long, composed of seven days, each day being seven years long. Now let us remember that Gabriel, in his message to Daniel, showed him that seventy weeks were determined upon his people and that in this time the Lord would accomplish six very outstanding things. He would (1) finish the transgression, (2) make an end of sins, (3) make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) seal up the vision and prophecy, and (6) anoint the most Holy. The bringing in of everlasting righteousness and the anointing of the most Holy brings us right down to the end of this age and the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

It is not my wish to try to over-simplify a matter that has puzzled men from Daniel's day until now, but it seems perfectly clear that, by using the forty-nine year week of the jubilee here, the seventy weeks of which Daniel speaks in chapter 9:24 actually embrace the entire history of Israel from the day of the exodus from Egypt (**Exod. 12:2**) unto the end of the days and the bringing in of aionian righteousness, which, of course, is the kingdom of God. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people", each week being forty-nine years long as we have already seen. Thus seventy times forty-nine equals three thousand four hundred and thirty years. Since the international geophysical year of 1957, when such a wealth of new knowledge was discovered, the date of Israel's departure from Egypt has been definitely set as 1453 B.C. in the month of Nisan, which is April. Thus three thousand four hundred and thirty years after April, 1453 B.C., plus the final jubilee year, brings us to the period between 1978 and 1979. It is not unreasonable, then, to expect that the seventy weeks, which Gabriel said were determined upon Israel before everlasting righteousness would be brought in, come to their end some time in 1978.

The prophecy of the seventy weeks, which we have briefly considered, is most sweeping and all embracing in its dimension since it includes the entire existence of Israel as a nation from year one (Exod. 12:2, the beginning of months) when the nation departed from Egypt in 1453 B.C. down to 1978-79 A.D., the end of the seventy weeks. Though undoubtedly there remains much about these final times that we will not have wisdom to understand, there need be no doubt in our minds that this prophecy of the seventy weeks brings us right down to our time and the end of the days.

Following the large scale seventy weeks prophecy, which covers a period of three thousand four hundred and thirty years, we have another prophecy which also embraces a very long period of time, two thousand five hundred and twenty years.

Two years after Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne of Babylon, he had a perplexing dream, which none of the wise men of his realm could interpret for him except Daniel the prophet Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream definitely showed that the dream embraced the entire period of world history from the time Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon in 604 B.C. to the time of the end when the entire Babylon system of world government would be destroyed and the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. This is the dream and the interpretation Daniel gave: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of iron forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." **Dan. 2:37-42, 44.**

This is indeed a very extensive prophecy. There is no possible way that we can read it and not be convinced that it covers the whole gamut of history as it proceeds from the coronation of Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon through the empires of Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and Papal Rome right down to the time when the kingdom of God shall take over all the kingdoms of earth and the stone cut from the mountain without hands, which is Christ, will become King of kings and Lord of lords.

Though Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image, of which he was the head, is in itself a very remarkable prophecy, it would do little more than give us a pre-written account of world history were it not for a second awesome event that took place in his life. The fourth chapter of Daniel records another disquieting dream that overawed the king and seemed to make his blood run cold. Though the dream was from God, it must certainly have seemed to him to have been a literal nightmare. The reader should familiarize himself with the entire fourth chapter of Daniel that its full significance may be the more clearly understood.

In his dream Nebuchadnezzar had seen a tree of great height grow out of the earth. The tree was strong. The height thereof reached to heaven and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all. The beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh fed of it. Dan. 4:10-12. Then the vision changed, and Nebuchadnezzar continued, "I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches: Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him." **Dan. 4:13-16.** In the remaining verses of the fourth chapter the prophet explained to Nebuchadnezzar the ominous import of the vision and the fearful consequence it envisioned. At the end of twelve months (Dan 4:11) all the calamities Nebuchadnezzar had seen actually came upon him until this

mighty monarch learned from God's omnipotent hand that it is the Most High that ruleth in the kingdoms of men and giveth them to whomsoever He pleases.

Now, while the seven times which passed over Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:32) may or may not have represented seven full years of calamity in his own life, I am confident that this vision concerned itself with far more than Nebuchadnezzar. The vision actually indicated the entire length of time through which the Babylon system of world government would hold its power and dominion over the earth. We must not forget that, whether it be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, pagan Rome or papal Rome, all these systems are the very quintessence of Babylon. Every form of world government, whether it be democracy, monarchy, Nazism, Facism, Communism or any other human system, all are Babylon. All are confusion. All belong to the beast system (see Daniel 7) and all carry and support the drunken harlot with whom the kings and rulers commit fornication. Rev. 17:2. Whereas Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was the head of gold, all lesser forms of government come under that Babylon head. All nations have fully drunk of the wrath of the wine of her fornication. See Rev. 17. Babylon is the mysterious harlot, drunken with the blood of the saints, who in her drunken corruption rides majestically upon the back of the beast of this world's systems, whether they be religious or political.

The seven times indicated in the king's dream presupposes the exact length of time this Babylon system will endure. A time in scripture is another of God's time scales by which the great architect of the universe indicates the interval that will endure before the end of the days and the end of the age. The word times here is from the Hebrew word iddan, meaning a set period of time. It does not mean a point in time. In Daniel's interpretation of the vision he spoke of seven times that would pass over Nebuchadnezzar "till thou shall know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will." **Dan. 4:32.** The world events that were to take place during this long period of seven times are fully described in chapter seven, which envisions the rise and fall of the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. All these world empires were to be Gentile powers that would dominate the world, overrun Jerusalem, and desolate the Promised Land until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

It was our Lord Jesus Christ who first used the term, the times of the Gentiles. He was telling His disciples of the terrible tribulation that would follow His death, when Jerusalem would be compassed with armies, and there would be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people. He said, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." **Luke 21:20-24.** The times of the Gentiles of which Jesus spoke are identical with the seven times of which Daniel spoke. When Daniel saw his vision about 607 B.C., Jerusalem was already trodden down by the might of the Gentile power of Babylon, and when Jesus spoke the words of Luke 21:20-24, Jerusalem was under the domination and iron rule of the Gentile power of Rome. This treading down of Jerusalem by Gentile power was to continue under one oppressor after another - Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and finally Mohammedanism - until the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled. THE LAST Gentile power to crush Jerusalem under its feet was the Turkish Empire, which lost its control when Jerusalem was captured by the British in 1917 to later become capital of the State of Israel.

It will now be our task to discover how long a period is indicated by "a time." If we can discover the length of one time, then immediately things that have puzzled us for centuries begin to fall into place. There does not seem to be any instruction in the Old Testament that would indicate the length of a time. This absence of understanding is significant because the Lord did not intend that the Old Testament saints should know the full meaning of these things. Thus, when Daniel sought the interpretation of his visions, he was distinctly told that the vision was sealed until the time of the end Hence the things Daniel wrote were not for him to understand, but were given for our edification to be understood by those of us who would be on the earth at the end of the days and also at the end of the times of the Gentiles.

For this reason the key to the length of a time is not found in the Old Testament at all, and without that key none could ever interpret the vision. But in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the key to the length of a time is given. In Revelation, chapters eleven and twelve, we have the use of three very significant terms. The first has to do with months (11:2), the second with days (11:3), and the third with times (12:14). IF we place these three terms side by side, we discover the true length of a time. We read, "And to the woman (Israel) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she

is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time." **Rev. 12:14.** The John Knox translation says, "A year, two years, and half a year," and Moffatt uses the expression, "a time, two times, and half a time."

Then much more light is thrown on the subject when in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6 we have the same time broken down into days by the expression "a thousand two hundred and three score days (1260) days." This is exactly three and one-half lunar years, or time, times and half a time, or a year, two years, and half a year. Again in 11:2 we have another useful expression that greatly helps us to understand the length of a time, for here we read forty and two months. The months referred to here are undoubtedly the lunar months of thirty days each, used by the Gentile powers who controlled Palestine right up to the end of the times of the Gentiles in 1917. The lunar month was thirty days. Therefore forty-two lunar months equal one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Thus from the following three expressions we discover the definite length of a time:

The first, Rev. 11:3 and 12:6, reads twelve hundred and sixty days, = 1260 days

The second, Rev. 12:14, time, times, and half a time, = 1260 days

The third, Rev. 11:2, forty-two months (lunar). = 1260 days

From this evidence we can scarcely come to any other conclusion than this: If three and one-half times equal twelve hundred and sixty days, the one time must equal twelve hundred and sixty divided by three and one-half, which is three hundred and sixty days. Thus, if one time equals three hundred and sixty days, then the seven times of Daniel's prophecy must certainly mean three hundred and sixty times seven, which is two thousand five hundred and twenty days. And whereas the time scale reads a day for a year (Ezek. 4:6), then the seven times referred to in Daniel undoubtedly means two thousand five hundred and twenty years.

We should digress from our subject for a moment to consider a thought of great importance. For centuries the preachers have been saying that Jesus spoke in parables to make the gospel so simple that everybody could understand what He was saying. This is a teaching I do not believe, because it is unscriptural. The opposite is the truth. Jesus spoke in parables so that very few could understand what He was saying. This was made abundantly clear when His disciples asked Him, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" His reply was this: "Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." **Vs. 13.** Now does that sound as though He was trying by His parables to make everybody understand? It certainly does not. Then again He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" **Mark 4:11, 12.**

If we will but remember this very important fact, we will understand why the Lord uses these difficult terms such as time, times and half a time, forty-two months, twelve hundred and sixty days, seven times, and the end of the days, and then, as if to complicate the parable further, He left us to discover from Ezekiel's prophecy that a day on His time scale may represent a year, or even a thousand years. 2 Pet. 3:8. These things were done so that none of the wicked would understand, but the wise shall understand. Dan. 12:10. Even Daniel himself, who wrote these things and sought so earnestly for the solution of the mystery, was told only, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shall rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." **Dan. 12:12-13.** Though that may have seemed like a brush-off to poor Daniel, it was really a blessed promise that he would be resurrected at the end of the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days mentioned in verse 12. We will consider these days presently.

Let us first, however, consider the meaning of the seven times or the twenty-five hundred and twenty days during which time the empires of world, all as integral parts of the image of Babylon, would rise in their successive order of power and might and suddenly come to their end exactly at the end of the seven times or the twenty-five hundred and twenty years. So exact is their rise and fall at the time appointed that one cannot imagine how it would be possible for anyone to doubt the absolute accuracy of the word of God or the inspiration of the prophet who gave us these things. Let us recall here that Jesus said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," (**Luke 21:24**), and that Daniel had told

Nebuchadnezzar that seven times would pass over him. Please remember that the times of the Gentiles, spoken of by Jesus, and the seven times of Daniel's prophecy are one and the same thing.

The Assyrian Empire fell in 607 B.C. and the Babylonian Empire with Nebuchadnezzar as its head came into the ascendancy that same year. In 604 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar captured the city of Jerusalem and Jerusalem for the next twenty-five hundred and twenty years was literally trodden down of the Gentiles. Now is it not most noteworthy to find that exactly twenty-five hundred and twenty years after 607 B.C., when Babylon became a world power, we arrive at the momentous year A.D. 1914? This was the year the first World War began, the war that was to end with the destruction of the Turkish Empire, the deliverance of Jerusalem from Gentile power, and the end of the times of the Gentiles. Though this is a most remarkable thing, it is not more phenomenal than the fact that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in the year 604 B.C. and twenty-five hundred and twenty years after 604 B.C. brings us to A.D. 1917, when the British army under General Allenby captured Jerusalem, December 11, 1917, and marched into the city without firing a shot, while the massed bands of the British army played

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Thus exactly and perfectly on schedule the seven times prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. Seven times, or twenty-five hundred and twenty years, after Babylon rose to power in 607 B.C., the war that was to liberate Palestine began, and seven times, or twenty-five hundred and twenty years, after Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in 604 B.C., the city was recaptured by the British forces (which are Israel). The times of the Gentiles were fulfilled and Jerusalem was to be trodden down of Gentiles no more.

In connection with this historic event, the re-capture of Jerusalem, I would like to make special mention of the prophecy of **Isaiah 31:4-5**. "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey ... so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hills thereof. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it."

As the British war planes like birds flew low over Jerusalem on this momentous occasion, the Turks fled and the British army marched unresisted into the city. Every commentator I have read or heard in the last fifty years admits that this momentous event was the fulfillment of **Isa. 31:5**, "As birds flying, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem; defending He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it." Remarkable as is this dramatic fulfillment of prophecy, we cannot miss the pertinent fact that in verse four those conquering forces were definitely identified as "the lion and the young lion roaring on the prey." No forces in the world other than British can be identified as the lion and the young lion. These symbols are not only British, but Israelitish as well, and do in my opinion form a mind-numbing proof that the conquering British armies were the armies of Israel. Otherwise Jerusalem would still have been trodden down of Gentiles.

World War I was the most fearful convulsion the world has ever known. In its bloody wave 65,038,810 men were mobilized of whom 9,538,315 were killed, 21,219,452 were wounded. 7,750,919 were taken prisoner or missing. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the total casualties were 37,404,186. No wonder our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of the day when nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, said this would be the beginning of sorrows. This devastating conflagration was followed by the Spanish influenza 1918-1919, in which plague it is estimated that twenty million people perished and fifty times that number were stricken with the disease.

The appalling conflagration of 1914-1918 and the desolating plague of influenza that followed it were the true beginning of sorrows and the time of Jacob's trouble. After twenty years of world-wide unrest and international sabre rattling and bloodshed the already reeling world was struck another staggering blow by the outbreak of World War II. Into this raging sea of blood and tears and incredible devastation waded the armies, the air forces, the navies and the civilians of fifty-seven nations, and when at last the guns fell silent and bombs ceased to fall, another 15,000,000 men had lost their lives besides an incredible number of men, women, and

children of the nations involved. The cost in money and equipment could not possibly be estimated. The cost to the United States alone was estimated to be three hundred and fifty billion dollars. This unspeakable conflagration saw the dropping of the first atomic bomb and the unbelievable incineration of two great cities and their inhabitants.

Since the closing of World War II, there has not been a day of peace on earth. Devastating local wars have been fought by many nations, and even now all signs point to the final holocaust that will end with the coming of Christ to take the government of the world. In our day we are seeing the literal fulfillment of the words of Jesus, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved..." **Matt. 24:22.**

Speaking of these days of sorrow and trouble, our Lord Jesus gave us a faithful promise when He said, "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." **Luke 21:32.** The words this generation evidently have reference to the generation that would be living when these things begin to come to pass. That, of course, is our own generation. As our life expectancy is three score and ten years, then a generation must be considered to be between sixty-five and seventy years. Many among us who were small children when this beginning of sorrows began in 1914 may yet live to see all things fulfilled.

In a writing such as this, when we walk in unknown paths that lead over unfamiliar ground, it is easy for us to become confused as our minds begin to swim with figures and statements of facts. We should not, however, be too surprised at our apparent lack of understanding since Daniel, noted in scripture for wisdom and understanding, could not in spite of all his effort comprehend the wonders he had seen, but remained to his death in doubt as to their meaning. Thus he writes, "I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." **Dan. 8:27.** The Lord had said that these things were sealed up until the time of the end, and, were it not for those promising words, until the time of the end, it would be vain for us to endeavor to search them out. But we who live at the end of the days will surely find their meaning. If, however, in our earnest search we find our calculations to be imperfect by a few years, we may rest assured that the time of the end and the end of the days are very near at hand.

Another direct Bible prophecy concerning the end of the days is found in Daniel, chapter 8. In this vision, which occurred in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, Daniel was given a vision of the destruction of the Babylonian Empire by Medo-Persia and the subsequent destruction of the Medo-Persian Empire by Greece. Here in symbol Medo-Persia is characterized as a ram having two horns, pushing north and south and westward so that no beasts could stand before him. Compare Dan. 8:1-4 with verse 20. In the midst of these mighty Medo-Persian conquests another beast appears in the form of a rough he-goat with a notable horn between his eyes. This he-goat is the kingdom of Greece (verse 21), which rose to the height of its power under Alexander the Great.

In the vision Daniel saw the he-goat (Greece) with the notable horn between his eyes come from the west. He came against the ram in the fury of his power, and smote him, broke his horns (power), and stamped on him. Verse 7. Then the he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, suddenly the great horn between his eyes was broken. This evidently is a prophecy concerning the death of Alexander the Great, who had become so great in power that his empire extended from India to Ethiopia. It is doubtful if any conqueror who ever lived could equal his prowess as a general. Alexander died suddenly in 323 B.C. at the height of his power at the age of thirty-two years, having never once been defeated in battle. The death of Alexander was undoubtedly one of the most outstanding events in the history of the Grecian Empire and was the great turning point in her history. It was after Alexander died that the nation was divided into four heads according to the prophetic words of Daniel 8:8, and from one of the four horns came forth the little horn (verse 9) by whom Jerusalem was trodden down and the daily sacrifice was taken away. Dan. 8:12.

As Daniel was seeking to understand the vision, he "heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." **Dan. 8:13,14.** This twenty-three hundred days, which on the time scale would be twenty-three hundred years, from the time the daily sacrifice

was taken away is described in verse 19 as the last end of the indignation. The indignation is the desecrating of God's holy place, "for at the time appointed the end shall be." **Verse 19.**

It is not completely possible to say with dogmatic certainty just exactly what year we should begin counting the twenty-three hundred years, but we may say with a good deal of certainty that, because the vision concerned the Grecian Empire, and because after the death of Alexander the daily sacrifice was taken away, the approximate time to begin counting the twenty-three hundred days would be at the time of Alexander's death. If, then, the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.), clearly foretold in Dan. 8:8, is to be the starting point of the twenty-three hundred days, twenty-three hundred years after 323 B.C. brings us once again to the year 1978 A.D. as the approximate time of the end of the days. Whether this reckoning is exact or not makes little difference to the indisputable fact that we are now living at the very time of the close of this age and the beginning of the kingdom of God.

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." **Dan. 12:11-12.**

As we have considered different periods of days as stated in this book of Daniel, we have, I trust, come to realize more clearly the meaning of the expression the end of the days. Should we who live at the end of the days find ourselves puzzled or frustrated in our endeavors to understand such tremendous end time prophecies, then surely we should feel the stricture and perhaps embarrassment Daniel felt in his endeavor to comprehend the meaning of the riddle that confronted him, since he had not yet seen the beginning of days, let alone the end of them. But this man of God was plainly told that the message was sealed until the time of the end and could not be understood until then. Therefore the Lord dismissed him with these words: "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

While the words must have been disappointing to the prophet, they should be reason for great rejoicing to us who live in the end of the age. Since history has left us some definite dates to indicate the time these thirteen hundred and thirty-five days actually began, we are now able to begin our counting of these days with some certainty. Let us then rejoice in the perfect assurance that we are drawing near to that time of blessedness which was promised in these words: "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." These final words, spoken to Daniel, were intended to be both a great comfort to him and a refreshing source of knowledge and inspiration to us. "Thou shall rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" was a promise to him of the date of his own resurrection and the resurrection of all the righteous in Christ. "Go thou thy way until the end be: for thou shall rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." This to Daniel was a sure and certain promise of the resurrection. Though he has been at rest for more than twenty-five hundred years, he is now nearing the end of his days and, as it is a glorious hope for him, it is also a sure and certain hope for us, for "they without us shall not be made perfect."

As the twenty-five hundred and twenty days had to do with the Babylonian Empire and the twenty-three hundred days had to do with the Grecian Empire, so also now the twelve hundred and ninety days and the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days have to do with the desolating power of Mohammedanism.

Grattan Guinness, that great and learned man who lived in the latter part of the nineteenth century and who possessed a wonderful understanding of the end of the age, foretold in his day that the end of the limes of the Gentiles would come in the year 1917. At the time he predicted the beginning of World War I, which was to bring about the end of Gentile power over Jerusalem. Writing in his book, *The Approaching End of the Age*, page 431, he said, "The Papacy does not stand out more distinctly as the great apostasy of the west than does Mohammedanism as the great parallel apostasy of the east. The one originated from within the church, the other from without; but they rose together... They have run chronologically similar courses; they have both based their empire on religious pretensions; the one defiled and trampled down the church, the other defiled and trod down Jerusalem. The Holy Roman Empire under the control of the Papacy dominated nearly all of Europe whilst the Mohammedan Empire at its zenith extended all the way from Spain to India."

In one of His many serious talks with His disciples Jesus foretold the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem and the setting up of an "abomination that maketh desolate" in its place. One of the signs He gave as an

indication of His coming and the end of the age was, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." **Matt. 24:15-16.** When Jesus spoke these words, He was referring to the prophecy of **Daniel 12:11**, which says, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." That is, there will be twelve hundred and ninety years left until the end of the days.

Mahomet was born at Mecca 570 A.D. and died 632 A.D. The temple of the Lord at Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans just as Jesus had prophesied in Matt. 24:2 and as Daniel had prophesied in Dan. 9:26. But unknown to Daniel more than twelve hundred years were to elapse between the giving of the prophecy and the actual time the abomination of desolation was to be set up as he had foretold. In 622 A.D. Mohammed fled from Mecca, where he had preached and established some of his doctrines. The Mohammedan calendar begins from this date. Therefore A.D. 622 is year one on their calendar, which is reckoned, not by solar years, but by lunar years. After the death of Mohammed in 632 Omar became caliph. He came to Jerusalem and in the year 643 to 644 erected a temporary wooden mosque on the temple site. Just as the temple of the Lord had been the center of Israelitish worship, so now this abomination became the centre and symbol of Mohammedanism. The Christian patriarch at Jerusalem, upon seeing the building of the mosque, exclaimed, "The abomination of desolation is in the holy place!" No truer word was ever spoken; and there it must remain until the end of the thirteen hundred and thirty-five years, which will be the end of the days.

This building of the mosque of Omar in the year 643-644 was a very important event and should definitely be considered the starting point of the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days of Dan. 12:11. That its erection in the holy place is connected with the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days and the consequent end of the days there can be no reasonable doubt, for the scripture clearly indicates that following this event there would be thirteen hundred and thirty-five days (years) from that time until Daniel would stand in his lot at the end of the days. If this be correct, then it is only a matter of simple addition to compute that thirteen hundred and thirty-five years after 643-644 brings us to the year of 1978-79 as the time of the end of the days spoken of in Daniel's prophecy.

Now there appears to be a double confirmation here, for, while Omar built the wooden mosque in 643-644 A.D. and it remained on the site for some forty-four years, the present structure, The Dome of the Rock, commonly called the Mosque of Omar, was begun in the year 688 A.D., the work continuing until 691 A.D. These are the figures given by the Encyclopedia Britannica.

You have already noted that Daniel was given two sets of figures concerning this abomination of desolation — twelve hundred and ninety days and thirteen hundred and thirty-five days. In **Dan. 12:11** he was told that from the setting up of the abomination of desolation to the end there would be twelve hundred and ninety days (years), and then in **verse 12** he was further mystified by the baffling expression, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days." How was Daniel to know what the abomination of desolation would be and how much less was he to know that two structures would be built, the first one temporary to be begun in 643 A.D., almost twelve hundred years after his day, the second to be commenced in 688 A.D.? My readers must already have come to the conclusion that twelve hundred and ninety years after the erection of The Dome of the Rock in 688 brings us to the year 1978, and thirteen hundred and thirty-five years after the beginning of the temporary Mosque of Omar in 643 also brings us to the same date. Thus $688 + 1290 = 1978$ and $643 + 1335 = 1978$.

I have no desire whatever to be guilty of juggling figures like some dishonest accountant, and probably no one on earth realizes more than I do how overly easy it is to make mistakes or be in error. Even an error of a year or two might appear to make a shambles of all our reckoning. But of this one thing I am positive: Once the correct dates can be rightly computed to begin the counting of the days as given to Daniel for our benefit, we will know of a certainty the exact time when the days will end. As the Lord gave these days to Daniel, he was given the wonderful promise that the end of them would be the time of his resurrection. "Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days." I shall never apologize for truth. The only thing for which we need to apologize is our ignorance and inability to understand the things, which God has stated.

To recapitulate and show again the things which we have considered we must conclude that the years 1978 and 1979 must of necessity be years of great importance concerning the end of the age, for we have already endeavored to show to the best of our understanding that the long series of days and times given to Daniel all bring us to 1978-79 as the approximate time of the end of the days. Seventy weeks or thirty-four hundred and thirty years, determined upon God's people Israel, when added to the date of the exodus, which was the beginning of days for them, brings us to 1978. The twenty-three hundred days after the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. brings us again to 1978. Thirteen hundred and thirty-five years after the first mosque was built in 643 brings us to 1978, and twelve hundred and ninety years after the commencement of the Dome of the Rock in 688 B.C. brings us also to 1978-79.

In the great vision concerning Nebuchadnezzar and the succeeding Gentile powers twenty-five hundred and twenty years were to pass before Jerusalem would be delivered from Gentile power. Seven times or twenty-five hundred and twenty years after the capture of Jerusalem in 604 B.C. brings us to 1917, which is the year that Jerusalem was captured by the British forces to end the domination of Mohammedanism and all Gentile rule in that city. Speaking of the beginning of sorrows and the time of trouble that would be at the end, Jesus said, "This generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled." From 1917 until 1978 is sixty-one years, which is well within the scope of a generation.

I leave these thoughts with you for your earnest consideration. I do not infer that 1978-79 is the exact date of the end of the age, but, in the face of all the multiplied signs that point to the end of the age, now appearing on every hand in ever increasing numbers, we would be very foolish and very unbelieving if we did not see in this simple evidence both that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh and that we are in truth at the end of the days.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCERNING OUR TIMES

There are limitless ways to be wrong, but only one way to be right; therefore it behooves us all to recognize the frailty of our understanding and be ready, if necessary, to say, "I may be wrong," and in some cases, "I was wrong." The vast capability for human error was probably the reason the apostle James exhorted the saints with this pertinent observation: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness. For we all make many mistakes, and if anyone makes no mistakes in what he says, he is perfect." **Jas. 3:1-2.** Revised Standard. That piece of inspired advice should make us all take second thought before we presume to be teachers of the word or before we insist that we are right in what we say. I may therefore be wrong, but I am very much of the opinion that September-October 1979 brought us to the end of the days as they are set forth in the book of Daniel. We now appear to be in the interim period of disintegration when all the systems of the world are crumbling and falling apart just as we would expect them to do, since the feet of the image Daniel saw are an unstable mixture of iron mingled with clay.

The great nations of the world are falling apart. The mighty empires are no more. In a day not long ago, when the British lion roared, tyranny trembled, and when the American eagle screamed, nations bent on evil slunk away and all the world took heed. Now these two powerful brothers have lost their will to lead. They have abdicated their power to resist evil. Through the abundance of their riches they have corrupted themselves. They seem to have lost their souls. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the last days of our age, said, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." The people referred to here are the Israel people, and I declare that their gross darkness, their spiritual blindness, has become so incredible that in many cases heathen nations are showing more moral fiber than the so-called

Christian world. These nations, among whom it once was true that Christ was the glory of His people Israel, now have sunk so low that many of them do not know that Christ is God's Son. They do not know that He was God manifest in the flesh or that He died, was buried and rose again for our justification. The prophets of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ our Lord, together with the apostles He chose, have all joined their inspired words to affirm with one voice that the final days of this age of grace will be times of great trouble, unrest and tribulation. "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come," and to such an extent that men's

hearts will literally fail them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth, for even the powers of heaven will be shaken.

The prophet Daniel spoke of an un-named beast that would arise before the end of the age, a beast dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly with great iron teeth. It devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet. It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." **Dan. 7:7-8**. This reign of terror was to continue until the Ancient of days came, whose garment is as white as snow, and He took the kingdom. Bless His name!

The prophet **Isaiah**, foretelling the glory of the coming kingdom age, in **chapter 60, verse 2** uttered one short sentence that vividly portrays the spiritual condition of the world immediately before the setting up of the long-awaited and glorious kingdom of Christ. "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Darkness like a black mantle hangs over all the world at the present time. The light of Israel shines no more and the light of the church is that of a flickering, sputtering candle.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in strict harmony with the prophets asked this sobering question: "When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" The Emphatic Diaglott has it this way: "Will He find the faith on the earth?" This, I feel, is the true meaning of the passage. The world is full of preachers preaching every imaginable doctrine, but the faith, which was once delivered to the saints is sadly lacking and for the most part is not being preached at all. If you speak to the existing church about sects or denominations, they can identify with you immediately. Preach about church tradition and they know what you mean. Fill your sermons with soul-winning, missions, Sunday Schools, crusades, seminars, creeds, assemblies, doctrines, meetings, communions, baptisms, programs, campaigns, tract distribution, healings, gifts, personal work, radio, T.V., offerings, drives, buildings and building funds, invasions, publications, Bible Schools, alms, temples, special numbers and on and on ad nauseum, and with these things the people can identify. But, when you start to talk about the faith once delivered to the saints, the eternal purposes of God, the restitution of all things, reconciliation, repentance, regeneration, justification, the atonement, sanctification, the mind of Christ, election, predestination, the kingdom of God and sonship, and many other words of faith which the Holy Ghost teaches (2 Cor. 2:13), then the veil is upon their faces and they stagger in amazement and think the preacher has taken leave of his senses. With sympathetic tones and knowing glances they whisper, "He has gone off the deep end," or "He is away out in left field," and other such expressions of infantile understanding. The existing church system of our day with its vast array of petty sects and vainglorious denominations has a form of godliness, but is in every sense denying the power of it. From all such God commands us to turn away.

Then again the infallible Lord Jesus taught us, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." **Matt. 24:37**. The sixth chapter of Genesis gives the reader a vivid picture of world conditions in the days of Noah. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." **Gen. 6:5**. And again, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." **Gen. 6:11-13**. There was also another evil rampant in Noah's day, and this same evil is becoming rampant in our day, but, alas, it is being passed over with a careless shrug. Adam was a Son of God (Luke 3:16-38) and the sons of God spoken of in Genesis 6:4 were the descendants of Adam. They were Adamites. Though the Bible deals in particular only with the seed of Adam, or the sons of God, by definite, unmistakable inference it becomes perfectly clear that races of men other than Adamites were on the earth, not only at the same time as Adam, but in all probability long before he came. These other races are not called sons of God, but are referred to as men.

An inference in scripture is as strong as, or perhaps stronger than, a direct statement. Thus, when the Lord banished Cain from His presence, Cain complained, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me." See **Gen.**

4:13-14. At the time this statement was made, only Adam and Eve and Cain remained of the Adamites. Abel had already been slain. Before whom, then, was Cain to be a fugitive in the earth? To whom did he refer when he said everyone who found him would slay him? If no other races existed, why did he fear that someone would slay him? Nay, but other races did exist and the indisputable inference is that Cain, being an Adamite and undoubtedly white of skin, was afraid that all these blacks and browns and yellows, who dwelt outside of Eden, would seek to kill him. Then, too, is it not a singular thing that Cain, having departed to the land of Nod, which means the land of wanderings, found a wife? The old question, "Where did Cain get his wife," vexes and befuddles all who fail to see that pre-Adamic races existed. Without doubt Cain married one of these daughters of men and was the first Adamite to begin the wicked practice of intermarrying with these forbidden tribes. Then not only did Cain marry a wife in his wanderings, but, the story goes on to relate, he also built a city. Verse 17. None of these wandering tribes had ever thought of building a city; neither had any of them ever tilled the ground. Gen. 1:5; 4:2. They were just as the savages are in our day.

By the time of Noah the earth had corrupted itself to such an extent that the sons of God - that is, the Adamites - were freely mingling with the daughters of men and taking them wives of all that they chose. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." **Gen. 6:1-4.** The idea advanced by some that the sons of God were the angels who married Adamites is in my opinion too ridiculous for comment. Angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. They are sexless beings and do not possess the powers of incarnation. Such jejune statements are made because of prevailing and perverse ignorance of the fact that there were other man-like beings on the earth as well as Adam and concurrent with him. We should dismiss all such artful dodging of the truth and open our minds to the fact that Adam was a special creation in God's image, destined to have dominion over all else in the world and eventually, when fully sharing God's image, to govern the universe, but that he was not alone in the earth there is abundant evidence.

The moment you understand this truth, it is a simple matter to grasp why it is that the scripture, speaking of the last days, plainly tells us, "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." **Dan. 2:43.** This forbidden act of Adamites inter-marrying with non-Adamites is a sign of the end of the age now just as it was a sign of the flood in Noah's day, and just as the wickedness of the earth was vastly increased by this wicked fornication with other races, so today the more this practice of "going after strange flesh" (**Jude 7**) is pursued so much the more evil and darkness comes upon the face of the earth. I verily believe it is a great sin against light for any child of Adam to intermarry with any pre-Adamic race. The Old Testament scriptures abound with warnings and judgments against any such thing to such an extent that both Ezra and Nehemiah forced the Israelites to put those wives away. See Ezra 10:10-19; Neh. 13:23-31; See also Deut. 7:1-4. A bastard in the language of the Old Testament is not a child born out of wedlock, but a child born of one of these illegitimate unions.

To talk about sin and corruption has never been a delight of mine. I would much sooner spend my time considering the incorruptible realms of the Spirit, but, since Jesus and His apostles and the prophets taught us to be watchers lest the great day of the Lord should come upon us unawares, it behooves us at times to pause in our flight to the celestial realms to examine ourselves and take particular notice that all the signs about us are pointing to the end of the age and the coming of our long awaited Lord. For this reason Jesus warned us that in the end of the age the world would be as wicked and violent, as adulterous and barbaric, as it was in the days of Noah and that the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts would be only evil continually.

In like manner He warned of another sordid evil of the last days when He said that as it was in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, so should it be when the Son of man would be revealed. Luke 17:20-30. The sin that ran rampant in Sodom was homosexuality in all its debasing, degrading, defiling debauchery. Sodom was a city situated on the Dead Sea, destroyed with its neighboring city, Gomorrah, because of the wickedness of the people. Gen. 18:10. From the proper noun, Sodom, comes the noun sodomy, which means unnatural sexual relations, especially between male persons or between a human being and an animal. This filthy, barbaric crime was the sin that caused the overthrow of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven so that not one person save righteous Lot and his two daughters escaped. Gen. 19.

It is a tragedy of enormous proportions that in our day this sin is again rampant in the earth. The significant thing is that it has only become rampant in the last twenty years. To earth's unspeakable shame so-called homosexual churches now claim over fifty thousand members. In their towering blasphemy they even profess to hold what they imagine to be "Holy Ghost conventions." I can think of nothing more blasphemous than this! This vile dissipation with all its devitalizing, debilitating corruption is present, not only among members of congregations, but also among an effeminate Protestant and Catholic, dissolute and immoral clergy, not excluding many so-called evangelical denominations. We have no delight in disclosing these evils, but let the unrestrained ragings of these crimes warn us that the day of vengeance and judgment and the end of the age is even at our doors, for as it was in the days of Sodom, so shall it be when the Son of man comes.

In his second epistle to Timothy Paul warned that "in the last days perilous times shall come, for," said he, "men shall be lovers of their own selves." From this love of self all the other evils of our day apparently spring. While considering this present day love of self, a few lines from the poetry of Macaulay comes to mind:

Then none was for the party;
Then all were for the state.
Then the great man helped the poor
And the poor man loved the great.
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold.
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

**Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe.
The Tribunes beard the high;
The Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we grow cold;
Wherefore men fight not as
In the brave days of old.**

Proceeding from the love of self, evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Men became covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high, minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. 2 Tim. 3:1-4. To this conspicuous list of end time evils the apostle James adds still another sign of the last times in his reference to the enormous fortunes that would be amassed in the last days. If Adam had earned ten thousand dollars a year from his day until now, he would have earned sixty million dollars, but in these last days many men have amassed fortunes of that magnitude in much less than a lifetime. But says James, "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you." Then to the faithful brethren he offers these comforting words: "**Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.**" **James 5:3,7.**

Before His departure out of this world our Lord briefed His disciples concerning the abounding iniquity of the last days. He made it clear that this great resurgence of sin would be due to an unprecedented falling away from the faith. So great was this regression and backsliding to be that it would be a question whether or not the faith would survive until He returned. I cannot agree in the least with those people who are predicting a world, wide revival before the end of this age and before the Lord returns. It is most evident that the entire body of Holy Scripture loudly proclaims an ever, increasing corruption, not only in the world and its corrupt systems, but in professed Christendom as well. If our age is going to end in a world shaking revival, as so many preachers are so fond of predicting, then why did Jesus ask, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find the faith on the earth?" The indisputable evidence is that He will not, except it be in a few elect. Again, if the days of the coming of the Son of man are going to be a repetition of the days of Noah, then how would this

substantiate the idea that there will be a world-wide, earth-shaking revival? In Noah's day the whole world was full of scoffing and unbelief and in the days of Sodom, in spite of Abraham's fervent intercession, not even ten righteous could be found. Gen. 18:23-33. The idea of a great revival before the end of the age is not founded on fact. The scripture that describes our time gives evidence in these words: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:3. Considering the facts, we can scarcely avoid the conclusion that those who are persuading themselves and the people who follow them that a mighty revival is on the way are themselves the true deceivers.

The present generation is seeing a clear vindication of the foreknowledge of God and His apostles and prophets. Those who today devoutly accept and believe the full counsel of the Lord are a tiny fraction of the human race. Even in the so, called Christian west the number of truly faithful is declining lamentably. As the older generation, who knew somewhat of the glory of God, is passing away, a new generation is rising with its hard rock music, its lightness and frivolous pretense, its mingling the things of God with the things of the world, its ecumenical spirit and its relentless drift back into pagan Rome with all her idols and abominable enormities. The furious hurricane of evil both in the existing church and outside of it receives so little attention from the so-called shepherds of the flock that a tide of sheer Satanism has set in, a corrosive, rotting condition so degrading that the normal decencies of community life have become the subject of jest, derision, and hilarity.

Is it not a tragedy that big strong men are so afraid of becoming "involved" that they will hear screams for help from a fourteen year old girl who is being raped and turn a deaf ear and like craven dastards slink into the darkness instead of coming to the rescue? What hope is there for a so-called Christian community whose citizens are as spineless as this? Though we know all these things are so, we have become so calloused, so seared as with a hot iron, that abominable crimes scarcely cause the raising of an eyebrow. It seems clear from all the predictions of the word of God that this foulness will not only continue to the end of the age but will grow worse and worse.

During the great, earth-shaking revivals of George Whitefield, Benjamin Franklin, himself not a believer, remarked, "It seemed as though the whole world had suddenly become religious." That is the kind of result that follows a true revival, but the imagined revivals of our day are not born of God. They do not produce such results as this, the reason being that they are the result of man's engineering and not the moving of the Spirit of God. One world, renowned evangelist, who claimed thirty thousand souls were saved in one of his campaigns, upon returning six months later admitted he could not find thirty. That is not a revival. It is a farce and a dreadful indictment against modern evangelism. The sooner we wake up to this shameful sham and turn away from such falsities and failure the sooner we will discover God's glory and enter His presence in sincerity and truth. A generation ago every pulpit in the land would have been fulminating against the wickedness and rottenness we see everywhere about us, including the backslidden church. It is to the eternal shame of the church system that condemnation of viscous, venal rottenness all about us does not come as much from the preachers as from the worldly media, which are usually concerned with other things.

Some fifty years ago Dr. Spock, to his eternal shame, introduced and advocated the despicable doctrine of self-expression. His teaching, among other things, was that children should not be inhibited by their parents. They should be allowed to freely express themselves in whatsoever manner they wished. As a result of this stupidity the Bible exhortation, "Bring up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it," was laid aside in favor of the new theory, which he supposed would develop much superior men and minds. The result has been a generation of undisciplined, rebellious, insecure and disturbed youngsters. The world now faces the horrible spectacle of seeing a rebellious, undisciplined generation, often dependent upon mind changing drugs, taking over the government of the world. Thus the world rushes like a loaded toboggan into destruction and tribulation. Man has sowed to the wind and he is now reaping the whirlwind. No wonder the cry in the book of Revelation echoes all across the world: "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!"

It is not my intention in any way to enter into argument with people who hold beliefs other than my own. Often times they have come to their conclusions sincerely enough, but sometimes, of course, our firmest beliefs have not come to us either by study or by revelation, but are simply traditions that have been handed down to us. Many thousands of people are preaching the tradition that the church will be taken out of the world before the tribulation comes. Not long ago, L. E. Maxwell, in one of his articles, warned of the danger that lies in

embracing false hopes. Mr. Maxwell, as you may know, has been largely responsible for the sending out of some fourteen hundred missionaries to many heathen nations on every continent in the world. In warning against the no tribulation doctrine, he cited how the Chinese and Koreans had been taught that, before tribulation came upon them, they would all be raptured, but, he said, terrible tribulation and fierce persecution came to these saints and so caught them unawares. Being thus thrown into great persecution and death, they were made to wonder about the truth of other things they had been taught.

I am firmly convinced that this same unexpected persecution and tribulation is going to come upon the Christian in every part of the world. The preachers have been lulling the Christians to sleep by telling them that they will never see tribulation; but they are misinforming the people and filling them with a false hope. Now, if the elect are all going to be taken out of the world before the great tribulation, can you explain to me why it was that Jesus said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, (the last trump. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:52), and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." **Matt. 24:29-31**. The question then is this: If the elect are to be gathered after the tribulation, then what ground does any man have to affirm that they will be raptured before the tribulation takes place? The idea is not founded on fact. It is, to say the least, a very shaky doctrine that is bound to leave people confounded and amazed when trial and great tribulation shall come.

Jesus taught us that in the last days iniquity would abound and, because of this, the love of many would wax cold. Matt. 24:12. The Bible meaning of iniquity is lawlessness and rebellion. We will not now concern ourselves with the flagrant lawlessness that fills the whole world with depredation and woe. There is another lawlessness, however, that has crept in upon the world and into the hearts of believers as well, and, though it is a sinister thing full of subtle evil, it is everywhere looked upon as good. It is simple for anyone to see that the world is full of people who are covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, high minded, and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. It does not take much thought to know that this kind of lawlessness abounds in the world, but what do the scriptures teach about family life? What do they say about husbands and wives and children? It is in this realm that rebellion has its beginning.

We hear a great deal in our day about women's lib and other feminist movements in which women are taught to rebel against the authority of their husbands. Do they not know that in so doing they are rebelling against the commandment of God, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church... Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." **Eph. 5:22-24**. We may be certain that Paul is directing this command to women who have husbands who are worthy to be called husbands and fathers - not to the violent, the abusive, the drunken, the dissolute, the demanding and overbearing. I do not say that any woman need submit to a devil incarnate, but there are many women who are rebelling against good husbands. Many are deserting their God-given responsibility to their families in favor of being a career woman. Women who refuse to be in subjection to their husbands never need imagine that they are in subjection to Christ.

On the other hand there are countless men who are lawlessly rejecting their responsibilities as husbands. Instead of being faithful husbands and fathers, they opt to spend endless hours in the office trying to heap up riches and make themselves a success, but take no time at all to love their wives and children and be a father and a head to them all. It is an enormous tragedy that the average American father, sometimes called the vanishing father, spends an average of thirty seconds a day playing with his children and being a father to them. The remainder of his hours are spent at work, on the golf course, or in any one of a dozen other ways. He leaves for work before the children are up and comes home after they are in bed, or else he sits with his eyes glued to the television and hardly sees them or talks to them. If home life is the bulwark of the nation, is it any wonder the world is full of woe!

If any man should think that God has forgotten his iniquity and rebellion against His laws, he might well consider the warning of Peter. "The Lord knoweth how to... reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." **2 Pet. 2:9-10.**

We see the spirit of lawlessness manifest in modern music, and in that continual savage uproar that is completely against nature and opposed both to the rhythm of the physical body and the harmony of the universe. Modern music has a tremendous grip on the young people of the day. Its weird rhythm and jungle beat urge its listeners to cast off restraint and morality and abandon themselves to the depravity of the drug culture, the sex craze, drunkenness and so many other evils of our day. The devil has been careful to introduce the "rock beat" into the modern church service under the false and shameful disguise of "gospel rock", and this is little else than a blasphemous revolt against all that is sacred. This evil is constantly promoted by singing groups, who themselves have never had a sound experience with God. From all such evil let us turn away.

In all the world there is no power that is such a rebel against the authority of Christ as in the carnal mind. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. It is impossible to walk in the flesh and walk in the Spirit, too. We will be found either obeying the desire of our physical man or walking after the leading and holiness of the Spirit of God. The carnal mind is the body mind. It is the mind that is bent on fulfilling and satisfying the demands and lusts of the body. It is the mind that does the wish and will of the physical man, obeying his lusts and walking after his corrupt desires. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." **Gal. 5:19-21.**

Notice now the contrast between the manifestations of the carnal mind, which is motivated by the flesh, and spiritual mind, which is motivated by the Holy Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Not even in Communist countries.) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another and envying one another." **Gal. 5:22-26.**

In our day there is much indiscriminate use of the Biblical term "born again." Tens of thousands of people are claiming to be born again who have never known true repentance, who have never wept over their sin, known the depths of godly sorrow or turned away from the world with its lusts, its corruption, its filth and its pleasure. They cannot say in truth that they are new creatures. The expressions Hey! and Wow! I've found it! and Honk if you love Jesus! Are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal to those who dwell in the depths of His Spirit, and they are foreign to Him whose name is above every name and in whose presence cherubim and seraphim cover their faces and cry, "Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory." God is not in their abominable gospel rock nor yet in their food, fun and fellowship. "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceiving while they feast with you." **2 Pet. 2:13.** He commands all men everywhere to repent of these vanities and turn to God with a pure heart for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

In the face of the abounding corruption, the lightness, the frivolity and make believe that overflows in the church system, no man need deem it a mystery when he hears the Lord's stern rebuke to the church of Laodicea, the church of the twentieth century. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear:" Neither need any man wonder that our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of this Laodicean mass of corruption that calls itself the church, scolded and reproached them thus: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou weren't cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." **Rev. 3:15-16.** Such forceful words of remonstrance and rebuff are not statements to be taken lightly. They are fearful

indictments against the careless professors of our day. It is no hand-clapping matter of exuberance to be told by Christ Himself, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." Neither is it any light matter of minor importance to be told, "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Yet these dire statements of truth come from the lips of Christ and they are spoken to the entire church system as it exists in our day. Can we wonder, then, that God sees it as mystery Babylon the great or that He calls to His elect, "Come out of her, My people?"

That which is wretched is unsatisfactory. It is worthless in ability and quality, despicable, contemptible, dejected and unhappy. To be miserable is to be in a state of misery, poor health, unhappiness and discomfort. It is something of inferior quality, paltry, meager and skimpy. That which is blind cannot see, and to this we may say that in all the history of the world the professing church has never walked in greater blindness than now. Well did Jesus say, "Because ye say, We see, therefore your sin remains." Can we wonder that the message of Jesus to this lukewarm, blind, naked, miserable, wretched church system at the end of the days includes the melancholy picture of the Lord Himself, standing on the outer side of that which professes to be His temple and His body. To add to the disconcerting portrayal the Lord is not seen asking admittance to the system, for that would be useless in the extreme, but addressing the individual, saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him."

We are living in an appalling hour of unbelief and blindness. We dwell in the Laodicean age and know it not. This is the end of the age and we know it not. Ours is an hour of gross darkness when the Christian conscience is seared as with a hot iron. Concerning this dread hour Jesus Christ counsels, "**Buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.**" **Rev. 3:18.** It is pitiful to be blind, but lamentable to be blind and not know it. It is shameful to be naked, but it is appalling for one who is naked to imagine himself well clothed. It is pathetic to find one wretched, but sad indeed when the miserable imagines he has need of nothing. But thus it is in our day. Jesus himself stands outside, and there from His exterior position He calls to you, "**Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues, for strong is the Lord that judgeth her.**" "**Let us go therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.**" **Heb. 13:13.**

The term the antichrist is not strictly a scriptural term. We need not say it is unscriptural, but it is, to say the least, misleading. God's people have been tragically misled by the traditions that have been foisted upon them until today, as in the days of Jesus, we make the truth of God of none effect by our tradition. Mark 7:13. So much of what has been taught as gospel truth is in fact a caricature of the truth. All of us are inclined to use terms that are supposed to be scriptural but which are in fact little more than hackneyed cliches and trite phrases, handed down from generation to generation. These expressions are supposed to be long established truth, but so often they darken truth and withhold from us any true searching after real understanding. Expressions such as the antichrist, the rapture, spiritual Israel, eternal torment and many others are heard readily on the lips of God's people, yet none of these terms are actually scriptural terms. Therefore, instead of serving to reveal truth, they cast a shadow over it and become definite obstacles in the path of truth and understanding.

Whenever the term the antichrist is used, our minds immediately conjure up the specter of some hideous creature who in the future is going to arise on the world scene. Indeed, such a hideous creature may very well appear, but we are deceiving ourselves if we think that antichrist belongs only to the future. The real truth of the matter is that both the antichrist spirit and the antichrist system have been with us for a very long time. We could scarcely be wrong in believing that the antichrist spirit was manifested when Cain killed his brother Abel, or earlier still when the serpent deceived Eve. It was manifested in evil Athaliah, who wickedly sought to murder all the seed royal and thus destroy the line through which Christ would come. 2 Kings 11:1-3. The spirit of antichrist was manifested in Herod when he killed all the boys two years old and under in the vain hope of murdering the Christ child. It was manifested in Judas Iscariot when he betrayed the Lord, and has been obvious on an ever increasing scale all through the church age. In our day it is openly evident to those who are aware of its working.

Centuries ago the Holy Spirit gave us some definite indications concerning what and who antichrist would be. John, writing in his day, said, "**As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many**

antichrists." Then significantly he adds, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." **1 John 2:18-19.** Doubtless those who went out still called themselves Christian, but their teaching was against Christ rather than for Him. In chapter four John, continuing his exhortation regarding antichrist, points out in **verses 1-3** some definite identifying marks of antichrist. These identifying marks were not to be so evident in the things men say as they are in the spirit of the person who says them. Therefore John's exhortation is: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." If God's people will take time to consider the wide scope of professing Christendom, we will be forced to conclude that in our day there are far more false prophets in the existing church than true ones. It is very easy for a preacher to wave a Bible over his head and shout, "I believe this book from cover to cover." It is an easy statement to make and, of course, it sounds convincingly fundamental, but quiz that man a little and you will find that he denies far more truth than he believes. Does he believe in election? Does he believe in predestination? Does he believe in the reconciliation of all things? Does he believe that God hath reconciled all things to Himself? Does he believe in a literal kingdom of God? Does he believe that God had a purpose for the world and all things in it and that all things, absolutely all things, are working according to the purpose? The spirit that denies any truth in favor of church tradition is the spirit of antichrist. Let us make no mistake about that.

It was Dr. Price who once said that, while he was surveying the world scene for a man who would fit the description of antichrist, he found that the real antichrist was within himself. That is a very true statement, for all and everything that belongs to the carnal mind is of a certainty antichrist.

John continues to disclose the unmistakable fingerprints of antichrist in these words: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." **1 John 4:3.** I thoroughly believe that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, but is it possible that we have entirely missed the truth that John was faithfully trying to teach us? If Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, which He certainly was, then would we not be right in saying that Jesus Christ manifest in the flesh refers, not to Christ's incarnation, but to the Spirit of Christ living and dwelling in you and me? "Christ in you is the hope of glory," but there are many who deny that this is true and that Jesus Christ is come in His people. These same people, thus manifesting the spirit of antichrist, spend their whole earthly existence trying to climb up some other way, hoping to gain heaven by their good works. They know not that in so doing they are thieves and robbers. They rob Christ of His place in themselves and they rob themselves of eternal life. The prophets long ago proclaimed the message, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:16.** The apostle Paul in like manner proclaimed the truth of this when he testified, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Gal. 2:20.**

It is almost two millenniums ago that the apostle John wrote to the saints, saying, "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists." **1 John 2:18.** From the analysis of this solemn warning it is right to conclude that the antichrist spirit was manifest in many people in John's day and in all periods of the church age. The distinction between antichrist and many antichrists indicates that many antichrists will find their head in one master antichrist, who would rise in the church so that "he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (The temple of God, of course, is the church — not Solomon's temple, as many imagine.) Now, while the majority of Christians rightly believe that a great master antichrist will arise, these same Christians have been deceived by the teaching that this antichrist is a personage who will appear in the future and who has not yet appeared on the world scene. This in my opinion is a gross error, the result of which will be that millions of Christians will unite themselves with the mother of harlots, over which antichrist now reigns.

At the beginning of the Reformation, in which under God Martin Luther played such an important part, this great reformer made the unqualified statement that the Pope is antichrist. In his Smalcald articles Luther laid special stress upon one declaration of the apostle Paul, which in his opinion pointed unerringly to the Pope and his successors. From 2 Thess. 2:3,4 he fastens upon the following mark of identification as unquestionably the true finger print of antichrist. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there

come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth Himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Martin Luther saw this statement concerning antichrist as definitely fulfilled in the papal system. The Pope raised his head above all. The teaching of Paul shows forcefully that the Pope exalted himself above and opposed himself against Christ because he would not permit Christians to be saved without his power. This, properly speaking, is to exalt himself above all that is called God, as Paul stated in 2 Thess 2:4. For confirmation of the above statement by Luther we quote the following from Bull Unam Sanctum of Pope Boniface 8th. "To submit to the Roman Pontiff we declare, say, define and pronounce to be absolutely necessary to every human creature to salvation." Then again, from the Council of Trent, we have the following: "If any one says that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be accursed."

Centuries ago Israel, particularly that segment of Israel known as Jews, was expecting the Messiah to come, but her people were not expecting Him to come as He did, lowly and riding upon an ass, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief - born to be crucified and die, not for His own sins, but for the sins of the world. They expected Him to come as a mighty conqueror who would destroy their enemies and bring them to an hitherto unheard of prominence and glory. The prophecies that are to be fulfilled at Christ's second coming they expected to be fulfilled at His first coming. They could neither understand nor believe nor accept the fact that their long awaited Messiah would be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities and that the chastisement of our peace was to be upon Him or that by His stripes we were to be healed. Such thoughts as these were the farthest from their imagination. What they wanted was pomp and prominence in the earth not tears of repentance or humility of heart. They saw no need of conversion. They understood not that a man must be born again before he can see the kingdom of God.

No man can see the kingdom until his life has been touched and moved upon by the Holy Spirit. It is true, not only that man cannot enter the kingdom in his unregenerate state, but that he cannot even see it. As heaven is higher than earth, so the kingdom of God is of an order so much higher than the kingdoms of this world that the natural man cannot see it, perceive it or understand it. He has no insight into it or any cognizance of it. His soul and mind are unenlightened concerning its heavenly nature. No glimmer of light pierces his understanding. Indeed, such a carnal man may have great theories about the kingdom of God, as was true of the dissenting and blinded Israelites of long ago, but to behold the kingdom of God as an age of righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost is something beyond the ken of the natural mind. For this cause our Lord Jesus, speaking to Nicodemus, a good man with a natural mind, went about to show him what all men need to know, that if we are to so much as see the kingdom of God, we must be moved upon by the Holy Spirit from above. Our spirits must be touched and transformed by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. We must be made new creatures in Christ Jesus. We must be born again. John 3:3. We must be born of that incorruptible seed, the word of God that liveth and abideth forever.

In the light of such truth as this it is small wonder that Israel, blinded by the darkness of the natural mind and cursed by the willfulness of an unconverted heart, could not see the kingdom of God. They could comprehend the workings of the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Rome or even the kingdom of David, but the higher realm of the kingdom of God with its transformation of man and earth and all things therein, its incorruption, its glory, its justice, equity, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost they could never be expected to see until they were born from above and received in themselves that eternal life which is the life of the kingdom and of the ages to come.

Now in the same way that Israel in the flesh was unable to see the kingdom of God or the true Messiah, but looked instead for a Messiah after the vain imagination of their own carnal minds, so also the church, knowing that antichrist will come, has looked for a tyrant to appear at the end of the age to tyrannize and oppress the whole world. The real truth is that antichrist is an ever present, deceiving pseudo Christ. Just as Christ came and the people of his day knew Him not, so antichrist has been in our midst from the beginning and we knew him not. As John in his epistle warned, "Even now there are many antichrists." 1 John 2:18.

According to Paul the mystery of iniquity was already at work in his day, 2 Thess. 2:7, and this was to be the manner of his coming and moving among the people. He was to come with all deceivableness of

unrighteousness. He was not to come as a world conqueror, but as a deceiver of great power and authority, whose spurious gospel, miracles and speaking with tongues would be a crafty imitation of the real workings of Christ. He will come with power and signs and lying wonders. 2 Thess. 2:9-10. Because so many Christians follow like dumb sheep after every spectacular thing and will not endure sound doctrine, God allows them to be deluded so that they might believe a lie. Verse 11. In the book of Revelation we find this beast performing great signs and wonders, even calling down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Furthermore, we are told that he deceived the people who dwelt on the earth by the miracles he had power to do.

I am a firm believer in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, in gifts, in ministries, in baptisms, in the working of miracles, in signs and wonders, in helps, governments and diversities of tongues, all of which are given to bring the saints to perfection; but I would be a fool indeed if I closed my eyes to the indisputable fact that in our day - even as in the days of the apostles - there are false prophets, false apostles, false miracle workers, false pastors, false healers, false baptisms, pseudo gifts and even false conversions. The world is thronging with false ministries and false prophets who exalt not Christ, but self and serve not Christ, but "their own bellies." As the beautiful word love has been desecrated and defiled, its true meaning completely lost as blind and craven people dare to associate that sublime word with adultery, fornication and illicit sex, so the heavenly truth that fell from the lips of Christ, "Ye must be born again," has largely lost its meaning because the pompous and unregenerate play with the term and profess the experience while their lives remain absorbed in the things of earth and the lusts of the carnal mind and still find their glory in the kingdoms of this world.

Christian brethren, never set your hearts on miracles and signs and wonders. Set your hearts on Christ and the glorious light of life that streams from His heavenly face. Ardently refuse to honor men except it be where honor is due. Refuse to let men exalt and adore you lest you be like Herod, who gladly received the acclaim of the people as they shouted, "It is the voice of a god and not a man." Wherefore God smote him and he was eaten of worms and died.

As we come nearer to the consummation of this age, we are going to see an ever increasing move among the churches, both modernistic and evangelical, toward unity with Rome and the Pope. The Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican church, is unquestionably in favor of union with Rome. Many among the Lutheran congregations are not only in favor of reunion with Rome, but condemn themselves for ever having separated in the first place. What are we to conclude when we see all manner of Protestant denominations (and I mean all manner) gathering together for charismatic meetings with the Church of Rome? Is this not a means of uniting them under one head? But that "one head" is not our Lord Jesus Christ! Perhaps you think this is good. The truth is that this is the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they love not the truth. 2 Thess. 2:10. If Paul had not warned the saints of this dreadful deception of the last days, I would not be repeating the warning now. Many Christians apparently imagine that this antichrist leopard has changed his spots and the mother of harlots is not the enemy of Christ she once was, but this is not so and, if you examine the countries where Rome holds sway, such as the nations of South America, you will see she has not changed; and she has emphatically stated that she has no intention of doing so. It is never my joy to write such things as these, but if the antichrist spirit of this, the end of the age, is to come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to such an extent that, were it possible, even the very elect would succumb to his devilish wiles, then with all longsuffering I exhort God's people to look only to Christ for their instruction, their knowledge and their wisdom. Ask of Him bread and He will not give you a stone. Ask of Him an egg and He will not give you a scorpion. Let the fervent exhortation of Paul ring continually in your mind: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Furthermore give fervent heed to these inspired words from the book of Revelation, which above all previous words are given for the admonition of all who live in the end of this perilous age. "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." **Rev. 18:4.** These are solemn warnings. They are given for the age in which we live, but, though God has spoken so often

in calling His people to come out of the systems of religion so prevalent in our day and remain no longer in touch with the unclean thing, for all His admonition only an elect few ever heed the call to separation that Christ may be all and in all and that God may be our Father and we may be His sons and daughters.

Many heart stirring and almost terrifying messages were spoken by inspired men concerning the last days of this age. Our Lord Jesus, foremost among them, bore faithful witness that the last days of this age, the time just preceding His second coming, would be as the days of Noah, days described vividly in Gen. 6 as days of violence that filled the earth, a time of universal corruption when the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts were only evil. He told us that the end of this age would be a time when faith had fled from the earth as it had in Noah's time, who alone walked with God. The days of Noah were days of indiscriminate racial desegregation when the sons of God, the Adamites, were intermarrying with all colors and races as they are now doing, bringing swift and terrible judgment on the world. Furthermore Jesus said that as it was in the days of Sodom, so would it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man. In our day sodomy is rampant from the high places to the low. The appalling result of this sordid crime is that men and nations receive a reprobate mind to do those things that are inconvenient and wrong, even as Paul taught us in Romans, chapter 1.

Perhaps the saddest picture of all is found in the letter to the church of Laodicea, that church, which above all others represents the church system at the end of the age. There at Laodicea we see the Lord Jesus Christ standing without - both outside the system and outside the hearts of the lukewarm multitude. From His position without Christ is seen knocking, not at the door of the Laodicean church - never could He hope to find admission there - but rather He stands before each troubled heart, knocking and saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me." This is the final promise of our age. It is the promise for you and me. God never leaves Himself without a witness. There are yet seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee either to Baal or to Babylon, but if you are bowing to the system or adhering to it in any way, then you are still in it and awaiting its condemnation. The call of the hour is, "Come out of her, My people."

Saints of the Lord, has the Holy Spirit ever impressed upon you the astonishing truth of who and what you are? As I was kneeling this morning with the Bible before me, my spirit was absorbing with reverent joy the almost incredible statements made by the beloved Peter to the saints of the Most High. After Peter had honored our Lord Jesus Christ by telling us that He was a living stone disallowed of men, but that He was chosen of God and precious, he went on to say that we also are living stones, and that, being living stones, we are being built up into a spiritual house. Peter stated further that we are a holy priesthood, ordained to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. These truths we find in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

Never before as today did the truth of what we really are dawn upon me so forcefully. The stones of Solomon's temple in all its costly glory were nothing but hard, cold, lifeless rock, unable to speak or feel or see. The stones which compose the temple of Christ's glorious body are not as these. The temple of His body is a living temple composed of living stones, each one throbbing and alive with the eternal life, which Christ is, each stone endowed with the seven Spirits of God. Not flickering lights burning olive oil, but each one blazing more brightly than the glory of the noonday sun. Ah, what a temple of glory and beauty God is building! A temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! The habitation of God through timeless ages! As God has said, "Ye are a building which is rising upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, is rising to form a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." This building, of which Paul spoke in his letter to the Ephesians, is the spiritual house of which Peter was speaking when he revealed that we are living stones, standing in order upon a foundation of glory. "Fade, fade each earthly joy! Jesus in mine!" I would not barter my place on that foundation for all the temples that have ever been built. "Break every tender tie," for no joy of earth can have the slightest appeal to those who know that through His marvelous grace we are the habitation of God forevermore.

But, lest our lives should be momentarily swept away by the fun and foolishness of this present world or by the vanity of its treasure, its gold or silver or costly array, or lest we should be swamped with the cares of this world or the deceitfulness of riches or the lusts of other things entering in, forget not, but rather call to remembrance, that you who are living stones in God's living temple are therefore separated from all others unto God as an holy priesthood. How those words of inspiration enlightened my heart as the light of the Spirit streamed upon

them today! Here in the realization of the meaning of this truth we come to the parting of the ways. Here we priests of God become separated from the noisy, capricious throng with their food, fun and fellowship, their giddy religious culture with its hand clapping, back slapping merriment to the accompaniment of hard rock music, which has everything in common with earth and nothing in common with Christ.

The holy priesthood of God is ordained to draw nigh to Him, not only on behalf of themselves, but on behalf of whatsoever and whomsoever the Spirit will lay upon their hearts. Unto this priest the way into the most holy is wide open. The veil has been rent asunder, and now henceforth the only veil that can hinder the priest from entering is the veil of his own flesh. Yet, if he will reckon it to be crucified with Christ and reckon himself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God, there is nothing that can hinder his entrance into His presence. Did not the great apostle plainly tell us, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh... let us draw near..." **Heb. 10:19-22**. When the flesh of Christ was rent on Calvary, my flesh was rent with His. In that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God, ever to make intercession as a priest for the saints of the Most High.

Herein lies the joy of the Lord. Without like a restless sea is the frivolity of a religion born of the flesh and not of the Spirit. The flesh, I find, is one of the most religious things in creation. Even Cain brought his offering to the Lord, unacceptable as it was, but this holy priesthood, these living stones, are ordained of God to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The revelation and the realization of what we are and who we are and what we are called unto comes to us as a tremendous awakening, even as life from out the tomb. Here old things die and new are born. Here the world with its vanity recedes and the life in Christ matures and grows exceedingly.

There is today, as there has been in all the ages that have passed, an elect company of saints who are not satisfied with anything less than the true glory and the true presence of God. Self-centered sermons do not satisfy these elect saints. The lightness and frivolity of the Charismatics leave them cold. The devilish rock beat that now holds sway in so many supposedly full gospel churches leaves them appalled and repulsed in spirit. The "Hey, let's give God a clap" crowd incites grief and pain to their hearts. The repugnant greed of the money grabbers with their multitudinous human programs repels their spirits. The elect according to the foreknowledge of God are sanctified by the Spirit and their belief of the truth. Therefore the manipulating and maneuvering of all modern forms of religion become a devastating abomination in their sight. Have you never read the awesome words of Isaiah the prophet, who spoke of these times of religion without God in the following words? "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes." **Isa. 1:13-16**.

Saints of God, the conditions in the church system will not change. They will grow worse and worse until it will be literally true that, when the Son of man comes, it will be an open question as to whether or not there is faith on the earth. When the Son of man cometh, the elect of the Lord will be scarce, as they were in the days of Noah, but violence, greed and spoil will fill the earth as it did then; and as judgment followed the days of Noah and fire followed the days of Sodom, so judgment and fire are about to fall upon the hosts of mankind. As the darkness gathers and the shades of night are descending upon this final stage of man's rule, the Spirit of God sends forth His final call to the saints who still dwell in the Babylon of the existing church system. It is this: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." And unto you who still pause on the brink of decision, I ask with all humility, "Why are you so afraid to walk with Christ alone." When at last your frail bark is borne from out the realm of time and place, is it not He who will guide you across your Jordan of death? Why then do you fail to heed His warning now and come out and walk with Him before judgment falls on the Babylon system and upon all who are within? You may indeed be "disallowed of men," but if you are chosen of God and precious, how little does the disfavor of the harlot matter! If we as living stones are built up a spiritual house, destined to become habitation of God forever, let us then strip for the race and leave the cunning devices of the harlot behind to run with patience the race before us.

I have endeavored to make this chapter a simple exhortation, knowing full well that the end of the age is upon us and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

"Never give your hearts to the world, little children, or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time; for the whole world system, based as it is on man's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions, and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world with all its passionate desires will one day disappear; but the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die."

CHAPTER SIX THE GATHERING STORM AND THE GLORY BEYOND

*The signs around in earth and air
And painted on the starlit sky,
God's faithful witnesses, declare
That the coming of the Master draweth nigh.*

In ages and dispensations past God's people lived to see many wonders wrought by God. In times of meditation we have thought how good it must have been to have seen the mighty arm of God made bare as signs and wonders were performed in the midst of His people. Can we imagine the abounding joy that Noah felt when, after six centuries of enduring the doubt and unbelief of godless people and after one hundred years of faithfully preaching the incredible message that God would soon destroy the world with a flood, he built an ark to the saving of his house, and now, safely sheltered in its kindly fold with beasts and birds and creeping things, which seemed to have more faith than men, he saw the storm clouds gather like angry portents in the heavens? The thunders roared as lightnings raced from sky to sky and tiny raindrops, never before seen in all earth's history, began to fall. Gently, perhaps, at first, then with increasing tempo and fury it came until the floods rose, first to the ankles, then to the waist as the fountains of the deep were broken up, until the ark itself was born aloft upon the mighty deep. Trees once stately and tall floundered helplessly in the waters until they sank beneath the waves to be seen no more. Hills and mountains to whose safety men and beasts had fled soon were buried in their watery grave and tongues that once had scorned God fell cold and silent and still, too late now to partake of His mercy.

What child of God could refrain from rejoicing to see the might of the Lord displayed as it was in Egypt when God's time had fully come to release from bondage His people, whose hopes were almost dead through the demeaning effect of two centuries of slavery? But could their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid! This could never be! His purposes do not depend on the strength or weaknesses of man. He who has promised will surely bring it to pass, even when all hope that we should be saved has fled away. In God's own time He sent a deliverer, a man once learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians but now taught in all the wisdom of God. From the sheepfolds God took him, a man of fourscore years, so lacking in eloquent speech that God sent his brother to be a mouthpiece for him. These two brothers were sent by the Lord to stand before the mightiest monarch of the earth with the message, "Let My people go." Then with signs and wonders never seen before nor since they led God's people forth with a high and mighty hand. Even the waves of the sea rolled back at the Father's omnipotent command, and Miriam, a woman of ninety years and more, led the ransomed hosts in singing this redemption song: "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone." **Exod. 15:1-5.**

How good it would have been to see the works of Christ as He spoke as never man before had spoken and performed mighty signs and wonders never before seen or heard or known by mankind! Though He was crucified through weakness, He arose by the power of God and ascended up into heaven in the sight of more than five hundred brethren who both saw Him go and heard the word of promise made by men in white

raiment, "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." **Acts 1:10-11.**

Great and marvelous have been the events of the past and I should like to have seen them all, but I speak forth words of truth and soberness when I tell you that the greatest and most glorious of all events are reserved for those who now live in these final hours of the age. The hour is at hand when all who are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God and will come forth, they that have done good unto aionian life and they that have done evil to aionian destruction. The mighty events which are sure to take place within the next few years will include the great tribulation, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, the defeat of the armies of Antichrist, the revelation of Christ to His people, Israel, and the setting up of the millennial kingdom, in which Christ, the head, with all the elect members of His body will reign over the earth for one thousand years.

There was a day when the disciples led their master about the temple grounds, proudly showing Him all the great and beautiful buildings that were there. "See," said they, "what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" Mark 13:1. But the Lord, knowing that these were temples made with hands, and that all things belonging to this realm of darkness must be destroyed, answered them and said, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." **Matt. 24:2.** And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, (1) "Tell us, when shall these things be? (2) and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, (3) and of the end of the world (age)?" **Matt. 24:3.** These three questions have been paramount in the minds of millions from time immemorial. No generation since the days of our Lord Jesus Christ has lacked its array of faithful saints who possess a heartfelt longing for the coming of the Lord. Not all those who believed in the Lord's coming have desired to see it. Many people who have believed that the end of the age is near have not anticipated that glorious event with pleasure and hope, but with doubt and fear, hoping that it would not come in their day.

If mankind could know the answer to the age old problem voiced by the disciples of Jesus - "When shall these things be?" - I am sure they would be willing to go to great lengths to find it. "When shall these things be?" was the earnest question of the disciples, "and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" Almost all prophecies have a double or triple fulfillment, first the small and local meaning, secondly, the larger and more general meaning, and finally, the fulfillment in all its power. Therefore, when they asked, "When shall these things be?" He gave them at first signs of immediate impending disaster. He spoke of certain local events, now long passed into history. Then, leaving the immediate future, He spoke of things, which were to happen in the latter days that would tell us clearly that the coming of the Master was drawing nigh. "Ye can discern the face of the sky," Jesus said to the Pharisees. "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" **Matt. 16:2-3.**

The signs of the times are all about us on every hand. Not only are they appearing in all the world, but they are pressing hard upon the heart and the conscience of all mankind. All people seem to know that the end of the present system is at hand. Never before has there been such a universal sense among the godly and the ungodly, the wise and the unwise, warning that some event of surpassing importance is about to take place. I do not mean to say that all men know what that event will be, but, as birds stop their singing minutes before earthquakes and volcanoes strike and rats forsake a ship that will be lost at sea, so God has placed in the minds of millions the consciousness that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

It hardly seems essential that one should repeat the ever, increasing signs of the times along with statistics to prove that we are in the end of the age. I doubt that there are very many who are unaware of them. Nevertheless, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days when the Son of man shall come. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and took them all away. In that evil day men and women were marrying and divorcing and intermarrying with people of strange flesh. Even the sons of God took the daughters of men and the result of that corrupt union was that "there were giants in the earth." Their sordid union was loathsome to God and the offspring of it were wicked men of renown, bent on every evil purpose. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." The earth was corrupt then as it is now from the lowest den to the highest offices in all the land, for all flesh had corrupted his

way. The earth itself became filled with violence of every kind. Violence always follows when those in high places become corrupt. So loathsome had the condition become that naught but total destruction could serve to cleanse the earth of the degraded works of men. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh."

I see no difference between their condition and our own, nor are the sins of our day of lesser weight than theirs. All flesh has corrupted God's way upon the earth. Men are more polluted in mind than they are in body and the thoughts and imaginations of their hearts are only evil continually, as they eat and drink, marry and divorce, murder, commit adultery and sodomy, and lightly murder millions of unborn children, while all unknown to the world at large the elect are gathering into the ark of safety.

For many centuries the world has known wars and rumors of wars as great armies have fought their battles and raised their banners over the new territory they had won, but Jesus gave one faithful word concerning the wars that will curse the world at the end of the age. He declared that nation would rise against nation — not merely army against army, but whole nations against whole nations. It was not until 1914 that we saw this for the first time as mighty nations and empires girded for war and locked themselves in furious and mortal combat. Peaceful men were summoned from the hilltops and called in from the glens. They left their farms, their merchandise and their professions to learn the dreadful arts of war. Not only in the front lines did men battle and die, but every person was in the war and in the front lines as devastating weapons of destruction fell upon innocent men, women, and children in the towns and cities, wreaking untold havoc everywhere.

Jesus told us there would be a rise of false prophets in the last days, men not sent of God, but trained in the arts of public preaching, hirelings who were false because God had not sent them and His Spirit had not led them. I will incur the wrath of many well-meaning people when I declare that false prophets in our day are innumerable. Thousands of preachers now occupying the pulpits of our land are further from truth and sincerity than were the prophets of Baal. False christs have arisen in the form of denominations and sects, telling the people that except they follow their way and their group they cannot be saved. Some of these deceived persons are requiring their people to go out into the wilderness places and propounding many other such schemes, hoping to escape the coming judgment. Had they enquired of the Lord, He would have told them, "Go not forth." Matt. 24:26.

When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, but there is an elect people who know in their hearts that the awful conditions of these present times are portents, warning us that the great day of tribulation is upon us to try the heart of man who lives upon the earth. We have often spoken of the coming of the great tribulation and, though I may be wrong, I have an inner conviction that we are even now in the very early part of that earth shaking event, which will end with the revelation of the Lord and the destruction of all this world's governments, systems, and religions.

Even now the mighty hosts of Gog and the land of Magog (Russia) are poised and ready to strike. During the 1973 Palestinian war Russia's seven air born divisions were on high alert and ready to cover the land of Israel as with a cloud. Ezek. 38:9. Her ninety ships were steaming in the Mediterranean Sea, loaded with infantry, deadly weapons, and men of war. We may look for the European Common Market to shortly find political union through the good offices of the Pope or some other superman, and the nations who are now in such turmoil and disarray will gladly put their future in his hand, because they will see no other salvation from the whirlpool into which the world is now sinking in despair. The crisis of the moment tells us clearly either political union of many nations or else total disintegration is near at hand. The nations of Europe will gladly choose political union. Then will come a struggle for power as Gog with all his forces, together with the armies of the Orient, march with their many millions against Palestine to seize her vast resources, which today exceed that of almost any other nation.

It may seem late in the day to relate the things which the prophets of old declared would come to pass. Little that is new can be said about the signs of the times. All that was written is present with us now. The signs will no doubt increase in intensity and numbers, but the signs of the end of the age are all about us. Our blessed Lord spoke of famines and pestilences and earthquakes that would greatly increase along with the general

unrest of the people. One only need look at his newspaper or listen to his radio to know that earthquakes have greatly increased. A very large portion of the world is feeling the ravages of famine and many others see its skinny finger pointing their way. Should the crops fail in this present year, whole continents would face its stark reality. Everywhere on earth there is talk of shortages. Even the affluent nations are feeling the pinch. Instead of hope that things will improve, every passing month sees the shadows thicken as the clouds grow darker and descend lower.

My prayer to God is that the eyes of God's elect may be opened wide to see that the world is swarming with false prophets, just as Jesus said it would be. Men who know nothing of regeneration are standing in pulpits like the prophets of Baal, instructing the people in error. I do not refer to the pagan religions often imported from heathen countries. I refer to the false prophets in the church system. Many know nothing of Christ, redemption, the blood, or the Spirit, yet they stand as teachers of the people. But far more serious than this is the fact that vast moves are afoot to hastily bring together into one harlot union all sects and denominations of professing Christians. People who live like the devil in private, who themselves have never known true repentance, are claiming to be the proud possessors of spiritual gifts. Young people pride themselves in their ability to speak with tongues, but have never gone home to their parents to repent of their fierce rebellion and hatred toward them. It is true that some parents are not worthy to own a dog, let alone a son or a daughter; yet, if that son or daughter has really found the Lord and is a possessor of the experience they claim, then they will earnestly desire the redemption of their parents just as Christian parents earnestly pray for the redemption of their children.

Among professing Christians today there is a woeful lack of repentance. They have not repented. Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. They would like to have the good things of heaven and still live after the flesh, but that just simply cannot be done. Everywhere we see what one has described as salvation without repentance, baptism without separation, and communion without discipline.

I make mention of these things because Paul warned us that in the last days men would come working miracles who would be "of that wicked one," "even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:9-2.** Think of the dreadful import of this scripture! There were signs and wonders and miracles among those who did not love the truth, and for that reason God - not Satan, but God - sent them strong delusion that they might believe the lie and so all might be condemned.

Many times I have warned the people that the days of revival as we have known them in the past are over and gone. With regret I say that I stand almost alone in this belief; nevertheless, it is true. Everywhere people are talking of one great final revival before the Lord comes, but they do not know that the rain is over and gone and now the sound of the turtledove is in the land. The people who love Christ more than life itself are gathering unto Him within the ark of safety. The so-called "breath of fresh air" and the "pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh" is largely a counterfeit revival. If it were a true outpouring, the world would not be sinking deeper and deeper into the quicksand of iniquity. The next great revival will be at the end of the tribulation, when Christ reveals Himself to His people, Israel. There will be no other revival except a false one. The Ecumenical Movement, the Interchurch Renewal, the Jesus Movement, and all such kindred things are not true revivals. They herald the rising of Mystery Babylon to her dizziest heights in preparation for her fall. See how she swaggers in pride and filth at the end of the age, full of names of blasphemy, drunk with the blood of saints, decked with riches and wealth, but full of the filth of her fornication! Rev. 17:1-7.

When John in Revelation saw the seals opened, the living creature bade him, "Come and see," and, when he looked, he saw a white horse go forth. His rider had a crown on his head and a bow in his hand, but no mention is made of an arrow. He went forth conquering and to conquer. There is very little similarity between this one and the glorious rider of the white horse in Rev. 19, who came forth with the armies of heaven. "He that sat on him is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were

as a flame of fire, and on His head are many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God ... And out of His mouth went a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations..." **Rev. 19:11-15.** The horseman in Rev. 6 with the crown and the bow is, in my opinion, the false religious movements of this present hour of deception. Take, for instance, Key 73 with all its wasteful pomp and human show. What has become of it? I need not answer that question. The answer is only too obvious. If there were even one genuine revival in all North America, the effects would be evident immediately as they were in the days of Finney, Moody, Billy Sunday, and during the mighty Pentecostal outpouring beginning in 1901 and continuing for almost forty years. Paul spoke of our age when he said, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." That is what we see all about us forms of religion denying the power thereof and others professing to have the power, but producing no fruits of repentance. Remember the word of Jesus, who said, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?"

Eloquent words of wisdom fall far short in their ability to express or explain those things, which the eyes of the faithful shall soon see. The six days of man's labor and travail are almost over and then will follow the seventh day, the kingdom day, which will endure for one thousand glorious years. What man can describe the power and glory of the resurrection? Even the raising of one man, Lazarus, from the dead back to the corruption of this present realm was an event of earth-shaking importance, but the hour cometh and now is at hand when all that are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will come forth. The resurrection now at hand is not the act of raising men from the dead to return to their former corruption. The resurrection, which our Lord Jesus Christ has promised is a resurrection like unto His very own when we, as He, shall see no more corruption. Acts 13:34. Christian men and women should treat their corruptible bodies with great respect because God's word has given us abundant assurance that this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. This same corruptible body that has been compassed by infirmity and has held us in bondage for so many years will be changed like unto His glorious body. The word changed is from the Greek word metamorphoo, from which comes our English word metamorphosis. The same word is translated transformed in Rom. 12:2, transfigured in Matt. 17:2, and changed in 1 Cor. 15:51,52. So often have I heard God's people say that the resurrection body has nothing to do with our present body, but is something entirely different and apart from this body of our humiliation! No, my brother, that is not the meaning of the words changed, transfigured, or transformed. Neither is it the meaning of metamorphosis. The beautiful butterfly that flies through the heavens on starry wings is the same body that was once a worm, crawling on its belly and satisfying its voracious appetite with the corruptible things of the earth. This same creature fashioned itself a cocoon, entered into the chrysalis stage, then the pupa stage, and finally came forth from its cocoon of death a transformed creature of the heavenlies, flitting about on starry wings, bearing the rich hues of all glorious things.

"There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one (thing), and the glory of the terrestrial is another (thing). There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." **1 Cor. 15:40-45,** "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." **Verses 47-49.**

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.... Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." **1 Cor. 15:51-58.**

Great were the glories seen by Moses and Enoch and Noah. Heavenly were the visitations that swept the Judean hills when our Lord spoke as never man spoke and healed as never man healed. Sublime beyond imagination were the holy visitations at Pentecost and in the days that followed as multitudes, both of men and women, were added to the Lord, and the Lord added to His church daily such as should be saved, and by the hands of the apostles God wrought special miracles and special signs and wonders until the world was literally turned upside down with the glory of the heavenly visitation. It would have been wonderful to have dwelt there then and to have rejoiced with them for all the wonderful works of God. Wonderful were the works of God as He instituted His infant church! Blessed as were all those things and glorious as were the results, yet "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." We have seen them afar off in the Spirit, but within millions of hearts in our day there is a rising wave of assurance, bidding us to believe that the ineffable wonders once seen afar off are soon to be revealed.

The supernal glories that lie like untrodden snow before us are beyond compare. The grandest event of all time is now at our doors. The resurrection of the inChristed is now at hand. The trumpet soon shall sound, the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Centuries ago the eyes of poor, suffering Job looked far beyond the turmoil and pain of his wretched despair. His vision caught a glimpse of things far beyond the law with its bondage and far beyond the dispensation of grace in which we live. Beholding as with transfixed gaze, he saw the hour now but a step before us, the hour in which God would raise the inChristed in like manner as He raised Jesus the Christ from the dead. As Christ the Head, was raised from death's dark gloom, so also will He raise Christ, the body, that that multitude of sons of God composing Christ, the body, might be forever joined to their heavenly head, thus forming one Christ - many members, yet one body. Job saw these wonders afar off and, knowing that beyond his awful hurt and despair, he too would be among the glorified throng, he lifted his voice in ecstasy of the hour to utter these immortal words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." **Job 19:25-27.** Yea, and, glory be to God, many ten thousands of souls now living and waiting are taking up the glad refrain, for they know that their Redeemer liveth. Nothing is more certain than that. The Spirit witnesses that in the latter days this same Redeemer that was taken up to heaven long ago shall so come in like manner as He was seen to go. Once upon a time He said, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore, and hold the keys of death and of Hades," Nothing is more certain, dear saint, than the fact He lives. Mohammed is dead. Buddha is dead. Confucius is dead. The multi-million gods of India and Africa are dead; but Jesus Christ the Lord is alive forevermore and holds in His omnipotent hand the keys of death and of hell.

Millions who now live, together with millions who long ago passed from the earthly scene of corruption, having won the victory and overcome through the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, are saying, "He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth." The cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saint are joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the manifestation of the sons of God. Their prayer, praise God, is soon to be answered. The long awaited revelation is at hand. The glorious Lord is soon to be revealed from heaven, and, when He comes, the cry will go up from all creation, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints," for every eye shall see Him. Those who pierced Him will mourn and those who ministered unto Him will rejoice. And one shall say unto Him, "What are these wounds in Thy hands?" Then He will answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." And those who thus enquired of Him will remember that once it was prophesied, saying, "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." **Zech. 13:6-7.** "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; ... And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and winter it shall be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up and inhabited... And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." **Zech. 14:4-11.**

"In that day the Lord will be king over all the earth." **Zech. 14:9.** That will be the time of the long awaited kingdom of God. No more shall the inhabitants of the earth endure the misrule and treachery of ages past. The six thousand years of human injustice will be ended, and that forever. The Lord with His inChristed saints will reign upon the throne of David. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David to order and establish it with justice and judgment from this time forth, even unto the age. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

A rod has come forth from the stem of Jesse, and the branch, which is the body of Christ, has grown out of His roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and the Lord shall make Him of quick (living) understanding in all the fear of the Lord. He shall never judge by what He sees; neither shall He reprove according to things He hears, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity the meek of the earth. And He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, which is the word of God, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. So glorious will be the rest and peace of that wonderful day that the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall love them and lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed.

Their young ones shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp; the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Read Isa. 11.

Never again shall there be such utter destruction as has cursed God's earth from that day when in his fratricidal rage Cain lifted up his hand and slew his brother. In the kingdom day shall all the swords be beaten into plowshares and all the spears into pruning hooks, for man shall not lift up his hand against his brother; neither shall they learn war any more, and Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all people (those nations) that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." **Zech. 14:12-17.** He who now rules with a rod of iron will not permit His glorious kingdom to be filled with rebels as all kingdoms of the past have been. "And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zech. 14:18-19. The feast of tabernacles signifies the coming of the Lord. He dwells among His people and reigns over all the earth.

All will be holy in that reign of lasting peace. Upon the bells of the horses shall there be holiness unto the Lord, and the pots in the temple of the Lord shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts, and there shall be no more Canaanites in the house of the Lord. In that glorious day, the acceptable year of the Lord, the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. The lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb man shall sing the songs of Zion. In the wilderness, long parched with dreadful thirst, shall waters break out and streams in the desert. "And the parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water. In the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass and reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go

up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." **Isa. 35.**

The Lord God will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys. He will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. In the wilderness He will plant the cedar tree and the pine and the box tree together that men may see and know and understand together that the hand of the Lord hath done this and the Holy One of Israel hath created it. Isa. 41:18-20. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isa. 40: 3-5. "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord your God will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for him:... He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." **Isa. 40:9-11.**

"In that day thou shall say, O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." **Isa. 12.**

From north and south the people meet,
To lay their trophies at His feet,
While western empires own their Lord.
And savage tribes attend His word.

These are the things our eyes shall behold. We shall see them for ourselves and shall not hear them from another. These are the things the Lord Jesus came to preach when He came with a message sweet as the breath of heaven, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." Entering into the synagogue, He stood up to read and, finding the place from Isaiah the prophet, He read, "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach to gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**" **Luke 4:18-19.** The acceptable year of the Lord is the kingdom age. There is a special gospel of peace for that dispensation. All other ages of the past have been but a preparation for that kingdom hour when men will know God from the least to the greatest as the waters cover the sea. This is the age in which all previous ages find their culmination. The inhabitants of this kingdom will enjoy an innocence far beyond that of Adam, a conscience void of offence, a human government that knows only the mind of Christ, a people in whose hearts is written with ink indelible all the laws of the Lord. No more will men need to say, "Know the Lord," for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. Neither shall men say, "Love the Lord," for the love of God is shed abroad in every heart by the Holy Ghost that abides in them and they in Him. None shall covet or murder or steal. How can he who loves his neighbor do anything to work him harm? Men shall lust no more, having passed beyond the realm of the flesh when they reckoned it crucified long ago in the days of their temptation. These are they who in the days of their sojourn were poor in spirit, but now the kingdom of God is their portion. These are they who often mourned, entering into the feelings and infirmities of the Lord, but now they are comforted. This is the company of the meek of the earth, who once walked among ravening wolves, trusting only to the grace of God for their preservation, but now they have inherited the earth as their portion forever. Hunger and thirst were once their portion - not a hunger for bread or a thirst of water, but for righteousness they hungered, a righteousness much higher than their own. Now they by their God are filled with that for which they hungered and thirsted. These are they who, though cruelly treated and often mercilessly judged, were themselves both merciful and righteous, because they knew the ignorance of those who hated them, often praying, "Father, forgive them and lay not their sins to their charge," and, having been merciful, they obtained mercy of Him who sees and knows all and will have all to be like

Himself. How blessed are the pure in heart, because God has been their portion! No unclean thing can see His face or approach unto Him, but saith He, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." The peacemakers shall inhabit the kingdom, bringing the fruits of their peace to all the earth. These are God's children. Yea, they are sons of God and in His image who is the Prince of Peace. Many for their righteousness have been persecuted. They have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter, but in all these things they were more than conquerors and their portion is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you when men shall revile and persecute you in this life, for great is your reward in heaven. Men revile and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely because they are from beneath and you are from above. If you were of the world, the world would love his own. Because you are not of the world, but He has chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you and speaks all manner of evil against you falsely. But rejoice in this with exceeding joy, for great shall be your reward in that heavenly kingdom of God.

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**TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 9
HERE IS THE MIND THAT HATH WISDOM**

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-6

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**CHAPTER ONE
WHERE ALL FULLNESS DWELLS**

I learned to know a Name I highly treasure;
Oh, how it thrills my spirit through and through!
Oh, gracious Name beyond degree or measure
My heart is stirred whenever I think of You.

My heart is stirred whenever I think of Jesus.
That blessed Name that sets the captive free.
Dear holy Name through which I found salvation!
No name on earth can mean so much to me.

That Name still lives and will live on forever
When kings and kingdoms will forgotten be.
Through mists and rain 'twill be clouded never;
My heart is stirred whenever I think of Thee.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:1-50)

Is it possible that, amid the confusion of the age, even God's own people are forgetting who Jesus Christ really is? What greater tragedy can overtake a world in need of salvation than to lose sight of the Saviour who came to bring deliverance and emancipation to all mankind? Whether we believe it or not man's pseudo religion, his higher criticism and his human tradition of worship have done nothing to open the gates of understanding but these things have served only to hide him from the Eternal and to close the doors of salvation in the face of those for whom Christ died. The time has certainly come for us all to do some solemn thinking, some seeking after the wisdom of the Lord, for without doubt we are living in the extreme latter end of the dispensation of grace. We are in the closing hours of the Laodicean period of the church age, an age distasteful to God and so repugnant to Him that it is likened to lukewarm water fit only to be spewed out of God's mouth as a thing obnoxious to Him. The Laodicean age is a period replete with every form of godliness, but it is powerless godliness, consisting of empty lip service where men draw nigh to God with their lips but their hearts are far away from Him.

With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit on the deathless page of God's word portray the tragic scene of Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour, standing at the end of this age completely outside the Laodicean church! No longer is He seen dealing with the apostate church system, but knocking, knocking, knocking at the heart's door of individual men and women, saying to them, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne."

He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 3:20-22. However much we may dislike to hear it, however much you may resent my telling you so, even the blindest man could scarcely fail to see that the scripture quoted above refers to our particular day and none other. Times without number good people write to tell me that it is absolutely necessary that they belong to some sort of church group, but consider this, oh tradition bound man! If Christ is outside the church system as He is pictured in Rev. 3:20, what good will it do you to be inside no matter how comfortable and self-assured it makes you feel? Christ in you is the hope of glory and the hope of sonship, but you in a Laodicean church group means only that your doors are barred against Him.

The greatest need in the Christian life is Jesus Christ, for by Him everything comes, through Him everything exists and in Him everything ends even as the Holy Spirit has said: "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." **Rom. 11:36.** "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all. How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." **Rom. 8:31-32.** God does not give His people either this or that; He gives them Jesus Christ, and, in giving Him, He gives them all things, for He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. He is the "image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." **Col. 1:15-19.**

God has provided salvation for the whole world, yet if you should seek salvation apart from Jesus Christ, you will never find it, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved. But if you seek Jesus Christ, you will find salvation even though you sought it not for "he that findeth Me findeth life and shall obtain favor of the Lord." For thirty-eight years a destitute man lay at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem vainly seeking healing for his stricken body with only frustration and withering disappointment as a reward, but the moment he met Jesus he took up his bed and walked, for Jesus Christ is life. John 5. The woman with the issue of blood had suffered many things of many physicians and was nothing better, but rather grew worse, but she said within herself, "If I can but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole." There were no eloquent prayers on her behalf, no demanding or commanding the sickness to leave, no big preachers to lean on, no microphones or T.V. cameras to enthrall the crowds, no prayer cards nor any other abominable paraphernalia, but just a confident assurance in the heart of a desolate little woman that God gives everything with His own Son, Jesus Christ. "If I may but touch the border of His garment, I shall be whole," she said in her heart, and pressing her frail body through the unwilling obstacles, she touched Him, for He is not far from any one of us, but nigh unto all who are of a broken heart and who call upon Him. As he who touches an electric wire is immediately filled with its current, so she whose hand touched God's Christ was that moment filled with the life and health which He is. "And she knew in herself that she was made whole of that plague." Mark 5:25-29.

Oh, touch the hem of His garment
And thou, too, shall be free,
His healing power this very hour
Will bring new life to thee.

Men and theologians have made the things of God far too complicated. You do not need a set of rules to govern your life; you need vital communion with God's Son, for He is the way, the truth, and the life. He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

All the blessings of God are in Christ Jesus. All the promises of the Father are yea and amen in Him. We cannot attain sonship apart from Him, for we will find in the end, when sonship has been attained, that it came because the Christ dwelt in us. We cannot attain immortality apart from Him, for He only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. 1 Tim. 6:16. We will never attain the resurrection because of the correctness of a doctrine or by some effort of our own. We will attain it only through His indwelling presence, for He is the resurrection and the life. Salvation is not a doctrine; salvation is of the Lord.

Call sonship a doctrine if you want to, but our sonship depends not on doctrine and codes but on the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Millions of sermons have been preached on the resurrection, but we will find in the end that the resurrection is not a doctrine, but a person, and that person is none other than our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. "I am the resurrection and the life," He assured the grief-stricken women in the long ago, and of us as of them He still enquires, "Believest thou this?" "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," Jesus said, for the dead Lazarus was the symbol of all mankind, but "I go that I may awake him out of his sleep." Neither darkness nor death could dwell with Jesus, for He is the light of the world and life eternal to all who touch Him.

No man that ever lived has been able to comprehend or explain the deep mysteries of God, though to a few some understanding has been given. Be it far from me, therefore, to attempt to explain that which I understand not. Faith gives grace and form to the unanswerable; therefore, the hidden things of God are to be believed and not pried into. We would all do well to heed the words of the Jewish rabbi who said, "Where there is faith, there are no questions; but where there is no faith, there are no answers." I may not be able to explain to your satisfaction this statement of John the apostle: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." **1 John 5:7**. But my lack of understanding alters nothing of the mystery of God. Indeed, I may not be able to explain the rest of the statement. "There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." **1 John 5:8**. Yet Jesus gave these three -the Spirit, the water, and the blood - at His death on Calvary. In His agonizing cry of death He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit," and when He had said this, He gave up the ghost: And, when the soldier pierced His side, there flowed out blood and water. Thus He gave the Spirit and the water and the blood - incorruptible blood better than the blood of Abel, blood to atone for sin, blood to purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And with the blood flowed out water, even the water of life, the water of which Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink, and he that believeth on Me as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And to the woman by Samaria's well He said, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In like manner also the Spirit that He yielded to God that day hath He sent forth to abide with us forever to be our comforter and baptizer and to transform us into that same image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not even understand myself! How then can I understand the mysteries of God? The Bible never hesitates to describe me as a triune being of spirit, soul, and body. 1 Thess. 5:23. It is much too great for my puny mind, but I know it is so.

Of all the vast creation of Almighty God nothing has delighted Him so much as His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. So great is God's joy in Him that all things were made for Him, whether they be things in heaven or things in earth, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, things present or things to come. Col. 1:16. He is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. Upholding all things by the word of His power, He has purged us from our sins by His blood, and has sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. When the Father brought His only begotten Son into this world, He said, "Let all the angels worship Him." And to the Son He said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." **Heb. 1:8-9**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not have His beginning in the manger of Bethlehem. He did not come into existence the night the angels sang, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." That was His beginning as a man. That was His enfleshment or His incarnation. He who gives eternal life is Himself eternal. He existed long before the angels announced His birth. He existed before the world was, for the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. That which is eternal has neither beginning nor ending.

Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels with an account of the royal ancestry of Jesus. Matthew traces His lineage from Abraham through David to Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born (Matt. 1:1-6), first, to show that He was in truth the promised seed of Abraham (Gen. 13:15, Gal. 3:16), and second, to show that Jesus was of the royal line of David, the king, to whom it was promised: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever." **2 Sam. 7:16**. The genealogy given by Luke in chapter three of his gospel is in

reality the genealogy of Jesus Christ on the side of His mother Mary, who was the daughter of Heli, the father-in-law of Joseph, the husband of Mary. See Luke 3:23. This human genealogy goes all the way back to Adam, proving that Jesus was in truth a man and a member of the human race as truly as you or I.

John, however, does not concern himself with either the royal line of David or Christ's human descent from Adam. His great concern is to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, pre-existent, immutable, and eternal; existing with the Father in the beginning, which expression (in the beginning) is used only to accommodate us poor creatures of time, for God is eternal and that which is eternal has no beginning and no ending. He is not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Thus the opening sentences of the Gospel of John burst like an eternal fiat upon the listening ear. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life: and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." **John 1:1-3.** This in one divine proclamation from heaven is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for God, not man, was His father, and He, being born of eternal substance, is Himself eternal even as His Father is eternal.

For some strange reason it has always been difficult for men to believe that the Son of God existed with the Father from all eternity, yet there is no truth more plainly taught than this, nor anything more essential to the salvation of the world. It was on one of the many occasions when Jesus was confronted by those high-minded theologians that He asked the amazing question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" They answered, "The son of David." Then Jesus asked them, "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand till I make thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" And no man was able to answer Him a word. Matt. 22:41-46. Certainly Jesus was the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham, and the Son of Adam according to the flesh only, for He became a man; but He was eternally the Son of God and was therefore David's Lord as well as yours and mine.

Our Lord made certain that the world would not be left in doubt as to His divinity and existence in the Father before the world ever was. Listen to the words of John the Baptist as he proclaims the eternal existence of Christ in these inspired words: "John bear witness of Him and cried, This is He of whom I spake; He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." Nothing was more blasphemous to the carnal minds of the Pharisees than Christ's teaching of His pre-existence, but, when He told them He existed before their father Abraham, their wrath knew no bounds, and when in doing so He called Himself "I AM", which was God's name at the burning bush (Exod. 3:14), they took up stones to kill Him. But He, passing invisibly through their midst, proved that He was God just as He had said. "If I honor Myself," He said, "My honor is nothing; it is My Father that honoreth Me, of whom ye say that He is your God; Yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM. Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." **John 8:54-59.**

Evidences of the deity of Jesus Christ and His existence with the Father before the world was can be produced by the score and from almost any Bible source you wish to name. The four Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, guilelessly teach the deity and pre-existence of Christ, each one recognizing from beginning to end that He was the promised Son of God that should come to the world. In like manner also do the apostles in their various epistles set forth the deity of our Lord, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him." **Col. 1:16.**

It is always the guileless approach that is the most convincing. If a man looks like a Chinaman, acts like a Chinaman, has a Chinese name, speaks Chinese, and comes from Shanghai, we have every right to believe he is a Chinaman. This is what I mean by the guileless approach. There is no need to try to prove or disprove anything. Does not the same guileless principle hold true with our Lord, who came from the very bosom of the

Father, who scores of times in scripture is called by divine names, who performed divine acts, was miraculously born, who refused not to be worshipped, and whose name is frequently associated with those of the Father and the Holy Spirit? Dare we come to any other conclusion but that such a one is certainly God? Furthermore, Jesus performed acts of omnipotence, acts of omniscience, and acts of omnipresence. Was anything too hard for Him to do? Were the secrets of men's hearts hidden from Him? Did He not say, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them?" These are not intentional proofs of deity. They are what I term guileless proofs. They prove the fact without intention. He ever lived with the consciousness that He had come forth from the Father, and that He would soon leave the world and go to the Father again. John 16:28.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1. (In the Greek original it reads: In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.)

Jesus Christ is here given one of His almost countless names. He is the Word of God. That is His name just as surely as Jesus, or Christ, or Immanuel are His names. A most remarkable manifestation of this most excellent title is seen in **Rev. 19:11-16** where among other titles of deity He has the name, the Word of God. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself; and He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the Word of God... And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords,"

Each and every one of the scores of titles given to our Lord teaches us some new truth of the wonder and magnificence of His eternal being. Jesus means Saviour; Christ means anointed; Immanuel means God with us. I AM demonstrates as nothing else can that ever present, eternal abiding existence, whether past or future. No name is sufficient to embrace all He is, for He is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending of all things. Because of this, even our efforts to interpret become a nuisance to us and we find it better to leave each name as it is as far as possible. Like all other names, the Logos has its own meaning — a meaning which does not appear in the English translation, the Word. Logos carries with it the idea of a word spoken, speech, eloquence, reason, thought and concept. It was by His word that all things were done, for the Word flowed forth from eternal wisdom by which God is declaring the purposes of His infinite mind, wherein now He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself. Eph. 1:8-9.

The plans and purposes of God for the ages of ages were conceived and spoken forth in an eternal fiat by the Logos, the living speaking Word that was with the Father in the beginning. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Life itself was to have its source in Him, and that life was to be the light of men. **John 1:4**. How truly did Jesus say, "Without Me ye can do nothing!" Every plan or purpose of God for all future ages was made to depend on Christ, for this was the decree of the Logos, (the Word), that in Him should all fullness dwell. It is in union with Him that all our hopes for eternity lie embodied, and it is in union with Him and through the shedding of His blood that the world and all creation has its hope.

How marvelous are the words of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians as, seemingly overcome with the glory of inspiration, he wrote these words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath crowned us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ; even as in His love He chose us as His own in Christ before the creation of the world, that we might be holy and without blemish in His presence, for He predestined us to be adopted by Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, such being His gracious will and pleasure, to the praise of the splendor of His grace with which He has enriched us in the beloved One. It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood that we have our deliverance, the forgiveness of our offences, so abundant was God's grace, the grace with which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it — the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him." **Eph. 1:3-10**. (Weymouth).

My heart's desire and prayer to God, both now and for years past, has been to make all men see that the hope of mankind for all ages lies hidden in Christ. If you are going to be saved, then the Logos has declared that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved. Those who are to attain the resurrection from among the dead will attain it because He is declared to be the resurrection and the life. He is the one who liveth and was dead and is alive forevermore and holdeth the keys of both death and the grave, and he who believeth on Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth shall never die.

Glorious as the resurrection shall be, there is a better resurrection of which some shall be accounted worthy. It was to this better resurrection that Jesus referred when He said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And it was to the better resurrection that Paul referred when he said, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Perhaps not all who read can see it, but it was the thought of the better resurrection that filled Paul's heart when he wrote the words of 2 Cor. 5:4. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." **2 Cor. 5:4.**

The apostle Paul was getting to be a very old man when he wrote, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which in through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead." **Phil. 3:8-11.**

If any man who ever lived could look back on an eventful life, it was certainly the apostle Paul. His life had been extremely eventful from the beginning. From a very young man he had been brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel. There was no article of the law of Moses that he did not know; and when it came to the keeping of the law, he pronounced himself blameless. He was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, a strict Pharisee, having obeyed all the ritual required by the law. In his zeal for what he positively knew was right he had zealously persecuted and put to death all who he felt were opposed to God's way. But for all this his soul was an empty void that could not be satisfied with form and ceremony, for the heart of man is a golden temple not made with hands, expressly formed for an habitation of Jesus Christ by the Spirit. For Thou, Lord, hast made us for Thyself and we are restless till we rest in Three.

Our souls are like the beautiful dove released by Noah from the window of the ark. She found no rest for the sole of her foot amid the swelling waters of judgment and the stinking bloated things that floated about, so she returned to the window of the ark, and Noah put forth his hand and took her in. But afterward she returned with an olive leaf, and Noah saw her no more, for that which is spiritual feedeth upon Spirit and cannot be satisfied with the rotting, decaying things of a world under judgment. But the unclean raven, delighting himself with the rotting carcasses of a dead age, returned no more to the ark, for his satisfaction lay in the realm of the flesh. Gen. 8:7-12.

Not only had Paul an illustrious past in all things that concerned the Law of Moses, but he had later lived and moved in a spiritual ministry unexcelled by any man in any age. By the hands of Paul God wrought special miracles. He knew what it was to be acclaimed as God by the crowds and have people fall down to worship him. He had seen the frenzy of the multitude as they rushed into the market place, crying, "The gods have come down in the form of men." And when it came to spiritual revelation, he had seen and heard things unlawful to be uttered. A whole dispensation was committed to him, and a gospel, which he called the gospel of grace, was given to him by a special revelation from God. So abundant were his revelations that the Lord chose the drastic measure of giving him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure. No man ever labored with more fervent zeal than he; no man ever saw more people turn to the Lord, and no man ever saw more people turn away, until one day he wrote these bitter words: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me." **2 Tim. 1:15.** And again: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their

charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me ... and delivered me out of the mouth of the lion." **2 Tim. 4:16**. Paul knew what it was to be thrown into the lions' den with the Christians and makes passing reference to the experience when he says, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?" Yes, indeed, his was an illustrious life.

But these are not the things on which he depended nor in which he gloried. What he wanted above all else was to know Christ. How I would love to sit down and talk to him now! But, if I could he would not want to tell me of his knowledge of the Jewish law, nor yet of the special miracles of God wrought by his hand, nor of the crowds who acclaimed him as a god at Lystra, nor of the long terms he spent in jail. The story I would want to hear him tell would be of the day he met Jesus on the Damascus road and of a light brighter than the noonday sun that shined into his soul, dispelling all the darkness of his religion, there and then bringing forth in his ransomed soul an explosive consecration that would never fade nor falter, whether men acclaimed him or stoned him. I think I would hear him say:

Jesus is all this poor world needs today;
Blindly they strive, for sin darkens their way,
Oh, to draw back the grim curtains of night!
One glimpse of Jesus, and all will be bright.

I think he would tell me never to seek to have men follow me, but to be like John the Baptist who so pointed his vast crowds to Christ that at last he stood alone rejoicing, for all his people had gone seeking Jesus. But he was not alone — not even in his prison — for I am sure he could have sung

Best beloved of my soul,
I am here alone with Thee;
And my prison is a heaven
Since Thou sharest it with me.

If you could talk to Paul today, you would come face to face with those deeper truths that were so evident in all he did and said, for he counted everything but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ the Lord, for whom he had suffered the loss of all things. You would hear him say, "For me, to live is Christ, and to die to everything else is great gain."

In this day we hear so much about gifts of the Spirit, of prophecy and tongues, of miracles and healings. The more spectacular these things are the more men seek them and the more diligently they covet to bring them into their midst. But for all their tireless efforts something is sadly lacking. Whether people care to believe it or not, with all their much seeking of these spectacular gifts Jesus Christ Himself, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, is left outside their busy camp. The carnal mind seeks spiritual gifts because they appear to be spectacular and promote the individual who has them. Men and women will turn themselves inside out to possess a gift of the Spirit, but the desire to know Christ in all His excellent fullness never once crosses their carnal minds. They do not weep like Mary at His blessed feet as they pour out the sweet perfume of their love or break the precious alabaster box to anoint His head. Ah no! It is not He they want; it is gifts, for "every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." **Prov. 19:6**. I do not like to be dogmatic, but it will do little good to debate the issue with me, for I have seen as much of the fickle crowd as most men. I have seen them come by the fifties and leave by the fifties. I have seen them come by the thousands and go by the thousands, but, while the multitude came for healings and for gifts and for a score of personal blessings, only a paltry few were willing to count all things but loss that they might know Him, and be found in Him without blemish.

Those who would long to be leaders of men will soon learn that of all the things on earth crowds of people are the most fickle. They will cry, "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," today and nail you to the accursed tree tomorrow. As long as you are handing out loaves and fishes in the form of gifts and healings, they will crowd so thick around you that there will be scarcely time to eat or sleep. But when you stand in Pilate's hall, alone in your rejection, they will leave you to your fate as they did with Jesus and with Paul. It doesn't take much to offend people, and it is impossible but that offences will come. Never seek crowds and disciples, for they will fail you when you need them most and, despising all your love, will leave you unrequited while they return to their fishing.

Back to their tasks the crowd had gone,
And He was left alone
Save for a little company whom
He could call His own.
What use was there for restless crowds?
That worldly, giddy throng
Would listen to the music,
But never hear the song.

We are living in a day that is fraught with a thousand dangers. Never in the history of the world has religion been so popular, but it denies the power of God. The Almighty God Himself is shoved away off into the background like some mystical convenience to be called upon when a stalking Hitler threatens to overwhelm our nation or a fearful Dunkirk fills us with despair, a sort of handy legend that serves in a remote way to alleviate the spiritual longing inherent in every man on the face of the earth; but to recognize Him as a personal God, almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, eternal and full of love for His creation - such a God is unknown to them. Strange as it may seem we have come to the place where religion and church membership is the popular thing. To have no membership in any religious organization is to class oneself as a heathen. It really matters nothing at all what we believe nor where we go as long as we at least profess to believe something. How often we hear the exhortation, "Go to the church of your choice, but go to church!" This may sound like superb wisdom, but it is the wisdom of man, which is nothing but foolishness with God, for such religion with all its Christless form and ceremony serves only to act as an antidote against the truth, lulling men into a false sense of security. They become like a man who is slowly freezing to death, who begins to feel calm and comfortable, sleepy and warm, until his eyes close in death and his body is found a corpse on the ground.

I think one of the most treacherous shoals in life's threatening sea is found in the religion of the so-called evangelical and fundamentalist groups of Christians. Once upon a time the fire of God's love burned hot among them, but as the saints died from their midst a second generation has grown up who know not the God of their fathers. True, they preach the doctrines of their fathers, but they possess none of the experience in God that crowned their lives. They preach regeneration but do not experience it. They conduct great revivals, but they are only revivals in word and name - not in deed and in truth. Genuine repentance is not there in spite of all their claims. Cities which have been visited by such pseudo revivals are not shaken and transformed by the electrifying power of the Holy Spirit, but crime, ungodliness, and worldliness increase apace in their wake. There is an infinite difference between a revival born of the Holy Spirit and a pseudo revival that is nothing more than the result of vast, expensive and well-planned organization. In the former even the unbelieving are changed by the transforming power of God as men and women cry, "What must I do to be saved?" But in the latter vast throngs go sweeping into the enquiry room, not because of the moving of the Spirit, but because of thorough and well-planned organization by the advance agents. Call this what you like, but it is not a true revival and not a true move of the Spirit, but that, which exalts man and man's ways of doing things. In my opinion from long observation these man-made revivals have become the easiest, safest, and most lucrative racket ever sprung on a gullible public. Masquerading as it does in the name of religion, it is safe from the law and respected by the people and beyond the long, bony arm of taxation.

Every effort today is being made to capture and hold the minds of men in every imaginable form of Christianity, but it is a sort of Christless Christianity, founded far more on respectability than on repentance and the forgiveness of sins. We may not like to hear it; we may get angry and flatly reject the statement, but the sad portrait of Rev. 3:20 which pictures the Saviour of the world standing outside knocking at the door of individual hearts is the scene fitting for the day in which we live. Christ is outside the camp of the world's religious systems, and, verily, all who will find Him must **"go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."** Heb. 13:13.

Solomon said, **"By means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread, and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life."** Prov. 6:26. What words could be clearer than these? What else under heaven does the harlot of Rev. 19:2 represent if it is not the professing church system that, like a brazen harlot, has corrupted the whole earth with her fornications? "True and righteous are Thy judgments for Thou hast judged

the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand." Instead of modern church systems producing saints shining with gold, silver, and precious stones, this whorish woman has brought them to a crust of dry bread.

"For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." **Phil 1:21.** The whole life of this great apostle was Christ. For him, to live was Christ. Christ was his purpose for living and Christ was his only purpose for living. Whether he lived or whether he died, he was Christ's. He was in a strait between two good things - whether to stay here living for Christ, or to die and go to Christ; but, in any case, whether he lived or died, he was the Lord's. The glory of Christ ought to be the supreme end of our lives, the grace of Christ the supreme principle of our lives, and the word of Christ the rule of them. From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof Christ must become the beginning and the ending of our very being. Just as His name is the First and the Last (Rev. 1:11), so He must become the first and the last in our life that we, too, might say, "For me, to live is Christ."

It is difficult to explain all the fullness contained in this superb statement, for merely to live as a Christian is far beneath the meaning of its eternal truth. Your only reason for living is Christ. Yea, yet more, the life that you live is the life of Christ, even filling up in your flesh that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the true church. Col. 1:24. Further still, Christ must become so much your life that nothing, absolutely nothing outside of Him, matters even to the slightest degree. You must come to the place where you count all things, absolutely all things, but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, for whom by actual consecration you have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that you may win Christ and be found in Him without spot or blemish. Yea, and further still, the life you now live in the flesh becomes a life literally lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved you and gave Himself for you. This is, indeed, the life of a son of God; Christ the Alpha, Christ the Omega, Christ the first, Christ the last, Christ the beginning, Christ the end that you may say in truth, "For me, to live is Christ."

How shoddy and cheap in comparison do the lives of men appear who can never say in truth, "For me to live is Christ," but who, if they told the truth, would certainly say, "For me to live is to enjoy the carnal things about me - my friends, my business, my respectable church-going, my listening to sermons, and my taking in big campaigns." Is this your life and purpose supreme? Nay, I trust not, for only those whose lives are hid with Christ in God shall know the glory of sharing His kingdom.

We are certainly at the end of the church age. Like the age of law, it has waxed old and is ready to vanish away. There is no use trying to sew the riven veil together as the Jews did long ago to try to make it last a few more years. We are at the end of the age. The sun is setting on a dying dispensation, and while the shadows lengthen over a dispensation that has gone, the gladsome rays of the kingdom age come stealing o'er the meadows of that wonderful seventh day, the Sabbath rest, when

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Let us now see if we can determine some of the steps the Lord has taken to assure that all fullness should dwell in His Christ. When Paul made the statement, "For it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Col. 1:19), he was not giving place to idle words, but was in truth uttering by the Spirit one of the mightiest edicts whether of time or eternity.

In the first pages of this chapter we considered at some length that mighty edict, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." **Col. 2:9.** The mystery of godliness, and consequently the mystery of God, is so incomprehensible to the human mind that all things concerning Him must be understood by faith or they will not be understood at all. The man who believes he understands God or His glorious Christ is deceiving Himself. He is vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. He knows nothing as he ought to know. But if a man, though admitting that his poor, puny, human brain cannot comprehend the glory of God, yet manifests deep love and affection for all that God is, then that man is known and recognized by God. No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. And of His

fullness have we all received and grace for grace. The man who loves God desires to be like Him, and through his love and desire he grows to be like Him, because "if any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23**. God once again becomes manifest in the flesh. God dwells in man and man dwells in God that in Him all fullness might dwell.

The true church, which is the body of Christ, is the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. Eph. 1:23. Now hear the vividness of Weymouth's translation of that passage. "For I always beseech the God of our Lord Jesus Christ - the Father most glorious - to give you a spirit of wisdom and of insight into mysteries through knowledge of Him, the eyes of your hearts being enlightened so that you may know what is the hope which His call to you inspires, what the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power in us believers as seen in the working of His infinite might when He displayed it in Christ by raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavenly realms, high above all other government and authority and power and dominion, and every title of sovereignty used either in this age or in the age to come. God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His Body, the completeness (fullness) of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself" **Eph. 1:17-23**. This passage fills my soul with glory, for, while all fullness dwells in Christ, God has ordained that the completeness of Christ should be the true church, which is His body, and this, my brethren, is the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.

The high and holy calling with which we are called of God is no small thing, but a thing both universal and eternal in its endless domain. I know these things are so. The Spirit witnesses that they are truth, but how can puny man, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, understand the marvelous working of such grace that would take man, who before was an enemy of God, and make him to be the fullness of Him who fills the universe with Himself? This is grace incomparable, incomprehensible, fathomless and divine. No wonder those who see it even afar off count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and do count them but dung that they may be found in Him who filleth all in all.

Let us now notice in greater particular what things God has included in Christ Jesus and let us grasp by faith the all-embracing, yea, the universal extent of those things to be included in the fullness of Him who filleth all in all.

Because of the extent of the things I now propose to declare, it would be wise for us all to examine afresh our devotion to the infallible truth of God's word. Many times in my life I have seen preachers stand in the pulpit and in a great gesture of faith in the veracity of God's word cry aloud as they waved the Bible over their heads, "I believe this book from cover to cover and I believe the cover!" But, if you were to ask that preacher if he believed Paul's words, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven" (**Col. 1:20**), he with ninety-five percent of all evangelical preachers would begin to make excuses or try to explain the truth away and show that it did not mean exactly what it said. Why, I think it to be a thing of unspeakable importance that not only has Christ reconciled the world to Himself, but He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation, that we should preach this very truth. Was not this Paul's meaning when he boldly declared, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing, not imputing, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." **2 Cor. 5:18, 19**.

Never once in all the Bible is there the slightest suggestion that could possibly lead us to believe that God ever needs to be reconciled to man, though this is the inexcusable lie we hear continually from the pulpit. It is not God who needs to be reconciled to man. God was never man's enemy. It is man who is God's enemy and needs to be reconciled to Him. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." **2 Cor. 5:20-21**. But I hear the unbelieving say, "If I believed that all men were to be eventually reconciled, I would just go out in the world and enjoy myself." Little do you know, dear friend that such reasoning can only come from a heart that has no true love for God. Those who love Him abide in Him, loving Him yet the more because of the vastness of His infinite grace and the universal extent of His redemption.

Having then established our faith in the correctness and veracity of God's word, let us see what sweeping statements follow this mighty edict, "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell;" **Col. 1:19**. The sentence ends with a semicolon. It is not by any means the end of the thought. God, having declared that all fullness should dwell in Christ, straightway proceeds to show what things of His creation go to make up that glorious fullness. Therefore He follows the fiat, "In Him should all fullness dwell," with these words: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." His clear purpose in reconciling all things in earth and in heaven is that they all might be included in the fullness of Christ, and that they might share in the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven." **Col. 1:21-23**.

Thus in His mighty work of reconciliation Christ has reconciled all things unto God. They are already reconciled if they had but heard the truth of God's edict. The word of reconciliation has not reached them as yet, but it will do so in God's good time. It was for this very reason that Jesus Christ, after His death, went to preach to the spirits in prison, the spirits of the men who had been disobedient in the days of Noah. To them He carried the word of reconciliation, showing not only that Christ had died for their sins, but that He was risen for their justification. If perchance our minds are numbed with the glory of such a thought, let us again consider the words from Weymouth's translation. "Christ also once for all died for sins, the innocent One for the guilty many, in order to bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which He also went and preached to the spirits that were in prison, who in former times had been disobedient, when God's long-suffering patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons - eight in number — were brought safely through the water." **1 Pet. 3:18-20** (Weymouth). The glorious proclamation that God has reconciled all things to Himself will eventually be told to all men - that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

The proclamation that it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell is not only followed by the promise of the reconciliation of all mankind, that they might add to His bountiful fullness, but is preceded by a statement of such incredible magnitude that it boggles the imagination. He says in **Col. 1:14-18**, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."

O, what a vast and all inclusive statement that is! Principalities and powers are to be included in His fullness. O, what a mighty redemption! O, what a universal reconciliation! O, church of the living God, unto you is the word given, "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Eph. 3:9-11**.

THE PEACE OF GOD

When winds are raging o'er the upper ocean,
And billows wild contend with angry roar,
Tis said, far down beneath the wild commotion,
That peaceful stillness reigneth evermore.

Far, far beneath, the noise of tempest dieth,
And silver waves chime ever peacefully,
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,

Disturbs the Sabbath of that deeper sea.

So to the heart that knows Thy love, O Purest,
There is a temple sacred evermore,
And all the babble of life's angry voices
Dies in hushed silence at its peaceful door.

Far, far away, the roar of passion dieth,
And loving thoughts rise calm and peacefully,
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, in Thee.
Harriet Beecher Stowe

CHAPTER TWO THE MIND OF CHRIST

There is no truth greater or more necessary to be understood than the truth that concerns the mind of Christ. I feel it is very wrong to assert that we are going to study the subject of the mind of Christ, for the mind of Christ is not a subject. The mind of Christ is in reality the omniscient, immutable, eternal mind of the Father. We have wasted far too much precious time trying to study about things only to find later that we have wandered off into a desolate wilderness of theories where no living water flows, but only the bitter streams of stagnation and death. What good will it do to form ideas and opinions about the mind of Christ? All the ideas in the universe will not bring us any closer to its eternal reality. How much better would it be to heed the exhortation of Paul and begin to let this mind dwell in us, for one moment of thinking with God's mind would place us in eternal harmony with His glorious will and purpose even as the sage has written, "God nothing does nor suffers to be done but thou wouldst do thyself couldst thou but see the end of all events as well as He."

Let us then consider the truths that follow, not with the thought of studying them, but with the hope of being made partakers of the mind of Him who everywhere filleth the universe with Himself. The truths contained in this writing have not come to me through much study, but they have come as I sat alone with Him and walked and talked with Him in the beautiful garden of communion. To many these truths will be the savour of life unto life, and to others they will be the savour of death unto death. The hearts of some will beat wildly with understanding and expectation. But others will see only with the flickering light of human understanding and will go away nursing resentment against the truths that have been spoken. Christians have walked so long in the frail light of human understanding that the true color of everything God has purposed and planned has become distorted until good is taken for evil and evil is accepted as good.

Science has declared that, if it were possible for man to build a machine even remotely comparable to the human mind, it would need a space the size of Rockefeller Center to contain it. It would take three lifetimes to wire it, three quarters of the electric energy of New York City to drive it, and the Hudson River to cool it. Let us consider then how great even the human mind must be, remembering that man in his fallen state is capable of using only about five percent of this brain power. Considering yet further that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God, behold with what reverence and godly fear we should cast away the death and darkness of the carnal mind that the mind of Christ with all its transforming light and life may richly dwell in us. Here in truth is the mind that hath wisdom. In its fathomless depths are locked up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. There are hidden the secrets of the universe; there abide the hidden purposes, known and understood only by the creator of being Himself. In the fathomless depths of His mind are hidden the secret mysteries of the heights above and the depths beneath. There are the purposes of good and evil, the purpose of both fall and redemption. His ways are too wonderful for us and His thoughts past finding out.

How crude and presumptuous must be the frail carnal mind that would lift its voice in pretentious wisdom to understand Him or to know the way He takes. How dare we attempt to study about Him or fathom depths of wisdom that are fathomless indeed? We must consider such eternal truth with reverence and godly fear, remembering above all else that God has willed that we be partakers of His mind, and that His mind should dwell in us. I have no hesitation in declaring that just as surely and truly as the mind of the Father dwelt in that

first begotten Son, Jesus Christ, so also that same mind that dwelt in Him will dwell in all that blessed company who are becoming sons of God. It is by that mind of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, that the world will be governed in the kingdom age and the whole universe in the ages to come.

God will never consent to give His mind to you until you are willing to admit that your mind is a worthless enemy of God leading you into error and death and at the same time deceiving you into believing that you are on the right track and on the way to life. True life and true light are the same thing. There is absolutely no difference in them. To have true light is to have true life, and to have true life is to become incorruptible and be as He is. "I am the light of the world," said Jesus. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." **Jno. 8:12.** "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." This means that the darkness of the human mind could not receive the true light of God. It could not appropriate, comprehend, apprehend, believe, or understand it. The world was made by Him, yet we knew Him not. What a paradox that is! He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Why did they not know Him? Because He is from above and we are from beneath. The veil of human flesh still hides the light of the Holy of Holies. We walk in the frail flickering light of the candles of the Holy Place, but we do not know that just beyond the veil of the flesh, just beyond the realm of the corruptible body, shines the light of God's presence, the Shekinah. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Can you imagine standing in a light where there are no shadows? No darkness at all? Where all about you is light, or should I say from within is light? John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light, and for a time men were willing to rejoice in that light, but Christ had greater light than the light of John, even the works which the Father gave Him to finish.

I am saying these things now so that we will see where we stand. When we are willing to reject our minds and our own wisdom, then God will draw nigh to us and give us light, true light. He will give us light into which no man has been able to approach, for that is the light in which He dwells. Let us come to God with a true heart of repentance. Let us rend our carnal minds asunder and cast away all our self-will and all ambition to fulfill the desires of the corruptible body and the carnal mind, and let us come to God praying that we may be forgiven for having placed our wills ahead of His will, for having rebelled against light and hidden our nakedness behind the fig leaves of the garden of human reason. Let us admit that we have lived after the flesh, that we have desired the things of the body more than the things of the Spirit, and that we have loved the visible realm and ignored the invisible. Let us confess that our hearts have been set on gaining temporal things while we have given only passing thought to eternal things. Let us confess that we have taken comfort in any teaching that would leave us free to seek after earthly things. Let us cease to love the world and all the things that are in the world, for all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, (the things craved by the corruptible body), the lust of the eyes (the visible things we see and want to possess), and the pride of life, (the pride we feel in possessing these visible things). Let us confess that we have loved the world and not God. We have loved the visible and not the invisible. We have loved the mortal, which is seen, rather than the immortal, which is not seen. We have loved the corruptible bread, which is visible. Let us repent of having been troubled as Martha was about many, many things that concern our physical and temporal welfare and of having forgotten the better part of partaking of the mind of Christ. Let our confession and repentance be real and let us seek to reject our minds while we seek to be partakers of His.

Let us not deceive ourselves. We have not been all out for God. We have been lovers of all visible and mortal things, and no man can love the visible things of the world and love the Father at the same time. For, if we love the world and the things that belong to it, then the love of the Father is not in us. Let us not be deceived by that great deceiver, the carnal mind. The carnal mind is a real and a wicked antichrist, and all who put their trust in the reasoning of the carnal mind will find themselves greatly deceived.

I am a strong believer in fasting and meditation before God, but I do not believe in fasting from food only. I believe we must fast from the carnal mind. Fasting is denial of corruptible food for the body, but Jesus taught us to deny self. Self is you. It is your carnal mind. What your mind is, is what you really are. Self is everything that concerns you. Jesus not only taught us to deny self; He also said, "Take up your cross." Now why take up the cross when we deny self? Because the cross is for the crucifixion and death of self. Saul of Tarsus thought he was doing God a service by putting other men to death, but he later found that he was doing both God and himself a service by crucifying himself rather than others. "I am crucified with Christ," he cried. "Nevertheless I

live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." When the self begins to die, then the Christ life rises from its tomb and lives eternally within you.

During a time of great distress I was much strengthened in God by a letter I received. I quote the following paragraph from the letter: "Before your eyes can see God, they must be incapable of shedding tears for any suffering of your own. Before your ears can hear, they must have lost sensitiveness to all sounds but the sound of His Spirit speaking. Your voice may not speak eternal wisdom until it has no power to wound. If once thou doest the will of the Father as His obedient child, this is the atonement, for He shall give strength to do every work of the Creator of being. It will seem to take thy very life. That is because it takes the lower soul (the carnal mind) and masters it. But this is where the Spirit comes in and this is the time for the silence of the soul. Strive to learn the peace of silence, for this is time-abiding wisdom." This paragraph is of tremendous power and truth. The frivolous and earthly can never see it, but the wise shall understand. How can God speak while I am speaking? How can He impart wisdom while I love my own? How can I love the invisible and the real while my heart is set on the visible and the unreal? How can I speak the word of wisdom when my heart is set on wounding others?

The carnal mind is an enemy of God. It is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and who can know it? The carnal mind is such an enemy of God that it makes all good things appear evil and all evil things appear good. It masks error as truth and brands truth as error. It puts truth forever on the scaffold and wrong forever on the throne. The carnal mind is so deceitful that it will fill you with confidence that you are seeking God's best when all the time you love the world and the wretched things that are in it. Let us not be "deceivers of our own selves," but let us honestly confess that we have not sought God. We have been all taken up with the things that concern the body and have been troubled and careful about the physical realm, but have put forth only half-hearted efforts to become acquainted with the spiritual realm. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, and none of the things that concern this realm can help us toward the kingdom, but only hinder us. We, like Martha, may be very, very good people, but we are troubled about the wrong thing. The better part that Mary chose concerned the realm of the mind of Christ, not the realm of the flesh. While good Martha strove to provide corruptible food for perishing, corruptible bodies, Mary drank at the fountain of eternal wisdom and partook of the bread of life, which if a man drinks, he will never thirst, and if he eats, he will never hunger again, but live forever. The church is full of Martha's — good, good people but troubled all their lives with the passing, corruptible, and mortal things. Only a few are wise enough to seek the kingdom and find their needs supplied in it.

Mary sought first the kingdom as she sat at Jesus' feet and, having sought it, she found that all else had been added to her, for she had need of neither food nor drink. Jesus at Samaria's well, having done the mind of God, had no need of food nor drink nor rest. So Mary, having put the Spirit first, found that all else was met in Him. When this is made real to us, we can understand much better why our blessed Lord taught us saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

I know of a certainty that no man on earth will ever become a partaker of the mind of Christ until he has first plainly seen that his own carnal mind is lord of his present existence, ruling and controlling him at every step. The carnal mind is an enemy of God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be; so they who are in the flesh cannot please God. They cannot please God because the flesh lusts against the Spirit. The flesh is anti-Spirit and therefore anti-Christ. Anti means against and the flesh is against the Spirit. No wonder all who are in the flesh find it impossible to please God! No man will ever become a lover of the Spirit until he is a hater of the flesh and all its works.

It is completely necessary that we be brought under conviction about our condition. It is very easy for a sinner to be saved once he is convinced that he is a sinner, but, until he becomes awakened, it is almost hopeless to bring him to a desire for justification. So also it is with the carnal mind. It is impossible for any man to seek the mind of Christ until he is awakened to his carnality.

The scripture says, "They who are in the flesh cannot please God." Why can they not please God? Because everything about the flesh is completely opposite to the Spirit. The flesh is the dust of the earth; the Spirit is the breath of God. One is of the earth earthly; the other is the Lord from heaven. The flesh can only live by taking

the life of other creatures such as plants and animals. The Spirit has life in Himself. The body of flesh can only bring bondage to the spirit; the spirit brings life to the body. Every tendency of the physical body is downward toward the dust and the grave; every tendency of the spirit is upward toward God. Every tendency of the flesh is toward death; every tendency of the spirit is toward life. Every desire of the flesh is toward itself; every desire of the spirit is toward others. Everything after the image of Adam dies; everything after the image of Christ lives. The flesh is mortal; the spirit, immortal. The flesh is visible; the spirit, invisible. The flesh belongs to time; the spirit, to eternity. The physical, corruptible body of flesh is the most tremendous factor at work in the earth today. Every war in history has been fought to obtain more things for the physical body of flesh. Every doctor spends his life trying to heal the corruptible body. We spend a third of our time resting it in bed. We nurse it in sickness, feed it, clothe it, and shelter it. We cater to its taste and various fancies.

The carnal mind is the fleshly mind. Carni means flesh. The carnal mind is the mind that is devoted to the desires and demands of the human body of flesh. If you do not think you have a carnal mind, then just compare how much time you devote to the demands of the body with how little time you devote to the demands of the spirit. Compare how much time you spend in working for the body with how little time you spend in the interests of the spirit; how much time you spend talking about the things that are temporal with how little about spiritual things. How much time do you spend like Martha bothered and burdened with temporal things? How little time do you spend like Mary partaking of the mind of God which is the bread of life! Let us confess it quickly. Let us get under conviction about it. Then for the first time we will be on our way to a life in the Spirit.

We will never get this picture straight until we are able to see that the carnal mind is the fleshly mind. It is the mind that is concerned with the body and all the things that pertain to the welfare of the physical man. Paul calls this mind the fleshly mind. (Col. 2:18). In previous writings I have pointed out that everything in the world is for man's body. I mean every visible thing. There is not a trade, occupation, or industry that is not for the body of man. All things from the grass of the field that feeds the cows to the mightiest concern on earth have their end in the satisfaction of the corruptible. Every perfume is for the nose. Every sight is for the eyes. Every taste is for the palate. Every sweet sound is for the ears and every thrill for the feelings. There may be no sin in any of these things but they are all the product of minds that are concerned only with lavishing upon the body every transient enjoyment, and whether such things are good or evil they have their end in death.

Until we grasp the far-reaching yet transient effects of the carnal mind and come to realize that all men both in the church and out of it are concerned almost entirely with the realm of the body, we never will be able to pass into the realm of the Spirit and the mind of Christ. Until we are able to see that the realm where we have lived so long is earthly and to realize that all things that belong to that realm are passing away, we will never be able to partake of the mind of Christ.

The carnal mind will lie and cheat and deceive. It is very religious and will pretend to be the mind of Christ. I am certain that many people who walk after the dictates of the body actually think they are in the Spirit and those who know only the carnal mind actually think they have the mind of Christ. We can tell what mind a man is in by the things he does and says. If he talks much of earthly things, then that is where his mind is. If his conversation is in heaven, that is where his mind is. No man or woman can feed his mind for hours on Hollywood's trash, which is without doubt the product of the most carnally minded men on earth, and still have the mind of Christ. How can one sit for hours watching shootings, fightings, violence, sex, stabbing, intrigue, hate, and every rotten thing that is produced by the carnal mind and still come away pretending to have the mind of Christ? Such people deceive themselves and all who listen to them. Let us turn from these vanities and give our time to prayer, to the reading of the Word, to fasting, and to fellowship with the saints, and let us rise into the arms of God where we belong. Feed on flesh and we will be carnal. Feed on the bread of life and we will be joined to the eternal.

The Apostle Paul through the eternal wisdom given to him by the Spirit of God gave us the secret formula for a life in the Spirit and the development of the mind of Christ. **2 Cor. 6:4-10.** "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in distresses, in necessities, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on

the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." The life outlined here is very different from the attitude of the life and mind of the average Christian, and I would say that among the so-called clergy of our day not one man in a thousand attempts to order his life after the fashion described here by Paul. Love of money, love of ease, comforts of home, family ties, pride of position, prestige, love of food, and delight in fine apparel have torn the heart out of Christian zeal and dimmed the eyes of the spirit, and make consecration a meaningless farce. It seems to me that the only fasting the ministers know is fasting from the "Word of Truth" which is the bread of life. See verse 7. But they know nothing of the fast from the bread of corruption which strikes the flesh, that enemy of God, with a mortal wound, loosing the spirit from the icy bonds of corruption into the glorious liberty of God.

I do not know how the Eternal Father looses the band of Orion in the heavens, forcing the icy grip of winter to loose its hold on the earth. But I do know it happens, Job. 38:30,21, and, when it happens, the waters that were bound up in a rock of ice are loosed to flow forth and water the earth. I do not know how the Eternal Father looses the bands of the flesh on earth breaking the icy grip in which it holds the spirit, but I do know that through prayer and fasting it happens. The moment the body of flesh looses its icy grip, the spirit leaps upward to the Eternal from whence it came and rejoices in those heavenly realms where it is at home with God.

God in infinite kindness has given us a simple way to begin to break the bondage in which our corruptible bodies, which are dust, hold our spirits, which are eternal and divine. Every man from Adam until now who has found his way into that heavenly realm has been a man of fasting and prayer. The list of such honorable worthies is far too long to investigate here, but it includes both men and women and embraces such immortals as Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Job, David, Hannah, Elizabeth, Christ and the Apostles, Luther, Wesley, Knox, and every reformer through the centuries. The Pentecostal revival that swept the earth at the turn of the century and the blessed out-pouring of recent years all began through days, weeks, and months of prayer and fasting. No man can rise into the realm of God and take the flesh with him. The celestial realm is "out of bounds" for the flesh. Flesh and blood can no more inherit the kingdom than corruption can inherit incorruption. God has made this a starting point; "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." Before God draws nigh to us who are saved, we must first draw nigh to Him. With the sinner the reverse is true, but with the regenerate the first step is ours. I know all the arguments against fasting and prayer, and I know also that they are all the product of the natural mind. The flesh hates fasting because it is deprived of the food of corruption. The spirit loves fasting because it is filled with the bread that is eternal.

The veil that hung in the temple represented the flesh. It separated the Holy Place where the priests ministered from the Holy of Holies where the Lord dwelt. No light of God's glory ever filtered through the veil of the temple into the Holy Place,, and neither will the life of the Spirit ever appear until the flesh is made subject to the Spirit. Away with all this light talk about passing beyond the veil. Learn first what the veil is. The veil is our corruptible body of flesh after which we live from morning until night and from infancy to old age. Away with all this foolish talk that would lead us to believe that we have already passed the veil of the flesh. Such utter nonsense! How can any man who loves his corruptible body say he has passed beyond its power? How can men who die say they do not live after the flesh, for it is only those who live after the Spirit who do not die. Enoch did not die because he pleased God. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Jesus died, but rose again because He did always those things that pleased the Father. Elijah did not die because he had the mind of God. Melchisedec did not die because he had departed so far from earthly things that he was not known by fleshly relationships. He was without father or mother, beginning of days or end of life, but had entered the eternal realm of the Spirit.

You may ask me this question: Do you believe that some men will never die? Most certainly I believe it. Many men have been taken out of this world without dying. We need only two or three witnesses and we have them in Enoch, Elijah, Melchisedec, and the Apostle John. But the scripture tells us of a great number who at last will rise to meet the Lord in the air without ever tasting death as we know it. But let us not deceive ourselves! All those who are found worthy to escape the grave will first have cast down the flesh with all its power. They will have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. They will live; yet it will not be they, but the blessed Christ living within them.

If we were asked to give a description of flesh and blood, we would immediately point the inquirer to our physical bodies, which are both flesh and blood. Paul teaches us that it is just as impossible for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom of God as it is for corruption to inherit incorruption. Flesh and blood and the kingdom of God are two completely different entities. One is visible; the other, invisible. One is corruptible; the other, incorruptible. One belongs to time; the other, to eternity. One is dead; the other, living. The one minds only the things that are visible and temporal; the other is concerned only with the eternal and unchanging. Paul taught us this: The things that are seen are temporal; the things that are unseen are eternal. Nothing that is visible is important, for everything that is visible passes away. I sat in deep meditation one day pondering over the visible and the invisible. My thoughts led me to search all the visible creation to find out if there was not something visible to human eyes that was eternal and therefore important. I thought of man's body that returns to dust. I thought of all the vegetable kingdom that springs up and passes away. I thought of the rocks that deteriorate with time and return to dust. So I thought of the dust itself and the earth and the visible heavens and the sun and the moon. Were there not eternal things to be found there? But I remembered the word of the Lord when He declared, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." **2 Pet. 2:10.** And again: "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: they shall perish, but Thou remainest. They shall wax old as doth a garment and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up and they shall be changed, but Thou art the same, and Thy years fail not." **Heb. 1:12.** Can you not see, then, that nothing visible to human eyes belongs to the eternal? And can you not see likewise that nothing visible to human eyes is important?

When I use the word 'visible,' I mean visible to our poor, corruptible, human eyes. When we speak of God's being invisible, we mean only that He is invisible to the kind of sight that we possess. Every invisible thing can be clearly seen, but not with mortal eyes. Every heavenly voice can be heard, but not with mortal ears. Every heavenly perfume can be smelled, but not with the nostrils of man. When man fell from the image of God, he was shut off from the sight of God, the voice of God, the Bread of Life, and every important and eternal thing. His ears could no longer hear the eternal voices. His taste could no longer partake of eternal flavors. The eternal perfumes of heaven he could no longer smell. All the transcendent joys and sensations were cut off from him. Every important, eternal, immortal thing became invisible to his eyes, inaudible to his ears, incomprehensible to his mind, and so on all the way through. Only the passing, transient, corruptible, mortal, unimportant things were left for him to dimly see, hear, smell, taste, and feel. Furthermore, all these sensations were in the realm of his visible body, and his visible body is also corruptible and passing away.

It will be a happy day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that the world where we struggle for existence is of no importance whatever, because it is passing away and therefore has no permanent value. No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the word of John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for the world passes away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will (mind) of God abideth forever." A man plays the fool when he loves the passing, because it will soon slip away from him and be no more. But a man who is a lover of the eternal, the immortal, and the invisible is a lover of that which is real and abides forever. Let us cease to seek after all the glitter the world has to offer, for it is false and blinds our minds to truth. A man cannot love the world and love the Father at the same time, neither can he serve two masters. If he loves one, he hates the other. If he clings to one, he despises the other. He cannot serve God, who is invisible and real, and mammon, who is visible and unreal. Only those who meditate continually at Christ's feet and spend their time in conversation concerning the eternal realities can be partakers of the mind of Christ. Do not deceive yourself. If you spend hours feasting your eyes and ears on the products of man's carnal mind, you will have a carnal mind. If you can enjoy the fleeting, transient rubbish presented to us by a world of unbelievers, then it is because your mind is only carnal. A man who walks with God is always nauseated by contact with the carnal mind. The great and righteous Job once declared that, if he could come before God, he would fill his mouth with arguments and order his cause before Him. Job. 23:3. But one day he came into God's presence and, when he did, he found he had nothing to answer or to say except to confess how vile he was. Job. 42:5-6. Likewise you also, my brothers, may imagine you are living in the Spirit and that you have passed beyond the veil of the flesh, but, should you only hear Him whisper, all your comeliness would turn to corruption and you would cry for deliverance from your worldliness.

The realm to which God is leading us is a new realm. It is a new land, a new plane, a new disposition. It cannot be reached by human organization. It cannot be reached by any standards of the past. Truth is the most potent

force in the universe, for God is truth. Truth breaks asunder the bars and cuts the cords of bondage. Truth floods light into shadowy valleys and makes the tender herbs spring forth. Truth is a light that is set on a candlestick. It is a city that is set on a hill and cannot be hid. All the great upheavals of the religious world have been caused by the entrance of truth. Yet truth has been on the scaffold from the shedding of Abel's blood in the field to the shedding of the blood of Zacharias between the temple and the altar. From the head of John the Baptist, the cross of Christ, the murder of the apostles, the catacombs of Rome, and the fires of Smithfield to the more refined persecutions of our day truth has suffered at the hands of the carnally minded. In spite of this it is as Paul once said, "You can do nothing against the truth, but for it." **2 Cor. 13:8.**

We cannot have the mind of Christ and the carnal mind at the same time. If we would seek the mind of Christ, we must crucify the carnal mind, which is interested only in the things that concern the carnal, the flesh, or the corruptible human body of flesh and blood. Paul was the greatest authority on this subject who ever lived. Enquire of him what he meant when he declared, "I keep my body under and bring it into subjection lest, after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Did he not speak of casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself above the knowledge (mind) of Christ? You wonder how such things can be done, but those who become lovers of the eternal, the immortal, and the invisible find no difficulty whatever in keeping the body under or in casting down the imaginations of the carnal mind. Only those who dwell on that carnal plane wrap themselves in a cloak of humility and pretend that all must be left to God. I know for certain that those who would have God draw nigh to them must first draw nigh to Him. They must first cleanse their hands from sin and cast away their double minds.

I have written all these things that our hearts might be prepared for the truths that concern the mind of Christ. No man can have the mind of Christ and retain the carnal mind at the same time, for that is a double mind. That is an eye with a beam in it, that is, an eye that is not a single, but sees double and fills the whole body with confusion that is worse than darkness. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and cannot receive anything from the Lord. All his teachings are high-sounding nonsense and never draw anyone nearer to Christ.

To be carnally (fleshly or bodily) minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life. It is the coming of the mind of Christ that will make the change. When these corruptible bodies are presented to Him as sacrifices, then they will begin to be renewed and transformed and come into the image of Christ in incorruption and immortality. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Whatever our mind is, that is what we are. If our mind is carnal, we are carnal and our body is corruptible. When our mind is displaced by His mind, then it is spiritual and we are spiritual, and the body of corruption and humiliation begins to be transformed because the mind is renewed.

I would like to show you as best I can what a tremendous power the mind really is. Even the natural mind of man is a very great power and accomplishes things that stagger the imagination. Everything good or bad that is in the world today is the product of the mind. All the remarkable inventions, all the outstanding feats of engineering, and accomplishments too numerous to count had their first existence in the mind of man. Every means of transportation from the cave man's cart to the jets that break the sound barriers was in the mind of man before it was visible to the eye. All the musical instruments from the monotonous beating of the tom-tom by the savages of the jungle to the sweet strains of the harp or the violin had their beginning in the mind of man. Every mode of communication from the ancient smoke signals on the distant hills to the breathtaking speed and accuracy of communication of our day began and was developed in the mind of man. Steam engines, electric dynamos, self-starters, radios, television, and radar are all the products of man's natural mind. Think on as long as you like about everything that man has made and you will agree that, before it existed, it had its birth in the mind.

The power of life and death is in the tongue. Prov. 18:21. If the judge says, "Not guilty," the prisoner goes free, but if he says, "I find this man guilty of murder," He goes to death. Surely the power of life and death is a great power, but is this power of life and death really in the tongue or is the tongue merely the instrument of the mind? Can any of us deny that it is out of the abundance of the heart (mind) that the mouth speaketh? The words that are articulated by the tongue first had their being in the mind. Did not James say that the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity that setteth on fire the whole course of nature? But is it not true that the words spoken

by the tongue were first conceived in the mind? Of course it is so, unless we have the ability to speak without thinking. Who can deny that it is from the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks? Whether it speaks of life and brings forth life or whether it speaks of death and brings forth death, it is certainly speaking from the thoughts that are formed in the mind.

"As a man thinketh, so he is." **Prov. 23:7.** The word of God tells us: "Eat not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart, so he is. Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shall thou vomit up and lose thy sweet words." Now this is a very revealing scripture, for it tells us that as a man thinketh in his heart (mind) that is what the man really is. He may connive nice things to say, but the thing that is in his mind is the thing he really is. He may feign friendship and bid you to eat and drink and make yourself at home, but in his mind he hates you and his heart (mind) is not with you at all. Presently you will discover his true attitude toward you and you will feel like vomiting up the food he gave you and the sweet words as well.

Let us now consider some of the truth we have before us. First: what your mind is, is what you are. Let us make it even plainer and say, what your mind is, is your true nature. I do not see how any man can argue against this truth. Would you not expect a man with a clean mind to be a clean man? If he has an orderly mind, would he not be tidy and orderly in all he is and does? If a man has an unclean mind, will he not be unclean? And if there is no order in his thinking, will this disorder not show up in his home, his business, and his occupation?

The word of God tells us many things about the mind. It speaks of the doubtful mind, Luke 12:20, the reprobate mind, Rom. 1:28, the double mind, Jas. 1:8 and 4:8, the carnal or fleshly mind, Rom. 8:5-6; Co. 2:18. If a man has a doubtful mind, what kind of a person would you expect him to be? Would you expect to find a man who believes everything and doubts nothing, or would you rather expect to find a man who believes nothing and is skeptical about everything? Because he has a doubtful mind, he doubts everything and cannot help it. Thomas was one of the chosen disciples of Jesus, yet he found it hard to erase doubt from his mind. "Whither I go ye know and the way ye know," said Jesus, but Thomas replied, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest and how can we know the way?" When all others were enthusiastically rejoicing over the resurrection of the Saviour, Thomas was shaking his head sadly in unbelief and saying, "Except I shall see the print of the nails in His hands, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." We cannot blame him for this. He had a doubtful mind and doubt was his nature. But a change of mind came to him that day and history records that none of the disciples worked harder or with more faith and consecration than Thomas. Thank God, He is able to renew the mind and give us the mind of Him who created us.

What then would you expect a man to be who had a reprobate mind] Would you not expect such a man to be a reprobate? Certainly you would. You would deplore his actions and be disgusted with all his deeds, but lying back of all his profligacy is his corrupt and reprobate mind; for as he thinketh in his heart so is he.

There is a most remarkable description of the gradual degeneration of the mind in the **first chapter of Romans**. Beginning with **verse 21**, we read, "Because when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart (mind) was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of the own heart (mind) to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which is meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge (mind), God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient." The remainder of the chapter bears witness of the great evil and degeneration that followed. We must conclude then that a man who has a reprobate mind will certainly be a reprobate and, barring a miracle to his mind, we can do nothing about him.

A double-minded man is an unstable man. Jas. 1:18. You can never depend on him and for that reason God does not depend on him either. He is one thing today and something different tomorrow. He is spiritual one hour and carnal the next. He walks in a fog of opinions and clouds up the minds of those who listen to him. If you want to be spiritual, he shows you how to be spiritual, and if you want to be carnal, he makes excuses for it. He runs with the deer and chases with the hounds. If you do not agree with his talk, he will swing around to your side and agree with you. He is not dependable and, when you lean on him, he is like a staff that breaks and pierces through your hands. Do you wonder what makes him that way? The trouble is all in his mind. He cannot help himself. He is in the same predicament as the doubtful and reprobate and, barring a miracle, he will never recover himself.

Satan's mind is the mind that is always looking to exalt self. You will find a vivid description of it in **Isa. 14:12-15**. "For thou hast said in thine heart (mind), I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the side of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." I will! I will! I will! That is Satan's mind. I have often seen that same mind working in the hearts of Christians. They are not satisfied with the thing that God has given them, but they must rise up and take away the thing that God has given to others. That wretched mind is at work in the world. It reaches out to grab that which belongs to another so that it can be consumed upon self. That same mind of Satan is at work in the church. We can see it everywhere. It was this mind that made Saul hate David. It was this mind that made Joseph's brethren sell him into Egypt. It was the same mind that was responsible for the gainsaying of Korah in his rebellion against Moses. I will! I will! I will! Did not the blessed Lord teach us that, if we would follow Him, we would have to deny self and take up the cross? The cross is for the crucifixion of self that Christ may live.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." **Phil 2:5**. The mind, which was in Christ Jesus, was the Father's mind. Let us not miss this most essential point of truth. Jesus Christ divested Himself in absolute completeness of every trace of His own mind. The mind and the will, we must understand, are one and the same thing. The Son of God came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. The words He spake were not His own words. The works He did with all their signs and wonders were not His own works, but He did them at the bidding of the Father's mind. The self-life did not exist in Him. He never once pleased Himself about anything. Never once in all His blessed life did He seek to amuse Himself with excitement, but He found the apex of pleasure and joy in His unity with the Father's mind. The holy and glorious God finds all His pleasure in one thing and one thing alone, and that one thing is the fulfilling of His own infinite and eternal purposes, which were ordained in Him before beings, worlds, or ages began. Before angels hymned praises to His name or universes rolled into their orbits, before morning stars sang together or sons of God shouted for joy, the eternal purposes for all ages flourished in the mind of Him who is omniscient, immutable, omnipotent, and eternal. In the fulfilling of those eternal edicts the pleasure and joy of God finds complete satisfaction. There and there alone do those who have become one with His mind find their unending joy. While the world and a carnal church find transient pleasure in the excitements and trivialities of a passing age, rejoicing in the petty things they can hear or feel or taste or see or smell, those who are coming into the mind of Christ find pleasure in that thing which alone gives joy to the Lord; that is, the immutable purposes of His will. Poor ignorant little man strives to find satisfaction in the pleasurable excitements of the life he lives. He tries to enjoy himself in a moment's pleasure, an exciting game, an exotic scene, a delightful banquet, harmonious music, the pride of possession, or a thousand other fleeting things, all of which, when apart from the eternal purpose, leave us bereft of eternal joys.

In speaking of the mind of Christ, we are speaking of the greatest power and authority in the universe. The truth I will endeavor to show you now will prove that all your eternal hopes of sonship and of the kingdom to come depend on one thing and one thing alone: that the mind of Christ dwell in you and that your own mind be crucified. We have already shown that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." It is with the mind that a man thinks, and as he thinks, so he is. What your mind is, is what you are, and there is no escaping this conclusion. Your mind is your personality and your character. If a man has a niggardly personality, it is because he has a niggardly mind. If a man is a sadist, it is because he has a sadistic mind. If a man is generous, it is because he has a generous mind. You have often wondered why some unsavory people are the way they are, or perhaps you have wondered what makes you the way you are. Why are some people so mean? Why do they tell so many lies? Why do they love malicious gossip or delight in another's hurt? It is all in their minds. What their minds are, they are, too.

Doctors have known for many years that a great variety of physical ailments come from the mind. Few people wish to hear that, but it is nonetheless true. Recently I listened to a medical report in which it was stated that sixty percent of all operations in the hospitals have a mental connection. I believe this to be true, and possibly, if we understand all the truth, the percentage would be much higher. If a man then has a carnal mind, will he not be carnal? If a man has a reprobate mind, will he not be a reprobate? And if a man has a covetous mind, will he not be covetous? Whatever a man is, whether covetous, proud, boastful, cantankerous, shiftless, two-faced, kind, gentle, generous, patient, or ten thousand other things, he is that way because his mind is that way. As he thinks in his mind, so he is.

Let us now carry this thought a little further and we will soon come to the conclusion that the state of a man's mind is often manifested by physical changes. If a man is in a towering rage, no one needs to ask him, "Are you angry, sir?" The fact that he is angry is manifested all over his physical being. His eyes bulge and redden, his fists clench, his face may redden or go livid, and his heart doubles or triples its pace. Food will not digest in his stomach as long as he is angry. A glutton soon begins to look like a glutton. A harlot begins to look like a harlot. A drunkard begins to look like a drunkard, and a mendicant like a mendicant. I was interested in a paragraph from the magazine, *Healthful Living*. Because it confirms what is stated above, I will quote it here. "The individual who is given to worry, fretting, and other emotional and mental upsets is the one who is most likely to suffer from enlargement of the thyroid. It is a well-known fact that hyperthyroidism does not occur among drifters, beach-combers, bums, morons, idiots, and savages. They are a happy, careless, unworrying lot. For them there is only this afternoon and tomorrow never comes. They never suffer from high blood pressure, ulcers of the stomach, diabetes, or hyperthyroidism. These are diseases of civilization and of people who have too much on their mind." So you see that, according to medical science, the mind has a tremendous power over the body.

The questions I am now going to ask will seem silly and preposterous at first, but you will soon see that they are both sane and scriptural and will bring into focus as nothing else I know the almost unbelievable power of the mind. Let us then ask the question, "If I could take your mind and put it in my head, would I not be exactly like you?" Is there anything you know that I would not know? Or anything that you could do that I could not do? If you were a musician, would I not also be a musician? If you were a skilled surgeon with many years experience, would I not be the same? I would have the same thoughts, the same reactions, and the same outlook on life as you. If, indeed, you could take my mind and let it dwell in you, would any knowledge, ability, or learning of mine be withheld from you? No! Absolutely no! Now then, if it were possible for a man to have his mind taken from him and the mind of a beast given him, what do you think he would be like? You would have no hesitation, I am sure, in saying, "The man would be like a beast," and so he would be.

Recently the book of Daniel has opened many new treasures to my heart. This book that was closed up and sealed until the time of the end is opening and the seals are being broken. As I read the fourth chapter of the book that contains the awesome experience of the great and terrible king Nebuchadnezzar, I was amazed beyond words at the truth it bears concerning this hour when we shall in God's mercy become partakers of the mind of Christ. We will quote extensively from this chapter, but I wish that all those who are reading would take time to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the fourth chapter so that we will understand better the thoughts we are to consider.

The fourth chapter of Daniel was written by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It is perhaps the only chapter in the Bible written by a Gentile. Nebuchadnezzar was a mighty monarch in his day, king of earthly kings. We are told by Herodotus that the city of Babylon was laid out in the form of a square occupying both sides of the river Euphrates. It was surrounded by an astonishing brick wall three hundred feet high, eighty-five feet wide, and from forty to sixty miles in length. The wall included about two hundred square miles of territory. A moat ran along the outside of the wall. The clay dug from the moat was used for sun dried brick. The wall was guarded by two hundred and fifty towers and was wide enough for four-horse chariots to turn about on. It was pierced by one hundred brass gates hung in brazen frames, and a wall along each bank of the Euphrates was pierced by twenty-five gates. Roofed bridges spanned the river and ferry boats plied from quay to quay. The city was surrounded by orchards and gardens all irrigated by canals from the river. The hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, were gardens of trees and flowers planted on terraces, one upon

another, to a height of not less than one hundred and fifty feet. Magnificent temples adorned the city. Blocks of magnificent stone quarried in Armenia were brought and used for inside finish of the most expensive kind. We do not have space here to go on describing the magnificence of the city and empire, which Nebuchadnezzar had built. Suffice it to say that it exceeded all else then known, and like all other pomp and magnificence it made the king exceedingly proud and boastful to the point where Almighty God intervened to show the king that it was He who ruled in the kingdoms of men and gave them to whomsoever He would.

This brings us to the fourth chapter of Daniel and to the awesome story of a mighty monarch of earth who had his mind taken from him and the mind of a beast given to him. This is not the story of a man who went insane and became a mad man, or who lost his reason and became a slobbering idiot. The story has nothing whatever to do with insanity. This is the account of a great king, powerful and clever and wise beyond most men, who had his mind taken away from him and the mind of an animal given to him in its place. In our meditations above we have already concluded that should a man receive the mind of a beast, he would immediately become like a beast, and like a beast Nebuchadnezzar became.

For the convenience of all in our investigation of this matter we will here quote extensively from Daniel chapter four and make comments as we go along.

Daniel 4:4. "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream, which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Therefore made I a decree to bring all the wise men of Babylon before me that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers and I told the dream before them; but they could not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, O Belteshazzar, master of magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

Thus were the visions of my head upon my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth and the height thereof was great. The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all. The beasts of the field had shadow under it and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed on it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud and said thus, Hew down the tree and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it and the fowls from his branches. Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the fields; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field and the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given him, and let seven times pass over him."

Verse 19: "Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished (astounded or astonished) for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream nor the interpretation thereof trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies." **Verse 24.** "This is the interpretation O king, and this is the decree of the Most High which is come upon my lord the king: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling place shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots, thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they

shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws." End of verse 33.

Here then is the inspired story that describes as nothing else could the truth that a man's life and personality is wrapped up in that unsearchable, untouchable thing we call the mind. We have already stated that a carnal mind makes a carnal man, a reprobate mind makes a reprobate man, and so on. This great story of Nebuchadnezzar proves beyond doubt that should a human being receive the mind of a beast, he would immediately think, act, and begin to look like a beast.

Can you form a mental picture of this strange happening? One day a man is a wise and a mighty king, sought out by all, ruling an empire beyond all empires of his day, of whom it was said to Belshazzar in Dan. 5:18, "O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, a kingdom and majesty and glory and honor; and for the majesty that He gave Him all people, nations, and languages trembled and feared him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he put down. But when his heart (mind) was lifted up and his mind was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him; and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart (mind) was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven."

Can you picture this great king, all nations trembling and fearing before him, keeping alive whom he would, killing whom he would, raising up whom he would, and putting down whom he would? It was no ordinary mind that enabled him to build up such a magnificent earthly realm. But suddenly a strange thing happens to him. His mind is taken from him and a beast's mind is given to him. Immediately a fearful change takes place. He forgets all about his mighty city with its towering walls. No longer does he care for his orchards and hanging gardens. The magnificent temples and sculptures are of no more interest to him than they would be to an ox or an ass. He does not care for the association of wise men and beautiful women, but he dwells with the wild asses. The sumptuous food and banquets of kings are traded for grass of oxen. He will not sleep in a feathery bed, but enjoys the grass wet with dew of heaven. Not only does his new mind change his disposition and nature, but it begins to change his physical appearance as well. His hair begins to grow out like bird's feathers and the nails of his fingers and toes grow out like claws of a bird or an animal.

If you will allow me a little imagination, we will dwell together on another aspect. Let us answer a few questions. Do you think that this man, pushed down to the level of a beast, could remember his former majesty and glory? Certainly not! He had a beast's mind and could remember none of the former things. Do you think he ever longed for his palace or his wife or his children? Certainly not! He had a beast's mind and enjoyed the realm where he lived. What more could he want? None of the higher things ever crossed his animal mind. He did not remember his former glory neither did it ever cross his mind to attain it. It was forgotten and a thing of the past.

Now all that I have written above is for the express purpose of demonstrating the following points and to make alive the great truths that face us at this most important hour. While I was reading this wonderful story, a flash of revealing light flooded over my understanding. I no longer saw this strange story of Nebuchadnezzar as just another chapter of the Bible, but it was made clear to me that this wonderful account was actually a prophecy of the whole purpose of God for man from the Garden of Eden where man had the mind of Christ until he re-enters that realm and is again possessed of that mind that rules the whole universe

I want you to take notice of these points one by one.

1. Nebuchadnezzar reigning in all his magnificent glory.
2. Nebuchadnezzar loses his mind and gets a beast's mind in its stead. Vs. 4,16,30.
3. Nebuchadnezzar dwelling on the plane of beasts because his former mind is lost and he has the mind of a beast.

4. Nebuchadnezzar oblivious to his former glory.
5. Seven times pass over him while in this condition. Vs. 16,23,25,32.
6. At the end of the days he lifts up his eyes to heaven. Vs. 34.
7. His mind is restored and with it his kingdom. Vs. 34,36.
8. Excellent majesty is added unto him. Vs. 36.

I have a great witness in my heart that just as Daniel interpreted this dream for Nebuchadnezzar, so the following is the true interpretation of the dream for all mankind today and for the sons of God in particular. The story of Nebuchadnezzar is the story of man from his fall to his restoration in God's image.

First: Nebuchadnezzar in all his glory and wisdom represents man created by God and placed as lord in Eden with all the earthly creation made subject to him. Adam in the Garden of Eden had the mind of Christ. There can be no doubt about that. And both you and I had the mind of Christ in Adam before he fell. As Levi was in loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him (Heb. 7:10), so I was in the loins of Adam when he was in the Eden of God possessed with the mind of Christ, and in him I, too, had that blessed and wonderful mind of the Father. How I would love to spend hours speaking of this glorious truth, but it will grip you as it has gripped me. When Paul speaks of the renewing of the mind, we must not forget that nothing can be renewed except that which was once new. For my mind to be renewed is for me to receive again that mind of Christ which I had in unfallen Adam.

Second: Nebuchadnezzar through pride and sin had his mind lowered to that of a beast. Here is man after the fall. No longer is he possessed of the mind of Christ, which concerns itself with the things of the glorious kingdom, but he now has a carnal mind, a fleshly mind, a beastly mind. Now, instead of being a "little lower than the angels", he is only a little higher than the beasts, because he has lost the glorious mind of Christ, and has received in its stead a mind concerned only with earthly things, a mind that is at enmity with the mind of Christ. Do not be deceived by thinking that the type is too strong, for I am sure that the fall of man from Adam in the garden of Eden with the mind of Christ to our present state was infinitely greater than the fall of Nebuchadnezzar from king of Babylon to the status of a beast. After all, the fall from the carnal mind to the mind of a beast is just a slightly lower order for the same mind, for beasts also have carnal minds. But the fall from the mind of God to the carnal mind is a gulf that is well nigh impassable.

Third: Nebuchadnezzar's dwelling on the plane of beasts was because he had the mind of beasts. It is impossible, completely impossible, ten thousand times impossible, for anyone to dwell on a higher plane than his own mind. As birds of a feather flock together, so fools go hand in hand and wise men counsel together in wisdom. A jewel of gold has no place in the snout of a swine, neither have words of wisdom place in the mouth of a fool. A man with an animal's mind cannot be king of magnificent Babylon. Much less can he who has a carnal mind reign with Christ. Small wonder the blessed Master declared, "Unless a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He not only cannot see it, but he has no desire to see it. It is a shadowy mystery to him. He can neither discern nor comprehend it and he has no desire in himself to attain it. The sow returns to her wallowing in the mire because that is the level and standard of her mind. She resents all efforts to cleanse her of it and will resist with struggle and noise all efforts to make her a clean animal. So likewise does the dog return to his own vomit and the carnal mind to his carnality. Except for a regeneration from a higher realm we would all be doomed to carnality forever.

Fourth: When Nebuchadnezzar had the mind of a beast, I am certain that he completely forgot all his former glory. If you would tell him he had been the mighty king of Babylon with all nations at his feet, he would have looked at you as dumb as an ox and would have understood not a word you said. He would have returned to his nibbling of the grass like the oxen, or gone galloping across the fields with the wild asses. Convince this beast that he was ever a king dwelling with men? No! Never! What did he want with men? He was a beast and never dreamed of being anything else. The great point of interest here, however, is this. As Nebuchadnezzar

could not remember his former glory in his kingdom, neither can we remember the glory we had in Adam before the fall blighted the world. You say we were not in Adam? Oh yes, we were. It is written. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But fallen men that we are, inhabited and ruled by the carnal mind, we cannot remember any of the glory we had in Him while yet we had the mind of Christ. In fact, we stare in dumb animal amazement at anyone who would tell us that we once shared His magnificent glory. Many centuries ago God asked Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Job. 38:4. Poor Job did not answer, for he did not know. But let me tell you this; just as surely as Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him, so also we were in Adam's loins and in Adam's mind before he fell.

Fifth: You will notice that four times over in this fourth chapter, - verses 16, 23, 25, 32, - it is said that seven times were to pass over the king before he would receive his own mind back again. God has made it wonderfully clear to my heart that this seven times represents the seven dispensations from Eden to the fullness of times during which man is condemned to the wretchedness of the carnal mind. He has been lowered to a level just above animals until seven times pass over him, and it will not be until the millennium is over that all mankind will be gathered together in one in Christ. Nevertheless, there is a first-fruit of the resurrection that at the evening of the sixth day will come back to the mind of Christ. The church is travailing and will bring forth the sons of God. I say without hesitation that there is one thing and one thing alone that makes a son of God. It is neither miracles nor signs nor wonders. It is the mind of Christ.

Sixth: "At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes to heaven and mine understanding returned to me." Verse 34. At the end of the seven times something strange came into the heart of the poor beast of a king. Something began to stir within him and to tell him that he had not always been in that wretched state. What am I doing running about with the wild asses, he wondered? Why am I on my hands and knees eating grass like an ox? Was I not a king once? What am I doing here? Something told him there was help for him in heaven and unto heaven he lifted up his eyes in longing. He began to deplore his condition and hate his degradation, and with longing and prayer he lifted up his eyes to heaven. Oh God in heaven, deliver me from this beastly mind and restore my mind and my reason and my kingdom. And his mind returned and the beast nature departed from him. Once the heart is awakened to the awfulness, the baseness, and the low estate of the carnal mind, we will have no trouble surrendering to the will of God. It is only those who are deceived by the carnal mind who have no desire for the things of the Spirit.

When the prodigal son was having a riotous time, he had no desire for his father's house, but when destitute and starving he sat in the swine pen and would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat, he said, "I will arise and go to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight". Oh, let us leave this wilderness of the carnal mind, this bestial realm of asses and swine, and let us return to our Father's will and the glory of His eternal kingdom!

My beloved brethren, we are nearing the end of the days. This beastly condition brought about by the carnal mind is about to be replaced by the mind of Christ. The mind that was in Christ, even the Father's mind, is about to dwell in us and transform us soul and body as well. It is the end of the days. Hallelujah! It is the end of the days. Everywhere I go people have come to hate the flesh and the fleshly mind and are lifting up their eyes to heaven to partake of the mind of Christ. It is the end of the days. Hearts leap in anticipation of the glory to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Nebuchadnezzar the beast is to be Nebuchadnezzar the king. The mind we lost in the first Adam is to be restored in the last Adam, even Christ.

Seventh: When his mind was restored, his kingdom was restored. Verse 36 says, "And I was established in my kingdom." The great lesson this king was given to learn was this: No kingdom can be established by man or man's mind, but God giveth the kingdom to whomsoever He will. Verse 32. God's dominion is from generation to generation and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Over and over we are told that God giveth the kingdom to whomsoever He will. Let me assure you of this, that though in the past He has given the earth to the basest of men (verse 17), it is God's will to give the final kingdom to those who are partakers of His mind. What other mind could ever rule the kingdom of the Lord? It may cost us sweat drops of blood to come to the will (mind) of Christ, but none save those who have His mind will be lords over His heritage.

Eighth: There is one more point I wish to make. After the king's mind returned to him, excellent majesty was added unto him. Verse 36. The dreary years in the realm of the beasts had not been in vain. He knew now

things that he had not known before, and he understood now things that he had not understood before. He was a better man now. Never again would pride and arrogance enter his heart. He knew from experience and would never fall again. In like manner also the dreary dispensations of carnality and sin we have endured will not be in vain. Adam fell because he had a lesson to learn that naught but the fall could teach him. When at last we return to the mind of Christ, we will never fall again, but the fall itself will have added excellent majesty unto us that will never be taken away through all eternity. When Nebuchadnezzar had the mind of a beast, he could not remember that he had been a king, but methinks that when he was restored to his kingly state, he still remembered the desolation of his beastly mind. I cannot now remember my former state, but I know that, when we are in Him, we shall never forget the lessons we have learned in our humiliation, and we shall never fall again, but excellent majesty will be added to us all and we will praise the God of heaven, all whose works are truth and His ways judgment.

Can you not now see that whatever your mind is, is what you are? Can you not see that, if to have the mind of a beast is to become a beast, to have the mind of Christ is to become a son of God? Through the mind of a beast the king's body began to look like that of a beast. So, conversely, will these corruptible bodies of our humiliation be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2) that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. The end of the days is upon us. Let us then like Nebuchadnezzar lift up our eyes to heaven that the mind of Christ may dwell in us and we may walk as sons of God.

CHAPTER THREE LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:5-11)

"If any man thinketh he knoweth aught, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but, if any man love God, the same is known of Him." The humble admission before God and man and ourselves that we know nothing as we ought to know is the proper attitude to maintain in all our seeking and searching after truth. I am convinced that all mankind is so blinded by those things we think we know that it is scarcely possible for light to shine into our hearts. Because we depend on our own understanding, our minds are forever clouded over with the dark veil of earthly tradition, human understanding, and natural ways of looking at things. It does not take long to embrace a falsehood, but it often takes a lifetime to disengage ourselves from it, for we, thinking that our minds are clear and honest and free from human tradition, are continually obstructing and refusing the true light which Christ is wherever we find it running contrary to the doctrines which have established themselves in our minds and have become our religion.

When Jesus walked among men, speaking words of life such as none other ever spake, the truth He unfolded was always bitterly rejected because of the blindness and ignorance of tradition-bound men. Because the truth He taught was not as they saw it, they branded Him a deceiver, controlled and possessed of a devil. Then one day He told them plainly the source of all their trouble. "... **Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.**" **Matt. 15:6.** Those inspired words of rebuke are as true today as they were then as tradition enthroned in the hearts of men smites at truth with the sword of pride and human understanding. As the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary one to the other so that we cannot do the things we should, so truth and human tradition run contrary one to the other so that we cannot believe the things we should. Truth is forever pointing with hallowed finger to the limitless expanse of the everlasting hills of God's unfolding glory while tradition draws its threadbare mantle about its skinny bones and runs away to hide itself in the dismal cave of its own misunderstanding. Religious tradition is like the legendary frog who lived in a well who, thinking he possessed all the water in the world, refused to believe that outside his dreary hole there were sparkling streams, mighty rivers, placid lakes, and boundless oceans. Just

so long as we are determined to keep our understanding anchored to the musty dock of our own tradition, we need never, never hope to receive anything of the Lord. We may pray with fervor, work with zeal, and try to believe for revival "in our church", and all the other things the flesh craves after, but in spite of all our efforts we will be like the two drunken men who rowed hard all one night to reach the other side of the lake only to find, when the sun arose and they were sober, that their boat was still anchored to the shore.

Confession is good for the soul, and I must confess that, during the past twenty years as God has graciously let the light of His Son Jesus Christ shine into my heart with ever increasing brightness, the path of every new horizon to which He beckoned me led me through a valley where my feet stumbled over the dry bones of my own tradition or were hurt by the crumbling walls of my own understanding. There was a time when I was a denominational minister until the Spirit of God through many fiery trials and jolting tribulations revealed that denominationalism in every aspect, large or small, honorable or dishonorable, fundamental or modernistic, Protestant or Catholic is part and parcel of the harlot system which God declares is fallen. There was a time when I was principal of the largest Pentecostal Bible Institute in Canada until the Lord revealed to me that His ministries are neither called nor chosen from the schools of men, but those whom God would choose to bear the vessels of the Lord are called and chosen, taught and prepared of the Lord. From time immemorial God has been calling men, but never once in all scripture do you find Him accepting any who were not both called and prepared by Himself. From the call of Abraham to the call of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch every vessel was chosen of God and all their training was of the Lord. Oh, so often we hear this cry: God wants volunteers for His work! You are misinformed, my friend. This is a lie. It is not the truth and never will it be. God never asks for volunteers. Never! He conscripts His ministers, calling and choosing whom He will. Many thus called of God were very unhappy and displeased with their calling as was Moses, Saul, Jeremiah, and even Paul, but no arguments about lack of eloquence, inability to speak (Exod. 3:10-18), being of a small and insignificant house (1 Sam. 9:21), or being a child (Jer. 1:6-7) altered the mind of the Lord concerning the thing He had ordained before the ages were formed.

Some time ago a young man boarded a train to make his journey to the far city, which was his home. He adjusted his baggage about him and, looking out the window, admired the scenes as they swept past. The conductor was slow in coming to collect his ticket. He fell asleep and rode along peacefully for many miles. Finally a hand on his shoulder awakened him from his slumber. Seeing it was the conductor, he handed him his ticket, but pleasure turned to consternation when he found he had boarded a west bound train instead of the one going east. He was going the wrong direction. How often in our journeys we find we have missed the turn or taken the wrong road! We are all wise enough to know, however, that, having discovered our error, our only hope is to retrace our steps and start all over again. All over the world today preachers who know nothing of God's purpose for the ages are calling on their people to "pray for revival in the churches", but the revival their human hearts crave will never come in the churches for the simple reason that the confused thing they erroneously call the church is not the church at all but the art of man's device, a house made by human hands. It is the wrong way. It is man's own building. It is man's project. It is refused by the Lord. It is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Look back into history and it will teach you that never once during all this dispensation of grace has God ever revived a denomination. Whenever showers of heavenly rain fell upon waiting hearts, it came to those longing souls who were sick and tired of the so-called church with all its deadness, worldliness and abomination. As they waited on God in fasting and prayer for the reviving of their own souls, the Spirit fell upon them, ravishing their souls with the sight of the jasper walls and the golden streets of a celestial city not made with hands. Leading them over the weed-filled fences of a man-made church system, He led them to feed in the green pastures of His ever expanding truth and to freely drink of that living water which Christ is, of which if a man drink he will never thirst again.

No, my brother! God will not revive a man-made church system though you rend the heavens with your prayers and your tears flow like rivers of water. He will never revive it, I say. He is calling His people out of it. The Christians have become sinners and, serving God and mammon together, they have become double minded. Therefore the call of God goes forth to them, "**Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.**" **Jas. 4:8-10.**

It is my hope in this writing to awaken the pure minds of God's people to true understanding of the mind of Christ. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they

are spiritually discerned. Therefore I approach this sublime truth, this celestial realm of the mind of Christ, with more than usual fear and trembling.

"As heaven is higher than the earth," saith God, "so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Therefore we cry out in our ignorance and earth-bound understanding, "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preached to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." **1 Cor. 1:20-25.** (Revised Standard).

Dare we then in the light of such an admonition as this approach God proudly displaying our D.D.'s, our Ph.D.'s, and our L.L.B.'s? Do you know that all such is the wisdom of this world which comes to naught? Have we never learned that the world by wisdom knew not God? 1 Cor. 1:21. Have we forgotten the exhortation of the apostle James when he said, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." **James 3:1.** (Goodspeed). Oh that men, Christian men, would humble themselves before the feet of God and divest themselves of all their pride in every form of human wisdom, confessing that they know nothing as they ought to know! Oh that God's children would cast aside the filthy garments of human understanding and throw away the leafy aprons fashioned from the evil tree of human knowledge that gives us man's understanding of what is good and what is evil and what is right and what is wrong! Then would God teach us His secret wisdom, even the wisdom hidden from all ages and dispensations but which is now being revealed to those who are wholly His. All who would learn God's doctrine and those who would receive God's knowledge must first be weaned from the milk of human understanding and drawn from the breasts of our earthly mother. There is a natural realm and there is a spiritual realm. There is a wisdom from beneath and there is a wisdom from above. There is a man who is of the earth earthy and there is a man who is one mind with the Lord from heaven.

In the first two chapters of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians the apostle unfolds a wealth of truth concerning the mind. I think I am right in saying that Paul clearly shows that all conditions whether good or bad extant among us are the product of the mind. Whether those conditions be wars, fightings, divisions, or blessed harmony and peace, all stem from the mind. The point that I wish to make very clear is simply this: Three kinds of minds are clearly shown in scripture. There is no possible way of avoiding this conclusion. There is the natural mind, which possesses the natural man. It is his natural unregenerate mind that keeps him a natural man. The natural mind cannot possibly receive the things of God. 1 Cor. 2:14. Everything that man does is totally in the natural. He is of the earth earthy. He thinks in the natural realm, talks in the natural realm, understands only in the natural realm. His conversation may be very interesting, he may be very well learned, well versed and very clever after this present age, but all his understanding is in this earthly realm and hermetically sealed in the natural. The simplest of spiritual truths are far over his head. In all probability he has never once heard the call of God in any way, much less responded to it. He is a natural man with a natural mind. Living in a natural world, he sees, hears, and understands only what is natural. As the ears of the deaf are fast closed to every beautiful sound - the singing of the birds, the voices of loved ones, the roaring of the surf - so his ears are closed to all that is spiritual and none but God can ever open them. As the eyes of the blind are fast closed to the beauties of the sunset, the magnificence of the mountains and the glory of the hills, so his eyes see not any spiritual thing, because he is a natural man with a natural mind, totally insensitive to the wonders of that heavenly realm that is high as heaven is high above the earth. A man cannot be spiritual and natural at the same time.

The second mind is the carnal mind. The carnal mind is described in scripture as being the enemy of God. Rom. 8:7. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so that they who are in the flesh cannot please God. Those last words, in the flesh, show us exactly what the carnal mind is. Our word carnal comes from the Latin word *carni*. *Carni* means flesh. The only part of man that is made of flesh is his body. The physical body is the flesh. The carnal mind is the fleshly mind. The fleshly mind is the mind that is always concerned about the welfare of the human body and how to cater to its passions - eating, drinking, hearing, seeing, smelling, and feeling. It is nothing more or less than this. It is the body that stands in the way of all spiritual progress. The flesh is such a deceiver that its true identity was hidden from God's people for centuries,

so that scarcely anyone knows what the flesh really is. Almost all erroneously represent it as some spiritual evil.

I speak the truth with all soberness that it is our own flesh rather than the devil that hinders us in all our approaches to God and battles against our every effort to draw nigh to Him. Was it the devil or was it the flesh that put the disciples sound asleep when they should have been watching one hour with Jesus? Did He not give the answer to them when He said, "**The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**" **Matt. 26:41**. Is it not the flesh that demands food when the spirit longs to fast and pray? Is it not the insistent demanding of the body of flesh that causes God's people to break a fast they have declared unto the Lord when it has scarcely begun? I am being neither mean nor sarcastic when I tell you that most of the difficulty Christians find in understanding the scripturalness of fasting and prayer is brought on by the strenuous revolt of the stomach, and, if you will be perfectly honest with yourself and with your God, you will freely admit that the true and honest reason for your lack of fasting is that your body, your flesh, rebels against it with such violent rebellion that you are quite afraid to enter this sacred realm. You are discovering by experience that the flesh lusts against the spirit to such an extent that you cannot do the things you would. The spirit longs to break the shackles of this earthly realm. It longs to soar away into the heavenlies where it can freely partake of that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered the heart of man, but the body, the flesh, says, "No, No, No! I'll be hungry! I'll be weak! I won't be able to earn my bread and do my job!" But the lying thing never once tells you that it is when you are weak that you are strong, or that it is the spirit that quickeneth while the flesh profiteth nothing. Every true fast from physical things enables us to better lay hold upon spiritual things. The power of the flesh is brought to naught. I think we should always remember this tremendous truth of scripture: If you live after the flesh (the body), you will die, but, if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body (the flesh), you shall live. Rom. 8:13. Notice these three things: First, in this scripture the terms the flesh and the body are used interchangeably, and this proves beyond doubt that the flesh and the physical body are one and the same thing. Second, if you live after the flesh by obeying the demands and dictates of the body, you will die. You will die physically and spiritually as well. You will be a very mediocre and carnal kind of a Christian. The flesh, therefore, can offer but one thing to those who obey its demands and whims - death, spiritual and physical death. Third, those who live after the Spirit, casting off the flesh and reckoning it to be the dead thing it really is, will find that two great results follow. The first is abounding spiritual life, wisdom, power and understanding, and the second is that the Spirit, thus nourished by the glory and power of God, is now able to give resurrection life to the mortal body. Is not this the only possible meaning of the inspired statement, "**If you live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live**"? **Rom. 8:13**. In **verse 11** Paul has just finished saying, "**If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.**" The conclusion of the matter, then, is this: Those who deny the spirit its necessary communion with God, because of the demands of the body with all its endless lusts, die - not only spiritually but physically as well; but they who deny the body (the flesh) to live after the Spirit not only gain great spiritual life but find that same Spirit quickening their bodies as well. It is not divine healing you need, my friend. It is the life that flows from a vibrant and healthy spirit that you need, for the spirit has a strange and godly way of giving "health to the navel and marrow to the bones". It is the Spirit that makes alive; the flesh profits exactly nothing. John 6:63.

Finally, there is the spiritual mind. The scripture has declared, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." It is impossible to divorce the spiritual mind from the mind of Christ. A man cannot have a natural mind and a spiritual mind at the same time, but he can, alas, and usually does, have a spiritual mind and a carnal mind at the same time. This fact is plainly taught by Paul throughout the first eight chapters of his epistle to the Romans. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other so that we cannot do the things we would. The flesh is a very real and terrible enemy. I shall not hesitate to say that our greatest enemy is neither the world nor the devil. Our greatest enemy is our own flesh, for, were it not for our flesh, Satan would have no power over us in any way. We would be able to stand with our Saviour and say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me."

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, but the wisdom, which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. James 3:17. The wisdom of this world flows forth from the corrupt fountain of the natural mind. The wisdom, which is from above flows forth as a pure river from that omniscient fountain head, the mind of God. The world's corrupt wisdom, which is the wisdom of the natural man with his natural mind, has filled the whole

earth with the abounding corruption seen and felt on every hand in this dread closing hour of the age. The natural mind with its finite wisdom cannot see tomorrow. It can only see this afternoon. It does not see that the corrupt egg it lays today will hatch a viper tomorrow; neither does it know that, because it sows the wind today, it will reap the whirlwind tomorrow.

The story of the natural mind runs like this: "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. (That is what the world is doing today.) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." **Rom. 1:21-32.** That is the story of the corrupt and natural mind. And, if you will read it all with thoughtfulness, you will see that even now at the time I am writing we have entered the final phases of this terrible condition.

Twice in this passage it is stated, "God gave them up", and once it is stated, "God gave them over". Because of their vain imaginations they were given up to uncleanness, and because of the extent of their uncleanness God gave them up to vile affections, the principal sin being all manner of unnatural sex vices, bestiality, sodomy, and the intermingling and intermarriage of races, whom God in infinite wisdom has commanded to be separate the one from the other. And now, because of the abhorrent filth into which mankind has fallen, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient, the last stages of which we now see everywhere about us - no understanding, covenant breaking, an absence of natural affection, a thing greatly accentuated by the rise of the so-called women's liberation, the despising of babies, the dissolution of the home, abortions, divorce, remarriage, wife-swapping. And the most devilish thing of all is this: Knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Filth has become the popular thing, the accepted thing, of a permissive, depraved, and reprobate society, but I warn mankind that, as sure as verse 32 is the last verse in the chapter, we are now seeing the final acts of man's hateful rebellion before the judgment of God falls upon these lovers of all that is corrupt and carnal. Every modern evil springs from that wisdom from beneath. It is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is man's crude notion of right and wrong, good and evil, at war with God's wisdom from above.

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," saith God, "and the cleverness of the clever will I thwart." **1 Cor. 1:19** (Revised Standard). Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? I am most thankful to God that those of us who love Him do not need to concern ourselves with the wisdom of this world which cometh to naught. Since God has given them up and given them over, there is nothing that you or I can do to change them. Let us then who are after the wisdom which comes from on high, even the wisdom which Christ Himself is, turn our eyes, our hearts, and our attention to the receiving of that wisdom which is from above, which before all else is first pure.

Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. His name is the highest authority in the universe. The mind that dwelt in Christ Jesus was the Father's mind. "I and My Father are one," He said; therefore, the mind of Christ and the mind of the Father are one. When God's word tells us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," He is not asking us to try to think like God would think, but He is asking us to let the very mind of Christ take possession of us as the mind of the Father took possession of His Son, Jesus Christ. Such glory can never be attained by trying, nor will it be attained by crying or struggling. It takes place as Christ abides, sitting daily

upon the throne of our life, ruler of His kingdom within us, Lord and Master of our mind until every thought is in obedience to Him and all wisdom and understanding comes from Him. If Christ is the wisdom of God, then it is Christ I must enthrone. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." **Rom. 12:1- 2.**

When I came to chapter 2:5-11 while reading that beautiful letter which Paul wrote to the Philippians, a bright flash of inspiration gripped my heart. I could see in those wonderful words a truth I had never known before. Here Paul is describing with the concise but vivid detail of inspiration the entire story of the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ the Son of God from His glory with the Father before the ages were formed through birth, manhood, death, resurrection and ascension to even greater glory. If you now have the faith to believe it, you will clearly see that the path of His humiliation that perfected His Sonship through suffering, leading Him at last to His exaltation far above all heavens, is also the identical path that you and I and all the sons of God must follow until all are presented faultless and tried, proven and faithful, in the glory and majesty of His presence to be, with our wonderful elder brother, exalted far above all heavens. This hope was in the heart of God in the day He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion ..." **Gen. 1:26.**

Sonship is the hope of all creation. It is the hope dearest to the heart of God. He has irrevocably purposed to rule the world by sons upon whose shoulders will rest the government of the world. Isa. 9:6. But in the ages yet unborn, when His sons are multiplied and countless as the stars, the whole limitless universe, restored and repopulated, will be ruled by the sons of God in a harmony surpassing the sweetest symphony the earth has ever known. Not only will God have one beloved Son, only begotten and dearly loved of the Father, but He will have countless millions of sons dearly beloved and individually begotten of the Father, and at the head of that vast family of sons will stand Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all heaven, the firstborn from among the dead, the firstborn of every creature, and the firstborn of His many brethren. Each and every one of that vast family of sons will be filled with the mind of God, and thus, while ages of ages endlessly roll, no schism will ever be found in that body of sons, for they, each possessing the mind of God, though numbered in countless millions, are but one sonship, the only begotten of the Father.

In the book of Ezekiel, chapter 1, the prophet was overwhelmed by the vision of the coming forth of that bright one who could be none other than the Son of God. Knowing as we do that Jesus Christ came forth from God (John 16:28) and was in the form and likeness of the Father (**Phil. 2:5-6**), we can better understand the inspired words that flowed from the heart of Paul: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He was the perfect Son of God before the ages began. Not only was He in the form of God, but He was equal to God, and it was in Him, with Him, and through Him that God began the whole process of sonship of which you and I are now a part. In the days of His earthly walk, when Jesus "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (**Heb. 5:8**), He was being perfected as a Son of man that He might be perfect both as Son of God and Son of man. This perfecting was in order that we, being men, might be perfected both as sons of men and sons of God, that He, who in all things was made like His brethren, now does make His brethren in all things like unto Himself.

Now when Paul says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ", he is exhorting us to follow in His exact steps that the Father's mind may dwell in all His sons as it dwelt in Christ. He is showing us that the path that leads to our sonship and adoption is the same path that led to His Sonship and adoption. There is no other path besides this. All else is robbery and false pretence. All else is to climb up some other way. He is the door by which men enter - not a gate that swings on hinges, but an image that we bear. He is the way - not a path over which men tread, but a likeness into which they come. He is the truth - not a word which men speak, but the tree of life in the midst of the garden which they are. He is the life - not that mist which the wind driveth away, but that which endures, unaffected by endless ages.

In my book, The Adoption of Sons, I pointed out some evidences from God's word that led us to believe that our beginning was not on that day when we came into this world, but that we had our beginning in Him before the ages began. Surely the single sentence of inspiration found in the book of Ecclesiastes, "the spirit returns

to God who gave it", **Ecc. 12:7**, should help us to see that we also came forth from God, for we can only return to places we have once been. I cannot return to China because I have never been there. But I could return to England or France because I have been there. Surely this same principle applies here also. The spirit returns to God who gave it. When God said to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth ... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy", (**Job 38:4-7**), He was not telling Job that he did not exist; but he was asking him if he knew where he was on that day. The very fact that He asked Job where he was should be proof enough that he was. Furthermore it is indicated that he was among that very company who shouted for joy at the wonderful unfolding of God's plan for the countless ages that were yet to come. Even in the darkness of this present night I can scarce restrain myself from shouting as I anticipate the purpose of God that will yet unfold. Why then would I not shout with the morning stars in that world of light before the ages began long before I was lowered into this realm of darkness, heaviness, and death? Whatever may be the case with you and me, one thing is certain. Our blessed Lord and Christ was in the form of God before the ages were formed.

The great confusion that exists in the world today is caused almost entirely by man's ignorance. I am sure we understand that any man, suddenly finding himself in the middle of a vast wilderness, knowing neither whence he came, whither he is going, why he exists, or who he is, could not possibly know aught but terror and confusion. Yet that is almost exactly the position in which the vast multitudes of earth, God's people included, now find themselves. The reason they find themselves in such a sad predicament of ignorance and fear is because blind leaders of the blind have led them into a wilderness of uncertainty. Now, if I try to explain my existence by beginning at the time of my birth in 1909, I encounter all manner of confusion whether I am aware of it or not. Not knowing where I came from, I know not why I am here, nor why I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. I am here not by choice. I live a life I didn't ask for. I die a death I don't want. In fact, I am much worse off than Columbus, who, when he set out, didn't know where he was going. When he got there, he didn't know where he was, and when he returned, he didn't know where he had been. But thus it is with us if we begin our reckoning from the day we appeared in a body of flesh.

It is little better if we conclude that we had our beginning in the Garden of Eden, for Eden itself with all its glory and all its calamity is a fruitless experiment completely gone astray if purpose divine, omniscient, immutable and omnipotent had not been formed in the mind of the Eternal before the ages began to be carried out in the minutest detail that none but God could devise. Let us, then, who are coming to maturity in Him begin our understanding, not on the day we came into this world, or with Adam in the Garden of Eden, but rather let us stand together with God our Father on that blessed day before the world was and, looking through His eyes of fire, let us behold the unfolding of the purpose of the ages. Then will the world and all things therein make wisdom and understanding as we behold the knowledge of the Lord? Well can we endure tribulation when we are aware of its purpose. The annoying thorn in the flesh is cause for naught but praise when infinite wisdom reveals that our strength is made perfect in weakness. The sting of death vanishes completely in the light of the truth that through death he is destroyed who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and they are delivered who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. It is time to learn that we are not saved from death, but saved by it and through it. Let us stand once more with Job and the heavenly hosts of God before the foundation of the world. Let us gaze once more through God's vast telescope that sweeps the very horizons of the ages of the ages, and let us shout once more the praises of God as we by inspiration see again the unfolding of the purpose, which we, since being lowered into this realm of death, had long forgotten.

So much depends upon our vantage point. So much depends upon where we stand to view the purpose of God for the ages. I exhort, therefore, that the men and women who read these lines will never again try to survey or understand the plan of God from the unimaginable narrowness of the natural mind, or from the low valleys of this realm of death into which all mankind has been lowered. But let us stand in spirit upon the mountains of God before the ages were formed. Let the inspiration of the Almighty awaken our memories to the glory of that day when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy as the almighty and all-wise Father rolled out the blueprint of the ages before our wondering eyes. There we saw the plan for the perfection of the sons of God. There we were made acquainted with the unspeakable benefits of the fall. There we beheld the value of testing and the fiery trial of tribulation, the blessing and strength of temptation and the final glorious outcome of our overcoming. It is he that overcometh who eats of the tree of life which is

in the midst of the paradise of God. **Rev. 2:7.** It is he that overcometh who is not hurt by a second death. **Rev. 2:11.** He that overcometh eats of the hidden manna. **Verse 17.** He that overcometh is given power over the nations. **Verse 26.** He that overcometh is given the white garment of righteousness. **Rev. 3:5.** He that overcometh shall be made a pillar in God's temple. **Rev. 3:12.** And he that overcometh will sit with Christ in His throne. **Rev. 3:20.** Cease from this day forward, my brother and sister, to look on God's plan from the lowly tomb of this present death. It is the Spirit of the Almighty that gives you understanding. There is a mountain even higher than the mount of transfiguration from which Christ will show you both the glory of the coming kingdom and the majesty of the plan of the ages. And methinks, as your eyes once more behold it, you will shout again as you shouted then, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy.

When Paul wrote the words, "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus", he traced the path, which Jesus Christ followed that He might be perfect God-man. This rugged road His feet must tread before God could highly exalt Him and give Him a name that is above every name, a name before which eventually every knee shall bow of things in heaven and things in the earth and things under the earth (Phil. 2:10), and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:11). Knowing as we do that no man can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3), this verse excludes all possibility of error or terror and tells us plainly of the day when every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea will be heard saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." **Rev. 5:13.**

God is interested not only in perfecting His Son, Jesus Christ, but He has chosen to make Him (Jesus) the head and firstborn of a vast family of brothers (Rom. 8:29, Weymouth), everyone a son of God, everyone perfect, everyone filled with the mind of Christ. Who else could govern the world and the universe in righteousness and harmony and peace but he who has the mind that was in Christ Jesus? Has not the natural mind proved that it can produce nothing but wars and fightings and divisions? Did not James ask the question, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" And did he not answer his own question in these words: "Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" **James 4:14.** Do you not see, then, that both the carnal mind and the natural mind can produce nothing but war and division and bloodshed and every imaginable lust? Human knowledge, man's conception of right and wrong, is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which kills with death all who partake of it, but the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. **James 3:15.** The mind that was in Christ is the Father's mind, possessing the Son, and God has decreed that the mind which filled and possessed His first Son, Jesus Christ, shall also fill and possess all His sons. I shall say without fear of contradiction that only those persons who "let" the mind of Christ dwell in them will be exalted to His throne or be given power over the nations. Never again will anything natural or carnal be permitted to rule after this present age of grace has concluded.

The wisdom that descends from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruit, without partiality and without hypocrisy is the mind of Christ. Christ Himself is the wisdom of God. We cannot possess God's wisdom apart from Christ. We cannot possess God's mind apart from Christ. None of the blessing of God can be possessed apart from Christ - no gift, no righteousness, no joy or peace. That is why I am forever stressing the infinite value of our personal relationship with Him. God is looking for the hour when not only our lips, but our very life, will proclaim the message, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It is when we reckon ourselves dead with Him that the Christ life springs forth. That is why Paul said, "To die is gain." What else could it be but gain since the life that comes forth from the tomb of our crucified self-life is the Christ life? Of course it is gain when from the carcass of this dead lion comes forth the honey of that Living Word, Christ Himself. Not I, but Christ! Not I, but Christ! George Hawtin is dead. It is gain that he died. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

So Paul has exhorted us: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ. He came from God. He came out of God. He was in the form of God. He was God's Son, and because He is God's Son, He is God, for kind begets kind in God even as it does in all creation. When we are born of men, we are men. When we are born of God,

we are God, for, "if He called them gods unto whom the word of God (Jesus Christ) came, say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God?" John 10:35. Oh, the wonders of His grace! How unsearchable is His wisdom and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him? "How unfathomable His decisions are, and how untraceable His ways! Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? Or who has advanced anything to Him, for which he will have to be repaid? For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen." **Rom. 11:33-36.** Goodspeed.

He who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God took seven steps to enter into a perfection never before experienced in heaven or in earth. (1) He made Himself of no reputation. (2) He took upon Himself the form of a servant. (3) He was made in the likeness of men. (4) He was found in fashion as a man. (5) He humbled Himself. (6) He became obedient unto death. (7) He became obedient even unto the death of the cross. I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that could be written from these words of inspiration, but it is not in the multiplicity of words that we are interested, but rather that we may clearly see that the course He trod to His exaltation is the exact course that we also must follow. The truth of the matter is simply this: The holy and all-wise Lord, our God, has already launched us upon this same course, even without our knowledge or understanding. The path to exaltation and glory through humanity, humiliation, suffering, and death was that which caused the morning stars to sing and the sons of God to shout for joy. The path that leads to the mind of Christ and exaltation at God's right hand lies not through the realm of greatness and honor nor spiritual gifts nor cleverness nor fame. Nor is it found with those whom the world calls great or whom Christians praise. The path leads instead through the valley of no reputation, servitude, and humanity with all its ills and pain, the likeness of men and all that is depraved and fallen, and finally death itself, the whole realm of it - death to self, death to the world, death to the flesh, and that particular kind of death that above all else identifies us with our Lord, even the death of the cross.

As we walk through the wilderness of this world, we are always confronted by men of reputation, wise men after the flesh, mighty men, noble men, men of pedigree and genealogy, men of race and lineage, man-made men, self-made men, world renowned preachers, internationally known evangelists, great healers and miracle workers. So great and important are they that their pictures appear from a dozen to sixteen times in one issue of their magazine. I do not say this from sarcasm or irony, but rather that you may know that the mind of Christ is not attained by the exaltation of self or by making a reputation for self, but by letting the self-life die away into dust and ashes that the new man, Christ Jesus might rise from the ashes of your crucified self. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. It is not a matter of trying to make ourselves nothing, but the great requirement is that we know ourselves as we actually are. Nothing! In my flesh dwells no good thing. Rom. 7:18. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" **1 Cor. 4:7.** Beware when all men speak well of you. There is something wrong when they do, and that something is that self is on the throne and Christ is on the cross. Let Christ be now exalted to the throne of your heart and you yourself be of no reputation.

There is a hidden wisdom that flows like a river from the mind of Christ. It is a wisdom which none of the princes of this world can possibly know. The wisdom from beneath is earthly, sensual, and devilish and ends in death. The wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jas. 3:17. "Where is the wise man after the flesh? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." **1 Cor. 1:20-25.** Revised Standard.

There is a secret wisdom that comes to the mature in Christ. It is a wisdom that can come from one source and one only - the mind of Christ Jesus. It is a wisdom that comes by revelation directly from the mind of God, and, whenever it comes, it opens the eyes of the understanding and transforms the life of him who receives it. I can never believe men who boast of a revelation whose lives remain unchanged. Revelation renews the mind, transforms the life and body, and cuts off conformity to the world. Is that not exactly Paul's teaching in Rom.

12:1-2? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God... be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." The wisdom from beneath conforms all men to this world's order, or should I say, disorder, leaving them in slavish bondage to the harlot system. The wisdom that comes from Christ, because it is the mind of Christ, wonderfully renews our mind, giving us the mind of Christ. It transforms our spirit, transforms our soul, transforms our mind, and begins the transformation of the body as well. For this reason the passage begins with the exhortation, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Certainly I believe there is healing for the body, but healing, however great or remarkable, still leaves the body corruptible and on its journey to the grave. The renewing of the mind begins a transformation, a change, a transfiguration of the body that ends in incorruption and immortality. Was not this transformation of the body the end Paul had in view when he bade us present our bodies a living sacrifice that we might by the renewing of the mind be transformed?

"There is a wisdom that we utter among the mature, a wisdom, however, not deriving from the present age nor from the powers who are in control of this age, though their days are numbered. We speak God's wisdom in a mystery - that hidden wisdom which, before the world began, God purposed for our glory, a wisdom which not one of the powers that control the present age have learned, for, if they had learned it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But we speak, to use the words of scripture, of things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has in readiness for them that love Him. For to us God has revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, including the deeps of God. For who among men knows a man's thoughts, except the man's own spirit within him? In the same way also only God's Spirit is acquainted with God's thoughts. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, which comes from God, that we may know what is freely given us by God. This we also utter, not in language, which man's wisdom teaches us, but in that which the Spirit teaches, adapting spiritual words to spiritual truths. The unspiritual man rejects the teachings of the Spirit of God: to him they are folly, and he cannot learn them, because they are spiritually appraised. But the spiritual man appraises everything, although he is himself appraised by no one. For who has learned the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." **1 Cor. 2:6-16.** Weymouth. I think it is very clear from the above passage that the secret wisdom which the world (and this includes the church system) cannot possibly receive, is the wisdom that comes from the mind of Christ, yea, the wisdom, which is the mind of Christ. What other reason could the apostle have for concluding this dynamic statement with the simple explanation, "But we have the mind of Christ!"

In conclusion of this frail study I disown any attempt to establish theory or to produce doctrine or any such thing that would leave your life unaffected or unchanged. There is a wisdom, which comes to the mature in Christ. It cannot come to the wise men of earth or the theologians of the church system. It comes only to those who empty themselves of the wisdom of this age. It comes to those who turn a deaf ear to the world and its program and to the religions and doctrines of men, which are little else than the conclusions of the natural mind, handed down by tradition as a stumbling stone for all mankind. The hidden wisdom of God comes to those who, seeking glory and honor and immortality, eternal life, empty themselves as Christ did, divesting Himself and becoming obedient to the cross, and not only the cross of Calvary, but the cross which this whole valley of death really is. Having done this, He was raised incorruptible and given a name which is above every name. Are we not members of His body? Are we not of that same Christ? Are we not the in-Christ company? The in-Christed people? Shall our way be different from His way? Shall He empty Himself while we remain full? Shall He humble Himself while we remain exalted? A thousand times no! For it behooved Him, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of our salvation perfect through suffering.

Do you not think it was a remarkable thing that Paul, having written, "Let this mind be in you", should say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ," **Phil 3:7-8.** And again, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you." **Phil. 3:15.** "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body..." **Phil. 3:20.** Knowing as we do that none may reign with Christ in His kingdom nor in the ages of ages which will yet unfold except those in whom the mind of Christ dwells in fullness, I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye be

not conformed to this world, but present yourselves as living sacrifices upon the altar of God to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

EAGLES' WINGS

Can Christians grow by holding firm
To doctrine or to creed?
The Shepherd leads His sheep to where
They in new pastures feed.
Can food of yesteryear suffice
For hunger of today?
Was it not for our daily bread
That He taught us how to pray?
A soul can never grow in grace
That is content to stay
In blissful contemplation of
The things of yesterday,
And live alone in memory
Of some bright evening star
His grace had sent to lead us on;
Not keep us where we are.
Unfolding revelation is
God's purpose for this hour.
Why live in flesh?
The stratospheres
Are vibrant with His power!
There is a Spirit realm to which
We can triumphant rise,
And blend redemption's melodies
With music from the skies.
Charles S. Price

CHAPTER FOUR THE NEW REALM

The words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, spoken in the secluded quietness of night to the seeking heart and attentive ear of Nicodemus, hold a significance far beyond the scope of human understanding. The greatest sermon ever preached on the new birth has failed to do anything more than to proclaim that the new birth was necessary that men might see the kingdom of God. We have proclaimed much the necessity of the new birth and have declared emphatically that none could see the kingdom of God without it, yet we understood little what the new birth really was, and few had even the faintest idea of the reality of the kingdom, which becomes our life, our breath, and our complete satisfaction when we are born of God's Spirit.

No one but God could have over-ruled the gross ignorance of men, making their ignorance and lack of understanding redound to His glory and to, the extension of His immutable purposes. The world can never come to know God through human wisdom, but, since human wisdom is the only wisdom we possess, it therefore "pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save all those who believe." The truth of the words "the foolishness of preaching" becomes more significant with every measure of increasing light. It is very hard for me to understand why men love preaching and why they simply rejoice in having their pictures taken in front of microphones and before crowds. There is nothing wonderful or wise about preaching, for God's word names it as foolishness. It is a means that God has taken to help ignorant, foolish men to believe. Because they are devoid of the wisdom of God, impotent in understanding, and destitute of His knowledge, therefore it pleased God by the kindergarten foolishness of preaching to save all who would simply believe.

Perhaps the anger of some will be aroused because of this statement, but if you will carefully scrutinize your own life and the lives of those around you, you will be forced to agree that no man has ever been perfected by listening to sermons. The reason that believers are on such a desperately low plane is that they have spent

their lives listening to re-hashed sermons, holding out their withered spiritual hands like beggars pleading for a pittance to sustain life and keep them saved for another week. What a desperate tragedy that really is! Then, to make matters infinitely worse, times without number the preacher himself has less spiritual life, experience, and truth than the people he is trying to feed. Juveniles with a graduation diploma in one hand and a Bible in the other, full of self-confidence and destitute of experience, stand to recite their childish sermons before the ancient grey head. The mighty Isaiah, speaking with prophetic exactness, cried, "As for my people, children are their oppressors and women rule over them. O, My people, they which lead thee caused thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths." **Isa. 3:12.** The times of this ignorance God winked at (Acts 17:30), but now He is commanding all men to repent and come to a knowledge of Himself, separate and apart from sermons, systems, and ceremonies, teachers, preachers, and things. He is putting in the hearts of men a longing to know Him as sons of God should know Him, a longing to be like Him who was the pattern Son, the sign Son, the Apostle of our profession, the High Priest of our calling to sonship, who maketh intercession that we should be even as He is, exactly as He is, the likeness of His likeness and the image of His image.

On the great windswept prairies where we live it is possible to stand on certain hilltops to sweep with unobstructed vision the vast plains that lie between distant horizons perhaps a hundred miles apart. But all things seen from a great distance are found to be very different when we see them face-to-face. In our readers in public school was the story of the House with the Golden Windows. It told of a barefoot farm lad who loved to look across the distant valleys as the sun was setting to a little house with windows of shining gold. He was a faithful little worker about the farm and as a reward his parents gave him a day off to do just as he pleased. With a lunch in his pocket he set off across the great valley to see the house with the golden windows. He told the kind lady who met him at the door that he had come from across the valley to see the golden windows of her house. "Ah," she said, "We are much too poor to have golden windows, and besides glass gives much more light, but stay with us until the morning and I will show you a house with golden windows." And when the sun arose in the morning, she pointed far across the valley to his own little home where the windows shone like gold in the rays of the rising sun. So it is in the spiritual realm. We hear of the new birth and we think we understand it. Faintly we hear the truths of sonship and we imagine we are already the sons of God. We hear of victory over the flesh and we think we have attained it. We mistake conversion for the new birth, and believing for receiving. We have seen through a glass darkly, but face-to-face we shall presently behold all things as they are. The mists that have hung like shrouds upon the shoulders of the distant peaks sublime are fleeing away before the rising sun of righteousness that we may know as we are known.

As sure as we breathe, a new day is dawning; a dispensation is at hand. The weakness and unprofitableness of the dispensation of grace in which men only walked in faith is giving way to the kingdom age when all men shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. The new birth is becoming a reality.

Believers of all ages have sold themselves woefully short on all the great promises of God. We have been content to say that every believer was born again and needed but to wait until some distant day when he would fly away to heaven either by death or by rapture. I remember seeing this sign vividly portrayed by the public highway: Except a man be born again, he cannot go to heaven. That statement, I fear, has been the sum and substance of Christian belief, but we have missed the true meaning of the truth given to Nicodemus so long ago. John 3:3.

To be born from above is to be born from a higher realm. Spirit is higher than flesh even though both should dwell together in one body. To be born of the flesh is one thing, for there you are born into a natural realm capable only of partaking of natural things. But to be born of the Spirit is to be born into a new and higher realm where the eternal things are clearly seen before us even as natural things are seen by natural men. Without the birth from above it is impossible to see the kingdom of God, for natural men have not been given the power to see spiritual things.

The realm of the new birth is the realm of sonship. It is the realm where Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived and moved and had His being. Not that He was born again, for He had never sinned nor died and needed not the regeneration of ordinary men. But He lived and moved in the realm of sonship full and complete. He lived and moved in the realm of the kingdom, which He came to proclaim and which for three years or more He

demonstrated in small part. As Moses led Israel to Kadesh Barnea (Num, 13:14) where they could actually see the promised land but through unbelief turned back to the wilderness, so Jesus led the whole world to a sort of spiritual Kadesh Barnea where the glory of the coming kingdom came into full view only to be lost sight of in a spiritual wilderness in which we have wandered for almost two thousand years. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived in a realm above and beyond the realm of ordinary men, for while we have lived as sons of men, He lived as the Son of God. While we have been from beneath, He was from above. While our kingdoms have been of the earth, His was not from hence. While all this is undeniably true to any honest man, yet, praise be to the eternal purpose of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became the Son of man that we who were born sons of men might become sons of God.

The Holy Scriptures bear the eternal promise, "Behold, I make all things new." Not all things are to be made new at the same time, for God is making some things new right now, and all things will be re-born in their own order and time. Even the earth and the heaven will be re-born as a result of this most precious promise.

Jesus is the apostle of our faith. He is the sign Son, the first begotten Son, the pattern Son. All who are to come to sonship through the ages shall come into that same wonderful image of Jesus Christ. It is time now, above all times, for us to mightily stress these truths. I see no possibility of any long delay until the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God becomes a reality.

We do not attain the realities of sonship by thumb twiddling. They appear as a great vision before our understanding and we attain them through surmounting faith, patience, endurance, and eternal vigilance.

The heights of great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

I for one shall be surprised indeed if much more time elapses before the kingdom day breaks in its glory upon the whole earth. The woman of Rev. 12:1-6 is without doubt in travail and the manchild, who will shepherd all nations with a rod of iron, is coming forth as a result of her travail. The forces of organized religion, typified by the great dragon, are banding closer and closer together ready to devour the sons of God, the manchild, as soon as he is born. But they will not succeed, for these sons do not belong to the weakness of an earthly realm but to an heavenly realm far above corruption, mortality, and death.

The realm of sonship is an entirely new realm. Jesus Christ was the pattern Son of God. All God's sons will be in His image and His likeness in everything. When we use the terms image and likeness, we are always prone to think of a sort of physical resemblance as a son bears physical likeness to a father, but the likeness which the sons of God bear to Jesus Christ goes infinitely beyond physical likeness. It includes all wisdom, knowledge, power, holiness, truth, justice, love, understanding, judgment, government, authority, and unity with the Father. We may name any attribute of sonship found in Jesus Christ, whether visible or invisible, and the truth abides eternal and sure that such is the pattern for all God's sons. We shall through infinite grace enter into that same image.

The prayer found in the sixth chapter of Matthew which we call the Lord's Prayer is really a pattern prayer. It was a guide and a compass that was intended to keep all man's prayers in the channel of God's will. There need be no objection made to reciting the prayer as is so often done in public and private. But these words were not given us to be mumbled thoughtlessly as a part of our ritual and form of worship. This prayer is a life that is lived. Until the individual request becomes an experience in our own life, we have understood but little of the pattern Jesus gave us that day.

The request, Thy kingdom come, is followed by the request, Thy will be done. It is the coming of the new will, which ushers in the kingdom of God. For six thousand years the will of man has ruled the nations of the earth. Man's own self-will has ruled his own life and the will of man has forever been imposed on other men. Monarchs and dictators have risen up, bombastically imposing their will and authority over whole empires, delighting in the bondage and slavery they brought to their own subjects. Men impose their wills on men.

Nations impose their wills on nations. When no domineering taskmaster enslaves us from without, we immediately become captive to our own will which is the will of the flesh, and, thus held chained to its carnal desires and ambitions, we pass our lives on earth as groveling slaves to our own self-will. We lay up treasures where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. We put our money in bags that are full of holes. Instead of passing our time in communion with God and thus partaking of the mind of Christ, we spend our time lolling in an easy chair allowing our minds to partake of filth and corruption that has had no equal since Noah's day. We allow the image of the adulterer and the adulteress, the thief, the murderer, and the crook to erase the image of Christ from our minds and the hope of sonship is slain in the dens of murderers and thieves. Do not try to tell me it doesn't matter. Can a man take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned? Prov. 6:27-28.

Nay, World! I turn away
Though thou seem fair and good;
Thy friendly outstretched hand
Is stained with Jesus' blood.
If in the least device
I stoop to take a part,
All unawares thine influence steals
God's glory from my heart.
I miss the Saviour's smile
Whene'er I walk thy ways;
Thy laughter drowns the Spirit's voice
And chokes the songs of praise.
Whene'er I turn aside
To join thee for an hour,
The face of Christ grows blurred and dim,
And prayer has lost its power.

The coming of the will of God into a believer's life is a personal experience far, far greater than the receiving of any spiritual gift. The coming of the will of God into our life is in truth the coming of the mind of Christ. It is the beginning of the very spirit of the kingdom within us. It is the crowning and enthroning of Jesus Christ in the throne room of our heart. As long as self sits on the throne, carrying out its private ambitions and ordering our life according to the human will, Jesus is still rejected, still despised, and still crucified. The world is full of men and women who proudly boast that they want God's will and only God's will, yet they spend their whole lives carrying out their own ambitions and trying to fulfill their own purposes. They venture not to come before God with fasting and with the prayer, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Men have become so busy presenting their programs before God and asking His blessing upon their own works and their own ideas that they never think to cast their ambitions aside while He leads them into his purpose and will.

Those rejected men who will come to the Lord, saying, "**Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?**" (**Matt. 7:22**), were not liars nor even deceivers. They were self-willed men who preached and performed miracles because that is what they wanted to do. They were not doing it because Christ had either called them or sent them. Therefore their works, though wonderful, amounted to nothing because they were done after man's own will. The existing church system has an endless variety of this type of men and women who lay claim to being great servants of God, but who in reality are serving their own bellies.

There are three very definite stages that transpire in becoming one with the divine will. First there comes the Gethsemane struggle in casting off our own will. It is here above all other places that we face death to self. It is here in dust and ashes and bloody sweat that we begin to plead with strong crying and tears, "Not my will but Thine be done." It is here that we are faced with the fact that this cup cannot pass except we drink it. This struggle between my will and His will is fierce and bitter and often long, but I tell you of a truth that His will cannot be manifest in us until Gethsemane is passed clear through.

Did you ever notice that when David, the king of Israel, was rejected by his kingdom, driven from his throne by his son Absalom, and betrayed by his best friend Ahithophel, he passed weeping over the brook Kedron? 2

Sam. 15:23. It was over this same brook Kedron that Jesus Christ passed on His way to Gethsemane. The longing for unity with God's will brought David across the brook to his Gethsemane. Unity with God's will brought Christ across the brook to Gethsemane, and our longing for God's will will also bring us across the brook that separates us from the purpose of men and the will of the flesh into the garden of His passion where we become one with Him.

This is an experience that we must face alone. We will not have many friends who can help us through the darkness of Gethsemane. It was only a few hours before Gethsemane that Jesus said to Judas, "That thou doest do quickly," and Judas went out and "it was night." It was night in so many ways. It was night for Judas; it was night for the disciples; it was night for the world; and it was night for Jesus. The darkest loneliest night we will ever go through is when we pass through our Gethsemane, for this is the place where we pass from our will to His. The don't-care noisy world will rush on, intent with its business. The don't-care priesthood will be busily preparing its robes, its sermons and sacrifices for the Sabbath. The professing church will be relentlessly pushing ahead with its programs. Our best and most devoted friends will all be idly slumbering, and somewhere there is sure to be a traitor carefully scheming our crucifixion. Gethsemane is the loneliest place in all the world of spiritual experience. Even Calvary was graced by the presence of a few heart-broken women and "that disciple whom Jesus loved," but Gethsemane was alone.

How often I have thought of the Gethsemane struggle of self-willed Jacob as he journeyed back to the land of his fathers after an absence of many years. Gen. 32. He was on his way to meet his twin brother, Esau, who was coming against him with four hundred men. Esau is the flesh. Jacob, in fear of his brother Esau, sent all his belongings over the brook and Jacob was left alone to wrestle and gain the victory over the will of the flesh. Even back there in Genesis 32:23 behold the brook! The same old brook that divides us from our loved ones and our earthly possessions as we struggle to attain unity with the will of God. The cunning, conniving, old Jacob nature within every one of us must be confessed and destroyed that our name should be no more Jacob, but Israel, the prince with God. A prince with God is without doubt a son of God. "Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for he had seen God face to face and his life was preserved." Verse 30. Jacob becomes Israel and Gethsemane becomes Peniel, the face of God.

I tell you in truth that I know by experience that these things are so. Well do I know by experience what it is to cross over the brook and enter alone into the Garden. I know the heartache of trying to awaken sleeping brethren only to have them despise and hate you and fall asleep again. I know what it is to see the hand of the traitor at work hoping to gain by your awful loss, but most of all I know the long, long, lonely hours when no prayer could pass the lips except to say, "Not my will but Thine be done." It is here and here alone that we begin to tread the ground of true sonship, for sons must know only God's will. None but those who know God's will can ever hope to be led by the Spirit. But as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. [We said above that the entering in to God's will was in three definite steps. First there comes the mighty struggle of Gethsemane, the awful clash between the will of man and the will of God. Then second, when the victory is gained, we will find ourselves meekly submitting, meekly saying "amen" to all the will of God. But there is a third stage which will eventually come. It is the time when we "delight to do God's will." Psa. 40:8.](#)

Whereas in the beginning we sought to be conformed to God's will, now we hunger and thirst after it. We seek it out that with joy we may follow it in life or death. The will of God becomes the highest and grandest prize. All else becomes utter dung by comparison. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God," is the theme of our song from month to month while our soul is always enquiring to be enlightened with the revelation of His mind for us. The very thought of living after the counsel of our own will is a repugnant odor in our nostrils, and the evil thought of counting the cost of following Him never darkens the soul. This indeed is the new will.

With great earnestness I pray that God will open your understanding, for it is of perfect truth that we tell you that no man can ever hope to reign in the kingdom of Christ until his will has thus become one with the will of the Father. Were it possible for one man to reign in the kingdom while still possessing his own will and not being in accord with the will of the Father, confusion, hatred, and rebellion would follow even as it did in lovely Eden in the beginning. Therefore all who seek the kingdom praying, Thy kingdom come, must first be filled with the knowledge that His will must be done in earth as it is done in heaven. The will of God in the earth is in truth the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER FIVE THE NEW MIND

The wisdom of men is foolishness with God. We will all agree that the puny wisdom of man has sought out many inventions. It is remarkable to see what he has accomplished as he has set his mind to work on the tasks that confronted him. The scripture says, "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." **Ecc. 7:29.** The expression "but they hath sought out many inventions" shows us that his inventions have tended to degrade him rather than to help him. It is certain that whatsoever a man does to bring himself freedom in one direction serves to bring him into bondage in another, for he must work harder to pay for the things that make his work easier, and what time he saves he uses to indulge the flesh.

It is not the weakness and unprofitableness of the human mind that we want to stress, for that is only negative at best, but what we want to show is the greatness of the mind of Christ. God has chosen to demonstrate the infinite gulf between the mind of man and the mind of God by a simple comparison of the two in which He shows that "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God." **1 Cor. 3:19.** Actually there is no such thing as foolishness with God, for with God "the thought of foolishness is sin" but He has chosen this form of expression to show us clearly that the highest flights of human wisdom are no more than foolishness in His sight. In this world things are only big or strong or wise by comparison with things that are small or weak or unwise. A man who stands 6'8" is a giant compared to most men, but, when he stands beside a man who is 8'6", he appears to be almost a midget. Thus it is with human wisdom. When we compare the wisdom of man with the wisdom of man, it may appear very great and very wise, but, when we compare the wisdom of man with the wisdom of God, then we are forced to conclude that the wisdom of man in its highest degree does not compare with that which God calls foolishness. The world by wisdom knew not God; therefore it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Because it was impossible for human wisdom to comprehend even the simplest of God's purposes, the Lord in grace laid aside the necessity of human understanding and made faith the only requirement necessary to man's justification. Thus it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. See 1 Cor. 1.

God seldom chooses wise men after the flesh for any of His work because wise men after the flesh are not a whit wiser than a fool in spiritual things. Thus it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men." **1 Cor. 1:19-25.** It is for this reason that Paul says, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." **1 Cor. 1:26-27.**

"The world by wisdom knew not God." What greater argument can we propose to demonstrate our utter need of the mind of Christ? It is the mind of man that keeps the world in continual turmoil. It seethes and bubbles and boils and erupts like a vast cauldron and the wisdom of man is powerless to help it. We live in an era of international tension such as the world has never known. In spite of plenty, hunger stalks the earth. Justice and equality have taken wings and righteous judgment is scarcely known. The earth abounds in forms of godliness that deny the power, and men both in the church and out of it are lovers of pleasures/are more than lovers of God. For six thousand years man has struggled to bring about a sort of Utopia, but the human mind, prone as it is to all manner of greed and selfishness, can never deliver the world or bring a reign of righteousness.

The mind that was in Christ was the Father's mind. We must never overlook that fact. When Paul said, "Let this mind dwell in you which was also in Christ Jesus," he knew well that the mind that was in Christ Jesus was the mind of God the Father. There can never be unity of mind until all have one mind. It was the Father's mind dwelling in the Son, Christ Jesus that made Him completely one with the Father. "I and My Father are one," He said, and so They were. The wonderful unity between Christ, the Son of God, and His father existed because

Christ dwelt in the Father and the Father dwelt in Christ. In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the godhead bodily. The great truth that is wide open to our understanding is this: We shall be made one with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son in exactly the same way as They are one. Christ knew perfectly the one and only place of true unity. It was this knowledge that prompted His prayer and caused Him to ask, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me that they may be made perfect in one." **John 17:21-23**. This is unity indeed. It is the kind of unity God demands. It is unity of mind and unity of glory.

All over the world today there is talk of unity. Councils are being held with ever increasing regularity in an effort to unite all phases of the church system. The words of Christ, "that they all may be one," are being wistfully repeated, but the kind of unity they are striving to attain is not the unity of which the Bible speaks. Man strives to unite all people under one authority and one earthly head that a united front might be presented to the world, but this is a false unity based on slavish servitude to a system. It has nothing in common with the unity that comes from oneness with the Father and with the Son. All the great religious systems of the world are certain to come together and nothing can stop them. But do not be deceived by it. Rather flee from it as from a plague, for it has the horns of a lamb, appearing harmless and good, but it has the voice of a dragon. Rev. 13:1. Isaiah turned his prophetic telescope down to our day to behold the frantic endeavors for religious unity, then spoke with exactness in these words: "Behold, they shall surely come together, but not by Me." **Isa 54:15**. This is not the unity we need, for it will not be unity but slavery based on dread and fear. The only true unity is the unity that flows like a universal river of life from the indwelling mind of Christ.

It is the mind of Christ that will order and govern the world in the kingdom age. Every son of God will be imbued with the mind of Christ and from those holy omniscient minds the law and government of the Lord will flow forth with a harmony that will encompass the earth with perfect peace and fill it to overflowing with the knowledge of the Lord. Men will learn war no more, for there will be no cause for division. Then shall men know the meaning of the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." No longer shall greedy, carnal minds seek to lay up vast wealth for future days, but all will know the glory of living daily from God's bountiful hand.

At this trying hour we cannot possibly emphasize too strongly the need to seek to become one with the will of God, to cast off the carnal mind and let the mind of Christ dwell in us. As it is impossible for the oak that fell last winter to up-rear its shattered stem, so also it is impossible for the natural mind to attain sonship. Only the indwelling mind of the Father, which also indwelt Jesus Christ, can bring us to sonship, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. It is the Spirit of His mind that brings us into unity with the Father, unity with the Son, and unity with each other.

Christian people of all ages have sought unity on the basis of beliefs and doctrines. They have tried to hammer out doctrinal differences on the basis of the Bible, all viewing the distant mountain peak from a different angle, all coming to a different conclusion, but all thoroughly convinced that they are right. We have been like the six blind men of Indistan who went to see the elephant. The natural mind can never bring unity. It knows only in part and an infinitesimal part at that, but the mind of Christ brings perfect unity, no secret is hidden from its universal wisdom. The apostle Paul opened the gates to a profound secret when he said, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." **Rom. 12:2**. We have heard a great deal about the corruptible putting on incorruption and the mortal putting on immortality. We have embraced many theories as to how this would be accomplished, but in one mighty word of inspiration the apostle sweeps aside all theories to tell us that we shall be "transformed by the renewing of the mind." Therefore he declares, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..." We present them to Him for transformation, and this transformation takes place by the renewing of the mind. The old mind, carnal and human as it is, is always conformed to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. It leaves us mortal, corruptible, and unchanged, but the mind of Christ, which is the new mind, is a transforming mind. It renews not only the mind, but the body as well.

A few years ago an article appeared in the Life magazine. It was most enlightening when spiritually applied to the renewing of the mind. For many centuries biologists had wondered what could possibly cause a caterpillar

to change to a butterfly. At last one biologist discovered a very significant thing. He found that this remarkable transformation was caused by a hormone in the tiny brain of the caterpillar. He found that, if the hormone was removed, the caterpillar would remain a caterpillar until death, but, if the hormone was left in the brain, the caterpillar would change to a beautiful butterfly. To prove his theory he joined five caterpillars together, removing the hormone from the brains of the first four and leaving it in the brain of the last one. The first four remained as they were while the last changed to a butterfly. He then reversed the process, leaving the hormone in the head of the first worm, and removing it from the last four. To the amazement of all the whole five changed to butterflies, or shall we say, became the same as the head one. The spiritual significance of this remarkable discovery cannot be overlooked, for it is God's word in His creation, teaching us that as a worm is transformed to a celestial creature by a tiny cell in its mind, so also are we transformed by receiving the mind of Christ. Thus Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice - and be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind." **Rom. 12:1-2.**

The renewed mind will transform you and me to mature sons of God who know God's perfect will. Rom. 12:2. Notice in particular that Paul says that we are transformed by the renewing of the mind that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Since it is the mind of Christ in God's sons that will govern the world in the coming age, it is therefore perfectly evident that this same renewed mind will change and transform the entire earth, bringing in righteousness, justice, equity, and truth that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Jesus called this glorious kingdom age the regeneration, (Matt. 19:28), and declared that every one who had followed Him should sit with Him in the regeneration. Just as the mind of man is now bringing desolation, war, famine, death, and disease upon the earth with an appalling darkness that deepens with every passing day, so the mind of Christ in the sons of God will bring order from the chaos. Once again the Spirit of God will move upon the waters restoring order from the chaos. The Eternal Word will once again command, "Let there be light," and the light of the mind of the Son of God will roll back the gloomy clouds of the darkness and death of the carnal mind, and Eden, lovely Eden, shall reappear.

CHAPTER SIX THE NEW ATTITUDE

Jesus Christ is the apostle and high priest of our profession. Heb. 3:1. An apostle is theirs/ advocate of a new order. He is not necessarily a worker of miracles or a performer of signs. A high priest is an intercessor between God and man. As our apostle Jesus Christ deals with us on behalf of God, and as our high priest He deals with God on behalf of us. He is a mediator both ways. The life and ministry of Jesus Christ demonstrated as nothing else could what the realm of sonship really is. He is the Word of God, and I declare with all emphasis that the life He lived was just as much the word of God as the words He spoke. Our trouble is that we have preached one thing by mouth and preached another thing by life. But the life of Christ was in exact accord with the words He spoke. We will now demonstrate and clearly show that the life of this apostle and high priest of our profession is without doubt the same life into which we as sons of God are now coming.

The attitude of Jesus was one of complete independence of ordinary necessities. "Take no thought for your life," He said, "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. ...And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." **Matt. 6:25, 26, 28, 29.** Devout men of all ages have wistfully listened to those blessed words of life, yet none have been able to partake fully of their truth. Truly, many have lived by a faith in God, and many have known what it was for God to supply their needs, but far more than bare faith is implied here. Taught here is an experience of abiding in God where God is the source of all things, our food, our raiment, and our very existence. This, men have not yet discovered.

Jesus showed us clearly that the life He taught was completely independent of every earthly tradition and custom. That life belonged to the realm of the kingdom, which we are to seek first of all. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." **Matt. 6:33.** Jesus came to preach the kingdom. That was His gospel. He did not come to set up His kingdom. He came to proclaim it

and tell the world that it was coming. All the things that were spoken in the Sermon on the Mount pertain to the kingdom, which we are soon to enter. These are the laws that will govern the dispensation of the kingdom just as surely as the law of Moses governed the dispensation of the law. The kingdom age is the age of sonship. It is the age of the will of God. It is the age of the mind of Christ. It is the one thousand year Sabbath of rest from the preceding six thousand years of labor and travail since Adam fell. Adam in his unfallen state was no more careful about raiment than a lily of the field. He had far less concern about daily bread than the birds of the air which sow not, neither reap, nor gather into barns. Adam was a Son of God, living and moving and having his being in God. But, when he lost that blessed estate, he was condemned to a life of care and travail, for God said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." **Gen. 3:17-19**. This has been man's awful travail for six thousand years. All that time he has sought to find life where no life is, forced to labor for that which is not bread. All man's labor is for his mouth and yet his appetite is never full. Ecc. 6:7.

But now for a brief period Jesus appeared proclaiming a new age, a new realm, and an entirely new attitude. The strange and wonderful things He proclaimed, He lived, demonstrating that it was possible for a Son of God to live as lilies live. Yea, He taught more than that; He showed that such a life was the true life of a son of God, all else falling far short of the blessedness of son-ship.

Jesus was independent of the need of human learning. "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" was the question of the learned doctors of the law. John 7:15. While other men wearied their flesh with much study and pored over books of earthly wisdom, here was one who knew all things both visible and invisible, yet had never studied a book nor learned an alphabet. When He was twelve years old, He was found sitting amid doctors and lawyers, hearing them and asking them questions until all were amazed at His understanding and answers. He knew the thoughts of men's hearts; He knew who would betray Him. He knew the graces and virtues of all and He knew the sins of all though He never studied lessons nor learned of men. And how was it that He knew all these things, which men can never attain through schools and books? It was because the omniscient mind of the Father dwelt in Him. His was the wisdom of which you and I are about to partake. This was a display of the wisdom that will govern the world in the ages to come. Let us not sell ourselves short on this most important theme. Think not that we have the mind of Christ dwelling in us just because we have had a few hunches and inspirations that have been correct, or even a few definite leadings of the Spirit. This mind belongs to a new realm. This mind brings us into an entirely new attitude toward all things, both on earth and in heaven.

It would be very easy to go on endlessly, demonstrating the glory of the wisdom of the mind of the only begotten Son of God. But the magnificent secret of it all is found in these words: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak," **John 12:49-50**.

The life of Christ demonstrated that He lived far above all of earth's systems, and because of the realm in which He lived, He was completely independent of them in every sense of the word. While foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head. Though He was called the carpenter's son, yet He built neither mansion nor hut for Himself. No mention is ever made of any abode He called His own. One day He turned and saw two of the disciples of John following Him, and said unto them, "What seek ye?" They replied, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" He said unto them, "Come and see." **John 1:35-39**. I have often wondered where He took them and what He showed them, but I do not think it was a house, a cave, or a nest. Perhaps it was the secret place of the Most High where He abode under the shadow of the Almighty.

John 8:1 really belongs to chapter seven and should read like this: "And every man went to his own house, and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives." The Son of God, who told us to take no thought for any of these things, lived out exactly what He preached. Don't you try to do it! You will only make a fool of yourself. But I tell you beyond a doubt that the realm of sonship in which He dwelt is the realm to which we are also now coming, and that before the end of this age. What else do you suppose Jesus meant when He prayed saying, "Father, I will

that they should be with Me where I am." **John 17:24.** He was the first Son of a vast family that He is bringing to His own power and glory, and to even greater glory because He has gone to the Father. "The works that I do shall ye do also," He said, "and greater works than these shall ye do because I go to the Father.

Notice next that Jesus was independent of natural food. Though He often ate natural food, He was never in bondage to it, nor did He have to slave for it by the sweat of His face. The scripture records at least five places where Christ showed that He lived on a plane where His need for food and drink was supplied from a source far above that which men and women know. Though all men, in fact, all creatures, are more in bondage to food and drink than to any other thing, yet this Son of God was never in bondage to either. The very first miracle He performed was to supply wine for a wedding feast when they had none. John 2:1-12. Certainly there is a spiritual significance to this intriguing story, but our point just now is that He needed not to depend on any natural thing or on any natural course of events. He supplied all things from an infinite supply which, was neither enriched by withholding nor impoverished by giving, for saith God, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is mine and the cattle of a thousand hills."

For three days the hungry multitudes had endured the desert heat as they listened to the words of life that fell from the Saviour's lips. They had brought their sick and afflicted from afar and many were the marvelous scenes of joy as demons went out, lame walked, lepers were cleansed, blind men saw, deaf heard, and sins were forgiven.

At even, when the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;
Oh, with what divers pains they met,
And with what joy they went away.

But now the three days were over and well the Saviour knew that, if He sent the multitudes away without food, they would faint by the way, so, calling Philip to Him, He said to prove him, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip replied, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little." Then Andrew (that man who loved to introduce people to Christ) ventured to suggest, "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?" And Jesus said, "Make the men sit down." So the men sat down in number about five thousand. And Jesus blessed the loaves with the blessing of the Son of God, and five thousand hungry men, beside women and children, ate until they were filled. And when they gathered up the fragments that nothing be lost, they had twelve baskets full. John 6:12.

Jesus had no concern about how much money was in the bag. Whether there was much or little meant nothing to Him. He was a Son of God and in the realm of sons food is the bread of life from heaven and drink is the water of life. In this eventide of the age I hear Him saying, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you, for Him hath God the Father sealed."

On his journey through Samaria, weary, thirsty, and hungry, Jesus sat at the wayside well. He had sent His disciples away to the village to buy food, and, as He waited by the well, He asked drink of a woman who came to draw water. But in the conversation that followed the woman forgot to give Him water, for He had told her the story of the water of life which He would give, and, of which if one should drink, he would never thirst again. When the disciples came back with food from the village, He would not eat, for He said, "**I have meat to eat which ye know not of.**" **John 4.** He was a Son and He lived in the realm He proclaimed.

Few of our bondages present more difficulty than distance. Our methods of travel are always awkward, growing more costly with each advance in technology. The Son of God lived in a realm independent of earth's modes of transportation. It is true He often walked, or rode in ships, but it is also true that He walked on water as though it were dry land, and once, upon entering into a ship, immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. John 6:21. He needed not to buy an ass to ride to Jerusalem, but sent His disciples with the message, "The Master hath need of him." And when the wonderful hour of His departure from earth arrived, He ascended to heaven to the wonder and amazement of some five hundred witnesses who had gone with Him to the Mount of Olives. Luke 24:49-51.

As time and space will fail us, we will mention but one more important point. Jesus lived beyond the power of earth's laws and governments. It is scarcely possible to describe properly the story of Christ's arrest in Gethsemane by the angry mob with lanterns and torches. There was such blind hate, envy, and confusion on the part of the angry mob, and such overflowing fullness of love, patience and kindness on the part of Christ! But notice! When Christ asked the mob, "Whom seek ye?" they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." And when He calmly told them, "I am He," they all fell flat on their backs, completely impotent and helpless at His feet. Then He, standing over their helpless, prostrate forms, asked again, "Whom seek ye?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." He answered again saying, "I have told you that I am He; If therefore ye seek Me, let these (the disciples) go their ways." **John 18:2-9.** Truly none but a Son of God could display such power over human authority. Not only before the violent mob was this divine authority manifest, but before the might of imperial Rome as well, for when Pilate insolently enquired, "Answerest Thou nothing? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee and power to release Thee?" Jesus replied with the assurance of sonship. "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above." **John 19:10-12.**

Therefore let it be known with truth and assurance that the sons of God belong in all things to a higher realm. Unto this high realm many are now proceeding, and from it the world will be filled with the knowledge and government of the Lord.

The following remarkable prophecy, given in the year 1619, forcefully confirms the truths written above. We quote it in its entirety for your blessing and benefit. Please read and re-read it, for its truths are profound - author unknown.

"There shall be a total and full redemption by Christ. This is a hidden mystery not to be understood without the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at hand to reveal the same unto all holy seekers and loving enquirers. The completion of such a redemption is withheld and abstracted by the seals of Revelation. Wherefore as the Spirit of God shall open seal after seal, so shall this redemption come to be revealed, both particularly and universally. In the gradual opening of the mystery of redemption in Christ doth consist the unsearchable wisdom of God, which may continually reveal new and fresh things to the worthy seeker. In order to which the ark of the testimony in heaven shall be opened before the end of this age, and the living testimony herein contained shall be unsealed.

"The presence of the divine ark (Christ) will constitute the life of this virgin church, and wherever this body is there must the ark of necessity be. The unsealing of the living testimony with the ark of God must begin the promulgation of the everlasting gospel of the kingdom. The proclamation of the testimony will be as the sounding of a trumpet to "alarm" the nations of professed Christendom. Authority shall be given by Christ to the putting an end to all controversies concerning the true church that is born of the New Jerusalem mother. His decision will be the actual sealing of the body of Christ with the name (or authority) of God, giving them a commission to act by the same. This new name (or authority) will distinguish them from the seven thousand names of Babylon.

"The election and preparation of this virgin church is to be after a secret and hidden manner, as David in his ministry was chosen and anointed by the prophet of the Lord, yet was not admitted to the outward profession of the kingdom for a considerable time afterward. Of the stem of David a virgin church, which hath known nothing of a man or human constitution is to be born, and it will require some time for it to get out of the minority and arrive at full mature age. The birth of the virgin church was typified by St. John's vision where the great wonder appeared in heaven, bringing forth her first born, that was caught up to the throne of God (or identified with the authority of God). For as a virgin woman brought forth Christ after the flesh, so shall a virgin church bring forth the first born after the Spirit, who shall be endowed with the seven spirits of God. This church so brought forth and sealed with the mark of divine authority will have no bonds or impositions; but the holy unction among these new born spirits will be all and all.

"There is not at this day (1619) visible upon the earth such a church; all profession being found light when weighed in the balances, therefore they are rejected by the supreme judge, which rejection will be for this cause that out of them may come a new and glorious church. Then shall the glory of God and the Lamb so rest

upon this typical tabernacle that it shall be called the tabernacle of wisdom, and though it is not now known in visibility, yet it shall be seen as coming out of the wilderness within a short time. Then will it go on to multiply and propagate itself universally, not only to the number of the first born (144,000) but also to the remnant of the seed, against whom the dragon will make war continually. Wherefore the spirit of David shall revive in this church and most especially in some elect members of it as the blossoming root. These will have might given them to overcome the dragon and his angels even as David overcame Goliath and the Philistine army.

"This will be the standing up of the great prince Michael, and it will be as the appearing of Moses against Pharaoh in order that the chosen seed may be brought out of hard servitude. Egypt doth figure this servile creation under which Abraham's seed groans, but a prophet and a most prophetic generation will the Most High raise up who shall deliver His people by the force of spiritual arms; for which there must be raised up certain head powers to bear the first office, who are to be persons in favor with God whose dread and fear shall fall on all nations, visible and invisible, because the mighty acting power of the Holy Spirit shall rest upon them. For Christ will appear in some chosen vessels to bring into the Promised Land the New Creation state.

"Thus Moses, Joshua, and Aaron may be considered types of some upon whom the same Spirit will come; yet in greater proportion. Whereby they shall make way for the ransomed to return to Mt. Zion; but none shall stand under God but those who have become "tried" stones after the pattern and similitude of Christ. This will be a fiery trial through which a very few will be able to pass or bear up in it; whereby the waiters for this visible breaking forth are strictly charged to holdfast, and wait together in the unity of pure love.

"This trial will be of absolute necessity to all for the clearing away of all remaining infirmities of the natural mind, and the burning of all wood, hay, and stubble, for nothing must remain in the fire, for as a refiner shall He purify the sons of the kingdom. There will be some who will be fully redeemed, being clothed upon with a priestly garment after the Melchisedec order. This will qualify them for governing authority. Therefore it is required on their part to suffer the Spirit of burning and fanning of the fiery breath, searching every part within them until they arrive at a Fixed Body from whence the wonders are to flow out.

"Upon this body will be the fixation of the Urim and Thummin that are the portion of the Melchisedec priesthood whose descent is not counted in the genealogy of that creation which is under the fall, but in another genealogy which is a new creation. Hence these priests will have a deep inward search and divine sight into secret things of deity, will be able to prophesy in a clear ground, not darkly and enigmatically, for they will know what is couched in the first originality of all beings, in the eternal anti-type of nature, and will be able to bring them forth according to the divine counsel and ordination. The Lord sweareth in truth and righteousness that from Abraham's line, according to the Spirit, there shall arise a holy seed, produced and manifested in the last age. The mighty spirit of Cyrus is appointed to lay the foundation of this Third Temple and support it in building. "There are characteristics and marks whereby the pure, virgin church shall be known and distinguished from all others that are low, false, and counterfeit. There must be a manifestation of the Spirit whereby to edify and raise up this church, bringing heaven down upon the earth, and representing here the New Jerusalem state, in order to which Spirits are thus begotten and born of God, ascend to New Jerusalem above where their Head in majesty doth reign. None but those who have ascended and received His glory can condescend and communicate the same, being thereby His representative upon the earth and subordinate priests under Him now; He that has ascended and glorified has made Himself as it were our debtor; consequently He will not be wanting in qualifying and furnishing certain high and principal instruments who shall be most humble, and as little regarded as David was, whom He will dignify with honor and priestly sovereignty for drawing to them the scattered flocks, and gathering them into one-fold out of all nations.

"Therefore there should be a holy emulation and ambition stirred up among the bands of believers that they may be of the first fruits unto Him that is risen from the dead, and so be made principal agents for Him and with Him, that they may be, if possible, of the number of the First-born of the New Jerusalem mother. All true waiters of His kingdom in Spirit ought to be numbered among the virgin spirits, to whom this message appertains. Be watchful and quicken your pace."

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 10
PRAYER – PREPARATION AND PATIENCE

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
THE SPIRIT MAKETH INTERCESSION

Great is the mystery of God and great is the mystery of man. Few there be among the earth's millions who can say with truth, "I know myself, for the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Jer. 17:9. Man above all else is spirit. He is not body, soul, and spirit, but spirit, soul, and body. Thus in God's word he is always defined. 1 Thess. 5:23. But man in the darkness of his understanding has chosen the visible things before the invisible, putting the last things first and the first things last. He has placed the visible and temporal ahead of the invisible and eternal, the passing before the permanent, the earthly clay in preference to the heavenly spirit. The perishing things that belong to time he has chosen to supersede the things that belong to the eternal. Into what deceit he has fallen.

How pitiful is to read of the vain and silly notions advanced by men of science as they vainly hope to preserve man's mortal flesh which, should it be preserved a thousand years, would at last fade away in obscurity and vanity, for all natural things are in the end vanity and vexation of spirit. Will man in his wicked desire to live without God become so base that he will indeed endeavor to deep freeze the human body, vainly hoping to restore it in some distant century when medical science has perfected a cure for the disease that was about to cause death in that particular person? Those who strive for such things have never learned that man is above all else a spirit being. They have never learned that the body is but an earthly dwelling place for the spirit, which is being prepared here in the lowest parts of the earth to bear the image of the eternal and to perform ministries of light and glory in a realm where pain never stalks and where death never prowls nor raises his ugly head. In those endless realms of light, whose fadeless flowers human eye hath not seen and whose deep songs of eternal joy human ear hath not heard, the spirit enters the realm of which it was created and the place in God where it can find rest.

If you, dear man of God, had a clearer vision of what you are, your whole life would take on an entirely different pattern. If you for even one day could forget the continual grinding and groveling enforced by the demands of the physical body to live and walk for that fleeting moment in the light of the eternal spirit which you are, you would never be the same man again. As long as you are not sure that you are above all else a spirit, there will be endless confusion in your life, for the spirit will ceaselessly reach out for communion with God while things of the natural realm, the realm of the body, will seek to crush all eternal desires and choke out all spiritual intercession. You will be driven as a slave by a taskmaster away from the realms of God back to your labor and travail to supply the demands of the corrupt human body of flesh. Never make the mistake of thinking you are the same today as you were before you partook of the divine nature. This wonderful partaking of God's nature should have been the signal for you to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust to take your glorious flight into purer realms of the spirit. From now on you must know that you are basically and principally a spirit being. You are no longer to confuse your true self with the body of clay in which you dwell, which has held your spirit in bondage, and for which all your labor in time past has been spent. Your physical body is not the true you. The body without the spirit is dead, but the spirit without the body is much more alive than before. The body is the house in which the spirit dwells during its earthly pilgrimage. When these solemn truths are borne home to our minds, we begin to adjust ourselves to the glory of a new life to live where God lives in the spirit.

It is not that the body shall not be a partaker of redemption, for in my flesh shall I see God; but it is the spirit that first partakes of life, then the body is quickened by the spirit that has become completely one with God. The first consideration of the believer is that his spirit should be born from above and it, being thus renewed, should have opportunity to reach beyond the restricting walls of the flesh to commune with God that he, like Christ, may become one spirit with the Father. It is unity with the Father that produces sons of God even as Jesus said, "I and My Father are one." As it was with our blessed Lord, so also will it be for all believers who through the spirit reach out beyond the corrupting powers of the flesh and the feculent powers of the age in which we live that they might become one spirit of the Father. 1 Cor. 6:17.

There is a spirit in man and that spirit is the true man and the true personality. The spirit can never rest satisfied until it rests in God. It ever seeks communion with God and longs with unutterable longing and unceasing desire for fellowship with the Most High. This should not seem strange, for God is the Father of spirits. Heb. 12:9. Therefore it is no wonder if the spirit is restless until it is one with Him.

The spirit that is born of God is renewed in the image of God and God sees it thus, though regrettably we seldom do. Our lack of understanding of our true position in God greatly impedes our spiritual progress, for while we should be growing in grace and growing in God, we seem to be putting forth a vain endeavor to grow into grace or grow into God. It is very simple for a tree to grow in a garden where it has been planted, but I see no way by which a tree can grow into a garden. Paul recognizes our position in grace when he says. "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

When the Philippian jailor came trembling and falling down upon his knees before Paul and Silas, crying, "What must I do to be saved", the answer of the apostle was clear and distinct. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." **Acts 16:30-31**. To believe on Christ means more than to merely believe in Christ. There are many who believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Saviour of the world, who have never cast on Him their hope of eternity that they might be justified freely by His grace, cleansed by His blood, and purged and renewed by His Spirit. Even devils believe in Christ and tremble, but believe on Him they never do. Men do not need religion. They need Christ. They do not need to know doctrine. They need to know Him. Tradition can do nothing for them but cause them to walk in blindness, but Christ is the light of men and the light of the world, and all who follow Him will not walk in darkness but have the light of life. It is not psychology they need to still their troubled spirit. It is Christ. An hour a day spent waiting upon Him in the silence of their bed-chamber with His Word open before their eyes will do a thousand times more to still their troubled nerves and calm their troubled spirit than all the psychology that men can offer.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart.

Wait, I say, on the Lord."

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The calmness and assurance that fills the heart of the man who knows that all things, absolutely all things, are in God's hands can never be measured. Resting in the fathomless depths of eternal wisdom and leaning every moment on arms that are everlasting, he knows that "there shall no evil befall you nor any plague come nigh your dwelling." Then can the inner man sing in the face of every calamity, "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

He leadeth me beside still waters.

He restoreth my soul.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever."

What greater comfort could ever be offered the believing heart than the blessed assurance given by David in **Psalm 91**? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shall thou trust."

Man with all his religion, his church membership, his preachers and priests, his bishops, cardinals, popes, and the like has not found God. What good, O man, will these things do if after a lifetime of trusting in them and looking to them for help you find yourself dying without knowing Christ? The fineness of temples and the beauty of ceremonial robes will not suffice in that hour. What difference will it make, O man, when thou art dying, whether on a bed or on cold earth thou art lying?

First believe. Come first to know Christ as the almighty and eternal Saviour. Repent of sins and turn from the ways of all the earth. Renounce them all and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that you may be saved, for, when this has been done, the miracle of the rebirth of the spirit takes place. You are an infant son of God. Henceforth the doors of heaven are open that you may go in and out and find pasture that you may grow in the grace you have so freely received, coming into mature stature and full sonship in Him.

There is not a religious system on earth that can bring you nearer to God. Call them churches if you will. They are not churches. They are whorish religious systems, a deep ditch and a narrow pit. Prov. 23:27. No system can bring you closer to God. Only Christ can do that. "I am the door", said He. "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." **John 10:9**. Again He increased the clearness of this statement by saying, "I am the door of the sheep". **Verse 7**. "All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers." And so they are, for they rob men of communion with God, standing between the seeker and Christ. They are thieves because they are more interested in making man their disciple than that he should know and love Him above all else in the universe.

The reborn spirit is ever reaching out to God. It is ever seeking God's face and God's presence and is restless and dissatisfied until it finds rest in Him. The spirit longs to be in God's image as a caged eagle longs to burst the restraining bars that it may rise into the celestial realm where it really belongs. Some years ago, while visiting a large zoo, I stopped beside a huge cage to watch the birds. The cage appeared to be at least one hundred feet in diameter and perhaps fifty feet in height. It was with great interest that I watched the score or more of varieties as they ran about picking up eatables thrown to them by the crowd. After admiring them with interest for some time, my eyes for no particular reason strayed upward to the top of the cage where to my surprise and delight sat a great eagle on the highest perch. Heedless of the squawking birds below and oblivious to the crowds of people he sat at the very summit, peering through the restraining bars and looking with unblinking eyes to realms above, longing to spread his mighty wings to roam the eerie regions where he belonged. How I wished I could climb up there and cut the bars to set him free! For eagles are types of God's sons who long to burst the binding fetters of the natural to soar to purer realms far above the sordid and slavish demands of the physical body and the carnal mind.

Far too often we meet with good people who wander about from here to there, trying to find a congregation where they will be happy and satisfied. They look for what they think will be the ideal church. Such people are often known by their fellows as "church tramps" because they go back and forth like Noah's dove and find no rest for the sole of their feet. But it is not the sole of their feet that needs rest. It is the soul within that is longing for communion with its creator. Misguided man understands not the longing of the spirit within. He does not know that the deep yearning that fills his breast must find its satisfaction in communion with Christ and not in fraternizing or chumming with other Christians. He does not know that the fellowship he seeks with people is often the thief that robs him of the fellowship with God for which his spirit craves. Learn then, O man of God, to fellowship with Christ, rejoicing in His Holy Spirit, communing with the Father, becoming one with Him in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, walking in His will and doing His bidding, being His sheep and knowing His voice and not the voice of strangers.

"Oh that I had wings like a dove!" said the psalmist, "for then would I fly away and be at rest." **Psa. 55:6**. But where, pray, would he fly? Would he fly to some great congregation there to listen to the sermons of preachers who are interested in building up their little kingdom? I tell you, nay! He would fly away to the secret place of the Most High to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, to hear His voice and abide in His presence, for the spirit, being one essence with the Father, is truly happy in His presence alone.

The things of the Spirit of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; but the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Cf. 1 Cor 2:10, 11. I am at a loss to know whether the spirit here refers to God's Spirit or man's spirit, but why should we not believe that both the Spirit of God and the reborn human spirit are active in their searching and longing for the great hidden mysteries of God? The spirit that is born of God is a partaker of God's Spirit and is one spirit and one essence with the Father. It is not the well, trained human mind that comprehends the deep things of God, but the reborn spirit that leaps within at the revelation of the Lord.

There is a very great misunderstanding among God's people today. Seldom do they ever realize or consider that the natural man is an enemy of God. The natural mind is completely blind to the things of God. It does not receive the things of God, neither can it know them. It can never be trained to know them. Great stress in our day is placed upon learning, but it is not education that reveals the mysteries of God. And, if you will bear with my boldness, I must declare that education without God is in reality great ignorance. The more of it we have the lower our morals sink and the more loose and ungodly the nation becomes. The corrupt religious moves in the earth today come forth from the minds of the highly educated as the unclean spirits like frogs came forth from the smoke of the pit. Rev. 16:13. The "God is dead" movement does not spring from the hearts of the unlearned and illiterate, but from the highest learning in the land, but learning, alas, in the natural realm where God can never be known. Indeed, their God is dead, for the God they imagine never lived.

The Babylon of religious confusion that permeates the whole world like leaven is the direct result of the activities of the carnal mind as it wrestles with spiritual problems that it can neither comprehend nor touch with one of its fingers. While the world cries, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," the preacher often presents another Jesus whom we cannot receive, (2 Cor. 11:4), for the Jesus he preaches and the law he expounds are all too often the product of his natural mind and not the glory of a revelation.

The wonder of the ministry of the apostles was not their unexcelled learning, as it was easily seen that they were "unlearned and ignorant men", but the thing that captivated the souls of the people was that "they had seen Jesus". **Acts 4:13**. If you live in the natural realm, then all that emanates from you is natural. Your most polished sentences will shrink to the realm you are in. Though you preached one of Paul's sermons, it would be without effect unless you lived where he lived in the Spirit. The natural mind weighs the spirit down with learning and heaviness, for much study is a weariness to the flesh, and you may be sure it is an even greater weariness to the spirit. But if you live in the Spirit, those who listen to you or read what you write are carried, momentarily at least, into the same realm where you live to behold with open vision the things that you behold, even as the servant of Elisha momentarily beheld the things that were always familiar to his master. 2 Kings. 6:17.

As there was a great gulf fixed between Abraham and Dives (Luke 16:25-26), so also there is a great gulf fixed between the natural and the spiritual realms. There is no bridge from the one to the other; and so it will remain until the things that were gain to us are counted loss for Christ and our new born spirits, like flowers bursting through the cold earth, reach into the pure and undefiled realms of the spirit where God abides and the natural mind never yet has entered.

It is the reborn spirit alone that reaches out to God. The spirit alone prays according to the mind and will of God. While the human understanding is completely fruitless, the spirit is rejoicing in the wonderful will of God, leaping across the impassable gulfs and impenetrable barriers to the bosom of the Father. So it was that the apostle said, "My spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." **1 Cor. 14:14**. This is a secret of inestimable value in every intercession if we by God's grace can learn the truth of it. It is not easy to explain how the spirit prays while the understanding is unfruitful. It must, I think, be experienced rather than explained. How many millions of God's people have experienced that inward groaning as the spirit reached out to God!

More than likely there were no words coming forth to express the longing felt by the spirit within, or perhaps there was some simple expression as "Oh, Lord!" or "Dear heavenly Father!" that was somehow expressing the deep but mighty and inexpressible longing of the spirit for communion with its Lord. The saint of God who thus groans out his unutterable longings to the Father would never be understood by the ordinary Christian whose prayers are often on his lips but seldom in his heart. Do not mistake the noisy pulpit prayer that so often is nothing more than part of the order of a service as being a prayer of the spirit. It is more often the prayer of John Doe than the prayer of the spirit. Long ago our Lord condemned the Pharisees for their public prayers, saying, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." **Matt. 23:14**. Much crass hypocrisy is often whitewashed over by loud, long, and what appears to be fervent prayer.

Consider now how great these two statements are: My spirit prayeth - but my understanding is unfruitful. There are two things definitely involved here, first the unfruitfulness and dearth of the natural understanding, and secondly, the effectual prayer of the Spirit, who is acquainted with the will and purpose of God. God is not interested in answering the multitude of requests that come forth from mere human desire couched in the form of prayer. God is interested only in the things that concern His will and His eternal purpose. Why should God be interested in satisfying human demands since the natural mind is His enemy, asking for and demanding a thousand things to gratify itself with no concern about God's will at all?

For decades it has been taught that it is always God's will to heal the body. But it is not always God's will to heal the body. What benefit is there for the body to prosper and be in health if the soul must remain infirm and crippled, stifled by the demands of a physical body intent on satisfying its own lusts? "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." **Third John 2**. Verily, if it were always God's will to heal the body, then you may be sure He would always do His will and heal, but the very fact that ninety-nine per cent or more of the people are not healed should scream the fact that it is not God's will to heal under existing circumstances.

If God's dear children would turn the searchlight within, they would see that the multitude of their spoken prayers are nothing more or less than the desires of their own hearts, which they, alas, imagine to be the will and plan of God. I have seen people almost beat their heads against the wall in their determination to pray a revival into their church, but no revival came. "Well," you ask, "why did not God answer prayer?" The answer is simple. The people were praying for something that it was not God's will to do. "But," you reply, "was it not God's will to revive His people? Was it not God's will to save souls?" The answer to that is simple also. God always does the things that are His will. Therefore, had it been His will, He would have done it.

The thing that many fail to see is that the people who pray in this manner are very often more concerned about seeing their prayer answered than they are about God's will and purpose. They are concerned that a revival should come, a revival after their own liking, that they might have a thriving church and a real spiritual boom. But the idea never enters their minds that God, having now called His elect, may now choose to scatter the flock as He did in Jerusalem long ago. Acts 8:1, 4.

Oh, that men would heed the words of Jeremiah! The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer. 17:9. So, you see, it is never safe to ask God for anything that proceeds from the natural mind, for the natural mind will hide its true ambitions behind a cloak of fervent prayer, availing itself of the subtle suffix, "We ask it in Jesus' name," or, "We ask it all according to Thy will." But the natural mind cannot ask anything according to God's will and it may as well not try. "When thou standest in the presence of a prince, let thy words be few. And put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite." Let this apply to our prayers in the presence of God.

Paul the apostle further demonstrates the unfruitfulness of our human understanding by saying, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." **Rom. 8:26**. Whether we wish to believe it or not, this is the naked truth, for man, whether he be a Christian or not, simply does not know what to pray for as he ought. He thinks he knows and he goes right ahead making all manner of requests according to his own will, but if he would stop his talking long enough to do some considering, he would see that his prayers are born, not of the will of God, but of his own wishing. Thus his wish is not only father to his thoughts, but father to his prayer as well. How

often have you heard Christians dreamily say, "I wish the Lord would send us a revival." "I wish the Lord would save my husband." "I wish the Lord would heal my body." "I wish the Lord would send us a good rain," or some such thing. Then they will make request in the congregation desiring the people to pray that these wishes of theirs, which they call prayer requests, will be answered. Then when such requests go unanswered for years we wonder why the Lord did not hear us. Why should He hear us when the request is born, not of His spirit, but of the natural mind?

"I asked for life, and this is what He gave me.

My lot is hard; my tears flow like the rain. I asked for hours gay with sunshine spattered, But, lo, my waking hours are filled with pain.

How could I know that crushing brings forth fragrance like perfume from some crushed and bleeding rose? That in the process of my better making, God used the methods He approved and chose?

"As heaven is higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." There is far too much rushing into God's presence with our boots on, far too much lifting up of unholy hands, far too much stepping where angels fear to tread, and far too little preparation of the heart in waiting for the spirit of God to put the yearnings of the Almighty in the spirit and on the lips of man.

Many years ago, when I was nineteen, a much older brother taught me a lesson I have never forgotten. "George," he said, "Learn to kneel for hours before God without saying anything." Then he added with simplicity, "I have found that to be a great blessing through life." I must admit that, when I first heard this statement, it seemed like a fruitless and somewhat unnecessary waste of time; nevertheless, I began to practice it. When I did, I discovered some strange and remarkable things. First I found that it often took me an hour or more to get rid of the thousand human thoughts that crowded like unwanted guests into the parlor of my mind. I found that my heart was far more charged with earthly things than with heavenly things and far more filled with my own fertile ambition than with God's will, but I also found that, as I waited like Mary at His blessed feet, He began to unfold to me the secrets that are hidden from natural men with natural minds, but which are disclosed to those who thus wait long in His presence to drink deeply of His Spirit. Now I shall testify that this silent waiting in His presence has been a blessing to me also throughout my life.

The mysteries of God are always hidden from the wise and the prudent, but are revealed to those who like innocent babes come into His presence. Oh, that men would wait upon the Lord! Oh, that men would cease from their constant requesting and everlasting demanding, taking time instead to wait upon the Lord, until He fills the spiritual mind with the unutterable longings of God! Refuse, then, to trust your own desires. Refuse to approach God with your own requests. God is not interested in those who think they will be heard for their much speaking. Matt. 6:7. He is interested only in the things that concern His immutable will. Our blessed Lord taught us this lesson when in great agony He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, saying, "Oh My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt." And may we all thank God that the cup did not pass from Him, but He drank it completely according to the Father's will for the salvation of us all.

Let us now look at the other side of the question. My spirit prayeth. Having taught us that our understanding is unfruitful, God has not left His people bound hand and foot by the inability of the natural mind to pray according to the will of God, but He has given us freely of His Spirit. He has touched our spirit with the life of His own eternal Spirit and we have been reborn, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God that liveth and abideth forever.

There is no way to measure the longing of the reborn human spirit after God. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" **Psa. 42:1-3**. David knew what it was to have lovers and friends and kinsmen stand afar off (Psa. 38:11) in complete indifference and lack of understanding while he cried in the agony of his spirit, "Lord,

all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me; as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me." **Verses 9-10.**

When Paul said, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought", he spoke of the natural mind of the Christian, and the natural mind simply does not know what the will of God is. Consequently, it cannot pray aright and its prayers, therefore, must go unanswered, for God is not trying to prove His power to anyone nor is He trying to please anyone. Rather, He would that we should know His will and walk according to His purposes. Then He will help us and that right early. For this reason, then, and in this connection Paul has written, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself (not itself) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts (God) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." **Rom. 8:26-27.** There is enough truth in those two verses to hold our meditation for a lifetime, and there is enough truth to completely transform the prayer life of any saint of God from the poverty of unanswered human requests to the richness and fullness of the prayer of the spirit that is always answered.

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." The greatest infirmity of the whole human race is lack of knowledge, and the greatest infirmity of every Christian is his lack of knowledge and understanding concerning God's will. Man is not only self-righteous. He is also self-willed. As the self-righteous are devoid of God's righteousness, so the self-willed are devoid of God's will. We reach the righteousness of God when we repent of our own righteousness and, believing on Jesus Christ, we receive the righteousness of God. In like manner, when we are delivered from the self-will of the natural mind, the Spirit comes to our aid and makes request to God according to God's will. You have heard it said that God always answers prayer. But no! that is not the truth! God turns a deaf ear to the demands of the natural mind however loud they may be shouted or however often they may be repeated, but His ear is attentive to the prayer that rises from the spirit and from a heart that has been cleansed and made pure from human desires. All other prayer than this is idle fancy.

There is no way by which these truths can be explained by use of the English language or of any other language on earth. These are spiritual things and are therefore quite beyond the realm of human explanation or definition. Even the apostle Paul himself left off his explanations to dip richly into the realm of experience when he said, "The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." **Rom. 8:27.** In Wey-mouth's translation we have these significant words: "The Spirit Himself pleads for us in yearnings that can find no words, and the searcher of hearts knows what the Spirit's meaning is, because His intercessions for the saints are in harmony with God's will."

The people of God who have experienced the "groanings which cannot be uttered," the sighings of the spirit that find no expression in human words, do not need my frail explanation, for they know by experience that unquenchable yearning within the human breast, the sighings of the inner man, the spirit, which can only be interpreted by the Lord who searcheth the hearts. Though such sighings are to the human onlooker mere nonsense, yet to the mind of God they are true spiritual worship and true prayer. It was of this kind of worship Jesus spoke when He said to the woman at the well, "The true worshipper must worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he left an open secret for all who long after God with unutterable longings. Would it not seem right to you, since certain longings are unutterable and beyond the limits of human tongues to be expressed, that God would in omnipotence bridge this impassable gulf by putting into the lips of men a supernatural tongue, a heavenly language, which could without let or hindrance freely make request according to even the unknown will and purpose of God? This very thing the Lord has done for those who will avail themselves of it. God has provided another tongue, unknown even to him that speaketh it, but fully known to God, for it, being the language of the spirit, is capable of bypassing the natural mind to freely speak the mysteries of God. Let us then take earnest heed to these few scriptures, which explain so well the things we have spoken of. "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit, in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries." **1 Cor. 14:2.** Then again: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit,

and I will pray with the understanding also." **1 Cor. 14:14.** All praying and singing in the spirit is a great edification to the spiritual man, a blessed uplift and an almost unbelievable building up of the inner man. Therefore he adds, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth (buildeth up) himself: but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." **1 Cor. 14:4.**

When our blessed Lord Jesus Christ hung upon the cross, He uttered seven short significant cries, each one full of meaning and dwarfing human understanding as the sun outshines a candle, but none more meaningful than the cry, "I thirst." Perhaps our first reaction will be like that of the men who filled a sponge with vinegar to press it to His lips, for indeed His physical thirst must have been unbelievably great because of the torture He endured. But when He had tasted the vinegar, He would not drink, for this cry had come forth from His spirit and, being borne upon the wings of God's Spirit, it penetrated to every corner of heaven and the secret places of earth.

There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ was God incarnate. He was God manifest in the flesh. He was God and He was man. He was God-man. He who was in the form of God "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." **Phil. 2:6,8.** Nothing less than a God-man could be a mediator between God and man. For this reason the sayings of Christ from His cross are the more significant. As God He said to the thief, "Today shall thou be with Me in paradise", and as man He said to God, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when He cried, "I thirst", I think we will have to enlarge our understanding that we may stand where He stood at that moment and where He still stands to day. On the one hand this Son of Man was expressing the insatiable desire of man for communication with God, and on the other hand this Son of God was expressing the insatiable desire of God for communication and fellowship with man. Never in the story of all creation did words more eloquently express the unspeakable longings of the human spirit for communion with God than was expressed by those two agonizing words that fell from His parched lips, "I thirst." And never in the annals of all heaven did God ever express so intense a desire for communion with man as He did when through His blessed mediator He cried, "I thirst."

From the Garden of Eden where our Lord called, "Adam, where art thou?", to the new Jerusalem where "the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come' " our blessed Lord has been ever thirsting to bring man back to communion with Himself. This same thirst that is born of Him He hath also placed in the hearts of His people who, though they know not how to pray as they ought, have been empowered through the Spirit to make intercession with deep sighings and unutterable longings according to God's divine will. Such thirsting on the part of God for man and such thirsting on the part of man for God cannot go long unrequited, but they will rejoice as one on that ground where mercy and truth are met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. **Psa. 85:10.**

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of the waterspouts." **Psa. 42-7.** A waterspout is a narrow, rapidly spinning funnel-shaped cloud of water, similar to a great whirlwind or tornado, occurring at sea. The whirlwind agitates the water into a cloud of spray, drawing the water up its vortex often to a height of several hundred feet and sometimes lasting half an hour or more before it disperses and collapses into the sea. Who can plumb the depths of the ocean or who can fathom the depths of the human spirit, much less the Spirit of God? In scripture water often represents people (**Rev. 17:15**), and wind is likened to the spirit (**John 3:8**). Waterspouts are caused by the action of the wind as the whirlwind draws the mighty deep of the ocean up into itself as the deep of the ocean calls to the deep of the sky. Nature cannot endure a vacuum but fills it immediately. There is an emptiness in the deep of the human spirit that only God can fill and there is an emptiness in the deep of God that only man can fill. Thus the deep of the reborn spirit is ever reaching out for God, and the deep of the Spirit of God is ever reaching out to man.

While yet my understanding remains unfruitful, my spirit prayeth, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, for He maketh intercession for the saints according to God's will. Even now, while we meditate upon these wonders, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only they but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within

ourselves, waiting for the adoption (the sonship), to wit, (which means), the redemption of our bodies. Rom. 8:22-23.

"Why, the sufferings of the present I deem not worth considering compared with the glory soon to be disclosed to us. All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to futility not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set free from the thralldom of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God." **Rom. 8:18-21.** Weymouth.

Never in the history of all the world was there a time when it was so necessary for saints to be in harmony with God. Never, not even in Noah's day, was there greater carnality and wickedness, whether in existing forms of religion or in the world itself. With all man's learning and with all his church-going there is an unspeakable dearth of knowledge of God. While millions throng to meetings to salve their consciences with a form of worship, Jesus Christ is left outside. Those who know God separate and apart from all else are in an unbelievable minority.

"When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" Yes, He will, but He will not find it in the great congregations or among the crowds. He will find it among those few who, leaving all others, cling only to Him. The hour is now here when "neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain shall men worship the Father, but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

The time has come for men to wait on the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping. It is by waiting long and alone in His presence that we come to know Him, and it is here in this secret pavilion that He fills our spiritual minds with His thoughts, His purposes, and His will. It is here that He empties the soul of all human desire, of appetite, avarice, and earthly ambition, and, though my understanding should for a time remain unfruitful, it is here that my spirit prayeth and maketh intercession according to God's will.

Come in, come in, Oh Tide of Grace!
Fill every parched vacancy.
Flood over all; fill every space.
Come, Tide of Grace, from Calvary!

CHAPTER TWO THE PREPARATIONS OF THE HEART

"The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." (**Prov. 16:1**)

In this chapter we will concern ourselves, not with the "answer of the tongue" as mentioned in the scripture above, but with four important things concerning the "preparations of the heart" to make it a fit vessel to receive truth. I have recently had the experience of beginning to write a message concerning a truth of great importance and feeling compelled to lay it aside for the time being because of the inability of the majority to receive the truth of it. This will not be the first time that truth has had to be withheld until the hearts of men were prepared even as a field is prepared and made ready to receive and nourish the living seed placed in its earthly womb. Well do we remember the occasion when our blessed Lord said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." **John 16:12.** And Paul likewise, having commenced to teach the Hebrew Christians concerning the excellent wonders of the priesthood of Melchisedec, was forced to cut short his teaching while he rebuked them soundly for the dullness of their minds and lack of spiritual understanding, saying, "Of whom (Melchisedec) we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." See **Heb. 5:1-14.**

How unspeakably sad it is to find that in our day, two thousand years after the above rebuke was written and with the kingdom of God coming on apace, millions of Christians are still babes at the breast! Worse still, I fear,

they are not even at the breast where they could receive the true milk of the word, but are on the bottle, receiving milk, which was never intended for spiritual growth. My heart sinks and my soul is filled with a sadness which is beyond expression when people who have been professing Christians for many years, often claiming the fullness of the Spirit, write to me demanding to know what I think about water baptism, what I teach about the Sabbath, what I think about Easter, why I do not write something about the way people dress, what I teach about the rapture of the church, where I stand on the communion, what I think about the gifts of the Spirit, and the laying on of hands! Honestly!! Did you never read Heb. 6:1-2?

Did you ever wonder what Jesus must have suffered in His Spirit when in the days of His earthly ministry He traveled through the land demonstrating the power and glory of that kingdom age which is yet to come, healing every imaginable disease, delivering men from the power of sin and Satan, demonstrating the mastery of the sons of God over the elements of sea and air, walking on water, miraculously feeding vast multitudes, speaking with the authority of the sons of God, and unfolding mysteries hidden from ages and dispensations, and then, right in the middle of that display of supernal glory, we are told, "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Matt. 15:1-2. Such a childish, petty, peevish, irrelevant question! What a sinking feeling it must have given our Lord to find men who were leaders and teachers asking such asinine questions, casting away the key of knowledge, and blocking the pathway to the distant peaks of revelation by stumbling over such human tradition as the washing of pots and cups and hands! They did not care how much a poor man suffered the pain and inconvenience of a withered arm just so long as their childish tradition about the Sabbath was respected. It was perfectly alright for a lame man to lie forty years in misery at the pool of Bethesda, but he must not be healed nor carry his bed on the Sabbath day. A blind man could grope in darkness from his birth and they cared not a straw for that, but the Man who made him whole must certainly be of the devil because He healed him on the Sabbath day.

How I admire our wonderful Lord and Christ for walking rough shod over their worthless traditions and calling them hypocrites, vipers, serpents, and liars for drawing nigh to God with their lips while their hearts were far removed from Him! Indeed, they were whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones, clean on the outside but vile and rotten and stinking within. I tell you, if Jesus were preaching in the church system today, Christians would still come demanding to know how He stood in relation to their doctrines, voiding the glory of the kingdom for the sake of their tradition, and making Him an offender for a word.

What does it matter what I think? What I think or what you think will change neither jot nor tittle of the truth. If men are guided by what I think, they will probably be wrong. The question to be decided is whether or not what I am saying is the truth. If it is, then let us walk in the glory of its light. Let us repent of the gross carnality that everywhere darkens our pathway that we may walk in the light of Him who dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto. 1 Tim. 6:16.

Never was there written a more faithful word of truth than this: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10**. According to this scripture we must conclude that there is one way and only one way by which spiritual truth can be received and understood by the human heart, and that one way is by the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God. It is when He, the Spirit of truth, takes the things of God and shows them unto us that we see, understand, comprehend and enter into those truths hidden from every natural mind from the very foundation of the ages. Decide then in your heart immediately that the deep things of God cannot be learned in schools, colleges, or universities. They cannot be dug out of books of learning. They cannot even be received from sermons though Isaiah, Paul, or Jesus were to preach them to you. Truth must be revealed by the Spirit; otherwise it cannot, simply cannot, be received.

"Why do you speak in parables?" the disciples asked their Lord. "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given" was His revealing reply. How helpless, then, we are if the Holy Spirit is not present to open these hidden things to our minds!

What hinders revelation? "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." **Isa. 28:9**. This passage of

scripture very forcefully teaches that true spiritual knowledge and true doctrine are never entrusted to men and women who subsist on spiritual milk. They are yet babies in spiritual things and no more capable of receiving the knowledge or doctrine of God than an infant of days is capable of understanding the arts and sciences of the natural world. According to Peter newborn babes are to desire "the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. 2:2), and they need not be deprived of it, but according to Paul strong meat belongs to them who are of full age (Heb. 5:14), that is, Christians who are no longer "little children", but developing "young men" and mature "fathers". 1 John 2:12-13.

Now let us notice what class of people it is who are to be considered spiritual babies and let us also notice in particular who those Christians are who are capable of digesting nothing stronger than milk and who consequently are never able to see "the deep things of God." What I now write will deeply wound many who read it, but it will be a blessed wounding, indeed, if thereby the eyes of their understanding are opened and repentance may be followed by the receiving of great spiritual truth and the receiving of spiritual truth followed by spiritual maturity.

Hear now what the inspired apostle says: "And I, brethern, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal." 1 Cor. 3:1-3. There should be no difficulty for even the most sluggish and unspiritual mind to see that carnality is the curse that keeps Christians in spiritual infancy. It alone is capable of denying them that strong meat which alone can bring them to spiritual maturity.

Let us now investigate what particular carnality it is upon which Paul puts such forceful emphasis. He does not here speak of adultery, theft, gluttony, uncleanness, lasciviousness, or any such thing, but he fastens his attention upon that one carnality which is the root cause of all carnality, successfully robbing Christians of spiritual growth during all the ages, that carnality which has made spiritual dwarfs of prospective giants and hidden from their eyes the glory of those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. That carnality for which he rebuked the church at Corinth is the same wretched carnality that in our day curses the entire professing church system. It is the carnality of sectarianism and denominationalism. I think it is completely reasonable to believe that 1 Cor. 3:3-4 is speaking of the sectarian spirit and the entire sectarian system. When Paul said, "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?", he was emphasizing the divisive tendency that inevitably follows wherever and whenever men choose to call themselves by some name whether it be Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Luther, Wesley, Knox, or Pentecostal, Apostolic, Baptist, or any one of a thousand other names that purport to describe some distinctive testimony. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Cor. 1:13.

I repeat without the slightest hesitation or without fear of any successful contradiction that sectarianism in all its forms, and denominationalism in all its forms, is the carnality that exceeds all other forms of carnality. It is the root of the tree of carnality and from its bad and discordant root of bitterness all branches of carnality derive their food and subsist as a green bay tree. It is this most devilish form of carnality that stunts all spiritual growth and keeps Christians drinking the milk of infancy when they should long ago have become spiritual fathers. Every Christian must repent of it and turn from it with all his heart if spiritual growth is to be attained.

How often I hear the time, worn objection, "We need these denominations to keep evil out". You lie, my friend! You do not keep evil out. Evil is rampant among you. It is God who is kept out and with Him the unfolding of His plan for the ages. You say we need these things so we will have a place for the five ministries to develop, but that statement is made only because people have failed to understand, first - what the true body of Christ is, and second - what a true ministry is. Surely you will agree that our true pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ, was an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher all in one as well as a worker of miracles, a healer and a speaker of wisdom, and all these ministries functioned perfectly outside the carnal conglomeration of man-made systems. He taught in the temple, raised the dead in the cemetery, by the highway, or in the bedroom, and proved His Sonship while walking the waves of Galilee. Seek not to defend and justify that which God has cursed and which in itself is the very root from which the confused and divided image of Babylon has sprung. What nonsense is it, which teaches that we need carnal institutions to promote spiritual ministries?

Let every one who has ears to hear stop and take earnest heed, because the Spirit of God now warns a carnal people, divided and held in infancy by the sectarian system, that, unless they repent of their division, mourn the carnality of their sectarian ways, and, forsaking all, go unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach, they are doomed to spend the remainder of their lives in spiritual infancy and in outer darkness insofar as the deep things of God are concerned.

Not only has denominationalism and all forms of sectarianism been used of Satan to dwarf and blind the minds of Christians but the division which these wickedly uphold has also been the darkness which has blinded the eyes of sinners for whom Christ died. How can sinful men who see nothing but war and strife and division among Christians ever believe that Christ has given them peace? I exhort, therefore, that all men and all women do now repent of this wickedness, and, casting out the evil spirit of sectarianism from their hearts, flee unto Christ, who is head of that mystical body, the true church, which will reign with Him, undivided, in the ages of the ages yet to come. Amen.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. While we are "at home" in the body, we are absent from the Lord; and I think you will agree with me that most of us are much more "at home" in the body than we are in the spirit. But you will also agree that the spirit is much more important than the body, because the spirit is one essence with God's Spirit while the body is identical with the flesh. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Rom. 8:13**. Even the statement, "The body without the spirit is dead", **James 2:26**, should lead us to understand that the body itself has no life except what it derives from the spirit. Thus every sin of the flesh is an outrage against the spirit whence it derives its life. Paul taught that, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11**.

In the days of Noah men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, which things concern the body and the physical realm only. In our day likewise, as Jesus said it would be, men are eating and drinking, marrying, divorcing, remarrying, and spending themselves into poverty in a vain effort to please and satisfy the flesh, which, of course, can never be done. All labor and effort in our day is for the body and not the spirit. Whether it be food and drink, clothes, shelter, comfort and speed of travel, dope, drugs, wine, women, song, perfume, or tobacco - name it all and you find that all things are either directly or indirectly concerned with the physical realm of the body, which is the flesh, the implacable enemy of the spirit. Even the religious gatherings and conventions of our day put great emphasis on their plush motels for accommodation, their good eating accommodations, and the beautiful buildings in which their meetings are held. How often we hear the deceptive expression, "food, fun, and fellowship"! The truth is that food and fun have no more in common with spiritual fellowship than oil has with water. They are iron mingled with clay. Each is the antithesis of the other. I tell you with solemn sincerity that, while you are thus at home in the body, you will find an absence from the Lord. There may be much frothy verbosity in preaching. There may be clapping of hands, singing of hymns, and shouting and praise, but what good are any of these things if you are the same tomorrow as you were yesterday?

Now God has provided a very simple method by which men can begin to become strangers to the body and at home with the Lord. You will find nothing popular or beautifully acceptable about the truth I now describe, but, if you will persevere in it and consider the message it teaches, you will find yourself growing in grace, growing in understanding, departing from sectarianism, and coming into harmony with the plan of the ages. God has ordained fasting and prayer as a means by which the interests of the physical body, which is the flesh, are greatly decreased while the interests of the spirit, so long neglected, are greatly increased. You will probably not be immediately aware of any spiritual progress during a time of fasting and prayer. In fact, you may feel much more dead and listless than at any other time in your life, but it is the flesh only that is growing weak. It is not the spirit; and I guarantee that, if your heart is honest and your motives are pure before God, a new understanding of the spiritual will begin to possess you. Things that were hidden, dark, and cloudy will begin to scintillate with the light of God. Truth long obscured by the carnal mind will awaken to become a part of you.

Men are forever talking about the sonship message, but, O my brother, when you have earnestly fasted and cast off the carnal mind, you find that sonship is something more than just another message. It is the relationship of a mature son to his Father in heaven. It is the adoption by which God places you as "a son" in

the spiritual body of sons of which Christ Himself is the head. People talk about the kingdom, but so often their talk portrays a dreadful dearth of the spirit of the kingdom. They talk much about coming out of Babylon, yet they adhere to and advertise every putrid thing that belongs to her harlot system.

God has ordained fasting and prayer as a means of casting down the carnal mind and raising up the spiritual mind. Fasting closes the eyes to the natural realm, displaying its deadness and ugliness while opening the eyes to the glory of those heavenly realms. If you show me a man who never fasts, I will show you a man who never quite sees the fullness and import of the present truth. Yes, he may be able to talk well. He may put it over, so to speak; but his talk, though all unknown to him, always leaves a pitiful vacuum which need not be there.

Whenever the Spirit of God intends to emphasize the Importance of any truth, you will find that it is brought to the forefront over and over again by teaching, by prophecy, by type, by allegory, and in many other ways. Take, for instance, the importance of the blood of Christ, which was shed for the sins of the world, not merely to save us from the penalty of sin, but to save us from sin itself. Over and over, times without number, in sacrifice, in offering, in prophecy, in type, in anti-type, in allegory we have this scarlet thread running through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. So also it is with any truth that concerns God's plan of the ages. You will find it line upon line and precept upon precept throughout the pages of the good Book until its many aspects shine out in one great revelation of Christ.

In view of the above I should think that fasting must be a matter of great importance. So great it is that we must conclude that it was vitally connected with the life and ministry of every man of God whether he be a Bible character or whether his ministry be recorded elsewhere. And should I not say further that, in this day of ours when above all other ages our god is our belly and our glory is in the things that should make us ashamed, Phil. 3:18-19, it is high time for us to take account of our own spiritual dearth and avail ourselves of that simple, lowly practice of fasting and prayer, which always determines the difference between those who would enter into the realm of the Spirit and those who would remain in the realm of the flesh. I would not make such a statement as this without thought and consideration. Fasting, though a very simple and valuable act, is undertaken by very, very few people simply because it is hard on the flesh, and "no man ever yet hated his own flesh". Why is it that so many people manifest a hatred for their spirit by keeping it in bondage to that cruel taskmaster, the body that can promise it nothing but spiritual decrepitude and impoverishment?

Moses, the man of God, fasted forty days on two occasions, and, if I am not mistaken, those two occasions had no interval between them, so that he actually fasted for eighty days without eating or drinking. In Deut. 9:9 Moses, relating his experiences to the children of Israel, told them that he had been in the mount with the Lord for forty days and forty nights. "I neither did eat bread nor drink water," he said. Upon descending from the mount, he found the people had corrupted themselves and had worshipped a golden calf, whereupon he took the two tables of stone and broke them to pieces before their eyes and fell down again before the Lord forty days and forty nights. "I did neither eat bread nor drink water," he said again. See **Deut. 9:17-18**. There was a great deal of the sovereignty of God in this act because it is quite impossible for natural man to endure eighty days without drinking and in very few cases could it be accomplished without eating. But it is not this that we are trying to prove. The truth is that the most remarkable revelation ever given by God to man, at least up to that time, was accompanied by fasting from all bodily and physical necessity.

The natural man is completely incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God; therefore, the more the natural man with all his beastly natural cravings is put out of the way the more the spirit, which is made after God's image and likeness, is capable of drawing nigh to God. Paul made the seemingly contradictory statement, "When I am weak, then am I strong." To the natural mind such a statement as this is silly, but it is silly only to the natural mind. The spiritual man knows that of all the enemies that bar the way of spiritual attainment the body of flesh is by far the strongest and most persistent and demanding of them all. It is an absolute fact that, while the flesh with its cravings is strong, the spirit is helpless and very weak. On the other hand, when the power of the flesh is at a minimum, then the spirit is freed of its bondage and chains and flies away to its own habitat in the realm of God. God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. It is this that Paul meant when he said, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

I will gain no friends by saying it, but the truth remains that in all human effort to accomplish something for the Lord there is a super-abundance of flesh. Where the flesh is strong human organization is great. Dependence

is upon education, fine singing, fine speech, fine buildings, and above all else money is made the prime necessity. Well have they nicknamed it "the almighty dollar". Carnal men love to display their pictures. They love to be called doctor, teacher, apostle, prophet, evangelist, man of the hour. The ever present glorying in spiritual gifts and ministries is a fleshly thing. Harsh words, you say? Yes, but too terribly true, nevertheless. What Christians need in this hour when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people is not a manifestation of fleshly niceties, but fasting and repentance and prayer that there might be unity with the will of the eternal Father and oneness with the mind of Christ.

As we consider the value of fasting and prayer, our minds usually turn quickly to the account of Daniel the prophet. Daniel was a man dearly beloved in the sight of God. Whenever the Lord expresses His exceptional love for any man, we will always discover that His love is not favoritism, but rather it is the Father requiting the love He sees in the man's own heart. God loves the whole world and everybody in it, but He especially loves those who love Him, Prov. 8:17, making them special objects of His correction and thus also of His favor. Daniel was greatly beloved, Dan. 9:23, because he cherished no interest of his own. God's interest was his interest and God's concern was his concern. The whole ambition of his life was knit together with the purpose of God, and besides that he had no ambition. Though he was the third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon - by necessity rather than by desire - his heart was not in Babylon but in Jerusalem, and it was with his window open toward Jerusalem that he kneeled three times a day in his chamber to pray and give thanks to God. Daniel 6:10.

The plans and purposes of God are forever hidden from the natural mind. Please mark that statement well. The natural mind is completely incapable of grasping eternal purpose. That is the reason for so much childish thought among Christians. Daniel was no more privileged than other man, nor was he more beloved than any other man who has a heart like his. Furthermore, he was no more capable of understanding the purpose of God for the ages than you or I. This fact is surely evident by his prayer in **Dan. 12:8** where he states, "I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

In the 9th chapter of Daniel we have a manifestation of the true spirit of fasting and prayer. Would you give special attention to the three prominent points that follow?

(1) The occasion of his seeking God with fasting and prayer arose from his lack of understanding of a prophecy given by the prophet Jeremiah. Dan. 9:1-2. His lack of understanding evidently troubled him greatly and caused him much concern. We should always give special attention to fasting and prayer when any great concern disturbs or troubles our hearts, for more than likely the concern we feel is a concern born of the Holy Spirit, and, if we will follow it faithfully by fasting and prayer, God will meet us with an answer and an assurance which is of Him. It is positively of no avail whatever to fast and pray in an endeavor to persuade God to give us something we personally desire. Our prayer and our fasting must always be in accord with God's purpose for the ages, always remembering that the present is a most important part of the ages. God has a plan for now.

(2) Daniel set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Notice: - Our seeking of God must not be casual, but with purpose. Daniel sought with prayer and supplication. Supplication denotes humble and earnest seeking and requesting special favor. See further how he used all means at his disposal - fasting, prayer, sackcloth and ashes - not to persuade or bribe God into giving an answer, but rather to separate himself from the uncrucified flesh, which hindered his approach to God, and to place his spirit in harmony with God's will and purpose. Many times I have written and spoken my firm conviction that there is only one element in faith, and that one element is the will of God. He who concerns himself with the will of God will find no problem with faith.

(3) He made confession of sin and the committing of iniquity and of rebellion against the precepts and commandments of the Lord. Wherever the word iniquity is used in the Bible the true meaning is rebellion. There are many Christians who live without sinning but who continually live in iniquity (rebellion). God speaks to them about fasting, but they rebel and refuse to do it. That is iniquity. God speaks to them about prayer and the reading of the Word, but they won't make the sacrifice. It is easier to read the newspaper, talk to friends, or watch TV. God speaks to them about tithing, but they won't do it. They rebel against it and console themselves

by speaking against it. That is iniquity. God rebukes them for their backbiting and evil speaking, but they won't stop it. All this is iniquity because it is rebellion. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. 1 Sam. 15:23. Is it any wonder that this stubborn man, Saul, later turned to a witch to answer his problem! 1 Sam. 28:7-25. Notice Daniel's confession how this truth is further emphasized. "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments." **Dan. 9:5.** A verse-by-verse study of this whole passage (Dan. 9) will reveal much truth to the earnest seeker, and God will prepare his heart and reveal his need of cleansing to him.

The fast recorded here took place in the first year of king Darius (Dan. 9:1) and the results were beyond description, but these we must leave for the reader to search out for himself. In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia (Dan. 10) Daniel again set aside three weeks for another special period of fasting before the Lord. During this fast he allowed himself certain foods, but stipulates that he ate no "pleasant bread" (no dainties) and he abstained from "flesh and wine". Verse 3. Again because of limited space we must leave the remarkable results of this fast and the glory of the blessed revelation Daniel received for the reader to search out for himself in the remainder of the chapter.

I think we may safely say that all the prophets were men of fasting and prayer. David states that his knees were weak from fasting, Psa. 109:24, and that he humbled his soul with fasting. Psa. 35:13. Paul makes mention of his own fasting by the simple expression, "in fastings often". 2 Cor. 11:27. Martin Luther in his longings for God fasted until sometimes he fainted. John Wesley and John Knox were men who spent almost countless days in fasting and prayer. Charles G. Finney found that, whenever his great spiritual power was ebbing, a few days of fasting would restore it.

I am sure it would be right to conclude that all the successful fasting and prayer accomplished though the ages concerned God's plan for His present truth. There is always a present truth, and it is with the present truth that we should concern ourselves. In the days of Noah the present truth was that the whole world, because of its abounding wickedness, was to be destroyed by a flood of waters. It was with this purpose and this alone that Noah concerned himself, and in obedience to God he built an ark to the saving of his house. The present truth for Abraham was that God had chosen him to be the father of a nation by whom and through whom He would bless the whole earth. It was to this revelation that he was obedient in all things. The present truth for Moses concerned the deliverance and instruction of those same chosen people. They were his concern day and night, and for them he fasted and prayed. The present truth for Paul the apostle was that the dispensation of grace had been committed to him, and because of that trust he was in watchings with fasting and prayer, continually preaching and writing to fulfill the demands of the time then present. In Luther's day the present truth was justification by faith, and to that all his efforts turned.

We should be very foolish people indeed should we allow ourselves to believe that the hour in which we live has no present truth. I am satisfied that no more important hour has ever dawned on the world's horizon than this hour in which we now live. It is, however, an hour as far beyond the understanding of the natural mind as the flood of waters was beyond the understanding of the disobedient of Noah's day. We simply cannot comprehend the message of these closing days of the age except it be by divine revelation. We may talk of Babylon all we wish, and think we have come out of her, but Babylon is a revelation. We may listen to sermons on sonship and imagine we have entered its blessedness, but these truths cannot be comprehended until the Lord God Himself breaks them open to the heart, enlightening the mind and giving understanding.

My dear brother and sister, I believe it is my duty before God to tell you that without fasting and prayer the present truth of sonship and union with Christ will never quite come alive to your spirit. You will always fall just short in understanding. While you preach that men should flee from Babylon, you yourself will yet embrace her harlot daughters. You will exult about the body of Christ as though it were a visible thing, but fail to know that for two thousand years that body has been rising in mystery completely outside the pale of human machinery, being perfected by ministries set of God and not made of man, to form a fixed abode, a mysterious house not made with hands for God Himself in the Spirit. Wake up, my sleeping brother! Tear the darkling veil from off your eyes! The body you are now trying to perfect is not the body of Christ, and the ministries you are desperately trying to establish are not the ministries which Christ has set. Oh that men would avail themselves of that mighty key to revelation available to every sincere heart, fasting and prayer!

It was Solomon who said, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." Again he said, "When wisdom entereth into thy heart and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee and understanding shall keep thee." These are remarkable words of inspiration and truth. All who read them would do well to take time out to consider them carefully and prayerfully. There is nothing more frustrating and detrimental to spiritual growth than to walk in darkness and ignorance; but, if darkness and ignorance give place to understanding, then doubts, fears, misgivings, and frustration are all erased, and we walk in the light that shines from the face of the Lord.

How often during the journey of life circumstances arise that are beyond our understanding, bringing frustration, disappointment, and even anger! In our dilemma we reproach ourselves, we censor those who seem to be responsible for our failure, we accuse the devil, and we blame circumstances, but, when at last we learn that God's hand was in our trial, then we understand. Hence, had our understanding been enlightened in the first place, we would have saved ourselves from the frustration and complaining that served only to befuddle our lives.

As I am writing these words, the three astronauts, Lovell, Haise, and Swigert, together with the control crew at Houston are desperately struggling with all the skill at their disposal to bring the crippled Apollo 13 back to earth. A few days ago millions of people felt a sympathy for a disappointed Thomas Mattingly whose years of training together with his ambition to take part in a great adventure were frustrated by the miserable prospect of German measles. But today I think we might congratulate him for his good fortune. If understanding can grip our spirits and open our eyes that we might see that "all things are of God", 1 Cor. 11:12, then we will not only save ourselves much frustration and misgiving but will rejoice in the knowledge that, because "all things are of God", it certainly follows that all things must be working together for good to those people who love God.

When we consider how God made promise to Abram not only that he would be the father of a nation but that he would be the father of many nations, that his seed would be as numberless as the sand of the sea and as countless as the stars of heaven, and that in his seed all nations would be blessed, dare we blame him if at times he grew a bit frustrated or disappointed as he saw the years pass by the score with no sign of fulfillment of the promise? But we read, "He staggered not". Yet I think the only thing that could have kept him steadfast during those long, long years of waiting was a faith that rested on understanding, unaffected by frustrating and changing circumstances. If I know anything about people, then I am positive that Abraham must have had many well meaning friends who chided him about his peculiar confidence and blessed him with many uncomplimentary remarks about his fanatical notions. No doubt they offered him much excellent advice as to how he should get back into the main stream of things. But here was one man who understood what the will of the Lord was. Permit me to say with all the emphasis born of many years of experience that he who understands what the will of the Lord is must certainly turn a deaf ear to all the free advice of well meaning friends and brokenhearted relatives who tearfully mourn, "What a blessing he could have been if he had only listened to our good advice."

There is a wealth of information to be found in the words of David, "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts to the children of Israel". No man ever comes to an intimate relationship with God by watching His acts no matter how great they may be. It is a knowledge of the ways of God that brings us to mature faith and understanding. The children of Israel based their faith on the acts they saw God do. They saw the plagues desolate the land. They trembled at the judgment that overtook Pharaoh. They saw the waters divide and marveled at the pillar of fire and covering cloud. They drank the water that gushed from the rock; but, the moment these signs were absent, they whined and complained like spoiled children because their confidence was not in God and His purposes, but in acts and miracles that tickled and pleased their imaginations. Moses was not of this coil. His faith rested in the eternal purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. To the children of Israel, if there were no "acts", no miracles, no signs, no wonders, then God was not there. To Moses God was there, working the immutable purpose of the ages, acts or no acts, miracles or no miracles, healings or no healings, water or no water, manna or no manna.

The faith and simple trust that all things are of God and all things are working together for good to them that love the Lord is the faith that the Father is looking for in you and me. I am fully persuaded that neither death

nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. And not only are these things unable to separate us from the love of God, but all these things are ministering together and working together to mould us into the kind of sons God is demanding. They are all ministers of His to do His pleasure. Yea, they are among the all things working together for good to them who love God and who are the called according to His purpose.

If a man cannot see that the temptation of Satan in the life of Job was a necessity, then he has completely missed the point and failed to discern the value of temptation altogether. If we cannot see that the temptation of Adam and Eve was a necessary part of God's plan, then I fear we have missed the point and failed to see the plan. The temptation of the Son of God in the wilderness was a necessity, and so also are temptation, trial, suffering, misunderstanding, disappointment, poverty and all else necessary in your life and mine. When we understand what the will of the Lord is, we can say blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him. James 1:12.

My heart's desire is that all who read these truths may be filled with the conviction that God our Father is preparing a people to share the image of Christ and reign with Him. First we shall reign with Him in that age we call the millennium, which is the kingdom of God, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Second, we shall reign with Him in the dispensation of the fullness of times when all things will be gathered unto Him. Eph. 1:10. Then we will reign with Him in the ages of the ages when the whole universe becomes subject to the Father in heaven. 1 Cor. 15:25-28. If we imagine that our main ministry is now in this present age, we have accepted one of the greatest errors the system of Babylon was capable of teaching. We all should realize that, while we are given some opportunity to minister in this age, this age is principally a time of preparation for the true ministry to come. With this understanding we begin as true sons of God to lay hold on the hope set before us. Even our blessed Lord Jesus Christ lived with this hope in view. He knew that His main ministry lay in the ages to come, for thus it is written of Him: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." **Heb. 12:2**. Why did He sit down at the right hand of the Father? The answer is that He sat down by the Father's throne to take the reins of government, first, to reign by Himself over the mystical church; second, to reign with His brothers, the sons of God, over the kingdom of God; and third, to reign with the sons of God and the bride in the dispensation of the fullness of times. How clearly we see in this the ever increasing glory of His kingdom, and our understanding is enlightened as to the true meaning of this statement: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." How marvelous are Thy works, O God Almighty, and Thy ways past finding out! Who hath known the mind of the Lord or who can instruct Him? For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him unto the ages of the ages! Amen and amen!

Since, then, we have such marvelous hope pulsating in our breasts, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? If this is the age of preparation, should we not prepare ourselves? Ought we not in this one thing to imitate our Lord, who for the joy set before Him endured all things? Let us avail ourselves of every means of grace, laying aside every weak and beggarly thing that binds us to this present age that we might partake fully of Him and share with Him in that abundant glory which is set before us. As for me, I shall gladly count all things but loss and utter trash, unworthy of the least notice that I may share with Him in that infinite glory and reign with Him unto the ages of the ages.

Hear now the wise instruction of our brother, Peter, for it is true that God gave to him the keys (plural) of the kingdom. "Rid yourselves, therefore," said he, "of all ill-will and all deceitfulness, of insincerity and envy, and of all evil speaking. Thirst, like newly, born infants, for pure milk for the soul, that by it you may grow up to salvation; if you have had any taste of the goodness of the Lord. Come to Him, the living Stone, rejected indeed of men, but in God's esteem chosen and valuable. And yourselves also like living stones be built up into a spiritual house, as a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it is contained in scripture, See, I am placing in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and valuable, and he whose faith rests on Him shall never be disappointed." **1 Pet. 2:1-6**. (Weymouth). "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God ... I entreat you as strangers and foreigners to restrain the cravings of your lower natures which wage war upon the soul; to live honorable lives that God may be glorified;

to submit for the Lord's sake to the authority set up by man, (emperor or governors), for it is God's will that by doing well you silence the ignorant talk of foolish persons. Servants, submit to your masters with respect, not only to the kind, but to the unreasonable. Married women, be submissive to your husbands. Married men, love your wives and live with them with a clear recognition that they are not as strong as you are, but, being heirs together of the grace of life, treat them with honor, that your prayers be not hindered. Be kind, harmonious, sympathetic, tender-hearted, lowly-minded, not requiting evil with evil, but blessing instead, because you have been called to be a blessing. He who wishes to enjoy life (the life of the ages) let him restrain his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful words. Let him turn away from all evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their supplication; but the face of the Lord is set against evil-doers." See **1 Pet. 2:9-20** (Weymouth).

In the epistle to the Hebrews we have this simple and instructive statement: "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." **Heb. 12:1**. Runners in a race always lay aside their garments so that the race may be run with the least possible impediment. The world's best swimmers often shave off all the hair from their bodies so that their passage through the water will not be impeded. If men to win a corruptible crown lay aside every weight with every hindering thing and strain every well trained muscle and nerve to win, how much more then should their example teach us to lay aside all hindering weights that we for whom an incorruptible crown is being prepared may better run the race that is set before us. See, then, what wisdom Paul uses in this urgent exhortation: "Lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."

You will rightly conclude from this passage that weights and sins are not necessarily the same thing. Christians are forever impeding their spiritual progress with seemingly harmless weights. "What harm is there in it?" so often they ask. But they are weights none-the-less, so completely able to handicap their progress in the race of life that they will be instrumental in denying them a place in His body and in His throne. There is no sin in eating, but, if a runner over-indulges even in such a simple pleasure, he will not only lose the race, but possibly fall out long before the finish line. Those who indulge the flesh to the detriment of the spirit can do nothing but fail, because ours is a spiritual race.

While Peter is saying, "Lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings," **1 Pet. 2:1**, Paul is exhorting, "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another". **Col. 3:8,9**. Again in **verse 5**, "Mortify (kill) your earthly inclinations (Weymouth); fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection (sensual passion), evil concupiscence (unholy desire), and covetousness (greed), which is idolatry."

We do not have space here to consider in detail any one of these weights and sins mentioned above, but it is time God's people disassociated themselves from all forms of the sex craze of our day. Sex in all its inordinate manifestations was the chief offender in bringing about the flood in Noah's day. Sex in every perverted form was responsible for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and sex - rampant, perverted, twisted, mingled, exposed, unabashed, and depraved - is hurling the present age into the fearful maelstrom of the great tribulation. Blessed is he who in this hour of filth and corruption watcheth and keepeth his garment spotless!

Paul, who said "put off" all these corrupt things that impede our progress, exhorted us to "put on" those things that would quicken our step and hasten our growth. "Put on" therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another ...And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts (remembering that He is our peace) ...Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ..." **Col. 3:12-16**. He who feasts upon the living word sups with Christ, giving Him place to dwell richly in the heart. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus... Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters..." **Col. 3:17-22**. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without. Col. 4:5. Let your speech be with grace. Verse 6. Continue in prayer and thanksgiving. Verse 2.

Now "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." **1 Pet. 1:3-5**. Seeing we have such a hope, we use great plainness of speech, and, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the image of Christ from one glory to another by the Spirit of the Lord. See 2 Cor. 3:18.

Let us, then, cast aside all hindering weights that tradition has heaped upon us and, delivering our feet from the snares that impede our progress to the distant peaks sublime, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking only to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER THREE CONCERNING FASTING AND PRAYER

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Never for any length of time has there been any peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors. The hatred between them does not arise from nationality nor national boundaries, but from the spiritual fact that Ishmael was born by the will of man through the operation of the flesh and Isaac was born by the will of God through the fulfillment of the promise. One is born through the scheming of man and is therefore after the flesh; the other is born after the promise of God and is therefore after the Spirit. These two nations are an allegory representing the flesh and the Spirit. Canaan, the land, represents the believer, that land of promise and of conflict which you are, a land in which the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, a land where these are contrary the one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you would. Gal. 5:17.

It was about the year 890 B.C. that war arose between Benhadad, king of Syria, and Jehoram, king of Israel. Jehoram was by no means a good king, for, though he had put away the images of Baal, he continued in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. 2 Kings 3:1-3. During the course of the war Benhadad, king of Syria, was frustrated again and again because all his tactical maneuvers against Israel had failed. In his frustration he called his generals and chief advisors for council, and this is the story of what took place. "Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God (Elisha) sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place, which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me, which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words thou speakest in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore he sent thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host encompassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." **2 Kings 6:8-17**.

I have quoted this beautiful story in full because it demonstrates in a particularly vivid manner that two worlds or two realms exist all about us. The first is the realm we all know so well, the natural realm. It is a realm that can be seen with natural eyes, heard with natural ears, touched with the natural hand, tasted with the natural palate, and smelled with the nostrils. The second is the realm of the spiritual, a realm that, to those who touch it, is ten thousand times more real than the natural world. Man has been excluded from this heavenly realm

ever since that mundane hour when he stretched forth his inquisitive hand to discover for himself that which is good and that which is evil. On that unhappy day his eyes were fast closed to the metaphysical and spiritual realm to discern the physical and natural and to see his own nakedness and the nakedness of everything that belongs to this barren realm of death. Scales of spiritual blindness beclouded his vision, shutting out from his sight for the dispensations to come the effulgent glory of that world where God dwells in the Spirit. And yet that realm is as close to us today as it was then, the only difference being that our darkened vision cannot see it!

So it was that distant morning in the dusty little town of Dothan that two men looked out upon a scene that possibly has never again been repeated in the annals of human history. Standing before the gates of the town and encircling its walls stood the hosts of Syria with horsemen and chariots, spears and swords and banners, a mighty and well-equipped army sent to capture one humble and inoffensive prophet of God. It was this army that Gehazi, the servant, saw. But there was another army that stood round about Dothan that day, for far up in the mountain nearby stood the numberless hosts of the Lord with horses and chariots of fire.

"My father, my father," cried the disconsolate Gehazi. "Alas, what shall we do?" For naught did his natural eyes see but the encompassing hosts of Syria, and well did he know the impossibility of escape. The knowledge that the hosts of the Lord with drawn and glittering swords were filling the skies could not penetrate the darkness of his natural mind. But with Elisha all was different. Well he knew that the hosts of Syria stood before him, but so small and insignificant did they seem to him that he scarcely noticed them at all. His gaze was fixed in a higher realm, a world with which he had become familiar as he walked in the Spirit with God, a world so wonderfully real that all who once have their eyes opened to it beg to remain in its celestial precincts, never more to return to the lowly estate and the level of the beasts. The frustration and fear that gripped the mind of this young man filled the heart of Elisha with pity, and, lifting his heart to God in prayer, he prayed, saying, "Lord, I pray Thee open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And, behold, the mountain was full of the horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

The truth is, my friend that the heavenly hosts were there all the time. The blindness was with the young servant, whose eyes were holden, allowing him to see only that which is natural, and not that more real world of the Spirit. And now I declare that not only the heavenly hosts but heaven itself is all around about you even as you read these lines, and, should the Lord but take away the veil of flesh from your sight, your eyes would behold the celestial realm and you would see and know and clearly understand; for the Lord is not far from any one of us. Acts 17:27. As Jacob said with trembling, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." **Gen. 28:16.**

Our knowledge of God and our understanding of the things of God depend entirely upon where we dwell. If our dwelling place is in the natural realm, then the things of the natural realm become all-consuming and very real to us, but the things of the higher realm grow dim and far away. They become ethereal and unreal and sometimes so removed that they are scarcely worthy of our belief at all. But to those who dwell in the realm of God and walk in the world of the Spirit the things of earth grow dim and distant, very unreal and far away. The noise and strife of the nations and peoples fade away, while angels hymn their praises and we walk in the light of the Lord.

The aged man sits in his old arm-chair,
And bright is the light of the evening sky,
His wife close by his side with her silvered hair
And the open book of God close by.
Sweet on the day the gloaming falls,
And bright is the light of the evening star;
But dearer to them are the jasper walls
And the golden streets of the land afar.

The Lord hath made of one "all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us". **Acts 17:26-27.** The Lord is not far from any one of us. He is nearer than hands or feet. If we seek after Him, we will find Him, and He will reveal Himself unto us. Why, then, do men dwell so far away from God, seeing he is not far from any one of us? Why

do they not feel after Him and find Him, seeing He is nearer than hands or feet? Why must our lives be lived devoid of God's Spirit, since the apostle declared, "In Him we live and move and have our being?" **Acts 17:28.** The answer to these questions is abundantly clear. It is simply this: God dwells in the realm of the Spirit and men dwell in the realm of the natural. There is a natural realm and there is a spiritual realm, but between the two realms hangs the veil of the flesh that darkens our eyes and beclouds our understanding.

In my book, *The Meaning of the Cross*, I have taken great pains to point out how God included all men in Christ long before we were born into this world, and that, when Christ was nailed to the cross and died, you were nailed to the cross in Him and died. Then in the book, *From Death to Life*, the truth was emphasized that the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness. Rom. 8:10. Thus the believer, the saved man, has a live spirit in a dead body. This present existence, which you and I fondly speak of as life is that which God speaks of as death, and death it really is. The only life God recognizes, as life is the life that Jesus gave us when we believed. He that hath the Son hath life. All else is death and all else is corruption.

I have no hesitation in saying that it is the flesh that separates all men from the realm of God. The flesh is the body; nothing more and nothing less. This I have made very clear in the book *Two Realms*. The carnal, or fleshly, mind is the mind that concerns itself entirely with all things physical - how it may cater to, please and satisfy the desires and lusts of the body whether in feeling, tasting, seeing, hearing, or smelling. To the carnal (fleshly) mind the flesh and the satisfaction of it is an end of great importance, though the flesh is never satisfied. It is the flesh that hinders all spiritual revelation. It is the flesh that hides the mind of God from us. The flesh influences us to attempt things that are of the will of man. The flesh has its own worship, and its god is itself. Even the massive healing campaigns so painfully evident in our day are not conducted that Christians may attain to spiritual heights, but that they may attain physical benefits that the present evil world may be enjoyed the more. Great spiritual heights are not attained through ease and luxury or physical well-being. They are more often attained through suffering and affliction, a path so opposite to the cravings of the natural man.

The Lord has graciously given to man a simple though difficult means by which the heavens may open to him and he may begin to enter beyond the veil of the flesh into the celestial realm. It is through fasting and prayer. I am not now speaking of the spiritual fast which seems to be indicated in Isaiah, chapter 58, but the thing most needful in our day is the simple act of fasting from food that we may more fully devote ourselves to prayer and communion with God. Let us consider some examples from scripture. The Bible teaches fasting more by example than by precept or doctrine. We who desire to learn the spiritual value gained by special seasons spent in complete abstinence from food as we seek the face of God must examine the instances in scripture where godly men and women laid aside the delights of eating and drinking and all other things pleasant to the flesh that they might reach beyond the veil of the flesh into those higher realms where God most surely dwells.

The disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus with this question: "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?" And Jesus said unto them, "**Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.**" **Matt. 9:14,15.** Let there be no doubt in any mind but that the bridegroom is now absent and these are the days of which the Saviour spoke, saying, "Then shall they fast." And I think great force is added to this statement in view of the fact that we have no account of the apostles' fasting while Jesus was with them; but, after He left them, there is abundant evidence that these same men gave themselves to much fasting and prayer, and to this putting off of the flesh and rending its veil asunder we may confidently attribute both their fullness of power in service and the saintliness of their lives.

The Lord Jesus Christ commenced His ministry with what we call a prophet's fast, a fast of forty days duration. After identifying Himself fully with man by His baptism, and after being filled with the Holy Spirit, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days of the severest testing. The entire forty days were spent completely without food, and during those days of severe temptation He gained complete victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil and angels came to minister to Him. He gained the victory over the flesh in that, though He hungered, He refused to turn the stones to bread to satisfy the desires of the body. He gained the victory over the world in that, when Satan offered Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them as a reward for His worship, His answer was, "**Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve.**" **Matt.**

4:10. And He gained the victory over the devil in that He said, "Get thee hence, Satan, for thou savorest not the things which be of God," and the devil departed from Him for a season. Also overcome were the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, those three things which in the beginning were instrumental in the fall of man. It is written of Eve that she saw the tree was good for food. This is the lust of the flesh. She saw it was a tree to be desired. This is the lust of the eyes. She saw it would make one wise. This is the pride of life.

Let the reader remember that it was the putting forth of the hand to partake of food, of whatsoever kind it was, which caused the heavens to be shut up from man in the beginning, and I think it is quite reasonable to believe that our refusal of that food which is only for the body will greatly assist us in our seeking to enter those realms of the Spirit where we share with the saints the glory of an open heaven.

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit; and so will all men return who lay aside natural things that they may freely partake of heavenly things. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. 5:17. Fasting is a God-given means of breaking the power of the flesh, rendering it helpless and submissive, that our spirit, which is in the image of God, loosed from the binding shackles of the flesh, may rise up into those realms of light where it truly belongs. The stronger the flesh, the weaker the Spirit; the weaker the flesh the stronger the Spirit. In this strange fact we find the answer to Paul's anomaly, "When I am weak, then am I strong." You will never know just how much you are in the flesh, nor just how much you cater to the flesh, nor what great and merciless power the flesh has over your spirit until the day comes when you announce to your flesh that you are going on a ten day fast from all food. Then you will learn that, until now, your spirit has been weak and your flesh has been very strong. Then you will know what a drag, what a nuisance, what a domineering, placating tyrant this body of death can really be. Then for the first time in your life you will better understand why Paul cried from the depths of his spirit, "**O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:24.**

Nevertheless, he who fasts has this end in view: My spirit grows stronger. The corrupting power that held it fast in its vise-like grip, causing it to grovel as a slave within the carnal house of death, begins to relax its hold. The ice of winter melts slowly away while the spirit as a vapor ascends to those pure realms of God where it truly belongs. Let every Christian know with all certainty that he who lives in such low estate as to cater to the demands of the body of flesh is bringing his spirit into captivity, inertia, bondage, and death. Our living after the flesh produces a double curse in death to the body and death to the spirit, but hearken to this saying and learn it with all thoroughness and clearness: If you live after the Spirit, there will be a double benefit in life, for the living Spirit will also quicken and make alive your mortal flesh. Divine healing is not God's best. It never was and never will be. God's desire is that men shall walk in the Spirit to such an extent that, without thought or effort concerning the body, the life of the Spirit will quicken and make alive the mortal flesh. Rom. 8:11. It was in this realm of the Spirit that Moses walked, and, as a result, at the age of one hundred twenty years he found his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. Deut. 34:7.

There is a spirit of understanding that accompanies fasting and prayer. It is quite possible for one to read this article through only to emerge with faulty conclusions and wrong decisions. First of all let me say that is totally wrong for us to fix our minds on some objective and decide we are going to fast and pray until we receive it. This may seem a very reasonable thing to do, but it is wrong. The heart of man is deceitful and the heart of man is desperately wicked. Who can know it? The human heart is so deceitful that men are forever coveting the things of God entirely for their own benefit and aggrandizement. Such an attitude, whether recognized or not, is a great evil and a deceitful fraud. There are, for example, hundreds of men who have fasted and prayed that they might receive the gifts of healing. I have heard of men who fasted forty days that they might receive the gift of healing, but they did not receive it; and neither would they have received it had they fasted twice forty days. Some one will ask, "Why wouldn't they receive it, since they sought it so earnestly?" The answer is simple and the truth is forthright and jarring. "**Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.**" **James 4:2-3.** Few men take kindly to such brutal truth, but the earnest searching of the heart would reveal that our much seeking was in our own interests, neither for the glory of God nor the benefit of mankind.

It is quite natural - and natural is the correct word - for people to imagine that to ask for a gift that would appear to be for the benefit of mankind and for the glory of God would certainly assure their receiving it without question. But let a man examine himself whether he be in the faith. Let him examine his motives for asking and his reasons for fasting, for that which is a gift God divides to men as He wills. 1 Cor. 12:9-11. Let him examine himself and he will probably discover the hidden and deceiving fact that his desire for the gift may have been much more for the benefit, the exaltation, and the promotion of himself and his ministry than for the glory of God or the benefit of mankind. How wicked and impure and deceitful the heart of man can be that it could thus deceitfully desire the gift of God for its personal promotion, hoping and expecting as many have done that the possession of a spectacular gift would draw the multitudes and he would become a great and notable man, and partaker of all the benefits that greatness and notability bring! "Ah, but," you say, "such a circumstance could not be." Ah, but it is true that such a circumstance could be, and such things happen over and over again in the lives of most of us! Was not this the deceptive thought that motivated the heart of Simon the sorcerer when he offered the apostles money for the gift and power they had? "Give me this power," he said, "that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." And did not Peter discern his impure motives, telling him in no uncertain manner, "Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God... For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." **Acts 8:18-25.** And was it not in the hope of financial gain that Balaam sought to curse Israel, and was rebuked for his covetousness? The dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet. 2 Pet. 2:15-16. Of course it was, and I have no hesitation in saying that the modern church system is full of Balaams who prophesy and heal for gain, and many preachers have the spirit of Simon and desire God's gift for their own aggrandizement. I will further say that the church system is crowded with men and women who have no gift at all, only pretending they have, but with sleight of hand and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive, they gull and gudgeon, dupe and deceive, fool and fox, if it were possible, even the very elect. The healing meetings and healing campaigns of our day have for the most part become such an abominable money-raising hoax that I am often tempted to believe that in some cases at least they are the work of the Mafia. When will Christians awaken to the disturbing truth that the Wicked One, who will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, is one with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish (2 Thess. 2:9-10), and that men will receive strong delusion to believe lies and all manner of deceiving things that they might be condemned? Let us learn here and now, before we begin our fasting, that it is useless to fast for these things the natural man lusts after.

There is, of course, a true and right spirit that will motivate and lead us to fasting and prayer. What, then, must our attitude be? How are we to know whether our attitude is right or wrong, since we are so easily beguiled and deceived through the deceitfulness of our own human heart? The all important question is simply this: Am I seeking to attain something for myself, or am I seeking through the crucifixion of self to become acquainted with the fullness of the mind and purpose of God? The longer I live and the closer my association with God becomes the more certain and assured I am that the secret of all success, all power, all faith, all knowledge, all wisdom, yes, and all holiness finds its beginning when our spirits enter into harmony and unity with the eternal purposes of the Lord. Once the Spirit of God makes clear to the human heart the design and desire of His own mind and the purpose of His will concerning any matter or any occasion, then he who walks in harmony with that eternal purpose cannot fail, but must succeed in whatsoever the Father bids him and leads him to do.

It is unnecessary for a man to fast and pray for mountain-moving faith. Not only is it unnecessary, but it is completely fruitless and useless. The secret of faith lies in the will of God, and in the will of God alone. It is not for you to fast and pray that you will have faith to remove a mountain, but it is for you, through fasting and prayer, to discover whether or not God wants the mountain removed. If He does want it moved, and if He wants you to move it, then it will be done - not because of your great faith, but because of His great will. But, if He does not want the mountain removed, all the praying and shouting and claiming promises will avail no more for you than the shouting and screaming and cutting themselves with knives availed for the prophets of Baal. How often we hear preachers talk about the faith of Elijah! How vividly they describe the things he did and the things he said while the audience giggles with glee! Though I have heard many preachers talk about the faith of Elijah as he stood before the prophets of Baal, I do not remember ever hearing any one draw attention to that rather insignificant verse which says, "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word" **1 Kings 18:36.** Here lies the true secret of his faith. God had told him beforehand what he should do. Elijah did exactly as he was instructed of God and the

result was exactly as the Lord intended. Any man or any woman reading these lines could do exactly the same thing that Elijah did, providing God had told him to do it, but Elijah himself would fail to repeat the same miracle if God had not told him to do it. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. That is the one and only source of faith.

For many years I read of the marvelous faith of George Mueller - how he built great orphanages, feeding and sustaining many hundreds of children for many years without ever mentioning his need or asking any one for a penny. How I coveted a similar faith by which mountains and obstacles could be removed! Well, the truth is that mountain moving faith is very simple. There is nothing to it at all - nothing except complete harmony with the will of God and the purpose of the Lord. Elijah himself could not have done what Mueller did simply because God had not asked him to do it. And George Mueller could not have called down fire on the altar simply because God did not ask him to do it or lead him into a circumstance where such an act was necessary. A lifetime of experience has taught me that there is only one element necessary to real faith, and that one element is the will of God. Therefore harmony with the divine mind is the secret of faith and it is this harmony and submission to God's purpose in us that must be the single thought and the compelling spirit that controls all our fasting and all our prayer.

Perhaps you will say that it is simple to come into harmony with God's will, and that is true; but let me first remind you that you will soon discover that all which is of the Spirit is contrary to all that is of the flesh. It is good to recognize the deceitful power of the carnal mind and to accept the brutal fact that all its desires are contrary to the will of God. It is not until you come to the place where you have no mind of your own that you will be able to receive the mind of God and come into harmony with His merciful purpose.

If you were to ask the average Christian the question, "What is it that the world needs most today", he would probably tell you that the greatest need is a heaven-sent revival. If you were to ask him whether or not a revival would be God's will, he would probably answer in the affirmative in no uncertain terms. But is it God's will? Of course it is not. If it were His will, He would send it, and nothing in the universe could stop Him. The notion that the church has to be just so-so before a revival comes is poppycock. It is not more preachers we need. It is not more radio broadcasts or T.V. churches. It is not more missions and missionaries. It is not more tracts or even more Bibles. All we need is an elect people who know the mind of the Lord for the hour; and may I quickly add that there is an elect people who know the mind of the Lord for this hour, and they are in the exact place God said they would be when almost two thousand years ago Jesus said, **"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."** **Matt. 24:31.**

The spirit of **"understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17)** is the spirit that must accompany all our fasting and all our prayer if we are to have success. "Let me see Thy purpose, O Lord, as it concerns me. Let me see Thy will as it concerns me. Lead me in the path Thou wouldst have me go. Guide me with Thine eye." This is the true spirit of prayer and the true spirit of fasting. All self-seeking is vain, useless, and degrading.

Many instances of fasting and prayer are recorded in the scripture. Each one, if studied prayerfully and with meditation, will add some definite conviction concerning this great truth. I would not presume to compare the value of one scripture with another, but much help and understanding concerning fasting will be found simply by reading the ninth chapter of Daniel. Daniel had been considering the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, who foretold the captivity of Judah in the land of Babylon for a period of seventy years. There was something about this truth that mightily stirred Daniel's heart, causing him godly concern. So greatly did God's Spirit move upon him that he said, **"I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes."** **Dan. 9:3.**

Let all God's people know and thoroughly understand that the answer to every spiritual question lies in the realm of the Spirit. The mysteries of God can never be fathomed, solved, or pried into by the natural mind. Those dear saints whose hearts are stirred to know the secrets of the Most High must, must, must first pass beyond the veil of the natural mind and natural understanding to stand where God stands in the Spirit. The truths of the Bible are to the natural mind little but dead, lifeless stories, filled with all manner of futility, but, when the glory light of God shines upon them, then from the cold meaningless shadow there materializes the substance of eternal truth.

Daniel knew, as I trust you also know, that the answer to the perplexities of his mind lay far beyond the wisdom of man. No amount of prying, or figuring, or enquiring of wise men, or adding two and two together to make four could possibly solve the mystery that baffled his mind. These were the secrets of God and the answer was not in man. The secret was hidden in God and the interpretation must come from Him. Well did this Daniel know that God had placed in his hand the master key that would open the door to the understanding of the omniscient One, though the lock itself was concealed beyond the veil of the flesh and beyond the reach of the natural mind. That magic key is fasting and prayer, and those who use it often will discover the secrets of the Lord and His eternal purposes unfolding before the eyes of their understanding. Would God that every Christian would learn that the secret things of the Lord cannot be received second hand. However adept a teacher may be his ability to unfold the mysteries of God is limited and confined to the realm in which his hearers dwell. Even Jesus Christ Himself felt the agonizing pains of this restriction as His words of life continually fell on ears dull through the flesh and hearts gross and heavy and incapable of understanding anything beyond the natural realm.

Paul, when speaking the simple truth to the Jews in Rome, suffered the pangs of an exasperated helplessness until he cried in his frustration, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by the prophet Isaiah, saying. Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." **Acts 28:25-27**. How strange that we, the children of God, should consent to grope as children of men in the outer darkness of the natural mind while within our hand lies the key that opens the door to the treasure house of eternal wisdom!

At the moment of Christ's death upon the cross the veil of the temple was rent asunder opening the way to the holy of holies. There is no stronger conviction within my soul than the conviction that a dedication to fasting and prayer will begin the rending of the veil of the flesh in that temple which we are, opening the way into the holy of holies of spiritual revelation and understanding. Without any hesitation whatever I make this statement, which I know to be true: If men and women would enquire of God with fasting and prayer concerning the things that mystify and trouble them, they would hear from heaven and, being convinced of God, would find it unnecessary to ask endless questions of men, the answers to which often fall on dull ears and hearts made gross and heavy with the cares and troubles of this present evil world. How unkeen and unsharp do our spiritual senses become by much partaking of the bread of men! How good and wise is the Lord our God to have secretly hidden all spiritual understanding just beyond the reach of the natural man in that secret place of the Most High! There beneath the shadow of the Almighty it may be touched by those who are willing to reckon themselves dead and to prove it so by the laying aside of every weight and every besetting sin that, free from defilement, they may receive of His wisdom.

The temple of the Lord at Jerusalem was but a type of the true temple "which ye are". The tabernacle in the wilderness and all that pertained to it was also a type of the temple "which ye are" and that greater temple, the body of Christ, a temple composed of all the elect believers. That mysterious tabernacle contained in type every possible aspect of the true church, which is Christ's body. In type or in pre-figure it taught every doctrine in the New Testament without exception. Within its confines were three distinct places of spiritual worship - the outer court with its brazen altar of sacrifice, which is the cross; the holy place with its candlestick, the altar of incense and the tables of shewbread, a holy place of communion, indeed; and beyond that the holiest of all, the holy of holies, where was the ark of the covenant, the cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, beneath which lay the law of God, the golden pot with the manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded and blossomed and brought forth almonds in one night, which typifies the resurrection. But I am burdened now to emphasize in particular the fact that over the door to each of these spiritual places hung a veil, which Paul says typifies the flesh. Heb. 10:20. It was impossible even to enter the outer court without passing through the outer veil. It was impossible also for the priests to enter the dimly lit holy place without passing through the second veil, which also represents the flesh, and the high priest, who entered the holiest of all once a year, could not enter the holy of holies without passing through the inner veil. The holiest of all was not dimly lit with candles as was the holy place nor even by the light of the sun as was the outer court, but the light that flooded it with glory was the shekinah, the light which God Himself is, the light which Jesus is, the light beyond the light of the

sun, even that light which will lighten the New Jerusalem in the blessed day when they have no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God will lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. Rev. 21:23.

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter. Prov. 25:2. God has never engaged in the artless business of casting pearls before swine. For that very reason He veils the precious treasures that only those who seek may find, only to those who knock will the door be opened, and to those who ask in sincerity with no conditions attached will the blessing be given from His bountiful hand. Thus for good reason was the door to each holy place shrouded by a veil, a curtain, which in its first analysis the flesh. The truth we are taught by this should be clearly seen by all who have understanding and by all who have eyes to see. If we enter only the outer court, which in type represents the realm of justification by faith, we must pass through the first veil of the flesh, laying aside by the power of God all those outward lusts and manifestations of the flesh so common among the ungodly, the lying, the swearing and committing adultery, the drinking, the smoking, and a thousand other corrupt things freely indulged in by the world of the unregenerate. If the cross does not change these things and deliver us from them, then the cross has not been reached nor the blood of cleansing applied. Justification does nothing if it does not deliver men from overt sin, separating them unto the Lord.

No sooner is a man justified by faith and cleansed from open sin than he finds himself facing a second veil, the great curtain that hung between the outer court and the holy place of sanctification and communion with its altar of incense, its bread of communion, and the light from the sevenfold candlestick. Those who advance to this second realm deal with the flesh as it appears and manifests itself within the soul, for those who were cleansed from adultery, fornication and uncleanness when they passed the outer veil are still possessed with idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions and heresies, things always common in the Babel of denominationalism. Beyond the second veil lies the third, guarding the way to the holy of holies and teaching us that all who would enter the presence of God must be cleansed from the filthiness of the flesh as it appears in the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Those who enter into this third and celestial realm live no longer in the realm of the senses of the body, but in the realm of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling in the realm of the Spirit, the realm where Elisha lived.

How long should one fast? There is no set length of time to govern our fasting and prayer. The scripture tells us nothing concerning the length of time we should abstain from food during times of special seeking after God. Let us always remember that we are not fasting to earn a reward, but to seek the face of God unhampered by the flesh. A fast may mean anything from the simple omission of a meal to long and extended periods up to forty days. The Pharisee who prayed, saying, "I fast twice in the week", is usually regarded with contempt, but, though his heart attitude was admittedly faulty and unworthy of the praise of God, his practice was one that, if pursued in the proper spirit, would have brought a bountiful blessing to his spiritual life. John Wesley was so convinced of the value of fasting twice in the week that he stated he could as readily contemplate cursing as contemplate not fasting twice in the week. This is a strong way of emphasizing his point, but it vividly shows the value this great reformer placed on the sacred art of fasting as an enabling means by which we can more readily enter into the spiritual realm. Slavishness to rules and regulations in the hope of gaining the favor of God should be cast from us, but times and seasons consecrated to the Lord are accepted of Him, and we should be fervent in our performance of them.

Paul said that he was often in fasting (2 Cor. 11:27), and clearly stated that he approved himself as a minister of God by labors and watchings and fastings. 2 Cor. 6:5. He makes little reference to the length of time of his often fasting, yet I suppose these fasts varied in length from one or two days to much longer periods. The time of his shipwreck on the Isle of Melitus indicates a fast of fourteen days (Acts 27:33), at the end of which time the angel of God stood by him and delivered all who were on the ship, bringing them safely to shore. See also Acts 14:23. Daniel's fast was of three weeks' duration, during which time he seems to have abstained from pleasant bread and wine and all other gastronomic delights. After twenty-one days of fasting, confession, and consecration he was visited by the angel Gabriel, who enlightened him with an understanding of the ages such as was never before revealed to man. See Daniel, chapters 10, 11, 12. The revelation he received that day was a vivid outline of the ages to follow, a pre-written history of great events by which we in these last days are being vitally affected.

Then there was the fast of Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) in which he went for forty days on the strength of one meal, given him by an angel - a fast after which the Lord revealed to him many necessary things, telling him to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria and Jehu to be king of Israel and Elisha to be the prophet in his room (1 Kings 19:15,16), a fast after which he was soon taken up into heaven in a whirlwind to walk forever in the celestial realm. The longest recorded fast in the Bible was the fast of Moses, the man of God, who, after fasting in the mount of the Lord for forty days, fell down at the sight of Israel's idolatry and continued fasting for a second forty days, apparently without touching food at all. Deut. 9:9-18. And what shall we write of Hannah, who waited before God in fasting for a son (1 Sam. chapter 1), and of the fasting of David in his awful distress until his knees were weak from fasting. Psa. 109:23,24. And of the Ninevites who, upon hearing the preaching of Jonah, covered themselves with sackcloth and denied food or water even to their animals while they themselves fasted and cried mightily to God; and God heard their prayer because of their sincerity and because of the thoroughness of their repentance, turning away His wrath and sparing the city. Jonah 3.

Carnal men "whose god is their belly" (Phil 3:19) can always find convenient excuses for refusing to fast. I am not remotely interested either in answering their corrupt and carnal arguments or in interpreting the scriptures they advance to prove their point. My ministry was not given to tickle the ears of men who love the flesh and live for its demands every day, but to those blessed folk who have esteemed the words of His mouth more than their necessary food. Job 23:12. This wicked age is still blessed by the presence of those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness", and these are they whose hunger and thirst for spiritual realities far outweighs their hunger and thirst for things of time and sense. The bread of heaven stands compared to the bread of earth as bread stands compared to a stone, an egg to a scorpion, or a fish to a serpent.

Fasting, you may expect, will be a misery to the flesh. Unless you are an exception to the rule, your whole life has been spent living by bread alone. Your body demands food and rebels violently against your decision to lay aside the bread of death that you may partake unhindered of the bread of life. I shall not hesitate to tell the novice who has never practiced fasting and prayer that you will experience a very bad time at first from the demands of the body. Your body will feel weak. Your head will probably ache. Your back will ache and your stomach will cry incessantly for food. Your friends will tell you that you are ruining your health that they know of people who died from doing just what you are doing. I tell you this before it happens that you may know what to expect. I see now the wisdom of God in telling us to fast in secret. Matt. 6:17,18. It is one way of avoiding the bad advice of the public. How often I have had people tell me, "I get sick when I fast, so I just can't do it." I have no sympathy for you, my friend. Your whole trouble is, though you are loath to believe it, that your spirit, your soul, your mind, and even your Christ is in bondage to your flesh, which is your body. Learn the deceitfulness of the natural heart and turn away from it. Have I not already said that there is a veil of flesh standing before each holy place and each new experience with God? It is only when we reach out our hand to rend these fleshly veils that exist in every life that we realize how strong they really are. It is abundantly true that Jesus in His death rent asunder the Veil in the temple but it is now given to you, O Son of God, through faith in Him to rend asunder the veil of the flesh in the holy temple which you are.

As soon as we begin fasting, we are doing the greatest possible favor to our physical bodies. It is an absolute fact that practically any physical distress or ailment and many diseases as well can be completely cured by long periods of fasting. I personally knew a lady who had suffered a physical disability for almost fifty years. She fasted for thirty days, not for healing but just to draw nigh to God. At the end of her fast she discovered to her joy and amazement that not only had she drawn nearer to God but her body was perfectly cured from that day forward. My own mother suffered intensely from continual headaches, but on hearing from a friend that four days without food had helped him, she also made the attempt, and to my knowledge from that day forth she was free of this blighting distress. I am also acquainted with a man who, after fasting for thirty days, found he was completely healed of prostate gland trouble, that fearful disease so common to western civilization. Even the doctors of the German army found that fasting was a more effective cure for the sick and wounded soldiers than drugs. The body is not composed of drugs and should not be forced to accept them. Fasting will do more for your ulcer than all the diets and medicines imaginable. No doubt there are cases where special care is needed, but the man or woman with an ordinary degree of health can receive nothing but lasting benefit from fasting.

The headache and fever that sometimes accompanies fasting for the first few days is evidence that the body is cleansing itself. Unhampered by an over-loaded stomach, it is now free to burn up, destroy, and cast off poisons that have accumulated in the system for a lifetime. You must completely ignore this temporary physical distress and keep your mind away from the thought of food or of yielding to the temptation to eat. Refuse to even open the cupboard door to take a look lest you add to your distress. Drink all the water you wish, and the more the better, warm or hot if you prefer. Go and have a sleep if you must. Take courage that you are not only cleansing your body, but you are laying aside that one thing which has long hindered you from entering the higher realms of Christian experience. After you have fasted about four or five days, you will probably discover that you are now experiencing less physical weakness, distress and hunger. Your stomach pangs are lessening. Your headaches and fever are disappearing. You are now passing the difficult period. Much poison has been cleansed from your body. The spirit is rising to pre-eminence. The flesh is less demanding. The experience of practically all people who fast is to discover that, by the time they have fasted ten days, physical hunger has practically ceased and physical distresses have gone also. Their strength is largely regained and they are quite capable of a good day's work. There is no reason to believe that we cannot continue our work while fasting unless, of course, it is work that requires more than usual physical effort, a thing sadly lacking in our day.

I write these simple instructions so that people will understand some of the difficulty experienced while getting into a fast. People who know what they must expect will not be so easily dissuaded, knowing that after the distress comes healing and after the weakness comes strength. People who are in fastings often do not suffer this same distress over and over every time they fast. The first fast is usually the most difficult. The person who has once accomplished a two week fast will probably find that, upon fasting a second time, he will experience practically none of those things I have mentioned. This is simply because his body is in much better condition.

A word of caution is in order about breaking a fast. You must break your fast carefully. This is very important. Because the stomach has not had food for some days, the first few meals must be very light, such as fruit juices or salads. Never break a fast by eating a big meal. It is a very bad thing to do and may cause you much distress. Eat very little at first until your body once again becomes accustomed to taking food. If you were customarily overweight before you fasted, your body will strive hard to regain the weight it had, but if you watch carefully for a few weeks, weighing each morning, you will be able to maintain the weight you had at the end of your fast. After a few weeks your body will adjust to this new weight and you will have no further problem.

It is unnecessary, when you are fasting, to worry about starving to death. This will not happen. After a week or so your hunger disappears and it will not return until your body has completely cleansed itself of all the accumulations of poison. However, after this has been accomplished, your hunger will return in no uncertain manner. It is then time to start eating since to continue longer would begin the process of starvation. Healthy persons may not reach this end before thirty or forty days.

After you have fasted six days or so, you will notice how clean you feel in body and spirit. After two weeks you will be surprised at the lightness of your step. It is after you have passed the misery of the first few days that you begin to realize the tremendous benefits that have begun. Then you will realize what a liar the flesh has always been. You will understand better why I have often said in my writings that the flesh is our greatest enemy. Satan himself has no power over us except through our flesh. Our real enemy is our own flesh, it is certain that we both were and are crucified with Christ, but it is just as certain that God has placed within our grasp the ability to see that this great work of Christ is accomplished in us in spirit, soul, and body.

Like all the great truths of scripture the varied aspects of this truth are practically exhaustless, and we cannot make an exhaustive study of them. Let us remember, however, as we have pointed out in the first part of this chapter, that the main benefit to be derived from fasting is the spiritual benefit. Our wise heavenly Father has placed all Christian experience in different realms, each realm one step higher than the preceding one. There are three definite and distinct realms portrayed in scripture, though not mentioned in so many words. There are the natural realm, the spiritual realm, and the celestial realm. Our journey is from the natural through the spiritual to the celestial. These three realms are clearly demonstrated in the three sections of the tabernacle - the outer court with its natural sunlight, the holy place with its sevenfold candlestick, and the holiest of all where was the shekinah, the glory light of God's presence. The first realm, the outer court, is where the crowds

gathered. This is the natural realm with excitement and activity. The second realm is the holy place, the realm of communion, of bread and incense. The third realm is where the high priest entered to minister before God Himself. This is the celestial realm.

Remember, then, that in fasting and prayer our chief aim is not the attainment of physical benefits, but the releasing of the spirit from the bondage of the flesh that it may enter beyond the veil into the realm where God eternally dwells in the Spirit. **"It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life."** John 6:63.

CHAPTER FOUR A PLACE BY ME

O Christ! Who once has seen Thy visioned beauty —
He counts all gain but loss;
And other things are naught if he may win Thee,
And share with Thee Thy cross.
And he on whom its shadow once has fallen
Walks quietly and apart.
He holds the master key of joy and sorrow
That opens every heart.
The burdened souls that pass him on the highway
Turn back to take his hand;
And murmur low with tear-wet eyes of anguish,
"You know — you understand."
ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

There are every increasing signs that some people are abandoning their natural way of looking at things. More and more they are opening their hearts to the spirit of revelation from God, which alone can make the invisible things, hidden from the creation of the world, clearly seen and thoroughly understood. The natural mind because it is natural gets every spiritual truth inside out, upside down, and back end foremost. Therefore the further man goes with his human reasoning and finite understanding the further he strays from the path of truth. His theology may resemble the truth. It may be a very plausible imitation; but it is error, nonetheless, and not the truth.

The Spirit of God alone can **"take the things of God and show them unto you"**. John 16:13-16. Let us then pause in our path, retrace our steps, abandon all human theology and philosophy, and there in utter abandonment to God and the Spirit of truth cry as David, "Lord, open my eyes." Psa. 119:18. Never under any circumstances do I ever permit myself the dubious luxury of religious argument, the reason being that all debate and dispute is on the level of the natural mind, and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2:14. Our human theories concerning the things of God count for nothing. Even the correctness of what we say is useless without the spirit of revelation. In God's plan we become partakers and participators in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is concerning our participation in Him that we now direct our earnest attention.

We often speak of the apostle John as the beloved disciple, and the word of God indicates that he was, indeed, the disciple whom Jesus loved, but dare we suggest that Jesus held some special favoritism toward John? I do not think so. The real reason that Jesus loved John so much was that John loved Jesus so much. **"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me" is still the word of the Lord. Prov. 8:17.** And Jesus Himself, speaking of this very thing, said, **"If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him; and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."** John 14:23.

The history of the world since the fall of man has been one of continual crises. They were crises insofar as finite man was concerned, but to God they were events predestined and foreknown of Him from the foundation of the world. Just as surely as times of crisis arose, God's chosen men and God's chosen people arose with them. God always has a people for His name who enjoy a special relationship and a distinguishing

identification with Himself. If you will examine the heroes of faith one by one, you will learn that in all times of apostasy and falling away the heavenly Father never left Himself for a moment "without a witness" in the earth, and each witness in his turn left his attestation and his mark in the exact way God intended. It will do no one any good to try to leave his mark upon history or to make a great name for himself. The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong. God raises up whomsoever He will. He uses worms to thrash mountains, acorns to make mighty oak trees, and drops of water to wear away the hardest rock. At this moment He is watching each man on the chess board of His creation move into his appointed place in the divine scheme of things even as the words you are now reading fall into their place in the paragraph.

Nothing useless is or low;
Each thing in its place is best.
And what seems but idle show.
Strengthens and supports the rest.

Enoch had a special relationship with God. Though the Bible records only a sentence or two concerning him, those words of inspiration give testimony to a relationship and identification with the Eternal that is so sublime that children of God in every age would do well to follow in his steps. "Enoch walked with God" is the testimony of the Lord; and, because he did, it is written, "He was not, for God took him." Gen. 5:24. So intimate was his participation in the Lord, so complete his sharing in God's eternal life that death could not seize upon him as it did upon others; so through the gates of life God took him to be forever with the Lord.

Enoch walked with God. It was no easier to walk with God in his day than it is now. No doubt Enoch, as Elijah, was "subject to like passions as we are." Undoubtedly the nominally religious throng of his day crowded its way to the public gatherings, joined in the chantings and the hymns, listened to the sermons, contributed their pennies, partook of the forms and ceremonies, and returned home to dinner and their schemes for a bountiful life in the flesh tomorrow; but Enoch walked with God. Special days of the week, special occasions, new moons or Sabbaths made no difference to him, for he was walking in the timeless realm with the eternal God. The darkness of the hour in which he lived had no withering or blighting influence upon his relationship with the Lord. Nothing could let or hinder his identification with the Eternal and nothing could for an hour halt his participation in the bread of life or that water of life, which is Christ Himself.

Enoch, the inspired record declares, was the seventh from Adam. Clear as the ringing of a vesper bell do these words of inspiration fall on our ear, for we, significantly, are now approaching the seventh dispensation from Adam. I am convinced beyond doubt that the sun has set on the sixth age and dawn with rosy steps advancing in the eastern clime heralds the glorious morning of the seventh age. The seventh generation is rising; the seventh day is about to begin, and we, like Enoch, are the seventh from Adam. In all quarters of the earth a peculiar people is coming into being, a people far removed from the religious systems of the day. Sects, denominations and creeds may belong to others, but not to them. Because they "walk with God", the blinding, enslaving systems of religion are no longer part of them, for Christ is their life. Christ is their breath, their bread and their water. Christ is their way, their truth, and their life. In Him they live and move and have their being and by Him they come to the Father. To them He is the beginning of all things and the end of all things. To them He has become the Alpha and the Omega. He has become their head and they have become His body. They are learning the intrinsic secret of these majestic words: "Thou in Me and I in Thee, that they may become perfect in one." By their baptism into one Spirit they have learned that there is no schism in the body of Christ, but that all schism and division is outside His body. To them there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Spirit, one God, the Father of all. They are as Enoch was, the seventh from Adam, blessed be the name of the Lord. From one to six is man's day, but the seventh belongs to the Lord. They walk with God because they have partaken of Him. They are participators in Christ and are identified only with Him. Their walk with God is in preparation for the hour when all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. These things shall be! A loftier race

Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,
The flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of knowledge in their eyes.
Nation with nation, land with land,

Unarmed shall live as comrades free.
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.
There shall be no more sin, no shame,
And wrath and wrong shall fettered lie;
For men shall be at one with
God In bonds of love and charity.

The world before the flood had much in common with our world today. Then as now men were multiplying rapidly on the face of the earth. The sons of God with reckless and imprudent abandon were marrying the daughters of men and from their corrupt and sordid union monstrous giants, hateful and cruel, came forth as men of renown. They were "marrying and giving in marriage" just as we see it today. The biblical phrase, marrying and giving in marriage, does not imply the simple marriage union. These perverted people, the sons of Belial, were practicing every wickedness prevalent in the world today. They were marrying, divorcing, re-marrying, and swapping wives and husbands. They worshipped the god of sex in all its perverted forms, Men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another, and the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. So filthy in our day also has the worship of the god of sex become that even the carnally minded feel revulsion at the mention of the word. The world then even as now was filled with endless "forms of godliness", but they denied the power of it; for then as now they "loved pleasure" far more than they loved God. With concise and all inclusive clarity the divine record states: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." See Gen. 6. Would it be possible for any man to paint a more accurate picture of the world in our day? Is not this exactly as Paul by inspiration described the latter days in 2 Tim. 3:1-6? Oh, that we might remember the Master's words: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man."

Dissolute, immoral, and corrupt as the world had become, God had reserved Himself one man who was just and perfect in his generation of whom it is written: "Noah walked with God." **Gen. 6:9**. Shall we who were chosen of God to live in the closing hours of this age, an hour of which the days of Noah were but a type, imagine for even a moment that the Spirit of God has failed to reserve a people who "walk with Him"? Such a thing could never be. It would be unlike God in all He is and does. Even the ages themselves record that the Lord never leaves Himself without a people for His name. When all the world was given over to idol worship in the days of Abraham, did the Lord leave Himself without a witness? No, He did not; for the Lord had said to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." **Gen. 12:1**. Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham dwelt, was down in the land where the tower of Babel was built. In all probability Abraham saw with his eyes the building of the tower and heard with his ears the confusion of tongues that is typical of Babylon unto this day. But far above the din of Babel's voices Abraham, the "friend of God", was hearing the sweet harmony of heaven. 2 Chron. 20:7; James 2:23.

In these the closing days of the age of grace, when the Babylon system has risen to such dizzying heights, embracing in its octopus-like arms with ever increasing firmness all the religious and political systems of earth, the Spirit of God is separating unto Himself a people who walk with Him, a people who are as separated and apart as Daniel or Abraham, a people who are in truth and verity friends of God and brothers of Jesus Christ. Let there be no mistake in the minds of those who read lest Satan should beguile you to believe that there is a place for you, a member of Christ's body, among the religious systems of our day. The Spirit of God is speaking to the friends of God as He did to Abraham, saying, "Get thee out!" "Get thee out of thy country!" Get thee out from among thy kindred!" "Get thee out from thy father's house!" Get thee out of the denominations! Get thee out of the sects! Get thee out of the little groups! Get thee out of the groups with a name! Get thee out of the groups without a name! Come out of her, my people! Come out from among them and be separate and walk with Me to the realm that I will show thee.

As we walk the paths of meditation to consider the lives of these men who have become a cloud of witnesses, there is one outstanding fact that illumines the heart like a flash of lightning. It is this: Enoch, who walked with God, walked outside the groups and systems of his day. Noah, who alone was just and righteous in his generation, was not involved with any of the systems about him. Abraham, the friend of God, was told to "get

out" from among relations, friends, countrymen and country. Jacob was Jacob only when he walked like other men, but when he met with God, his name was changed to Israel, and he was called "a prince with God". It was when he met with God that his flesh shrank and he halted upon his thigh. Then all men everywhere knew Israel by the way he walked. And Moses in like manner fled in terror from Egypt, leaving forever its systems and teachings, that he might know God face to face as no man before had known him. Of David it is written that he was a man "after God's own heart". But so much without the camp and outside the systems did he dwell that in the dispensation of law, when sacrifice and offerings were the order of the day, he lifted his heart to God, saying, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it." **Psa. 51:16**. Should we therefore think it strange that in our day God should call the members of His holy temple to walk with Christ and dwell with Him outside the camp of religious systems? Is it peculiar that to the friends of God it should be said, "Get thee out?" Can we who reverently dote upon the words of Paul fail to hear him say, "Therefore let us go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (**Heb. 13:11**), since we have no continuing city here, but journey to one which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?

There is a beautiful picture in the New Testament, an image to be seen by the spirit much as the trained and talented sculpturer sees the image of a man in the uncarved rock. From the chaos of the uncarved rock of a universe without form and void, without God and without hope, the eternal Architect and Sculpturer has envisioned a perfection that none but Himself could produce. In the uncarved mass of humankind His eye has seen the likeness of untold millions of sons in His image standing upon the elysian fields of redemption to govern the entire universe in righteousness. No more forever will the words "without form and void" be spoken, but to the far flung corners of the universe shall the message be heard: "He created it not in vain." Nor shall it be said again that darkness was upon the face of the deep, for the Lord almighty is the light thereof.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. In that blessed verse the world and the whosoever are in great prominence. Far out on the horizons of humanity God loves the people who know nothing of Him. His salvation encompasses the masses and hordes of human kind who never once knew that God ever had a Son or that He came as the Redeemer of all mankind to purchase and possess in Christ all that was lost in Adam. So great was the redemption of Christ that God does now proclaim from the very gates of Paradise, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." **1 Cor. 15: 22**. Well do we know that the world is full of sinful men, and that evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, but do not write them off forever as Satan's eternal captives, for "they know not what they do". There is a day coming after God has prepared His chosen sons when they who sit in darkness will see a great light, and life will come to men whose abode has been the valley of the shadow of death. So marvelous is God's grace and power that I am sure, had He shined His glory light into the darkened heart of Pharaoh or of Adolph Hitler as He shone it into the darkened heart of Saul of Tarsus, the result would have been the same with them as with him. Hitler was bent on murdering Jews.

In his darkened mind burned the wicked objective called by him the "final solution". He would kill and destroy them all. Was not Saul of Tarsus possessed with the same paranoic dementia against the Christians? Did his mind not burn with the hope of a bloody "final solution"? So then, you see, it is "not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

As the glory of the light of revelation shone into the heart of Isaiah the prophet, from his inspired lips these words of truth poured forth as water from the fountain of life: "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run into thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee." **Isa. 55: 5**. "And He shall judge among the people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." **Micah 4: 3**.

While men grope in darkness and preachers without a breath of inspiration in their barren souls proclaim the eternal loss of ninety-nine percent of all mankind to sin and the devil, God the Father, who saw a world of unborn men die in Adam, proclaimed with rejoicing a world of men made alive in Jesus Christ our Lord. As I have listened to preachers by the score striving desperately and even frantically to get men to repent and be saved, my heart is often filled with sadness because the message they preach is made weak and futile by their failure to grasp the infinite purposes of that omniscient mind who laid His plans in Christ before ever there was

a world or a sinner in it. All through the ages with clock-like precision everything is coming to pass as He purposed and in the very hour He purposed it. Many times in my life men and women have asked me this question: "Do you believe in a second chance?" My answer to them is simply this: "No, I do not believe in a second chance, and neither do I believe in a first chance." The one omniscient mind of the universe leaves none of His eternal purposes to chance. It was not by chance that you heard the truth nor was it chance that you were saved. What seemed chance to you was in reality the invisible working of the purpose of the omniscient and omnipotent God.

There were always those in the life of Jesus who were intimately nearer to Him than that great restless world of unheeding mankind. There was a crowd of about five hundred who followed Him as much and as often as they could. They had come to a closer relationship with Him than the multitudes who found the zenith of their ambition in loaves and fishes. No doubt many like Nicodemus were secret disciples. They followed afar off, yet they believed and knew in their hearts that He was the Christ. Many of these were no doubt among the five hundred brethren to whom He appeared after His resurrection and who stood and watched Him ascend to heaven from the mount of Olives. Of this same number came the one hundred and twenty disciples who tarried in the upper room until the promised Holy Spirit fell upon them on the day of Pentecost, instantly transforming their lives by a baptism of such tremendous power that never again did it appear that flesh was to have any hold upon them.

Besides these there was another group of seventy men appointed and chosen of the Lord, men of whom it is said that their names were written in heaven. Luke 10: 20. It is true that other men, numbered perhaps in thousands, were His disciples, some following near and some afar off, but these men were more than disciples. They had been especially chosen and to them was given the divine commission to carry the kingdom message into all the towns and villages into which Jesus Himself would afterward come. They were to tell the people of the nearness of the kingdom of God. They were to walk as lambs among wolves, carrying neither purse nor scrip nor shoes, and saluting no man by the way. Into whatsoever house they entered there they were to remain, eating and drinking what things were set before them until their ministry was completed. They were to heal their sick and pronounce peace upon the household in return for the hospitality given them, but whenever a city refused to receive them, the very dust of that town was to be shaken from their feet as a witness against it. Cf. **Luke 10: 1-12.** And when with rejoicing the seventy returned, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name", He said, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you, but that your names are written in heaven." "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." **Luke 10: 21.**

In all the realm of human frailty and failure there is nothing more evident or more destructive than our tendency to revel and rejoice in the things we have accomplished. "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name," they proclaimed in their boundless exuberance. No doubt they were thrilled by the size of the audience that had listened to them. Delighted beyond words were they to see the multitudes of people healed and perhaps a little exalted because of their success and their influence upon the people. Words failed to describe their feelings of triumph as demons, crying with loud voices, departed from those tormented by them.

How prone is the natural man to rejoice in the things that are evident to the eye! During the lifetime of many of us have not our hearts been saddened time and again as we have heard the boasting of men concerning their supposed accomplishments, or beheld the high-sounding advertisements that appear in the local newspapers or on the handbills handed to the passerby, or displayed in windows and prominent places! They boast of the crowds, of the converts, and of the healings. They exalt the preacher and display his college degrees, often falsely. I have known preachers who advertise their prowess as swimmers and athletes and display their awards for things they have done. They advertise their careers as criminals, gamblers, singers, and movie stars. When, oh when, will men learn that the "flesh profiteth nothing?" When will they learn as Paul learned, "What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ?" All such gain he considered on the level of common dung.

Full well did Jesus know that success even in the spiritual realm was nothing that should occasion either boastfulness or pride. Perhaps, if other men have reason to glory in what seem to be accomplishments, I, too,

would have some reason for boasting. But forty years of experience and silent observation have taught me the fiery lesson that he who foolishly puts his confidence in men or crowds or visible results will be bitterly disappointed. He will learn before long that crowds are fickle and their acclaim as changeable as the wind. Crowds are as fickle today as they were during the earthly ministry of Jesus. They shout their hosannas to the Son of David as they wave their palm branches and spread their garments as a carpet for His feet, jubilantly anticipating an earthly kingdom; but in the hour of His greatest trial they shout, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We will not have this man to reign over us." How often I have seen the jubilant multitudes as in one hour of victory they were almost ready to worship a man, but the next week they are spreading evil reports, sowing discord, and rejoicing in the lies, which increased in their absurd intensity as they passed from mouth to mouth. Levi Petrus, of Stockholm, Sweden, once pastor of the largest congregation of Christians on earth, told me that he had been accused of every sin in the book except murder. But that is people! They are the same fickle, vacillating throng in every generation, blessing in triumph and good adventure and cursing in adversity and misadventure.

When Jesus, therefore, heard them rejoicing over the success of their ministry, He told them of a much more wonderful thing. He, too, had seen an event more far-reaching than any of the things in which they rejoiced. **"I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven!" Luke 10:18.** "Nevertheless, rejoice not that the demons are subject to you, but rather that your names are written in heaven." It is our relationship with God that must be our fulfilling cause for rejoicing. It is this that our heavenly Father is longing to see. This is perfume in His nostrils. The children of God have walked in blindness as to the true purpose of their lives here on earth. The corrupting tradition of a harlot Church system has taught them to believe that the important thing in this brief life is to be "up and doing for God", wearing their fingers to the bone, becoming nervous wrecks, and wearing themselves out for God. "Wear out, not rust out," they say. The general thought seems to be that the house is on fire - God's house at that - and except we race and tear and scramble and snatch the people from the burning wreckage, everything and everybody will fall into the devil's embrace and hell from beneath will devour it all. As long as we see God's will and purpose to be such a hubbub of frustration and disorder as that, we will never become acquainted with the eternal God of the universe whose knowledge is omniscient, whose will is immutable, whose power is omnipotent, whose wisdom is inscrutable, whose love is fathomless, whose time is eternal, whose kindness has appeared to all men.

As farm boys enjoying the delights of our boundless prairie heritage, we never failed to be intrigued with the ant hills, those tiny insect communities that bulged up and appeared here and there over the countryside. We would gaze with pleasure at these little creatures as they swarmed about intent on their insect tasks, doing things we could not understand, lugging loads three times the size of their tiny bodies, transporting their eggs from one place to another, and doing a hundred other things that only an ant could understand. But, if we tossed a pebble among them, then the orderly peaceful routine of life ended at once. They would race frantically, helter-skelter in all directions and as far as one could see all purpose, order, and plan had vanished from their presence and confusion reigned supreme. Their little insect community became a picture of modern Christendom with all its confusion and turmoil, its rushing hither and yon to make converts, its compassing land and sea to make proselytes in the vain imagination that anything being done for God is bound to be blessed of Him. But this is a great mistake and a very evil disease that has blinded the minds of men so that they see darkly, not comprehending the eternal purposes of God.

There is a vital lesson important above all else that men should learn as they walk with God. First and foremost they should learn that, when their relationship with God is right, they need to have no worry about their ministry. It will take care of itself. The man who walks with God will be directed by His guiding hand into the very task God has ordained should be accomplished by him. The man in whose heart dwells the spirit of sonship reverently repeats, "Abba, Father", and he, walking in the knowledge and blessing of sonship, walks in the knowledge that God leads His sons. You are not responsible to the people. You are not duty bound to meet their demands. The only responsibility you have and the only responsibility I have is to do the will of our Father which is in heaven. There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but to none of them was he sent save to a woman of Sarepta. And there were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha, but none was healed saving Naaman the Syrian.

Oh, that men would see first and foremost how great is the importance of their personal relationship with the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. This and this alone is the keynote of true success. **"Blessed is everyone**

that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways... Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee," **Psa. 128:1,2**. Those who read the word of God should take heed to its precepts also. Did not God promise Abraham that his seed should be as innumerable as the stars of heaven and the sands by the sea for multitude? Did Abraham ever have the joy and satisfaction of seeing that promise fulfilled in his day? No, indeed, he did not. Through the dreary tiresome years of waiting he saw one son of promise and probably his grandson, Jacob. Surely at times his heavy spirit must have wondered if he had somewhere failed his God; but God had not said that he should look at evidences as no doubt, like other men, he was prone to do. When he was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai); walk before me, and be thou perfect." **Gen. 17:1**.

It may come as a great and blessed surprise to learn that it is much easier to please God than to please man. Whoever heard of any one who was able to walk before men and be perfect? Even Jesus Christ was not able to do that. As for me, I never bother trying. But before God we can walk and be perfect. The man who measures himself by himself or compares himself with other people will pass his life in the turmoil of continual disappointment, but the man who walks before God, seeking only to love Him and please the Father, will in turn receive His favor, being a beloved son in whom the Father is well pleased. To love God and obey Him is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15:22, because "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." **1 John 4:18**. Fear comes when we measure ourselves with men and walk before them. Love comes by walking before God and seeing ourselves in Christ. Rejoice not, therefore, that the devils are subject to you nor be moved by success or failure, be it little or much, but rejoice rather that your name is written in heaven and is familiar to the Father of us all.

There was, however, yet another group, a group of twelve men who were specially ordained to spend their time with the Lord Himself, seeing, hearing, and understanding secret things often hidden from all others. Many were the conversations Jesus had with these men. Many were the instructions and precepts He gave them. Full well the Saviour knew that upon their shoulders would fall the weight of the coming dispensation, for their ministry would form the foundation upon which would rise the superstructure of the true church. Their writings, their acts, and their sayings would be a shining light of inspiration for the whole age of the kingdom of heaven. These apostles were with Him on every special occasion. When important instruction was given, they heard it. When promises were made, they were the ones who heard and believed them. Of them it was written that men took notice of them because they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13.

I have never been able to give a satisfactory explanation as to why divine wisdom chose one among the twelve whom He knew beforehand to be a traitor. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He asked. Perhaps in this age we will never fully understand why Judas, the son of the devout Simon, should be a traitor, but one thought is most worthy of our consideration. It is this: A man's relationship to Christ can never be judged by the miracles he performs nor by the apparent devotion of his preaching or teaching. Judas, like Peter or John, was among the miracle workers and rejoiced with the rest for the signs and wonders that had been wrought. Our relationship to Christ can never be judged by the works we do or by the company to which we belong. It reaches far, far beyond that. It is extremely difficult to find men who keep their own interests completely out of the picture and harder still to find men who have no interests of their own. Times without number we make the pitiful discovery that the smooth and oily words of seeming devotion, "should not this ointment have been sold and the proceeds given for the poor", (cf. John 12:5), are in fact the words of a clever thief who slyly slips his sticky fingers into the purse. I have often said it before and will repeat it here. Never trust a man who has big plans for your money. The longer I walk with God the more thoroughly I am convinced that the Lord Himself will provide for every program that is born of Him and He will stand by those who trust in Him. What impertinence it is for men to boast of mountain moving faith while they stand before audiences begging for money to carry out their projects! That is not faith at all. There is neither jot nor tittle of faith in such a program. Such fraudulent knavery is no more faith when found in the pulpit than it is faith when it is found in the ragged mendicant on the street who extends his grimy hand to receive our pittance. The only true difference is that one man is polished while the other is grubby and what the beggar calls "bumming" the other calls "faith".

Never put your confidence in man regardless of who that man may be, no, not even if that man is yourself. The apostle Paul once said that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead. I have no good

reason to have more confidence in myself than in another. The eleven apostles were shaken by the knowledge that one among them could be a traitor, and each in turn questioned, "Lord, is it I?" **Matt. 26:22**. Let not your heart be troubled over any of these things. "Ye believe in God; believe also in Me" is the divine exhortation.

Close, indeed, were the twelve to Jesus and great was the trust He bestowed upon them. Yet it is clearly evident that there was a group even among the twelve who abode closer to the heart of Christ than the others. These were Peter, who after the bitter lesson of his denial was renamed Cephas, which means a stone, and the brothers James and John, whom Jesus called Boanerges, which by interpretation means "the sons of thunder." Perhaps we cannot fully explain why this inner circle of three was closer to Him than the others, but, knowing that the Lord looks not on outward appearance but upon the heart, we may be sure it was the man within He loved and not the frailties that appeared on the surface. Why did God say, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau had I hated"? The answer does not lie in the outward appearance, but in the heart. To the outward appearance it would seem that Esau was a more likable man than Jacob. The neighbors did not think of him as a stingy crook, a cheat, or a supplanter as they may have thought of Jacob. The question finds its answer, not in outward appearance, but in the knowledge of where their interests truly lie. To Esau the promises of God, the gifts and the birthright were worth less than a hearty meal of pottage for the physical man, but to Jacob the birthright was the only thing of value. He was willing to risk both life and limb to attain it and this in his human ignorance he did. So, while the other nine disciples vainly struggled with the demon at the foot of the mountain, these three men stood with Jesus in the glory realm. **Matt. 17:1-16**. When Jesus went to raise the dead girl to life, He took with Him Peter, James, and John. **Mark 5:37**. Even in the garden of Gethsemane it was Peter and James and John whom He took a little farther than the rest. **Matt. 26:37**.

We cannot, however, close this thought until we have noted that even among the three there was one still closer than the other two. As John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, laid his head upon Christ's shoulder at supper, Jesus whispered a secret to him that was not heard by anyone else at the table. "He it is to whom I shall give this sop when I have dipped it". **John 13:23-26**. And when all the disciples forsook Him and fled, the disciple whom Jesus loved was standing in Pilate's hall of judgment with the Christ, who was more than life to him. **John 18:15**. He was there among the little group who stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus died; and unto John Jesus committed the care of Mary, His now widowed mother, with these words: "Woman, behold thy son!" And to John, "Behold thy mother!" **John 19:26, 27**.

You may have wondered why John in his epistles declares truths hard to understand. For instance, he says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." **1 John 1:8**. Then in vivid contrast he writes, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." **1 John 3:6**. The secret is that John was not writing or speaking from the outer court of Christian experience nor yet from the holy place, but John in experience dwelt with Christ in the holy of holies. In one sentence he describes the condition of Christians who dwell in a spiritual outer court where, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and in the next sentence he describes the blessed state of those who abide in Him and sin not. It is no great wonder that Jesus said of him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This was the special word concerning this beloved man who had learned to dwell in God. **John 21:22**. Need we marvel that it was John who was chosen to behold and relate the intrinsic glories laid down for our learning in the book of Revelation?

It is clearly evident that among the disciples of the Lord there were wheels within wheels and circles within circles that separated those who dwelt in the outer court of experience from those in the holy place, and these in turn from those who dwelt with Him in the holy of holies. The vast multitude followed Him because they saw miracles or because they ate of the loaves and fishes, enjoying the temporary satisfaction of a "mess of pottage" as Esau. From the multitude came forth the five hundred who followed much closer, hearing His words, seeking His works, and believing His promises. From their midst the seventy were sent forth and the twelve who continued with Him; and from the twelve came forth the three and from the three the one. It is your relationship in the love of Christ that makes all the difference. Your participation in Him and your identification with Him is the glory of which Christ spoke when He said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." **John 17:22**. Religious denominations are but chaff that the wind driveth away. Sects and groups are naught but dust and ashes. What things were formerly gain to us now are counted loss for Christ that we might be found in Him.

The fact that men stand in various relationships to God is not only seen by the examples we have given but is a truth clearly taught by the apostles and by the Lord Himself. Paul describes a time when we were "enemies of God", when we were "hateful and hating one another", but exults in the blessed assurance that we were made nigh by the blood of Christ. There was a time when Jesus looked upon His disciples as servants, but saw their relationship advance beyond the somewhat austere relationship of servants to the warmth and comradeship of friends. "Henceforth I call you not servants," He said, "for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." **John 15:15**. It is blessed to be called a servant of Christ and twice blessed is he who, as Abraham, is called His friend! Yet it is with reverence and holy awe that we read that our Lord after His resurrection no longer referred to His disciples as servants or as friends, but, being raised to life and immortality, He commanded, "Go to My brethren, and say, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." **John 20:17**. See also Matt. 28:10.

Since, then, His Father is our Father and His God is our God, now are we as brothers to Him and sons of God. To the inspired writers of the New Testament the inspiration was given to emphasize the excellent worth of our sonship in Him. The sonship company has been in the process of gestation during the entire dispensation of grace. Jesus Christ, the head and firstborn, was first to appear and, since that blessed day of manifestation, the other sons of the same body have been in the process of formation. The shoulders, the arms, the belly, the legs, and now finally the beautiful feet ready for the washing are coming forth from the virgin womb. The picture is almost complete and one like unto the Son of man is rising to stand among the candlesticks. His head and His hair are white like wool, His eyes as a flame of fire. His breast is girt about with a golden girdle. His feet are as brass in a white, hot furnace. His voice is as the voice of a multitude, even a multitude of sons. The visage of the glory of His countenance is as the sun shining in his strength, and out of His mouth goes the sharp two-edged sword of truth to smite all nations with conviction and repentance, for the sword is the word of God.

King Solomon, his heart bathed in inspiration, beheld the day when the bride of Christ would be complete. In his prophetic and beautifully poetic pronouncement this scene appears: "There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." **Songs of Sol. 6:8, 9**. Here again circles within circles appear — virgins without number, women not married; fourscore concubines, women married, but not wives in the truest sense; sixty queens, all wives of the king; and then the final beloved one. My beloved, My Shulamite, is but one.

O, Thou whom my soul loveth, show me where Thou feedest Thy flock that I may be Thy brother and with Thee a son of God, and Thou mightest be the first-born of many brethren and the oldest in a vast family of sons!

CHAPTER FIVE FAITH AND PATIENCE

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (**Heb. 6:12**.) Faith and Patience! What wonderful words these are! I wonder how many of God's dear children know that faith and patience walk hand in hand. Has it not been the thought in the minds of most of us that if one has faith he will not need to wait for anything? He will be able to touch some magic stream of blessing that will immediately bring to pass the thing he desired. He will not have to wait or be patient but triumphantly carry away the answer to his prayer. If God answers prayer immediately, then let His name be praised. If on the other hand years should go by and death should come while the promise is still afar off, know this: His promise is still certain and His word is sure.

As you walk through life with God, the passing years change many things. The song writer said, "Change and decay in all around I see." Men change, customs change, ways of doing things change. That which was new yesterday is withered and old today. Boys of yesteryear are the men of today and the ancients of tomorrow.

Moths corrupt the garments and rust eats the things of iron. Thieves break in and steal the priceless gems. Time withers with age even the stoutest things and makes of the mighty Hercules a tottering old man.

The change in all we see is decadent. The strong become weak, the mighty fall, the great things decay and return to dust. That is because the things that are seen are temporal. There are some things, however, which do not change from strong to weak and from beauty to ashes. They grow from weak to strong and from nothingness to omnipotence. These are the things that are not seen. They are the eternal things. God does not change but all that He is and does grows greater. His love does not decrease and become imperfect. It increases until that which was great yesterday is beyond compare tomorrow. His patience and longsuffering do not decrease and finally run out, but they grow greater and shine brighter through thousands of years of trial in bearing the reproaches of the ungodly. The man who sees God as an Almighty being who some day will run out of patience and in raging passion send His wrath upon a disobedient creation does not understand God nor His purpose in permitting a sinful creation to exist. Perhaps we have forgotten that all things were made by Him and for Him, that all things are for His glory and bring glory to Him. God is adding to His power, increasing His love, extending His patience, and perfecting further His longsuffering. Our puny idea of perfection is a cut and dried affair to which nothing can be added. Such a thing is static and dead. God's idea of perfection is manifest in His creation. The baby boy is admired by all as a "perfect child", but the perfect child of today learns to talk a year from now. He grows in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man.

Thus it is that God increases our faith through patience. At first what faith you had was void of patience. It wanted to see creation leap in response to its impatient demands. The sick must be healed right now. The world must be converted right now. We must get rid of carnality and become perfect now, of course; but as years went by and things continued much as they were before we tried to set the world on fire, we began very slowly to see that God is not enthused about impatient faith; we came to see that faith and patience are inseparable and methinks someday we will see that patience is faith. We have heard a great deal about faith, much of it springing from the desire of the carnal mind. Little indeed have we heard of patience without which there can be no real and lasting faith.

I am deeply impressed with the words of Jesus Christ as found in **Luke 8:15**. The Master was telling them of the sower and the seed and upon explaining the parable to them ended thus: **"But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."** What was it that caused the seed, which fell on stony ground and among the thorns to fail to bring forth a harvest? Was it just a lack of faith? No, I do not think so. There must have been some faith, otherwise they would never have started. They would have been like the seed, which fell by the roadside. It would have been carried away without taking root at all. No, the trouble was not with faith entirely. The difficulty was there was no patience and consequently no endurance.

Harvests do not come without patience and waiting. Vainly we have tried to squeeze God into our mold of haste and hurry. We have cried, wept, and teased like spoiled children in an endeavor to get our way and hurry God in His program. We have demanded of God and tried to command Him. We have quoted scriptures to try to bolster our position but all in vain. To learn faith in patience is much more important than for us to have our own way about things.

In **Heb. 10: 35-37** the apostle wrote, **"Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while and He that shall come will come and will not tarry."**

It is never difficult to find a multitude of folk who will eagerly embrace new revelation and truth. They will carry the palm branches and shout Hosanna in chorus with the multitude. They will thrill to the revelation and proclaim their undying consecration from the house tops. "I'm going through" will be the theme of their song. Enthusiasm knows no bounds as they proclaim the wonders of the message to their friends. One would think surely there never would be a declension in such unfaltering devotion. But wait a little while. Let a few days drift into weeks. Let weeks enlarge themselves into months and months embrace years. The glow has gone from their testimony. No more is their voice lifted up on high. The enthusiasm is dissolved. We search for them among the depleted ranks of the faithful and they are not found. They have returned as a dog to his vomit and

a sow to her wallowing in the mire. What has happened? Time has leveled them. Their patience has given way to disgust and despair. Because they could not hurry God or speed His promise, they lost all confidence and faith in it and returned again to feed on husks never more to hear His voice or have their eyes enlightened to His unfolding truth.

God is not interested in a vast multitude of people. He knows how impatient we all are. Well does He know that a few months of waiting for the promise will eliminate the vast majority of those who started on the journey, and a few years will wear out the patience of all but a few faithful pilgrims who have cast their anchors within the veil. The joy and anticipation of the prize lends them strength and fortitude. Nightly they pitch their moving tent a day's march nearer home as they rise on the stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things.

There are many wonderful truths to embrace, endless revelation to inspire and thrill the heart of man, but he will never enter into any of it without patience even to wait till the shadows lengthen on life's day. He may as well return to his husks now, for he will never receive the promise. Should the bloom fade from youth and the strength of manhood weaken till tired old hands are lifted upward to His own, yea, should life's silver thread break and love's eternal ray guide him to his everlasting home, still the promise is true for, when God awakens those who sleep in Him, he will walk in life's eternal reality.

The promises of God are vast and varied. Some of them are free and can be attained very easily. That is why so many people receive them. But if we would be sons of God and receive the life that raised Jesus from the dead, if we would learn the authority and government of God in preparation to take the kingdom and reign with Christ, then that is a different thing altogether. We must become followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God.

If we are going to be sons of God, it is not enough to have a saved soul. We must have a saved body as well. The final redemption of the body brings us to full sonship. If you read Rom. 8:18-23, you will see how true this is. I would like to quote it here as recorded in Phillip's translation. (Romans 8:18-23) "In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared to the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tip-toe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind but because God's purpose has been so limited. Yet it has been given hope and the hope is that in the end the whole creation will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay and have its share in the magnificent liberty that can only belong to the children of God. It is plain for anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension while we wait for that redemption of our bodies, which will mean that at last we have realized full sonship in Him." Now is that not a wonderful thing? The life we now seek is the redemption of our bodies and that means "full sonship". Let us quote the rest of the passage now and see where patience comes in. "We are saved by hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down and wait for it in patience".

Hope means "waiting for something we have not received." We know for sure that we will receive it, but we have not yet received it. That is why the scripture says, "We are saved by hope." but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we do not see, then we with patience wait for it. Hope and patience then go hand in hand.

I am writing these things because it is easy for some, if not all of us, to begin to run well but be hindered because we find the promise of God to be much further away than we had thought at first. Consequently patience runs out and men lose heart because the journey is long and the climb is very steep.

I still have vivid recollections of climbing a mountain at Banff, Alberta. The mountain towered seven thousand feet into the sky. A rough foot path zigzagged its way through rocks and streams and trees to its summit. We were all anxious for the climb and set out with eager anticipation. Many others set out ahead of us and were well up the mountain before we started. The first half hour or so of the climb was easy, but as time wore on it became more difficult. The mountain seemed to be steeper. Limbs began to ache and as the air became thinner with height, breathing became more difficult. In all the climb it was never possible to see the summit.

We felt sure that every bend in the path would be the final one. Surely we must be near the top. It could not be much farther now, but we were unpleasantly surprised to find a sign telling us we had now reached the half way mark. That was discouraging and, being tired, it would have seemed well to return. We did not, however, and plodded on, quenching our thirst at mountain streams, sitting down to rest and enjoy the view from the height we had gained.

It was not long before we began to meet people coming back. We enquired of them about the climb but their answers were all adverse. Had they reached the top? Most of them answered, no. As we came within a thousand feet of the pinnacle, I well remember the path was not well beaten. Not too many feet had walked upon it till at one spot we lost it altogether. Finally we came to journey's end to feast our eyes on scenes far and wide. Mountains, which had seemed huge from the valley below now appeared as little hills. Stretching far and wide in all directions were peaks innumerable, many of which had never felt the tread of human feet. There was one sobering thought, however. Though we had climbed so high and were thrilled with the glory of things about us, we discovered there were mountain peaks all about us much higher than where we now stood. Some were three and four thousand feet above our level. Between us and them lay vast valleys, steep descents and precipitous climbs. There are always peaks beyond our highest attainments. To reach them we must descend in consecration and prayer. Our channels must be unstopped by fasting and weights must be cast off with the sins which easily beset us.

It takes patience to reach the summit. It takes endurance, too. No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven.

We do not attain sonship by a single bound. Neither do we enter into that life which is the redemption of our bodies in a moment of time. Ye have need of patience. We must through faith and patience inherit the promise. Did you know that God, our heavenly Father, is called "the God of patience?" Rom. 15: 5. Is that not a wonderful thing? But the passage does not end there for it says, "The God of all patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded". May we truly be like Him.

Since God is a God of patience, it is impossible to imagine that He would require something less in those who are becoming His sons. If all those who read these lines and rejoice in these truths would but quietly meditate upon the infinite goodness of God in that He has called us to share with Him His eternal purposes, then we would gladly bow our necks to His yoke and willingly spend a whole life-time if by so doing the patience of God could be wrought in our own souls. But what has become of the patience and faith of the saints? What has happened to the people of God who embrace with assurance the eternal promises of the word of God, only to lose their grip upon those promises and cast them recklessly away because they do not see them immediately fulfilled? Their faith may have been very good to start with, but there was need of patience that after they had patiently endured they might receive the promise.

How often our hearts have thrilled as we have read the wonderful accounts of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews! As we read those thrilling stories, our hearts always leap in anticipation of the possibilities of faith. "Oh," we sigh, "if only we had the faith of Moses, or Abraham, or Elijah, or could we like the three Hebrews walk unscathed in the fiery furnace, or could we like Daniel stand unharmed in the den of lions!" And on and on we go, foolishly imagining in our minds that these people were in some way created different from ourselves, that they were given a kind of head start and were not subject to the handicaps that blight our progress. But this is really not so. These men and women of whom the Spirit speaks in such glowing terms were men and women of like passions as we are. They were not different from you or me. The only difference was that they took the matter of their calling more seriously than most of us do, and much more seriously than the rank and file of people in their own day, who as a majority walked as we walk. If we settle down to patiently follow the promises God has made to His elect and chosen, we, too, will attain the inheritance even as they.

It would seem that one of the most outstanding and shining examples of faith the world has ever known was that patient, slow-going pilgrim, Abraham. He was not a prophet, nor a priest, nor a worker of miracles. He was a cattle man. We would have called him a rancher. When God called him to "come out", he came out, not knowing where to go, but "looking for a city that had foundations whose builder and maker was God." He could not see the city with his natural eyes. He could see it only by faith with the eyes of his spirit. God had promised him that every place whereon the sole of his foot should tread would be his, but it never came to pass during

his life time. Surely there must have been moments when he wondered about the promises of God. Had he mistaken the voice of God? Or had he failed along the way somewhere? If these promises were true, why was he destitute of both houses and lands and forever dwelling in tents and among strangers.

Then there was the promise that his seed would be as the stars of the heaven and as the sand of the sea for number. What had become of these promises that at one time had quickened his step and made his heart beat wildly with anticipation? Where was the promise of God? Yea, where was God, who seemed at times to hide His face from him and cause the promise to mock him? He walked through the shadow of temptation just as you or I so often do. He knew what it was to wonder. He knew the disappointment of having days lengthen into years, years into decades, and decades into a century with still no sign of the fulfillment of the promise. He knew what it was to have men jest about his name, Abraham, which meant father of a multitude, but none of these things moved him. They may have discouraged him at times. They may have made him wonder; but there was that ever present urge of faith within that kept him plodding along in the direction God had shown him.

May I share with you now a little revelation about faith that has been a great blessing to me through life. It is based on one verse of scripture - **Heb. 1: 13**. This is what it says: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth." As we read this strange passage of scripture, which seems so contradictory to our past traditions concerning faith, six great elements of faith stand boldly out for all to see, teaching us a lesson, not only of faith, but also of those two great brothers of faith, patience and endurance.

Let us then divide this verse to see these six great elements of faith.

1. These all died in faith.
2. Not having received the promises.
3. But having seen them afar off.
4. And were persuaded of them.
5. And embraced them.
6. And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

We shall not become involved now in a dissertation on this verse, for the lessons it teaches would fill not only this book but many more besides. But it would be a disrespect to the truths contained herein not to briefly mention the gravity of their meaning.

Firstly: Men of faith do not always live long enough on the earth to see their faith fully realized, for these all died in faith. What a blessing it would be to us all if we could but see that the planting of a seed is just as important an act as garnering the harvest, for, while the harvest is much greater than the seed, yet without the seed that fell into the ground and died there would be no harvest at all, but only barren soil. Why do we not look beyond our frail earthly life with its pitiful failures to see the end of our faith in the ages yet to come? Have you not read the words of the prophet who spoke of Jesus Christ the Saviour who died, despised and rejected of men, filled with sorrow and acquainted with grief, and how God the Father looked into the unborn ages and "saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied"! **Isa. 53:11**. When therefore we believe the promise of God, we must count the dead as though they lived and believe that God is not the God of dead men but of living men, even as He said: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. If the promise of God to a man could be lost just because that man should die before he saw its fulfillment, then God would not be worthy to be called faithful and true. Those who receive and believe the promise of God will never be robbed of its attainment though death should walk the path between the promise and the fulfillment. "These all died in faith."

Secondly: "Not having received the promises." Oh, how often we have cruelly rebuked men for their lack of faith just because they were unable to receive a promise the moment we thought they should! Why have we never learned that God is more interested in purifying and building our confidence and trust in Him through patience and longsuffering than He is in giving us a pittance in answer to our begging? The alms we give to the beggar at the gate may be given without hesitation or consideration, but the provision we make for our children is a matter of life long concern. Can we expect less from our heavenly Father, who knows us not as beggars at the gate but as sons and daughters ordained by Him to share His eternal attributes? While we imagine that true faith will always touch some magic spring of blessing that will immediately give us the promise, the Holy Spirit is teaching us that faith is still faith and always abides the same though all should die, not having received the promise.

Thirdly: "Having seen them afar off." The spiritual eye has a good tendency to be far-sighted. It has that wonderful, strange, divine quality of being able to see things that are afar off and, better still, things that are invisible. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Heb. 11:27. Abraham looked for a city, which his natural eye could not behold. He knew it was there for he could see it afar off in his spirit. Therefore his whole life was devoted to pressing toward it and it shall be his reward eternally.

It is right here that so many of us fail. We catch a glimpse of the transcending wonder of the promise of God and we set out joyfully to reach the goal. But the hills and valleys that lie before us hide the promise from our eyes. The drifting snows have buried our path and caused our feet to stumble, while the burning desert sands choked us with thirst and prepared our tomb. Earthborn clouds ever rise to hide the promise from our eyes, but it is here as nowhere else that faith walks hand in hand and step in step with patience. While faith has power to believe, patience has power to wait and endure, and we shall through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Have you ever gone through some outstanding experience, which, after it was past, seemed as though it had never really happened? How often we hear folk say, "It just seems like a dream to me," or "I can hardly believe I was ever there," or "I can scarcely believe that it ever happened." We all have experiences like that. Strangely enough we are inclined to be creatures of the present and sometimes of the past, but we are seldom creatures of the future. For this very reason men and women who have seen by faith that which is afar off are inclined to doubt the reality of the promise they saw, as they pass through the wilderness of sin, the fiery furnace, or the lion's den. Those who are far-sighted enough to see that which is afar off will never be darlings of the world, and by the world of religion and tradition they will be regarded as visionaries, mystics, fanatics, and fools. But happy indeed is the man who can see the promise of God though it be very far off.

Fourthly: "They were persuaded of them." It was the apostle Paul who said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded ... 2 Tim. 1:12, but it was King Agrippa who uttered that pitiful though memorable phrase, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." It is one thing to see a thing whether it be near or far off, but it is another thing altogether to be fully persuaded about it. It is those who are only half persuaded that return as dogs to their vomit and as sows to their wallowing in the mire. Bunyan saw in his vision that, as Christian and Pliable journeyed toward the Celestial City, both of them fell into the horrible slough of despond. But he also saw that, though they both struggled out of the slime and the filth, Pliable climbed out the same side he fell in - nearest the City of Destruction - while Christian got out on the opposite side of the slough, nearest to the Celestial City. So, you see, it is not our falling into the slough, into the fire, or anything else that counts. The thing that counts is on which side we climb out. All those who see a promise afar off should be firmly persuaded of it before they start the journey, for only God knows the precipitous climbs and the dismal valleys that lie ahead.

Personally, I am very glad that I did not know all the things that lay ahead when I began this journey years ago. God in wonderful grace hid from my eyes the pitfalls and discouragements that were to bedevil the path that He had prepared for my feet. I knew practically nothing then of my own weaknesses and inherent sin. I did not know that of all the anit-christs I would meet the greatest and fiercest of them all was within me, even that carnal mind which is an eternal enemy of God. I knew nothing of the half-heartedness of many people, nor that treachery, envy, deceit, and betrayal would be found in the hearts of those who walked in company with me to the house of the Lord. Be all these things as they may, but if we are going to gain the prize and lay hold on the pearl of great price which lies at the journey's end, we are going to have to be fully persuaded of the reality of the prize for which we seek.

Are we fully persuaded that God is calling us to sonship? Are we sufficiently persuaded about Zion to earnestly press toward it? Are we sufficiently persuaded about Babylon, the Mother of harlots, to come out of her and be joined to Christ and to Him alone? Are we fully persuaded about the eternal purpose of God? Persuaded enough, I mean, to abandon all else and cling only to that? Oh, how often we meet men and women on the way back. They become impatient about the road that leads to Zion's hill, so back they go to Babylon's tottering tower. They lose patience and can no longer believe that the vision they saw is sure and the promise immutable. They start thinking and reasoning in the natural and human wisdom tells them to forget the promise of God and return, so back they go. Can we not hear the voice of Jesus saying, "He that putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom?" And again, "Remember Lot's wife."

No looking back; just forward to glory,
With joyous hope and glad expectant face
To find, when He unfolds life's finished story,
Wealth, wealth unfading and an honored place.

Let us then be fully persuaded concerning these promises of God, and, being persuaded, let us lay aside every weight and run with patience the race that is set before us.

Fifthly: "They embraced them." To embrace is to enfold in the arms, to clasp and to hug. Ah! What a picture that is! What a sermon in that one word! Is this not truly the way that the elect of God must lay hold on the promise they have seen, to embrace it, to enfold it, and to hug it that none of the jolting experiences of life can tear it from them? "Holdfast that which is good," said Paul. **1 Thess. 5:21.** "We are made partakers of Christ if we hold fast the confidence firm to the end." **Heb. 3:6.** Hold fast the confidence! Holdfast the profession of your faith! Holdfast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown!

We may not think these things are important nor that they apply to us, but they do. It was Esau who held his birthright so loosely that he sold it for a mess of pottage and, though he afterward saw his mistake and sought the blessing earnestly with tears, yet he was rejected. This same mistake is repeated in the lives of Christians every living day. Not that they are not saved, but that they hold the promises that lie before them so loosely that they relinquish them for love of some paltry thing that can become their possession here and now. It was Demas who departed from Paul, having loved this present world. So in his love for the visible he lost sight of the invisible, and in his desire for the passing he lost the permanent. Let us be exhorted then to embrace the promises, for that is an element of faith. Let us lay hold of the vision before us and it shall be our joy and crown eternally.

Finally: "They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth." If this were always our testimony and our attitude, we could save ourselves whole worlds of trouble. Is it not true that our whole attitude in life portrays that we live our lives as though we were going to remain here forever and live on and on as we are? We are so much like the rich man who said, "I will tear down my barns and build greater and there I will bestow all my goods, and I will say to my soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years. Take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." But our attitude should not be the attitude of the citizens of this age. Our attitude should be the attitude of pilgrims who are passing through this fleeting age to the realm of their true citizenship. Visitors to foreign lands seldom invest in things they cannot carry with them, but we who have our citizenship in heaven are forever getting our affections bound up with the earth as though we were citizens of it. This ought not to be.

Though we might pass lightly over this final statement of faith, we may be sure that, before we can ever find the faith and patience that will bring us to the promise, we must have this confession within ourselves - that we are strangers and pilgrims in the earth. Though we may give this testimony to those about us, yet the true testimony is given when we speak the truth inwardly in our own heart. Our declarations before men count for little. God requires truth in the inward parts.

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise." **Heb. 10:35-36.**

While we journey on this pilgrimage to God's great calling of sonship, there are many questions that must go completely unanswered. We must all learn that the effectiveness of the thing God is doing is not necessarily hindered by our lack of perfect understanding. Our faith and trust in God's purposes shine with increasing brilliance because we trust and believe in that which we do not see. But we do see promise with the eye of the spirit and we do hear it with the ear of faith. We believe, because God has said it, it is so and believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Thomas once said, "Except I shall see the prints of the nails in His hands and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." But Christ appeared to him and said, "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing"; and when his wavering faith was strengthened, the Saviour thus reproved him, "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed is he who has not seen and yet has believed."

We are not able to explain, for we do not understand, why the blessed Father has seen such infinite value in the virtue He calls patience, but the value is there and He deems it not wasted time to spend a life-time in its cultivation. We should, therefore, take more earnest heed to it, for there is evidently some wonderful unseen value in patience that brings the believer to a realm of perfection that only God knows and understands. We all have surely read this exhortation: "Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." **Jas. 1:4**. Why not stop reading right here and consider this verse long and earnestly, for it speaks more truth in one brief statement than I can say in many a word. I know of no other spiritual virtue about which such potent words are spoken. The work of patience is perfect and entire. Those who possess it want nothing. It is ordained of God to operate in my life and yours because its work brings the excellence of perfection into our lives. Therefore he says, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect." Paul once said, "Not as though I had attained, either were already perfect..." No doubt his patience was being tried to the very limit, but the very trial he was patiently enduring was that which was hastening his perfection. The Holy Spirit exhorts us all to be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

We are living in an impatient world. Everywhere people are in a desperate rush. Undue pressure caused by hurry and worry of business is causing hearts to fail on every hand. We live in a horn-tooting, light-crashing, speed-breaking impatient age. Bad as this may be, it is even worse to find that the same restless spirit that is in the world has been carried into the realm of religion as well. Everywhere men are trying to hurry God's program. Hurry! Hurry!! Hurry!!! They hurry because the end is near, hurry because this may be the last opportunity, hurry because communism will engulf the world, hurry because of the population explosion, and hurry because of the threat of nuclear war. But we will find eventually that God cannot be hurried. We will have to learn that, long, long before God made the earth, He foreknew all these circumstances that exist today and ordained them as part of His own will and purpose for the time of the end. All those who are in such a desperate haste will find eventually that their efforts have not altered the course of the world at all. The nations of the earth are as rivers of water and God orders their courses as He wills. They are as dust in the balances that He brushes off at His pleasure. He raises them up and puts them down as He pleases. What help will it be for me to try to extinguish a fire that He has kindled or to relight a fire that He has extinguished? I have but one responsibility in life, and that is to listen to His voice and walk according to His eternal purpose.

When we see the haste and impatience of Christians as they drown their lives in religious activity, we would surely think that God had fallen asleep and needed to be awakened or that things had gotten beyond His control and He needed impatient and desperate men to save Him from being overwhelmed. God has no such need. He is seeking only men who see His purpose and walk in faith and patience toward it. It should be clear for all to see that, if patience works perfection, then impatience is bound to have the opposite effect.

Now notice that tribulation worketh patience, patience worketh experience, experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Rom. 5:3-5. Consider well these successive steps that rise like the rungs of a giant ladder from the desolation of tribulation to the glory of that plane where the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Tribulation! Patience! Experience! Hope! Not ashamed! The love of God! Heaven is not reached by a single bound, But we build the ladder by which we rise From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies, And we mount its summit round by round. People bowed down with care and tribulation often write to tell of their sorrow and heartache. My heart goes out to them in sympathy and often we kneel together in prayer and pray for men and women who are feeling the crushing load of trouble and despair. But, though we fervently pray for them, yet so often it is well nigh

impossible to ask God to remove their tribulation, for He who sees the steps that lead to perfection and sonship certainly knows that tribulation worketh patience, patience worketh experience, experience worketh hope and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We dare not and must not hinder God's refining processes, for they are bringing us to perfection and sonship. I asked for life and this is what He gave me; My lot is hard, my tears flow like the rain. I asked for hours gay with sunshine spattered, But lo! my waking hours are filled with pain. How could I know that crushing brings the fragrance Like perfume from some crushed and bleeding rose, That in the process of my better making God used the methods He approved and chose? "Re patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he received the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh ... Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." **Jas. 5:7, 8, 10, 11.**

There are times when despair and hopelessness stalk our pathway like ravening wolves seeking to destroy our hope, but in such times of tribulation we hear the words of promise ringing o'er the tumult of our strife. "Cast not away your confidence which has great recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promises. For yet a little while and He that shall come will come and will not tarry." **Heb. 10: 35-37.** And again He says, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." **Heb. 6:12.**

Since the world began there has never been a more important hour than the one in which we now live. For six thousand years the whole creation has groaned in travail waiting and waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Not only does the creation and every form of created life wait and groan for that glorious hour, but we who are being prepared for sonship also groan and sigh, waiting for that hour of redemption which will mean that at last we have attained full sonship. Everywhere the groaning creation is sending its heart-breaking sighs up to God. Every physical pain is a sigh to God for deliverance. Every drop of blood shed in war is a groan for universal peace and justice. Every typhoon, tornado, or hurricane is nature's cry for deliverance. Every crime committed, every death endured, every starved and famished body, and every broken home is creation's plaintive prayer to the Creator for the manifestation of His sons, for they will deliver the world from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children.

It seems to me that Romans 8:18-28 is the very core and heart of the entire plan and purpose and will of God. Sonship is the theme of that magnificent fiat. The apostle emphatically declares that every created thing is patiently expecting and awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, for this and this alone is their deliverance. Even the sons of God themselves groan within themselves, longing to come to full sonship, and this also is the prayer of the Holy Spirit who helps our infirmities, enabling us to pray according to the will of God. The suffering of this present age is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us; neither is it to be compared with the boundless deliverance that will come to all creation through the sons of God. Oh, that God would open the eyes of His people who have believed on His name that they might leave their hopeless paths of tradition and their human ways of looking at things and begin to fall in step with the eternal purpose that is laid out so beautifully before our eyes. Since so much depends on our entering into the glory of that sonship which He first ordained when He said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion ...," we should therefore strip ourselves of every weight to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

It would not be right to finish this article without a few more words of exhortation. We have heard many wonderful things from the heart of God in the past few months. If you will take time to consider the light and understanding God has given you, you will surely agree that the Lord is opening the eyes of His people to turn them from darkness to light. He is giving them understanding in the things that have been hidden from ages and dispensations. The eternal purposes that have been locked up in His mind and kept secret from the foundation of the world are being gradually unfolded before our wondering eyes, for the time is at hand when all men must see how great and wonderful are the mysteries reserved for the end of this age.

While we remain as children, many things are purposely kept secret from us. It has to be that way. We do not tell our little children about our plans and purposes. We do not trust them with responsibility nor laugh at them

because of their ignorance. So also it is in our relationship with God. While we are children, God deals with us as with children. He patiently waits as we grow to maturity and expects very little of us except obedience. But the hour of maturity and sonship finally comes — the hour He planned from the beginning of the world. When that long-awaited hour comes, God begins to reveal to His sons the things that concern His purpose for the government of the world and the universe in the fullness of time.

The childish traditions of the church have clouded men's minds with darkness and have hung a veil of blindness over their eyes. The things that are really important we cannot see and the things that are not important are magnified to the heavens. I have actually had men tell me that to put emphasis on sonship is selfishness. Instead of emphasizing sonship, they say, we should be up and doing and trying to bring the world to Christ. I really have no argument with any man about such things, but when I read in Romans 8 that the whole creation — man, animals, birds, fish, vegetable life, and even the elements — is groaning in travail for the hour when they will be delivered from their dreadful night of bondage by the sons of God, then how can I or any man be so ignorant and short-sighted as to condemn those who see the purpose of God in sonship and who press toward it with all their strength? Not only is creation groaning for this most important of all events, but the Spirit also helps our infirmity and gives to us that spirit by which we are able to say, "Abba Father." The spirit that cries, "Abba Father," is indeed the spirit of sonship, for who else can cry "Our Father" but he who is a son of God?

Let us then be careful that we do not become as Israel in the wilderness who, finding the way slow and hard, became discouraged and in their hearts turned back again to Egypt. I am absolutely convinced that no man will ever attain to sonship until his faith and patience and endurance have been tried to the very limit. I feel I have the mind of the Lord when I say that God is going to shake everything in heaven and in earth so that all things that can be shaken will be shaken and will fall out and go back that only the people who cannot be shaken may remain. We may have brought the idea with us from the traditions of the past that God will turn Himself inside out to coax us along to sonship, but I cannot see any scripture anywhere to substantiate such a claim. Every evidence is that "if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return." **Heb. 11:15**. It is just the same now as it was then. Those who become weary with the journey and the difficulties of the way will be given opportunity to return to their old orders and their old traditions.

I have long been intrigued with the inspired statement of Paul in **Rom. 8:29, 30**. "Whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He did predestinate them He called, whom He called He justified, and whom He justified He glorified." These are the steps on the stairway to sonship — foreknowledge, predestination, justification, and glorification. But we must give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, for we could turn back at each step. "And giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the age lasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:5-11**.

To try to get the world converted in this age is not the most important thing, for God has reserved to Himself a day when all who sit in darkness shall see a great light and all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. He has ordained a day when no man shall say, "Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, but in this age of grace He is calling out a people for His name." **Acts 15:14-18**. He is completing His body and perfecting His sons in preparation for the government of the world in the ages to come. Let no man deceive you then, for we cannot possibly over-estimate the tremendous importance of reaching forth to maturity and sonship.

Do not worry as to whether or not you seem to be making progress. There is nothing in the world that grows so fast that you can see it grow. Let God be judge of how much or how little you have grown. Your duty and mine is to press relentlessly onward heedless of circumstances or conditions, but pressing patiently toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

When the path ahead is rough,
And the rocks in ridge and bluff
Bar your progress to the distant peaks sublime;
When your strength and heart are breaking,
Take pride in the fight you're making;
Throw your rope around a higher rock and climb!
"Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

CHAPTER SIX THE ABIDING PRESENCE

"The course of bad men leads through darkness dim; they cannot see what makes them stumble. The course of good men, like a ray of dawn, shines on and on to the full light of day." (**Prov. 4:18,19**) (Moffatt). The burning truth that lies hidden in these words of inspiration is borne home to our hearts with ever increasing power as we see the lengthening shadows falling about us as sentinels, heralding the end of the age. It is not without purpose that the Holy Spirit has been directing our thoughts and bending our inmost nature toward a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord — a kinship in Him none but the elect in any age can know. All about us we see the paths of bad men leading them into ever increasing darkness while on the other hand the path of the just, shining more and more with the revealing light of truth, inspires our hearts to sing that gladsome song, "His lightnings enlighten the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." **Psa. 97:4,5.**

God's purpose in leading men out is that He might lead them in. The God and Father of Abraham led him out of Ur of the Chaldees that he might be led into a land that He would show him. Israel was led out of Egypt that the nation might be led into a land flowing with milk and honey. So now in our day! The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, who in ages past led them from Babylon and Egypt, is calling to a people enslaved by traditions and bound by sectarian chains of darkness to leave their prison house of confusion to walk in the presence of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the only true church in the universe, the church of the firstborn, the born again, whose names are emblazoned on the pages of the Book of Life — not with the fading ink from the pens of men, but with eternal Spirit of the living God.

During the short span of our sojourn here on earth thoughtful people, knowing that they must soon depart from this valley of the shadow of death, prepare their last will and testament for the benefit of loved ones who will be obliged to carry on after they are gone. Our last will and testament is not of force, however, until our eyes close in the dreamless sleep of death. Paul made reference to this fact when he said, "For where a testament (will) is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament (will) is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." **Heb. 9:16,17.** During those memorable days in which our Lord Jesus Christ walked among men, He left for us a will so forceful, so strong and completely unalterable, that no power in the universe can change, alter, or destroy it. Hear now, ye partakers of His benefit, as He sets forth His eternal will for us in these immutable words of truth: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." **John 17:24.** And again: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do. .. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." **John 14:13,14.** "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." **John 14:18.** "If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23.** But the special promise which most concerns the message of the moment is this: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." **John 14:16,17.** In these words our Lord gave us the explicit assurance that He would be present with us and in us all through the troublesome days of our earthly pilgrimage. It was of this abiding presence that David spoke, saying in **Psa. 23**, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

You have noticed that, when Jesus gave the promise that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever, with great significance He added, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not." The world as a whole and carnal Christians are usually ready to proclaim that seeing is believing. What they cannot see with

their physical eyes they readily disbelieve, but the power that firmly holds our vessel through the raging storms of life is faith, the steadfast anchor of the soul. Heb. 6:19. So, while the world is confidently proclaiming, "Seeing is believing", the word of faith is filling the universe with the victorious decree, "Believing is seeing!"

There is a power whose care
Teaches thy way along the pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone wandering but not lost.
He, who from zone to zone
Guides thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must walk alone
Will guide my steps aright.

The moment a Christian begins to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and comprehend the incomprehensible, then his friends and neighbors call him mystical. "Much learning has made thee mad," they say, or sympathetically they think he has gone soft in the head. But, while they amuse themselves with derogation, hoping to belittle and disparage, the truth must ever be confessed that those who share the mysteries of God must of necessity be mystics. "Great is the mystery of godliness," saith the Lord, and to this my searching heart replies, "I shall be satisfied only when I awake in Thy likeness." If this be mysticism, then with all my heart I am a mystic. The Holy Spirit whispers this truth to every believing heart: "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God: Thou art the King of Israel," cried the fervent Nathaniel as the eyes of his understanding were opened. And Jesus Himself, seeming to be amazed at such divine illumination, responded with this assurance, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shall see greater things than these... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." **John 1: 49-51.**

The burning desire within my heart in this the end of the age is that God's chosen people might with me become aware of the abiding presence of God. Several years ago one of my dearest friends wrote me a letter in which he spoke of the reality of the presence of God. I read his letter with interest, but the force of the truth did not then fully grip me. The letter was laid aside and the truth contained therein was almost forgotten until one early morning I dreamed a dream in which the presence of God descended upon me from heaven, increasing in wonder and power as it drew near. I awoke in ecstasy of spirit, breathing aloud the words, "How wonderful is the presence of God!" From that moment until now the blessed fact of His presence has often filled my meditation, and the truth which I now set before you conies with the earnest hope that all who read may henceforth walk with an ever increasing consciousness of the presence of Him who told us in words that cannot fail, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

For centuries men have spoken — some reverently, some carelessly — of walking in the presence of God; but it is indisputably true that such great statements of truth lose their sacred meaning by man's constant and often flippant reiteration. Students of theology, poor souls, are usually first and foremost in this transgression. Poring over their musty volumes, they learn the arguments and proofs, which teach that God is almighty, but the almighty God Himself they do not know. They write their learned essays on the love of God, but the God of love is a stranger to their hearts. They themselves become ineffective and often vacillating and hypocritical because they have separated truth from the Person, knowing the law, but not the law giver, reciting the truth, but having no relationship with Him who is the truth. A lifetime of experience has taught me that it is possible for one to know all the arguments and possess all the answers, but still be a stranger to God. I testify to all, however, that, the moment any man begins to know Him, vast changes take place in his understanding, for to know Him is to be like Him. "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18.**

The Holy Spirit, who proceeded forth from the Father, is not an influence, but a divine person, possessing personal names, personal attributes, personal qualities, personal offices, performing personal ministries and personal acts, and referred to by personal pronouns. I shall never be persuaded to descend to that valley of carnality where men delight to reason and debate about trinities and unities, for why should the fellowship of

the saints, together with the joy of their friendship, be cruelly destroyed by debating these sacred things before whose mystery wise and holy angels bow their heads in silent awe? The man who seeks to argue about the Godhead has lost his sense of respect for the awful greatness of God. Yet be it known to one and all that He whose presence abides with us throughout all this age of grace is that same Holy Spirit of whom Jesus spoke, saying, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." **John 14:16-18.**

With my small and limited ability I cannot make the truth of Christ's abiding presence to be a living, transforming reality to your heart. None but the Spirit of God is capable of this divine and mighty act of illumination. He alone can take the things of God and show them unto you. Nevertheless, I confidently assure you that, the moment the solemnizing fact of Christ's presence grips your heart and fills your mind by the Holy Spirit, the reality of His presence will immediately begin to transform your life. Yea, and I shall further add that the knowledge of His abiding presence will also begin to change and renew your body as well; but of this we shall speak at a later time. The sublime truth of His ever abiding presence through an indisputable promise of God's grace cannot and will not become real to you until you devote yourself to it by prayer, by meditation, by fasting, and by faith above all else. "Lo, I am with you," Jesus said; and, if His word cannot be trusted, our mighty foundations are but quicksand beneath our faltering feet. But He who abides with us forever is He whom "having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." **1 Pet. 1:8.**

Again 'tis eventide and we,
Oppressed with various ills, draw near;
And, though Thy form we cannot see,
We feel and know that Thou art near.

"This is He who was with the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him (Moses) in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively (living) oracles to give unto us." **Acts 7:38.**

Some glad morning, when the ever, unfolding plan of God is complete, our eyes will behold with endless joy that heaven blest Eden, the garden in which walked Adam, the son of God. Our eyes, long dimmed by the things of earth, have not beheld such glories as were there; our ears have not heard its deep songs of joy, nor have our dreams pictured that land so fair, whose inhabitants knew no sorrow nor crying, no tears nor death nor pain. Wonderful as were its heavenly charms, the glory above all else that made each moment an endless joy was the glory of God's abiding presence. He who knew all things from the beginning to the end was abiding there with them. He in whom all power dwells, whether in heaven or in earth, was holding them by the hand. The omnipresent Lord, who knows neither slumber nor sleep, was abiding there. It could not have been otherwise else God could not be God. "In Thy presence," wrote David, "is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." In this secret place they dwelt beneath the shadow of the Almighty, for the Lord God is a sun and a shield to all who walk uprightly. Then in God's wisdom the dark hour came when the creature was made subject to vanity. Rom. 8:20. Stretching forth his hand in disobedience, he took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and did eat, "and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." **Gen. 3:7.** But they were ashamed to meet God in their fig leaf aprons, and, when in the evening of the day "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden ... Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden." Gen. 3:8. Surely none could have been more conscious of God's presence than were Adam and Eve as daily they walked and talked with Him, but now their disobedience had thrust them into a dreadful outer darkness that made them feel naked, ashamed, and frightened at the very thought of God's presence so that they desired only to hide themselves from Him forever.

Here, then, when man in fear and shame hid himself from the presence of God, was the beginning of labor, sorrow, and night. Thus from the glory and light of God's presence all men in Adam were cast; for there is no difference, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God through man's transgression. Upon our eyes a veil was cast that could not be taken away until that day of triumph in which Jesus Christ, the "second

man", 1 Cor. 15:47, rent the veil in two and flung the gates wide open that repentant, forgiven and newborn men might come with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus - by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Heb. 10:19,10. For this purpose the Spirit of truth was given, that we who have fixed our hopes in Jesus may abide in His presence forever.

Let us consider with care the detriment that fell like a cloud upon the human family when through disobedience and transgression Adam hid himself from the presence of God. We should not be obliged to present lengthy arguments to prove that man without God is hopelessly blind to eternal things, pitifully helpless, and desperately carnal. Once our eyes become closed to the invisible things, then we are blind to the eternal things, for the things, which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. When our eyes are closed to the invisible, then our vision changes from things above to things beneath. Because we are no longer conscious of the invisible and the eternal, we begin to feast our eyes on the visible and the temporal. Without God men are hopelessly in the flesh. They pass their time in the worthless pursuits of the flesh. Their days are spent in vanity, seeking to gratify the five senses of the physical body, but seldom do they learn that this cannot be done. The eye is never filled with seeing. The lust of the eye for seeing is insatiable. The ear is never filled with hearing, nor is the taste ever satisfied with the rarest of dainties. All our physical appetites, like the grave and the barren womb, never say, "It is enough".

How often, as I have read the books of First and Second Kings, have I been almost sickened by the dreadful display of carnality and wickedness, manifested in the lives of the kings of Judah and Israel! These were men who from their childhood knew the law of God. They knew better than to do as they did, yet their lives were a continual manifestation of the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the corrupt and carnal mind. The further they went in their unholy desire to gratify the lusts of the flesh the more they rejected God, and the further they departed from His presence the lower they sank in their degrading rebellion. Even Solomon himself, because he loved many women, is found in the end to be a tax-raising oppressor, building altars and places of worship to the abominable gods of his heathen wives, and even stooping to worship them himself. 1 Kings 11:6-8, 33.

Man, without God to change his evil nature, can never hope to bring peace or justice in the earth. The tree of the carnal mind bears the evil fruit of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, and heresy as naturally as an apple tree bears apples; but the Spirit of the living God, seated in glory upon the throne of the regenerated heart, filling it with the mind of Christ, bears the good fruit of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, faithfulness, and temperance. Against such there is no law, neither in earth beneath nor in heaven above.

How wonderful are the words of our Saviour, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." **Matt. 18:3**. What better word could we find than the word converted? He who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is converted in every sense of that word. All that he ever was is passed away and all that he never was is vital, unfading, and new. "He whom the Son sets free is free indeed," for he has passed from death across to life, from a child of the flesh to a child of the Lord, from the bondage of corruption to the freedom of the Spirit, from dreaded condemnation to acceptance and pardon in His sight. Changes so great as to seem almost incredible transform the life of every believer when Jesus Christ comes into his heart. He who once, because of the filth of his sin, hid himself in shame and fear from the presence of God now returns to bask in the shekinah of God's presence because he has repented of his sin and been cleansed by the blood of the everlasting covenant. "For," said Paul, "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" **Heb. 9:13-14**. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," **1 John 1:7**, and the man who is thus cleansed by faith in Christ is brought back by Him into that glorious presence from which he hid himself in the long ago. Among the sacred scenes of earth none is more wonderful to the regenerated heart than the sight of a sinner coming home to God in repentance. Many times in my life I have watched them come - from tender little boys and girls, sobbing at the feet of Jesus as though they were the greatest of sinners, to men and women hardened and calloused by decades of groveling in the swine pens of iniquity. To the lover of our souls it makes no difference who we are. The same Christ is as real to one as to the other and the same all-powerful blood cleanses from all sin. As the lines of hardness fade away from the sinner's face and the joy of the Lord fills his heart with peace, myriad angels on high fill the

universe with their music and lift their rapturous voices in songs of praise to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, for we "who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." **Eph. 2:13.**

The death we endure outside the presence of God is a dreadful experience. Forth from its unholy shadow every evil and ill of all the ages have proceeded to curse humanity. Every war that has darkened the pages of history has come as a result of man's separation from God's presence - every persecution of righteousness, every hateful demeanor, every torture chamber, every sickness and disease, every hospital and cemetery. The vast, overpowering corruption of the present hour, which sees humanity more sinful and separated from God than at any time since the days of Noah, is the result of man's continual desire to hide himself from God's presence. Because men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God has given them up to a reprobate mind to do the things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. See Rom. 1:28-32. The murderous rash of convenience abortions now filling the earth with the blackness of iniquity is no less heinous a crime than the slaughter of the innocents in the days of Herod. The callous insensibility of this inhuman act is a crying evidence that mankind has entered the incredible place of stupefaction described by Paul as "without natural affection." **2 Tim 3:3.** Any reasonable person will concede that an extenuating circumstance may arise which could justify the termination of the pregnancy, but God will hold mankind responsible for the mass murder of the innocents that now every year exceeds by far the number of babies thrown into the river by the wicked Pharaoh or slaughtered by that bloody murderer, king Herod. I am often reminded of the words of one devout Christian woman who, being gravely ill during the months of her confinement, was warned by her doctor that it would not be possible for both her and the unborn baby to survive. To save her own life she was advised to immediately terminate her pregnancy. To this suggestion the brave woman gave this beautiful answer of resignation and consecration: "The Lord knows which life to spare and which to take." The result was that both were spared. How good our heavenly Father is to those who put their trust in Him!

The last stage in the corruption and final destruction of a nation is reached by the acceptance and popularization of the sin of sodomy, that vile affection which Paul describes as changing the natural use to that which is against nature, men with men working that which is unseemly. Rom. 1:26-27. This is the sin, which brought fire and brimstone to consume Sodom and purify the ground on which it stood. This is the abomination that hastened the flood in the days of Noah. Man cannot possibly survive nor can a nation endure once he stoops to this dreadful evil. Because of it God curses the people with a reprobate mind to do all manner of things that are inconvenient. Perhaps I will shock you when I say that the problems facing the world are neither complex nor difficult; neither are they complicated nor hard to solve. The solutions are exceedingly simple; the difficulty is in man's mind. It has become reprobate and confused by his iniquity so that every decision he makes is wrong and everything he does is inconvenient. It is useless to try to correct it now. The abominable confusion must await the termination of man's six days of labor, confusion, and turmoil. Then will follow the reign of Christ and His sons. Then the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Selfishness will be gone forever and iniquity shall be no more. Repentance shall have filled the earth of men with believing faith, and we shall have returned to dwell in the blessedness of God's live-giving presence.

The message of life that even in this evil hour still permeates the believing heart of every saint separated unto God by His Holy Spirit is this: It is possible for saints here and now to live with the constant and continual assurance that the same Lord who walked with Adam in heaven blessed Eden is now walking with them. As the days have passed, especially in recent months, there has come to me an ever, increasing assurance that I am dwelling and walking in His presence. God is no longer far away; He is here. No longer need saints say, "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep to bring up Christ again from the dead? The word (Christ) is nigh there, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." **Rom. 10:6-7.**

This is not a moment for fine words or eloquent speech. This is an hour for very plain speaking. There is a truth that runs like a golden thread throughout all the pages of Holy Writ from Genesis to Revelation, teaching us that the elect whom God has chosen may even now walk in the light of God's presence. The teaching of this

wonderful fact is verified by reality of experience, by many types, and by infallible prophecy. Let all God's people be informed of the truth I now present. Lay hold upon it as you would a precious jewel because its truth uncovers the secret key that will unlock the door to great spiritual experience and understanding. Men and women in ages past attained through faith in their own day blessings promised to men who were to live in ages yet to come. Let us notice a few examples. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Through faith Enoch was translated that he might not see death. Enoch was a man who lived in the dispensation of conscience - five dispensations in the past - yet by faith he was translated and experienced that which is yet future. Abraham lived under the dispensation of promise - three dispensations before Paul preached the message of justification by faith. Yet Abraham, in the far-off day when justification by faith was only a promise, believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Rom. 4:3. Three dispensations before justification by faith was preached, his eye beheld the blessedness and his faith reached forward two thousand years or more to partake of its glory, and Abraham was justified by faith without the works of the law, and that before the law was given. And what shall we say of king David, who lived in the heart of the dispensation of the law when by God's own command sacrifices and offerings for sin were made daily, and the blood of bulls and of goats flowed in an endless crimson stream, heralding a better day when the better blood of Christ, the great anti-type of all sacrifice and offering, would be shed for the remission of the sins of the whole world. David with the eye of the Spirit looked far beyond those animal sacrifices, which could never take away sin, but left with the offerer a heart unchanged. The eye of David, the son of Jesse, looked forward through the corridors of time to the day when the blood of Christ would be shed for the remission of all sin, and Jesus Christ, as God's faithful High Priest, would enter heaven itself to present His own blood as a sin-offering once, forever, and for all, that mankind should through Him be brought back into God's presence. Thus did David under the law turn his face away from the religious ceremonies of his day, and with a heart broken for his sin he prayed, "For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering." **Psa. 51:16.** "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness ... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." **Psa. 51:6-10.** Of David it is written that he was a man after God's own heart. Who then dare doubt that he, who lived so long ago, reached beyond the experience of his age to receive the blessing of justification by faith as we do now when we kneel at God's feet to confess our sins and receive Christ our Saviour into our lives?

There is a promised day in a dispensation still future of which it is written, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." **Rev. 21:3.** Angelic voices, echoing in heavenly charm and eloquence, could not describe the triumphant day of blessedness and rejoicing in His presence! I suppose then it is not to be wondered at if but few in this hour of gross darkness are able to see that God is calling a people in our day who shall know the divine secret of walking in His presence. Here and now the elect will know the wisdom of His Spirit within. They will be sensitive to the reality of His presence, conscious of His Spirit speaking, His hand guiding, and His power transforming the spirit, the mind, and the body into the image of Him who created them. Men and women, elect and chosen of God, are not walking in the nakedness that Adam knew and that sinners know. The Spirit of God, who had departed from them, has returned to abide, and all who believe shall know that through God's Christ we have been led back into the presence of God. The misunderstanding of God's people concerning God's eternal purpose, and the abominable traditions of the false church system rob us continually of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that shines forever from the face of Jesus Christ. "Lo, I am with you always" was the word Jesus spoke, and in fulfillment of that promise He said, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who will abide with you forever", or for the age, meaning this age in which we live. Though all the world and most of the Christians dwell in outer darkness of unbelief, we who believe and lay hold of the promise shall know the wonder of His presence.

There came a day when the patriarch Isaac called his son Jacob to himself. He had blessed him with the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine, saying, "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee." **Gen. 27: 28,29.** Then he sent him to Padan-aram to the house of Bethuel to take a wife of the daughters of Laban, his uncle. Gen. 28. With the command of his father in his heart and a haunting dread of the wrath of his brother, Esau, in his mind Jacob started the long journey from Beer-sheba to Padan-aram. "And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and,

behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread toward the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." **Gen. 28:11-17.**

"Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not!" These were the words of the patriarch Jacob. They are the words of heaven-sent revelation. This sudden, divine understanding that God was present wrought an instant transformation that changed him from one glory to another throughout his long and difficult life. This revealing experience was his first true contact with the God of Abraham. The sobering knowledge that he was standing in the presence of the almighty God filled his heart with dread, for no man can see God and live. It is impossible! Impossible, I say, because the very knowledge that God is present causes the carnal things of our former life to pass away as ice before the glowing sun, and in their place new things are born that cannot pass away, but, reflecting the glory of God, they abide in His presence forevermore. "God is in this place and I knew it not" will be your inspired words, O Christian, as the transforming truth of His presence, like the life-giving rays of the sun, come stealing o'er the meadows of your soul. It is an immeasurable spiritual tragedy just to see how many Christians, bound by the tradition of Babylon, stumble along over the byways of life, forgetting that He is very present who said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." And this God's people continue to do until by some miracle of God's grace their eyes are opened and from their trembling lips the words break forth, "Surely the Lord is here, and I knew it not."

Moses was a man of eighty years when he tended the flock of Jethro in the backside of the desert. Gone from his heart was the zeal and fire of yesteryear that had once inspired him to rashly attempt the liberation of his people. Exod. 2:11-15. He was an outcast now, a name long forgotten both in Israel and in Egypt. He wanted nothing better than to be left in peace to tend his inoffensive sheep, for they, unlike his people Israel, were gentle and docile, peacefully trusting him to lead them by day and protect them by night. No man of account knew where he dwelt. Of that he was glad; and perhaps he wondered in his heart if even God knew where he was. This old man had probably convinced himself that the God of Abraham had no special need of him nor any plan for his life. How good it was going to be to live the rest of his life as a simple shepherd of these woolly sheep, and then at last to be gathered to his people and take his place in the bosom of Abraham!

But then there came a day when, looking up, he saw a bush burning with fire. There was nothing very unusual about that except that he presently became aware that, though the flames continued to burn fiercely, the bush was neither harmed nor consumed. Thinking this to be a most unusual phenomenon, he said to himself, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said. Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." **Exod. 3:3-6.**

It is not our purpose here to speak of the call and ministry of this man to whom God spoke face to face, but rather to show that God is present at all times, even when we know it not. We have stated before that names in scripture have a special meaning, usually describing the character of the ministry of those who have them. Thus, when Moses said to the Lord, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and He said, Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." **Exod. 3:13-14.** There is no other name in scripture that more perfectly represents the ever present, the omnipresent God. As to time God is eternal; as to place He is omnipresent. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from

Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." **Psa. 139:7-12.** Know this, O child of God: these words are spoken unto you, and He who speaks them is present with you to guide your thoughts into all the will of God. In the knowledge of the secret of His presence you will possess an understanding hitherto unknown in your Christian experience. He who is present with you is a very present help in trouble, transforming the night of all trouble and sorrow into a fortress of Christian light and experience.

Time fails us to tell of Daniel, who stood all night in a den of lions purposely famished that they might destroy him, and of the angel of the Lord who, being present with him, closed their mouths and made them as docile as house cats. Nor can we speak in particular of the Hebrew three, who, walking in a furnace of sevenfold heat, found a fourth man present with them, the form of whom was "like unto the Son of God." Nor can we tarry long to speak of Paul, who in the midst of the raging storm at sea stood forth with boldness to proclaim safety and deliverance for all who were on board, saying, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." **Acts 27:22-24.**

In the thirty-third chapter of Exodus the Holy Spirit has related for our learning a very important and dramatic incident. Leading up to this chapter is the record of the giving of the law of God and of the subsequent abomination committed by Israel in the worshipping of the golden calf. These chapters should be reread that we might better understand the truth that follows. Israel had been spared destruction through the intercession of Moses, and now the Lord says to him, "Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou has brought up out of the land of Egypt. ... And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanites ... for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff, necked people; lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil things, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments." **Exod. 33:1-4.** "And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me." **Verse 12.** "And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he (Moses) said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken ..." **Verses 14-17.**

When believers become conscious of God's abiding presence, they become distinct from all other people on the face of the earth. They also become distinct from all other Christians. Men who live their lives continually conscious of the presence of Christ both abiding with them and dwelling in them are men who always walk softly with God. A fool who holdeth his peace is considered wise; so they who in silence listen to His still small voice come to know Him as the great I AM. The rich man in pride answereth roughly, but the poor useth entreaties. So he who is poor in spirit depends upon Him who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

The fourth chapter of Acts tells of the great excitement and wonder caused by the healing of the lame man, and of how in hate and pride the priests and lawgivers, together with rulers and authorities, took counsel against the Lord and against His anointed; but "when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." **Acts 4:13.** And may we add the confident assurance that Jesus had been with them! Yea, His presence was continually with them.

In the Authorized Version of the Bible **Titus 2:13** is rendered in these words: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." But the Emphatic Diaglott, Moffatt, Young and several others render it thus: Waiting for the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ in you is the hope of glory, and while Christians century after century have eagerly scanned the heavens for signs of the appearing of the Lord, they have forgotten to live in the glory of the presence of Christ here and now, I am fully aware that a crowning day is coming when Christ shall ride forth from the heaven, followed by those celestial hosts of which John spoke. Rev. 19:11-16. I have no power or ability to describe events so supernal; I may only bask in their surpassing glory. I am led to believe that those who will share the blessedness of that triumphant advent will be they and they alone who, while walking in the wilderness of this world, lived in ever increasing consciousness of God's presence. These are

they who dwell continually in the presence of Him who said, "Lo, I am with you alway." "For what is our hope or joy, or the crown of which we boast? Is it not you yourselves in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?" **Thess. 1:19** (Weymouth). Think of the power and majesty of those words that literally say, "Our hope, our crown, and our rejoicing is you in the presence of the Lord Jesus at His coming!"

The presence of the Lord is a secret place. David describes it as the shadow of the Almighty. The cloud overshadowing the camp of Israel throughout their journey in the wilderness, a shade by day and a pillar of fire by night, was none other than the presence of the Almighty. They ate of spiritual meat; they drank of spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. 1 Cor. 10:3-4.

"In Thy presence is fullness of joy," wrote the enraptured psalmist; and how could it be otherwise since the God of Israel is our fortress, our power, and our habitation? As a garment plucked from a perfumed closet bears in its fibers the sweet aroma, so they who dwell in the presence of Christ radiate the glory, the beauty, and the power of His attributes. "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad," wrote David. The ointment Mary poured with prodigality upon the head of the Saviour filled all the house where He sat with its fragrance, and we would be right in believing that all who came forth from that room carried in their garments the sweetness of that aromatic balm.

To dwell in His presence is to be like Him. To abide in His presence is to be changed into His image. Man can never hope to attain the likeness of the Lord by any outward regulation or command to his carnal mind, such as, touch not, taste not, handle not. It is when saints become conscious of His presence that men say they have been with Jesus. It is not what God commands that changes the heart; it is He Himself. It is not the recitation of God's divine laws that transforms our lives, but our relationship to Him who made them. Our abiding in the presence of Jesus Christ will cure our every ill and transform our spirit, soul, and body into the image of Jesus Christ.

As I was in meditation concerning the truth I have presented here, the following words by Martha Wing Robinson, so full of the breath of the Spirit, reached me through the mail. I think they will make a fitting conclusion to what we have been considering of the presence of God. "You do not realize that you would have broken down under the weight of your cares but for the renewing time with Me. It is not what I say; it is Myself. It is not the hearing Me so much as being in My presence. The strengthening and curative powers of this you cannot know. Such knowledge is beyond human reckoning.

"This would cure the poor world if every day each soul or group of souls waited before Me. Remember that you must never fail to keep this time apart with Me. Gradually you will be transformed, physically, mentally, spiritually, into My likeness, All who see you or contact with you will be by this intercourse with you brought near to Me, and gradually the influence will spread.

"You are making one spot on earth a holy place, and, though you must work and spend yourself ceaselessly because for the present that is your appointed task, yet the greatest work you can do is done in this time apart with Me. Are you understanding that? Do you know that every thought, every activity, every prayer, every longing of the day, is gathered up and offered to Me now? Oh, the joy that I am with you! For this I came to earth, to lead man back to spirit converse with his God." Amen.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 11
WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT
BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-7

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CHAPTERS ONE
WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT

There is almost universal conviction today that we are now living in the end of the age. We humans soon learn that, as the evening approaches, shadows begin to lengthen, casting the specter of the coming night across the land. So also the lengthening shadows of this age of grace herald the approach of the black night of tribulation, which will be followed by the kingdom day.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was here, He often marveled at the ignorance and stupidity of the people. He was appalled at the unbelief of His own people, but sometimes marveled at the faith of Roman, Syrophenician, or Samaritan. He foresaw a day in which strangers would come from the north, the south, the east, and the west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, but His own people would be cast out. There is no royal road to the kingdom of God, but only the pathway of faith. No privileged people walk this way, but only obedient sons. There are no special helps for the laggard, no easier paths for those who fear hardship, nor any quicker way for the impatient. He reminds the faint-hearted, "My Son, do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, and do not faint when He corrects you; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He acknowledges. The sufferings that you are enduring are for your discipline. God is dealing with you as with sons: for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? And if you are left without discipline, of which every true son has had a share, that shows that you are bastards, and not true sons." **Heb. 12:5-7.** (Weymouth).

There never was a teacher like Jesus. The soldiers said, "Never man spake like this man", and the common people, hearing the authority of His teaching, in wonder remarked, "Lo, He speaketh with authority and not as the scribes." The teachings of Jesus were simple, but always beyond the reach of the wise and prudent of this world. Jesus taught that it would be a very simple thing to recognize the signs that herald the end of the age and foretell the approach of the kingdom of God. Just as simply as a man or a little boy foretells the weather by simple signs, so also shall we be able to foretell the imminence of His coming by the simple but multiplied signs He gave us. When one day the Pharisees with the Sadducees approached Him, desiring that He would give them a sign from heaven, He answered and said unto them, "When it is evening, ye say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today for the sky is red and lowering. O, ye hypocrites, Ye can discern the face of the sky: but can ye not discern the signs of the times?' **Matt. 16:2-3.** And again, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say there cometh a shower, and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say there will be heat, and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" **Luke 12:54-56.**

Surely these are simple signs that even a child can understand, but it seems that we are all prone to ignore the winds and red skies that proclaim the end of the age. Are we to be numbered among those foolish people who willfully brush aside all evidence, smugly assuring themselves that, "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world"? As this age speeds to its close, there will be ever increasing and indisputable evidence that the end of this age is upon us and the kingdom of God is at hand.

It is true that no man knoweth the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh, but it is equally true that "Ye have no need that that day should overtake you as a thief. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the

Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape, but ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light and children of the day: we are not of night nor of darkness." **1 Thess: 5:2-5**. Therefore, as a man who knows a thief is coming sits and watches that he is not taken unawares, so let us watch also that, when He cometh and knocketh, we shall be ready to open immediately to Him.

Every dispensation begins with a promise, but every dispensation has ended in judgment. The dispensation of grace in which we now find ourselves will be no exception to this rule. Without question the judgment, which will bring this age to its climax will gather into its fearful self the calamity and wrath of all ages before it. Eden, the dispensation of innocence, ended with man's being cast out from God's presence. The dispensation of conscience ended with the judgment of the flood. Human government ended with the tower of Babel. Promise ended with the destruction of Egypt and the death of the firstborn. Law ended with the crucifixion of Christ, and the dispensation of grace will end with a tribulation as terrible as the expulsion from Eden, as universal as the flood, as complete as the overthrow of Babel, and as devastating as the destruction of Egypt.

Man is so constituted that he readily becomes accustomed to noise, to traffic, to cold and heat, to physical disabilities, and even to pain. Men who have been long hardened in battle become accustomed to the crash of artillery and the whine of bullets. In like manner the multiplying signs of the end of the age creep upon us unawares and we are inclined to believe that things have always been this way. Our minds have become so accustomed to the lawlessness and violence that daily glare from the headlines of our papers that we frequently turn the page without even reading the story. Thus the earth has become filled with signs that tell us that the end of the age is here, but we have become as insensible as the people of Noah's day, who "knew not until the flood came and took them all away." Indeed, we have become so insensible to the truth that a great part of Christendom is willing to relegate the story of Noah and the flood to the level of Anderson's Fairy Tales. But let us assure our hearts of this: In spite of all science, whether true or false, the word of God has never been proven inaccurate nor untrue. God always makes His statements without explanation because all He declares is truth, even though it may take unbelieving man endless generations to discover that God cannot lie. Therefore, when the Lord declares, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," there is room for neither discussion nor argument about possibilities or impossibilities. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ was not a whit more miraculous than the birth of Adam, or Eve, or you, or me. God is the miraculous author of them all and man knows not how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. While we walk this pilgrim pathway, our only true recommendation before God is faith in the veracity and immutability of the Lord. All such men know that, should heaven and earth pass away, the word of the Lord will endure unto all generations.

For centuries men have believed the promise of Christ, "If I go away, I will come again." Often have we repeated the words of the two men in shining garments, "**This same Jesus which was taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.**" **Acts 1;10-11**. Though we have waited long until hope deferred has made the heart sick, yet the promise is sure. Though it tarry, we will wait for it, for it will surely come.

The ever increasing signs now gathering about us on every hand are evidences given us of God that the long delayed hope of creation is drawing near. Sonship, the hope of the entire creation for which all creatures groan, is soon to be a living reality. The kingdom of God for which Jesus prayed is being prepared in secret to spread its wisdom and knowledge, justice and equity, like a sweet perfume over the entire earth. All who truly hope for sonship and all that it entails will lift up their heads and rejoice that the redness of the sky on this dread evening of the tribulation and heartache is the divine assurance that all will be fair in the kingdom of tomorrow. We should concern ourselves with the gathering signs of the times, not for the sake of being spectacular, but because Jesus Himself said, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh." It is with this thought in mind that I wish to point out some of the truths that clearly show that the end of the age is come and the true hope of all past ages is about to be realized — the kingdom of God. The Sabbath of rest is at hand.

Of all the scriptures which concern the end of this age the one most frequently quoted is this: "**And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.**" **Luke 17:26**. It is a sobering thing to know

that "all things happened unto them for ensamples to us upon whom the ends of the ages are come." **1 Cor. 10:11**. Therefore all the things, which happened in other ages were given not alone for the sake of those who then dwelt upon the earth, but for our instruction and understanding upon whom the ends of the ages have come. This is the most important hour of human history. The perfection and hope of the saints of all ages depends upon those who are coming to perfection and sonship now, for they without us cannot be made perfect. Heb. 11:39, 40. Let us then refrain from esteeming lightly the things that are coming upon the world, for they are/or our instruction, and our sure knowledge of them will help us to follow the steps of Him who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. "When a cloud rises in the west, ye say there will be a shower, and it cometh to pass." Let us then at the sight of the gathering clouds lift up our heads and rejoice, for our redemption draweth nigh.

In the days of Noah there was a great dearth of spiritual life and spiritual understanding, for the Lord had said to Noah, "Thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." **Gen. 7:1**. Therefore God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." **2 Pet. 2:5**. Never in any generation has the Lord left Himself without a witness. He has always had an election according to His purpose and according to His grace, and Noah, that one righteous man, that one man was the forerunner and foreshadow of an elect company of sons who will stand as one body in the great tribulation. Though they be many, yet will they be but one, for all are one in Him. For this reason they are called the manchild. As we behold the ever increasing godlessness, apostasy, hate, and rebellion, all of which herald the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, contrary to all ungodliness and in direct opposition to it will stand God's elect sons who, though despised and hated even unto death, bow not the knee to Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian image. But they as Noah will hold in their grasp the key to man's redemption, the regeneration and re-constitution of all things. Acts 3:21.

Important and indisputable are the signs in the earth today, for they are the swift heralds of the climax of this age. Yet the most important event transpiring in the earth is the secret, silent formation of the manchild, the sons of God who are to rule the world in the ages to come. As Solomon's temple was built without the sound of a hammer from stones carefully cut and prepared in the quarries before time, so is that great temple of the body of Christ being prepared in the dismal quarries of this dark age. The work is perfect and the moment is at hand when, without noise of hammer or rasping of saw, each select, elect member will be found standing in his proper place in Christ. Thus will the kingdom's temple be complete and the rule of Christ will have begun.

There will not be a great revival before the end of this age as is expected by some. No dispensation has ever ended with a revival and this age of grace will be no exception to the rule. All dispensations, including the kingdom of God, end in judgment, and true faith is found only in the hearts of an insignificant few. "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" No! Indeed He will not, except in the hearts of those few elect whom He will call together from the distant ends of the earth and heaven. The next great revival will be in that glorious age when "the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." That will be no local affair, but will cover the world like a mantle until the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Then no man will say, "Know the Lord," for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

In Noah's day the flood (tribulation) covered the entire earth. So also shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man. Every day we live is bringing us closer to the hour when the nations of the world will be forced from sheer necessity to form a world government under a world dictator. Nations can no longer be independent of each other. They can no longer act alone. What affects one seems to affect them all. Modern means of travel and communication have practically eliminated distance and time. The assassination of President Kennedy was known around the world in minutes, and the murder of Oswald was witnessed as far away as Russia the moment it happened. All these things demand a world government and a world leader. The word of God leaves no doubt that such a government is on the way, when power and authority will be given to "the beast". We are now entering upon the phase where nations, trying momentarily to bury the bloody hatchet, will say peace and safety. The united forces of great Babylon will rise higher and higher to rule over the kings of the earth, but the destruction of this antichrist system will be sure, sudden, universal, and complete.

In the days of Noah the world at large was in complete ignorance of God's plan. This is the story as told by Jesus Christ. **Matt. 24:37-39.** (Phillip's Translation). "For just as life went on in the days of Noah, so will it be at the coming of the Son of man. In those days before the flood people were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage until the very day that Noah went into the ark, and knew nothing about the flood until it came and destroyed them all. So will it be in the coming of the Son of man." These words adequately describe the faithless lethargy into which our own age has fallen. All things continue on day after day as they have "since the fathers fell asleep" - marrying, giving in marriage, divorcing, remarrying, rising, going to bed, seeking pleasure, making money, playing religion, living and dying, but knowing nothing and caring less about the tribulation soon to envelop the world. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of the flesh have drawn a veil over the eyes of the masses of humanity that they cannot see the gathering storm clouds of tribulation, nor hear the distant rumblings that herald the blackest day the world will ever know. "They knew nothing about the flood until it came and took them all away." Millions of Christians of our day have ceased long ago to watch and be ready for the coming of the Son of God. They have become like those who say, "My Lord delayeth His coming", and so they have set their hearts on gaining earthly things, neglecting to pray, neglecting the word of God, neglecting to tithe, and failing to avail themselves of the graces, which God has freely offered to every man. We live in a world abounding with religion, an age packed full of systems professing godliness, but God has departed from them all. Christ is no longer found in the excitement of the multitude, but standing at the heart's door of the individual, saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with Me," **Rev. 3:20.** Thus it is in this the Laodicean age. Christ is found outside the church system, knocking and asking admittance to the believing hearts of individual men and women. To those separated individuals He says, "He that overcometh will sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne." **Rev. 3:21.** I know nothing at all of the religion of Noah's day, but without doubt they were a religious people. Humanity has always been religious, but seldom godly. In all probability our present day is the most religious of all ages, but with less power and less true knowledge of God than any age before us. Our age was summed up by Paul in these tragic words: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." From such we must steadfastly turn away.

If we read the account of the days of Noah with reverence and meditation, we will need no help nor explanation to see the exact parallel in our day, for "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth and it grieved him at His heart." **Gen. 6:5-6.** "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." **Gen. 6:11-12.** What a dread but accurate description this is of our modern day! Could we fill volumes with description of our twentieth century decay, we could enlarge very little upon these few divinely inspired words, "the earth was corrupt", "the earth was filled with violence", "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth", and "the imagination of men's hearts was only evil continually."

The earth was corrupt then, and the earth is corrupt now. Corruption has crept like a sly and stealthy serpent into all walks of life until we find ourselves in the sad position of having to admit that there is scarcely a walk of life that is not infested with corruption. Corruption is found on every level of government, from the highest to the lowest. Corruption has crept into the court of justice so that judgment can often be bought for a fee. The poor can be punished because he is poor and the rich is set free because he is rich. We strain at gnats and swallow camels and rob the hireling of his wages. Faults are built into automobiles and washing machines. The evils of dope and drink are allowed to persist because they are big business. While we collect millions of dollars to fight cancer, cigarette companies go on advertising their cancer producing products, and so on and on the corruption goes.

One would certainly think that religion would be the one realm, which could be pronounced free from corruption, but, so far from this being the truth, "the Father's house has become a house of merchandise and the place of prayer a den of thieves." Religion today has become big business. It is one of the biggest and most lucrative businesses in the whole world. More than one preacher, supposing that gain is godliness, has become a millionaire in the last decade, not because of God-given gifts, but because he was a tremendous promoter. Through clever talk they have tossed the children of God to and fro and carried them about with every wind of doctrine. By the sleight of man and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive they have beguiled innocent people, pretending that they were great ones with outstanding gifts. Yet for all their

pretended revivals there is no spirit of revival in the land, and for all their claims of healing, the sick abound more and more. By craftiness they obtain the names of tens of thousands of people to whom they regularly send their pleas for financial help, with their self-addressed reply envelopes into which the poor and the widows are urged to put their offerings that they might live in wanton luxury upon the earth. Woe to them, for they have gone greedily in the error of Balaam's covetousness. With glib tongues and plausible programs of imagined faith these smooth religious salesmen with feigned sincerity have robbed widow's houses and have covered their crimes with long prayers and eloquent sermons. Well-meaning people are urged to give to further grandiose programs, which are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, and avaricious mind. Millions have been squeezed from the poor to build huge temples, world churches, Christian cities, refuges and sanctuaries for the time of tribulation, and to devise schemes to further other human notions which seldom, if ever, materialize. The greed and avarice of this self-styled clerical order is always applied in the name of religion and amounts to nothing but a veritable plunder system. One would certainly be convinced that the avaricious scheming of Protestantism is not one whit behind pagan Rome, who for centuries has collected vast sums for confessions, penance, and indulgences of all kinds.

In the face of such vast corruption as is seen on every hand, the fiery words of St. James ring like a trumpet of doom to our entire generation. "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them, which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." **James 5:1-7.**

Corruption abounds everywhere, and I do not know how the world could become more corrupt than it already is. Corruption is big business. It abounds in governments, in courts, in ordinary business practices, in sports, in schools, in religion, in morals, and even in homes. Certainly the days of Noah are upon us, for "all flesh has corrupted his way upon the earth."

In Noah's day the earth was filled with violence as it is to-day. We live in an age when violence is international policy. Scarcely a day goes by without violence breaking forth somewhere. We do not need to look to international wars or remote rebellions for violence, for there is violence among street gangs, violence in trade unions, violence on the highways, and violence in sport. There are sluggings, beatings, knifings, shootings, and brawls every day on an almost unbelievable scale. Somewhere in America a murder is committed every few minutes. The seed of violence is continually sown in the minds of young and old by television, radio, theatre, newspapers, and novels. It is a most significant trend and an infallible proof that we are living in the final days of this age.

In the May, 1959, issue of the Calgary Farm and Ranch Review the following article appeared, which for a secular magazine is unusually to the point. "One of man's most tragic weaknesses is his failure to benefit from the lessons of history. Yet those lessons have for centuries been recorded by scholars. Not the least of these was the famous historian, Edward Gibbon, who dedicated many years of his life to future generations by his precise research into the causes and effects of social changes.

In his classic, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, he cited the five primary causes for the deterioration of that historic society.

1. The rapid increase of divorce and the undermining of the sanctity of the home.
2. The spiraling rise of taxes and extravagant spending.
3. The mounting craze for pleasure and the brutalization of sports.
4. The building of gigantic armaments and the failure to realize that the real enemy lay within the gates of the empire in the moral decay of the people.

5. The decay of religion and the fading of faith into a mere form, leaving the people without any guide.

How does our society compare with that of imperial Rome that once ruled the western world? What about our mounting divorce rate, climbing taxes, and government extravagance? Have the telephone and the automobile brought more home life or have they turned the home into a clearing house for outside activity? Now that T.V. has brought wrestling into the drawing-room and gun-play into the nursery, have we more fair play and athletic skill? What about religion? Is man simply going through the motions, or does he know what the symbolism is about? Or is he instead on the golf course or sleeping off the effects of intemperance from the night before? In the light of today's conditions the failings of ancient Rome make a rather sobering comparison with our own."

The above quotation shows a keen insight into the true condition of our age. If editors of secular magazines can see the glaring evils of the present hour with such clearness, then surely those who believe God's word must assuredly know that these conditions are forerunners and harbingers of the great tribulation and the end of the age. In the light of such truth we need not be caught sleeping, for those who are looking for Christ should be much more awake than those who care not at all. But it is to their eternal shame that we find millions of Christians sunk so deep in this slough of corruption that they can never see anything clearly. In their mad dash for money they have forgotten all the finer things that life affords. The frantic race to possess and partake of earthly things has dulled all spiritual desire until God's people actually believe that "gain is godliness." Millions of Christians who once fervently loved Christ, crowning Him head of their lives and homes, knowing no joy like the glory of His presence while they patiently waited His coming, now lock Him out of their parlors while they fix their eyes for countless hours on all the filth that corruption affords, sitting like Lot in the very gates of Sodom. Christ has no fellowship with Belial. How then can he who fills his head with the world of Belial dare to hope for the mind of Christ?

Neither I nor any other person on earth knows the exact sequence of events which precede the end of the age and the coming of the Lord; neither does any man know the day nor the hour of His appearing and manifestation, for God has hidden these things from our minds. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit has caused to be written some very forthright and exact lists of events, which any man can understand if he wishes to heed them. The apostle Paul in his epistle to Timothy left the world a most exact account of the last hours of this age of grace. No more searching blow by blow description could possibly be given than the one he gave when he penned these words: "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent (having no control over appetites and passions), fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady (headstrong), high, minded lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" **2 Tim. 3:1-5**. There is practically nothing one could add to these words by way of comment, but no more exact description of our time could possibly be given than Paul gave in this brief, word by word run-down of the sordid conditions that will bring this age to its close. When men become "lovers of their own selves", then everything else, whether physical, moral, or spiritual, must be adjusted to suit and satisfy self. No fraud is too great to perpetrate, no crime too great to commit, no covenant too sacred to break, no truce so binding that it cannot be ignored, no name too holy to blaspheme, no parent worthy to be obeyed, no gift worthy of heartfelt thanks. Even the loud professions of godliness are for selfish ends, hoping to ease a guilty conscience here or subtly hoping to escape judgment hereafter. These frightful conditions are so prevalent today and have become so familiar and ordinary that they are no longer noticeable among us. Our eyes have become dim from seeing them, our consciences seared by their presence, and our ears deaf to their shouted warning that the end of the age is even at the doors.

If we believe not these things, neither would we believe though one rose from the dead to tell us. Luke 16:31. And though an angel from heaven came to warn this godless generation, it would have no more effect than the warning of the angels had upon the men of Sodom, who persisted in their heady unbelief until fire and brimstone fell upon them and the stinking stench of their unbelief ascended in billowing smoke before the judgment throne of Almighty God. "As it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all; even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." **Luke 17:28-30**. Sodom has always been a symbol of evil and her people the quintessence of evil. Both Sodom, the city,

and the Sodomites, the inhabitants, have lent their names to the languages of earth to signify the embodiment of every corrupt and evil thing. How dreadful is the indictment of Christ against our day when He likens it to the days of Sodom! Let all who have begun to flee from the city of destruction remember two things. First, remember Lot, who, though he started bravely for the mountain (Zion), turned aside from the distant peaks sublime and settled for a little earthly habitation, Zoar, requiring no faith, easily attained and soon forgotten.

Some of the greatest truths of the word of God are the ones that lie hidden like pearls of great price, unnoticed by the careless but available to all who will search beneath the uninviting surface ground. Of the many signs which herald the soon coming of the Lord and the end of the age, the most significant of all is the one which fewest people see. It is the one sign which is hidden almost entirely from the world of professing Christians, for they, being a part of it, are absorbed by it. They sit at its tables and are drunk with its wine. "The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine; they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment, for all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." **Isa. 28:7-8.**

The sign to which I refer is the sudden, unbelievable, mysterious rise of the system known in the scriptures as Mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. That which has become familiarly known as the ecumenical movement is in reality the heading up under one universal head of all religious systems of the earth, especially those who claim the name Christian. The mystery of Babylon will be complete when the harlot mother, who is so well known to us all, is united with all her harlot daughters, which includes the entire denominational system of Protestantism. Then, united in her whoredoms, she will sit on many waters, drunken with the blood of saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. It is she who rides the scarlet-colored beast with seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 17:30) and by the hate and wrath of these ten horns shall she be utterly destroyed in the end. Rev. 17:16-17.

When we wrote the book, Mystery Babylon, in 1962, many people doubted that there would ever be a union of church systems such as we then foretold, but today only those who choose to be blind could possibly doubt it, for its phenomenal rise is evident everywhere. During the last few years the heads of the Romish system, together with the heads of the Protestant systems, have been working overtime to iron out their differences. Many of these "heads" were saying that, though there would be eventual union, it may be many years before it could be achieved. There is, however, another remarkable and sinister development which not even the cleverest leader could have foreseen, for during the past few years the efforts toward union have been snowballing from the opposite end, that is, from among the common people, until now it has gained such momentum that the leaders will be hard pressed to keep ahead of it. Story after story appears in the newspapers heralding the success of Protestant-Catholic rallies. In Vancouver, B.C. a "standing-room only" crowd of some 5000 took part in an interdenominational Roman Catholic-Protestant service. Ministers and priests alike hailed it as the true ecumenical spirit. In Seattle, Wash., a Lutheran church announced a month of meetings at which a Roman Catholic priest was to officiate. Such gatherings are increasing all over America as anyone who has watched the newspapers will have noticed.

There are some misinformed people who think that I am "fighting" against these things. Nothing could be further from fact. Neither Jesus nor the prophets were fighting when they warned the world that these things would surely come at the end of the age. Neither am I fighting when I point out that the things they foretold are happening to us. There is no desire in me to see these things stopped, but rather, seeing them, we lift up our heads and rejoice, for our redemption draweth nigh.

In Christ's parable of the unjust judge (**Luke 18:1-8**), He asked this question: "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" The answer is that, when the Son of man cometh, true faith will have departed from the earth and from the church system and from all forms of religion. They will become like the Pharisee who trusted in himself that he was righteous and despised others. Luke 18:9. But there is a company of people now as always whom God calls His elect. In them and in them alone will true faith be found. Their faith will be tried to the bitter limit. Many times their hopes will all but vanish as through weeks and months and years they cry day and night to Him, but they shall neither fail nor be discouraged until He sends forth judgment unto truth, for their ear shall continually hear the clear ringing of His promise, "Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" **Luke 18:7.**

All evidence goes to show that at the end of the age there will be a tremendous trial of faith for all true children of God. Every dispensation has ended with a great trial of faith to the few remaining elect children of God. There is always evidence of plenty of religion but no real faith in it. True faith is always found in those few seemingly peculiar people who stand outside the camp of the religious systems and who have become a sort of laughing stock and a byword because they have been sanctified unto the kingdom of God. Was there faith in the earth in Noah's day? No, indeed, there was not. Yet in the heart of Noah, the elect of God, simple faith abounded in that at God's word he built an ark to the salvation of his house. And was there faith in the days of Moses? Very little, I fear, for only through mighty signs and wonders could he make the people believe that God was visiting them. Where was faith in Jesus' day? Why, it was more to be found in Syrophenicians, centurions, publicans and harlots than in the hearts of scribe and Pharisee. But now we stand at the close of another dispensation, the dispensation of the grace of God, a dispensation specially given by God for the explicit purpose of gathering out of all nations a people for His name. And can we find faith on the earth? I tell you, no More religion than at any other time in world history, more programs for the advancement of religion, more schools turning out assembly line preachers, more presses pouring out literature, more voices on radio, more faces on television, more compassing of land and sea to make proselytes, more advertising, more high pressure campaigns, more building of churches, money flowing like water to advance all causes, but in spite of it all from sea to sea men of all denominations are hailing the ecumenical spirit and joining the crushing throng eager to bow their knees to the Babylonian image. And when at last at the signal of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musical instruments the whole church system falls on its face to worship the Babylonian image, only the elect will be left standing, for they know that their God is able to deliver them both from the burning furnace of tribulation and from the king of Babylon, the final head and anti-christ of the Ecumenical Movement.

Let us not deceive ourselves. Great tribulation is coming. Already people have suffered excommunication because they have refused to join the march of the multitude to unity with Rome. Great deception is coming. We are seeing false signs and false wonders. We will hear of men high in church stations who will perform miracles and imitate the glory of Pentecost as did the magicians who resisted Moses. It would have been hard indeed to tell the difference between the miracles of Moses and the miracles of the magicians who duplicated with their enchantments the things that he did. But all who walk in the Spirit will know the difference. By the Spirit of God alone truth and error are manifest.

Many hundreds of years ago the prophet Isaiah significantly stated, "Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me." **Isa. 54:15**. The truth is that many millions who have refused to recognize the true coming together of the body of Christ to make Him the one Lord and supreme head of their lives will now find themselves coming together to form another body of which He, Christ, is not the head. The words of Jesus Christ come ringing like a trumpet over the centuries: "I have come in My Father's name and ye did not receive Me: If another shall come in his own name him ye shall receive." **John 5:43**. In this all important hour, when any number of men are seeking followers, refuse to follow them. Learn to follow Christ and be led by His Spirit, for such are the sons of God. While human voices clamor for the attention of your ear, refuse to listen. Learn to know His voice, for "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." Cease to crave the fellowship of people however dear they may be. Crave the fellowship of Christ whose voice is only heard when all other voices are silent.

I cannot believe that the existing church system everywhere visible in the earth is either the true church or the true representation of Christ. Protestantism today is in the same sorry state as Romanism in the days of Martin Luther. The "faithful city has become a harlot." Therefore, if it is not the true church, it is wrong to assemble with it, but right to come out of her that we be not partaker with her plagues.

The church of Laodicea is the representation of the church at the close of the age, a church lukewarm ready to be spued out of God's mouth, a church rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing, but knowing not that it is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. It is a church which has forced Christ outside its precincts so that He stands outside, knocking not at the church door, but at the door of the individual heart of men and women like you and me, and saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me." **Rev. 3:20**.

CHAPTER TWO THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

Because of the lateness of the hour and because of the dreadful calamities which are relentlessly hurling themselves upon the earth and all mankind, I have been filled with a great urge to place before you certain signs which cause me to believe that we are now living in the closing months of this dispensation of the grace of God. Since we are all fallible men and women, it is always possible for us to be wrong or over-zealous about things which vitally concern us and the world in which we live, yet it would be a most remarkable thing indeed if among those who read these lines any will be found who do not have a God-given premonition that the door of God's forbearance and longsuffering is now closing upon this rebellious and untoward generation. The most incredible situations are stalking the whole earth. Crime, violence, destruction, war, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, the collapse of morals, and the impending collapse of the entire financial system are all on hand until every new day brings its new disasters.

Forgive me for the use of personal pronouns and personal opinions. There is no desire in me to set myself up as one knowing more than my brethren, for God has never given me reason to believe that I am anything more than the least among them. I disavow any intention to lead away disciples after myself either in the days that are past or in the days that are present. Within my heart my one longing toward mankind has been to so present the truth that men and women would love God and, seeing His goodness and greatness, be transformed into his likeness. My heart's desire has been that, should my tongue be stilled or my pen laid down, mankind would never miss me because they had learned to depend, not on me, but upon the everlasting arms of Him unto whom they had "looked and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." Cursed be he that putteth his trust in man, but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed.

If we reflect upon the things about us, we will be forced to conclude that the world situation with its maze of problems is completely beyond the grasp of mankind. The racing inflation that engulfs the financial world is such a problem that governments are no longer trying to grapple with it, but instead have thrown up their hands in despair and decided just to let it race to its doom. The politicians (for there are no statesmen now) are like engineers who have lost control of a runaway train, which gathers speed at every yard as it descends the mountain. The whistle is screaming, the brakes are burned out, all controls are useless, and they themselves are utterly helpless. To make matters even worse, the runaway train of the world financial system has now gained such unbelievable speed that they dare not try to jump off. They have become like frenzied men who, having seized a tiger by the tail, dare not let go though it is hopeless to hang on.

The whole world situation is so touchy that even a rumor could set forces in motion that could bring absolute ruin on the present doomed order. Only today I read of a Japanese woman in Tokyo who jokingly remarked that a certain bank was going broke. Within hours forty-eight hundred people had rushed to retrieve their savings and had withdrawn five million dollars from the various branches and almost broke the bank. The manager in amazement said, "I still don't know what hit us." I mention this only to show more clearly what a literal volcano the whole world system is sitting upon.

Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed important details concerning the end of the age, some of which are enough to fill any heart with terror, but, bless His dear name, He always added many things that were intended to comfort those who will love Him in these perilous, closing days of time. After telling the people of the dreadful events to come upon the earth in the days in which we are now privileged to live, He brushed aside our anxiety as a mother wipes away the tears of her infant and soothes the childish woes of the little one she loves. "When ye see these things begin to come to pass," He said, "then lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh." Jesus was not underestimating the awesomeness of the things that were to come in the end of the age, but well He knew that there would be a people upon the earth in the last days who would live lives so totally detached from the world and its godless system that they would be almost unaffected by the dreadful upheaval that would accompany the end of the age, knowing that the calamities of this present order are the swift heralds that loudly proclaim that glorious age, the kingdom of God.

In the book of the Apocalypse we have a picture given by revelation to the apostle John. In the vision he saw the fall of the world system, that Babylon of confusion of which the scripture speaks. Babylon may be defined as both political and ecclesiastical. It represents both the world system and the church system as they are seen and known in their abominations in our day. The revelation given John concerning them is almost beyond human belief as he describes the fall of Babylon in these awe-inspiring words; "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour thy judgment is come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things, which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. And the merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate." **Rev. 18:4-19.**

Having seen the complete and utter destruction of this whole world system, both political and religious, John's eyes are directed to another scene and another company, and these are told to rejoice. As we read his words, we can hear again the faithful words of Jesus, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh." "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of the harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever." **Rev. 18:20, 19:3.**

This great and terrible vision seen by John is a true picture of the end of the age in which we live. It portrays the end of the present world set-up, the collapse of the present system of finance, and thus in consequence the end of commerce and trade as we have known it for six thousand years. It faithfully describes the end of the present religious system, which is now governed by man, and all this great and dreadful fall is the final preparatory step for the coming of the kingdom of God.

The weeping and howling of the merchants and rich men of the earth because of the fall of their system brings to mind the faithful words of the apostle James as he, too, describes the financial collapse of the last days in these significant words: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton, ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." **James 5: 1-8.**

The collapse of the present world order is definitely at hand. It is falling apart on every side and in every nation. The great depression that overwhelmed the whole earth, beginning in 1929 and continuing without let-up through those tragic years known by millions as the dirty thirties, will be merely a shadow compared to the fearful collapse into which we are without doubt now heading. Those of us old enough to remember those trying times, that came as a scourge over all the earth, have some realization of what a world-wide depression can be like. Terrible as were those evil days, there is every reason to believe that they were child's play compared to that tribulation which is now brewing. From the last great depression there was a period of recovery, but there will be no true recovery from that which is to come. The great world antichrist dictator, which is to come before the end of the age, will for a time bring about a spurious and phoney prosperity, but it, too, will collapse at the coming of the Prince of peace.

There was a time in Germany when a whole wheelbarrow full of marks was scarcely sufficient to buy a cup of coffee. There was a time in France when it took thousands of francs to buy a tank of gasoline. There was a time in America when the old continental dollar was so worthless that creditors would hide from their debtors who wished to pay their debts in that worthless currency. All these things were but the beginning of sorrows, but we are soon to see the day when the rich men of the earth will wake up and find their millions utterly worthless. Their gold and silver will be cankered and as useless as the dirt in the street.

Terrible as these things are, there is no need for alarm in the heart of any saint of God — no need of alarm, I say, only true understanding and godly concern. Jesus told us to rejoice when we saw these things coming, not because we were to be flippant and careless and unconcerned, but because we know that the collapse of this present world order is the trumpet call proclaiming the setting up of that wonderful kingdom which shall never be destroyed, a kingdom over which Christ and the Sons of God shall reign, a kingdom promised from the very beginning of time. "I will give unto you a kingdom," Jesus said, and that kingdom shall have fully come when this present confusion is ended. When the sun goes down with a flaming ray and the sky is red, we say it will be fair weather tomorrow. It is the eventide of this present world order. The sky is red as the sun is setting on this evil age, and the very redness of the sky in this awful hour is clearly telling us that the kingdom of God is at hand. The signs of the times are explaining to all who will hear that His coming is near, yea, even at the doors. There will be a rainbow round about the throne very soon to signify that the deluge of man's iniquity is over, the flood is past and the tribulation is gone. We who love God know that these things will surely come to pass and nothing can thwart them and no devil can find power in heaven or earth or under the earth to prevent them.

Again the voice of God is calling over the din of this world's final calamity, "Lift up your heads and rejoice." Again the blessed voice of Jesus is saying to His own, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

It may be, dear child of God that you will not like what I shall say now. If you disagree, I have no quarrel with you. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. For many years I, with millions of others, adhered strongly to what may be called the rapture theory, a doctrine which teaches that all God's people are going to be taken out of this world by a rapture - that is, they are all going to be caught up into heaven and will not be here at all while the great and terrible tribulation period is upon the earth. Now there is no question that there will be a catching up, for the scripture has said, "We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall

we ever be with the Lord." I know all the arguments there are to substantiate this doctrine and for years I faithfully taught them all, but as time has passed, I have become more and more convinced that there is much misunderstanding concerning this rapture theory.

One day, when our Lord was telling His disciples about the end of the age and spoke of the great tribulation that was coming upon the earth, He made these definite statements: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." **Matt. 24:21-22.** The question I wish to ask is simply this: What are the elect doing in the tribulation? If they were all previously caught up to heaven, as so many affirm that they will be, then why must the days of the tribulation be shortened for the elect's sake? The thing really does not make much sense, does it? We must conclude, then, that there must be a great misunderstanding as to the meaning of this catching up.

The three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace were living types of the elect of God as they will be preserved through the fires of the tribulation. The fire will not hurt them and the Son of God, who was with those blessed three, will be with us also. The elect will be right here in the world, yet they will be caught up to a new realm of spiritual glory and power, a realm where nothing of the earth can really harm them. Daniel was thrown into the den of ravening lions because of his faithfulness to God, but because he lived in a heavenly realm far above all his associates, the roaring lions became as docile as domestic kittens in his presence. It is quite possible that he stroked their manes and listened with pleasure to their mighty purring throughout the night when angels came to shut their mouths, yet these same lions tore his enemies to pieces before they could fall to the bottom of the pit.

The apostle Paul knew the glory of being caught up. He said he was caught up to the third heaven; but remember this: When he was caught up into God's presence, he was actually right here on the earth. He never left the ground for a minute, and thus I think it will be for all God's elect people. They will be in the fire, but never feel it. They will be in the lion's den, but find no hurt. Yea, they will be like Noah, who rode through the great waters of the flood, but came down on the other side to people a glorious new age, which in our case will be the age of the kingdom. The man child of Revelation 12:5 was caught up to the throne of God, but in verse six we see them feeding the woman in the wilderness. I frankly admit that I am by no means sure just what the wisdom of God has planned in this regard. Things concerning the end of the age have always been shrouded in mystery, but it is the blessed prerogative of every saint of God to so live in His presence that, whatsoever wonder He has purposed for His people, they will be found in Him, ready, waiting, and watching for His coming. Therefore, should He call at the cockcrowing, in the morning, at noon, or in the evening, we shall be found ready and waiting to enter with gladness and rejoicing into His wonderful presence with fullness of joy.

This age is not going to end in a world-wide revival as some seem to believe. There will be a remnant saved, but that is all. There will be a mighty turning to God during the great tribulation, but that turning to God will be mainly among Christians whose robes have become soiled with the filth of Babylon's harlotry. These will be purged and made white during the awful fires of the tribulation, which they will not escape but endure. These saints will be the innumerable throng whom John saw standing about the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb ...And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." **Rev. 7:9, 10, 13, 14.**

The end of the age and the second coming of Christ are to be preceded by many signs of great importance and significance. A man is a fool indeed if he pays no heed to the wonders, which are sent to warn the people who dwell on the earth that the Lord's coming is at hand. Our Lord once said, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" **Matt. 16:3.** Men are very wise in their own generation, but they seem to be awfully dull in any sort of spiritual understanding. It is not hard to understand why men in centuries past did not give heed to the signs about them. That was because the Spirit of God was not bringing these wonders to their attention. It is true we have always had wars and famines, but our Lord made it plain that these signs would greatly increase as we come to the end of the age and to such an extent

that there could be no mistaking them. He told us there would be false christs. It has been a shocking wonder to find in our day both men and women openly saying, "I am Christ." One would not expect to find women saying, "I am Christ," but they are doing so. In the face of the warnings of scripture one would not expect any to be deceived by such impostors as these, but it is amazing to find how many become their avid and faithful disciples. The warnings of God mean nothing at all to such people. They just go right on believing as deception dictates.

In my articles concerning the white horse of Revelation six, I have described some of the awful persecution endured by God's people in ages past, but I think there is every reason to believe that a persecution of unheard of proportions will come during the tribulation years. Those dreadful fires will be the means by which saints with defiled garments will have them washed clean. Persecution always contains the fearful but wonderful aspect that it separates the wheat from the chaff, divides the sheep from the goats and the false from the true. It separates between the genuine and the pretender so that nothing is left that is unreal or impure.

In the world at this moment we see the abominable spectacle of children being disobedient to their parents. This rebellion has reached the stage where it is no longer mere disobedience but outright hatred, and in millions of cases there is no reason for such a circumstance to exist. It is true that there are parents who are completely unworthy of the name. Rebellion in this instance is bad enough and unnecessary. The thing that staggers the mind, however, is the sight of children who have come from excellent homes, where love and harmony reigned supreme, carrying their senseless rebellion to the point of actual hatred, doing all manner of evil to ruin their own lives in hope of bringing harm and loss to parents who loved them. Jesus foretold the evil day when the household would be divided; and that evil day has come. He spoke of a time in which children would betray their parents and cause them to be put to death. He also spoke of parents who would betray their children, and these things we are now beginning to see. This condition will become much worse as time goes by. When religious persecution becomes such that no man can buy or sell without the mark of the beast, then we will know what it means for children to betray their parents and parents to betray their children unto death.

Our Lord spoke of fearful sights that would come upon the world in the last days - of blood and fire and vapor of smoke. He prophesied of dreadful earthquakes, one of which John saw in his revelation, so terrible and of such vast proportions as the world has never seen. Our Lord told us that famines would stalk the earth, and we are now beginning to see these in all their stark and dreadful reality.

In my opinion the Bible gives abundant proof that the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America are brother nations, direct descendants of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, respectively. Let us never forget the ancient wonder that in the universal famine that gripped the world when Joseph was in Egypt it was Joseph who possessed the corn to feed the starving world. It is God's grace and kindness that today these two sons of Joseph possess eighty percent of the wealth of the earth and are the biggest suppliers of wheat for the world. The Bible says there will be famines in the last day - famines of such terrible proportions that they will snuff out the lives of one-third of the people. The population planners need no longer worry their unspiritual heads about world-burgeoning population, for before the end of this age two-thirds of it will be wiped out by famine, war, and pestilence, and except those dreadful days are shortened, no flesh shall be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Our Lord told of plagues and pestilence that would come on the earth and terrible sores that would break out on man and beast. Most of those who read are aware that already new varieties of plague and disease are breaking out faster than medical science can begin to cope with them. It will not be long before we see dreadful plagues on earth so consuming as to swallow up untold millions of earth's inhabitants. The epidemic of Spanish influenza, in which fifty million people died, will seem mild in comparison to the plagues that are coming as the age draws to a close.

Before the children of Israel entered into the Holy Land, Moses, the man who spoke to God face-to-face and mouth-to-mouth, gave them detailed instructions as to what their future would be. Warning them of evils that would overtake them should they turn to other gods and cease from serving the Lord, he said, "Cursed shall thou be in the city, and cursed shall thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of the body, and the fruit of thy land, and the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Cursed shall thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shall thou be when thou goest out The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou sellest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me. The Lord will make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until He have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And thy heaven that is over thee shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord will smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shall not prosper in thy ways; and thou shall be only oppressed and spoiled forevermore, and no man will save thee. Thou shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shall build a house, and thou shall not dwell therein: thou shall plant a vineyard, and shall not gather the grapes thereof ... Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto other people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thy hand." Please read Deut. 28:15 to the end of the chapter. These are but a few of the curses pronounced upon the children of Israel for their disobedience to God, and have we not in our day disobeyed God? Nations whose very constitutions were laid in God's truth are now turning to every imaginable rebellion against the Lord, who, when we honored Him, made us great in the earth. Filth in literature, in news media, on radio, on television, on public platform in high places and low places, has become a veritable flood. No longer are the minds of young and old fed upon things that belong to faith and soundness, but upon all that is low and degrading, and for all these errors does the Almighty God now bring the world into the judgment of the great and terrible tribulation.

When one reads of the dire calamities that are coming on the world, injurious disasters recorded in the word of God as they were spoken by Jesus, by the apostles, and in the book of Revelation, we are inclined to think of them simply as the irresistible hand of God, coming to judge the people with fearful vengeance. It is true that these impending calamities are the judgment of God, but if we will pause to consider the matter, we may readily see that each and every dire calamity will come upon mankind through man's own doing. Their own iniquities will correct them, and their own disobedience shall bring judgment upon them. **"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." Jer. 2:19.**

One of the rampant scourges blighting the world today is venereal disease. Why has it become such an uncontrollable plague? Simply because man vainly imagines that God and all His ideas are old-fashioned! Like men bereft of their senses they ignorantly proclaim what they imagine to be a new morality. "Laugh at ma, laugh at pa, give them all the ha, ha!" Laugh at God, laugh at the Bible, laugh at all the old values and defame all morals as Victorian prudishness! And what is the unseemly result? Galloping venereal disease now reaching epidemic proportions in all nations of the world, bringing in its train blindness, madness, heart disease, crippled children, broken homes, and aionian destruction. The man or woman who thinks he can defy God and His law is a fool of fools. No one — absolutely no one — can be as great a fool as he who defies God.

Man imagines himself to be clever with all his sprays, food additives, and his wonder drugs, but all these things are bringing the plagues upon us that are solemnly foretold in God's word. There need be no manifestation of the power of God to bring the plagues and famines of Revelation on the earth, for man himself is preparing the ground work for the death and destruction that is now coming apace. Only a few weeks ago a doctor to whom I was speaking helplessly shook his head and said, "They are putting so many things into foods that we just don't know how to cope with it." Elements foreign to the body and detrimental to health are being accumulated in ever increasing amounts in land and air and water, and it will not be long before they bring the dreadful plagues of Revelation upon the whole earth. Even the prophecy of Peter — **"the earth shall melt with fervent heat" — could be fulfilled by man's own evil doing, and indeed it may be, should God permit it. Therefore "thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." Jer. 2: 19.**

Some fifty years ago Dr. Benjamin Spock cursed the earth with his teaching of self-expression. Children, according to him, should not be corrected nor given any kind of punishment. The result of this teaching is that the world is seething with every imaginable disorder. Disobedience and confusion is everywhere. Not only does it corrupt and destroy the homes of our country, but because of the selfishness caused by this wickedness the whole earth is in a turmoil of strikes, lockouts, walkouts, slowdowns, and now in ever increasing fury violence is being used to force decisions in favor of the rebellious. The kidnapping of company presidents and high officials is almost a weekly occurrence and, when the police catch up with the criminals, the law refuses to punish them and allows them to go free. And now, after the world is filled with rebellion and disorder, Dr. Spock publicly admits that his doctrine of self-expression was a grievous error and also helplessly admits that it is now too late to do anything about it. Indeed it is too late, because the boys and girls who grew up under that God-defying error are now the leaders of the world. Because they were never disciplined themselves, they have no will or understanding to discipline the wicked or the unlawful. Thus the momentum toward judgment increases as the whole world rushes in darkness toward the final great tribulation when a wicked super-dictator will bring all things under his control so that none can buy or sell without his abominable mark.

In the dark days of the American War of Independence, in the year 1777, George Washington, the father of the American Republic, was given a vision of its future from that time down to the end of this present age, and in my opinion he was finally seeing the beginning of the kingdom age. True prophecy may be judged by whether or not it came to pass. Since, therefore, up to the present all his vision has been fulfilled, I feel no need of hesitation in believing the remainder of it. As the number of people who have read this account is comparatively few, I am taking the liberty to quote it here as it was given, trusting it will help us all to see how close we are to the end of this present age. The following account was given by Anthony Sherman, July 4, 1859, before the Civil War.

"The last time I ever saw Anthony Sherman was on the Fourth of July, 1859, in Independence Square. He was then ninety-nine years old. His dimming eyes rekindled as he gazed upon Independence hall, which he came to visit once more. 'I want to tell you an incident of Washington's life — one which no one alive knows except myself; and, if you live, you will before long see it verified.' "

He said, "From the opening of the Revolution we experienced all phases of fortune, good and ill. The darkest period we ever had, I think, was when Washington, after several reverses, retreated to Valley Forge where he resolved to pass the winter of 1777. Ah! I have often seen the tears coursing down our commander's cheeks as he would be conversing with a confidential officer about the condition of his poor soldiers. You have doubtless heard the story of Washington's going to the thicket to pray. Well, he also used to pray to God in secret for aid and comfort.

"One day — I remember it well — the chilly winds whistled through the leafless trees, though the sky was cloudless and the sun shone brightly. He remained in his quarters nearly all the afternoon, alone. When he came out, I noticed that his face was a shade paler than usual, and there seemed to be something on his mind of more than ordinary importance. Returning just after dusk, he dispatched an orderly to the quarters of the officer I mention, who was presently in attendance. After a preliminary conversation of about half an hour, Washington, gazing upon his companion with that strange look of dignity, which he alone could command, said to the latter:

"I do not know whether it is owing to the anxiety of my mind, or what, but this afternoon, preparing a dispatch, something seemed to disturb me. Looking up, I beheld, standing opposite me, a singularly beautiful being. So astonished was I, for I had given strict orders not to be disturbed, that it was some moments before I found language to inquire the cause of the visit. A second, a third, and even a fourth time did I repeat my question, but received no answer from my mysterious visitor, except a slight raising of the eyes. By this time I felt strange sensations spreading through me, and I would have risen, but the riveted gaze of the being before me rendered volition impossible. I assayed once more to speak, but my tongue had become useless, as though it had become paralyzed. A new influence, mysterious, potent, irresistible, took possession. All I could do was gaze steadily, vacantly at my unknown visitor. Gradually the surrounding atmosphere seemed as though

becoming filled with sensations, and grew luminous. Everything about me seemed to rarefy, including the mysterious visitor.

"I began to feel as one dying, or rather to experience the sensations which I have sometimes imagined accompany dissolution. I did not think, I did not reason, I did not move; all were alike impossible. I was only conscious of gazing fixedly, vacantly at my companion.

"Presently I heard a voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn,' while at the same time my visitor extended an arm eastwardly. I now beheld a heavy vapor at some distance rising fold upon fold. This gradually dissipated and I looked out upon a strange scene. Before me lay spread out in one vast plain all the countries of the world — Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I saw rolling and tossing between Europe and America the billows of the Atlantic, and between Asia and America lay the Pacific.

" 'Son of the Republic,' said the same mysterious voice as before, 'look and learn!' At that moment I beheld a dark, shadowy being as an angel standing, or rather floating, in mid-air' between Europe and America. Dipping water out of the ocean in the hollow of his hand, he cast some on Europe. Immediately a cloud raised from these countries and joined in mid-ocean. For awhile it remained stationary and then moved slowly westward until it enveloped America in its murky folds. Sharp flashes of lightning gleamed through it at intervals, and I heard smothered groans and cries of the American people. A second time the angel dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it out as before. The dark cloud was then drawn back to the ocean, in whose billows it sank from view.

"A third time I heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn,' and I cast my eyes upon America and beheld villages and towns and cities springing up one after another until the whole land from the Atlantic to the Pacific was dotted with them. Again I heard the mysterious voice say, 'Son of the Republic, the end of the century cometh; look and learn.'

"And this time the dark, shadowy angel turned his face southward, and from Africa I saw an ill-omened specter approach our land. It flitted slowly over every town and city of the latter. The inhabitants presently set themselves in battle against each other. As I continued looking, I saw a bright angel on whose brow rested a crown of light, on which was traced the word 'Union,' bearing the American flag, which he placed between the divided nation, and said, 'Remember, ye are brethren.' Instantly the inhabitants, casting down their weapons, became friends once more, and united under the National Standard.

"Again I heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.' At this the dark, shadowy angel placed a trumpet to his lips and blew three distinct blasts; and taking water from the ocean, he sprinkled it on Europe, Asia and Africa. Then my eyes beheld a fearful scene. From each of these countries arose thick black clouds that were soon joined into one. And throughout this mass there gleamed a dark red light by which I was seeing hordes of armed men who, moving with the cloud, marched by land and sailed by sea to America, which country was enveloped in the volume of cloud. And I dimly saw these vast armies devastate the whole country and burn villages, towns and cities that I beheld springing up.

"As my ears listened to the thundering of the cannon, slashing of swords and the shouts and cries of millions in mortal combat, I again heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.' When the voice had ceased, the dark angel placed his trumpet once more to his mouth, and blew a long and fearful blast. "Instantly a light as of a thousand suns shone down from above me, and pierced and broke into fragments the dark cloud which enveloped America. At the same moment the angel upon whose head shone the word 'Union' and who bore our national flag in one hand and a sword in the other, descended from the heavens, attended by legions of white spirits. These immediately joined the inhabitants of America, whom I perceived were well-nigh overcome but who, immediately taking courage again, closed up their broken ranks and renewed the battle. Again, amid the fearful noise of the conflict, I heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.' As the voice ceased, the shadowy angel for the last time dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it upon America. Instantly the dark cloud rolled back, together with the armies it had brought, leaving the inhabitants of the land victorious.

"Then once more I beheld the villages, towns and cities springing up where I had seen them before, while the bright angel, planting the azure standard he had brought in the midst of them, cried with a loud voice: 'While the stars remain and the heavens send down dew upon the earth, so long shall the Union last. And taking from his brow the crown on which blazoned the word 'Union', he placed it upon the standard while the people, kneeling down, said, 'Amen.'

"The scene instantly began to fade and dissolve, and I at last saw nothing but the rising, curling vapor I at first beheld. This also disappeared, and I found myself once more gazing upon the mysterious visitor who, in the same voice I had heard before, said, 'Son of the Republic, what you have seen is thus interpreted. Three great perils will come upon the Republic. The most fearful is the third, passing which the whole world united shall not prevail against her. Let every child of the Republic learn to live for his God, his land and Union.' With these words the vision vanished, and I started from my seat and felt that I had seen a vision wherein had been shown me the birth, the progress and the destiny of the United States."

"Such, my friends," said the venerable narrator, "were the words I heard from Washington's own lips, and America will do well to profit by them."

It would be presumptuous to add anything to this vision or seek to explain the wrath it foretells, so soon to come upon this part of the world. Nationally we have forsaken the God in whose hand our breath is to live instead after the baseness of the god of this age.

It must have been difficult for Nahum in his day to describe the modern automobile, but describe it he did in the second chapter of the book that bears his name. It must have been hard for Ezekiel to describe our modern air warfare, but he did so very successfully in **Ezekiel 38:9**. "Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee." No doubt George Washington was somewhat bewildered, especially by the last part of his vision, but it appears very clear that what he saw was the awfulness of modern warfare, the coming of the Lord and the subsequent setting up of the kingdom age, all of which without doubt are now very near at hand.

In these troublous times let us lay aside every weight and the abounding sin that does so easily beset us as our hearts continually cry, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

CHAPTER THREE

BE YE LIKE MEN WHO WAIT FOR THEIR LORD

Christ is coming and coming very soon. There can be no doubt about that. To Israel, more than three millenniums ago, the hope of their coming Messiah was the burning prayer and fervent desire of the elect. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, looking with prophetic vision far beyond the first advent of Christ, lifted up his voice to prophesy, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Isaiah wrote of the coming of the Lord, telling of His advent as a suffering Messiah who would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a man from whom we hid our faces, and a redeemer lightly esteemed by those He came to save. God's people Israel were baffled and confused in mind, because they had learned to look only for a Messiah who would come to deliver them from their enemies and from the hand of all who oppressed them. The scriptures plainly taught that a deliverer would come out of Zion. Of this they were confident and assured, but their unregenerate hearts did not know that the first work of the great Redeemer would be to deliver them from the curse of their sins and transform their wicked hearts by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which salvation could only be accomplished by the shedding of His righteous blood and the renewing of the Holy Ghost within them.

What value would it have been had the Redeemer come only to deliver them from the power and authority of Rome if there was to be no change in their wicked and rebellious hearts? God's word is full of accounts of His mighty acts of deliverance on their behalf, but no sooner were they delivered from their enemies than they utterly corrupted themselves and forsook the Lord. God's word records how they had corrupted themselves and defied the authority of Moses, saying, "You take too much upon yourselves," and "We will not have this

man to rule over us." This same Moses had warned them before his death that after his departure they would utterly corrupt themselves. Deut. 31:29. The mighty Joshua had scarcely begun his victorious conquest of the Promised Land when the people fled before their enemies at Ai simply because one of their number had sinned in that he had taken the forbidden thing, hiding a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment in his tent. Joshua 7.

Furthermore, after the death of Joshua they again corrupted themselves and, leaving the worship of the one true God, who had always delivered them from their enemies and who had made them a peculiar people unto Himself, they went a-whoring after Baal to worship him and to make images to that hateful thing in orchards and groves and in the high places. No sooner had they done so than the hand of the Lord God of heaven was against them to deliver them into the hand of their enemies, who enslaved and devastated them. Then in their misery and oppression they cried unto the Lord and He in grace and mercy raised up deliverers such as Barak, Deborah, Gideon, Samuel, and Samson. Yet for all this they corrupted themselves again and again, going after strange gods, marrying heathen wives, and building altars to Baal, Moloch, and Ashtaroth, who could neither see nor hear nor walk.

The book of Judges is a wonderful book. Over and over again it records the loving kindness and tender mercy of God on the one hand and the incredible corruption of the human heart on the other. I must confess that time after time I have closed the book with a feeling of despair bordering on disgust as I have read how the Lord mightily delivered only to be repaid by the same ever-repeated story, "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord;" and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines, or the Ammonites, or the Moabites. (See the book of Judges.)

The corruption of the human heart is beyond belief and it would have been completely useless had the Lord sent His Son to be the deliverer of His people Israel while leaving their wicked hearts unchanged and their carnal natures not destroyed. What good would it be to have a perfect law beautifully written and wonderfully engraved on a table of stone within one's house while the heart of man is deceitful and corrupt and his mind more nearly the mind of a devil than the mind of God? If ever the world is to be ruled in righteousness, then righteousness must first be established within the heart of man and the law of God removed from the cold tablets of stone to be written on the warm tables of the heart.

There must be a new birth, even a birth from above. The wickedness of man demands it. There must be a conversion wherein evil men who once were afar off from God are made nigh by the blood of Christ. The very well-spring of that conversion must be a birth from above by which a new heart and a new spirit are placed within the believer. Therefore Jesus, when He appeared on the world scene, came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and the first word of that gospel is this: **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. 4:17,** for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Cor. 7:10.

The whole problem with Israel as a nation in Old Testament times was that they were unconverted. While they willingly made covenants with God and swore allegiance and obedience to Him, their hearts were not changed. There was no birth from above. All the while they were forcing themselves to do God's bidding, their unregenerate hearts were wandering after Baal or Ashtaroth or Mammon, because these gods catered to their flesh and to every abomination that is common to the human heart. They did not serve the Lord because their hearts were not attuned to a life of holiness, which begins when Jesus comes into the heart. The same condition still exists all about us in the realm of the unregenerate and unconverted people who go to what they call "church." With their lips they serve the Lord, but their hearts are far from Him. They sing, "Holy, holy, holy," while their hearts dream of business and pleasure and oft times unholy things. The first essential step in the life of any man is briefly stated in these words: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

There can be much hypocrisy in singing. As one has well stated, we sing, "Sweet hour of prayer," and content ourselves with five or ten minutes. We sing, "O for a thousand tongues to sing my Saviour's praise," and don't use the one we have. We sing, "There shall be showers of blessing," but don't come in when it is raining. We sing, "Blest be the tie that binds," and let the least little offense sever us. We sing, "Serve the Lord with gladness," and complain about every little thing we do. We sing, "I love to tell the story," but never mention it to

our friends. We sing, "Cast your burden on the Lord," and worry ourselves into a nervous breakdown. We sing, "O day of rest and gladness," and wear ourselves out traveling for pleasure. We sing, "Throw out the life line," but content ourselves by throwing out the fishing line.

I do not mean to be sarcastic or derisive, but the sooner we learn that the human heart is utterly corrupt the sooner we will come to the fountain of His blood for cleansing that there through the grace of Christ we might be soundly converted and our spirits born anew from above. It is a wonderful blessing to be raised in a Christian home, but even there the hidden danger sometimes lurks that children may grow up, hearing wonderful truth from childhood yet never themselves having the blessed personal experience of sins forgiven or a personal knowledge of regeneration. What good would it have been had the Saviour come to Israel to deliver them from their Roman oppressors if He had left their hearts unchanged? They would no sooner have been delivered from their enemies than they would have turned back to heathen gods and to the lusts of their own flesh as they did in the days of Samuel and the judges. Is not this what the unregenerate are doing now? Do they not worship Mammon, the god of riches? Are they not lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God? Do men not worship the god of self and the god of sport and the god of lust and sex? No wonder the Lord said, "Ye draw nigh to Me with your lips, but your heart is far from Me." How well did James proclaim, "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded."

The first and most essential thing is this: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that you may be saved, for what shall it profit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul? There is no price that man can give in exchange for his soul. What America and England and all these nations must do is repent of their sins that they might be saved. Then would the Lord deliver them from all that oppress them? When Great Britain served God and honored Him in all their doings, the sun never set upon her Empire. When America honored the Lord in her Congress and in her schools, she was in truth the land of the free and the home of the brave. But now God is dishonored. His laws are broken down. Punishment of crime is delayed, then forgotten altogether. Homosexuals are interviewed on TV as acceptable people. Nations from the far east are permitted to bring in their heathen gods and to build temples to these shameful idols, religions that have brought only poverty and misery to all who follow them. They are allowed to build temples to their sightless, speechless, grotesque gods while their priests are permitted to teach our children to turn away from the living Christ unto gods that are dead and have never lived. Cursed be their idols, for they speak not, neither do they hear.

All these things demonstrate as nothing else can how desperately the human heart needs regeneration by the washing of the blood of Christ and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which God has freely given to all who believe. Without the power of regeneration, that renewing Spirit of Christ, we can never hope for anything more than continual backsliding and falling away from God. No matter how well we have been brought up, we must have a personal experience of the new birth. We must be saved from our sins. "They shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The coming of the Lord draweth nigh; there can be no possible doubt about that. We only weary our souls by continually repeating the many signs of His coming - signs of which Jesus said, **"When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."** **Luke 21:28.** The whole world is now a fermenting mass of corruption. Few people are worthy of any confidence or trust. Politicians make solemn promises, but make little or no effort to keep them. The leaders of the church system cannot be trusted. Their programs, supposedly for the good of mankind, are very often cleverly devised schemes for personal gain. We are living in an hour when parents betray their children and children rise up against their parents. We can scarcely expect, therefore, to find faith and trust in anyone.

In the midst of all the violence and war, the cheating and lying, drugs and sex, the filth of homosexuals and lesbians, and the prevalence of every imaginable false cult and religion, there still remains a people in the earth who are undefiled before God. They are a people who have repented of sin and every work of the flesh. They have burned their idols of wood and stone and gold. The symbols of the world and all that is in it - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life - they have put away, with all malice and greed. They are done with the goddess of illicit sex, the god of Mammon, the craze of sport. With Christ, their victorious head, they have died to the desires of the flesh and of the mind. No longer do they crave to be possessors of earthly treasure. They are a people who have fixed their hopes in Christ the Lord. They have come to Him through the

open gate of repentance and their godly sorrow has worked repentance unto salvation that needs not to be repented of. The sorrow of the world that works naught but death is far from them. Their ransomed hearts cry not for the trinkets and tinsel of the world, but their prayer ascends to God day and night, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." They are like men and women who **"wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."** **Luke 12: 36,37.**

From time immemorial the Lord has reserved a people for Himself. He always has a people for His name. These people are never more than a little flock. At no time can they be numbered in millions. In the days of Enoch there was scarcely any who walked with God. In the days of Noah he alone was found righteous in his generation. In the days of Abraham all Babylon was gone after their idols, and when Elijah was witnessing before the idolatrous house of Israel, he was told of seven thousand others who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, a small number indeed when compared to the multitudes of that nation. Though Jesus preached to multitudes and countless thousands were blessed by His ministry, it was to a very small number He spoke the words, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Even so it is today. The Lord has a people still. One may as well try to stop the sun from shining by day or the moon by night as to extinguish the light of this handful of elect people in whose hearts the Lord dwells.

Have you ever read the words of David when he spoke of that great day of blessedness to come, even the kingdom of Christ? He said, **"There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass."** **Psa. 72:16.** That handful of corn on the top of the mountains is God's elect people. Then **"His name shall endure forever; and His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who doeth wondrous things."** **Verses 17-18.**

Everyone of us at some time has waited patiently or impatiently for the arrival of someone we knew was coming. How vivid in my recollection are the numberless times in our pioneer prairie home when we would watch and wait and listen for the sound of the wagon wheels that told us someone was coming home. Only those pioneers who in bygone years moved out into the great prairie vastness can appreciate the conditions as they were then when hardy settlers pushed one hundred miles or more beyond the end of the railroad. There were no roads then - only wagon trails across the vast prairie landscape. There were no automobiles to bridge the endless expanse of miles. Lowing oxen at a snail's pace turned the furrows one by one and he who had a team of horses possessed the utmost speed. There were no radios, no telephones, nor any modern convenience. They were difficult days, but good days. Wonderful beyond words! I am forever thankful that I was raised among them. Then neighbors were neighbors and friends were friends, more so when one was in need than at any other time. There were no doctors within miles; neither was there much sickness that a good dose of Watkin's liniment would not cure. In all those pioneer years I never met nor heard tell of an insecure child, a divorce, or a broken home.

Often times it was necessary for some member of the family to take the team and wagon, or in the winter the bobsleigh, and go to the village for groceries and mail. How often have I gone to the door and listened through the unbelievable stillness for the sound of the wagon wheels coming in the distance or the sound of the sleigh bells in the frosty air! There was no way to know just when they would arrive, but they would never get closer than a mile or so before I could hear them coming. Then the lantern was lit, the teakettle put over the fire, and all was ready to receive the weary traveler home. Thus Jesus said that we who live in these last days should be like men that wait for their Lord. Let your loins be girded and your lights burning. Luke 12:35.

In the long dark night that has enshrouded the earth since our Lord went away, the elect have been God's lights in the world. **"Ye are the light of the world,"** said Jesus. **"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."** **Matt. 5:14.** It is a wondrous thing that Jesus, who Himself is the light of the world, should deem it good during His absence to place His elect as lights of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. It is no small wonder that He instructed His people, saying, "Keep your lamps burning." Anyone who had had anything to do with a kerosene lamp will surely remember that two things were necessary, and that continually, if there was to be any light at all. First the lamp must be filled with oil, and, secondly, the wick must be trimmed as often as

necessary. If there is no oil, the lamp will go out. If the lamp is not trimmed, it will smoke and give a very inferior light. The oil here represents the Holy Spirit in our lives and the wick represents ourselves. We can never have light without the Spirit and the Spirit cannot shine unless we are trimmed. All is darkness without Him. Even the attempt to preach the word of God is darkness and death when the Spirit is not present. **"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.** These are the faithful words of our Lord Jesus Christ as He stood teaching the people. We cannot give forth light without the presence of the Spirit within; neither can we receive light unless the Spirit of God reveals it unto us. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." But we have received, not the spirit of the world, but that Spirit which is of God that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and Jesus Christ returns with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, it is the Spirit who will make alive our mortal bodies. Just as steel responds to the pull of a magnet, so the elect will respond to the pull of the Spirit when the dead are raised incorruptible and we are all changed into His likeness. I am among those foolish people who believe that the body that was sown (buried) in corruption is also the body that will be raised in glory, and I think I see at least one scripture to indicate that even in the dead bodies of the elect and believing saints there may yet remain some trace of the Spirit of God.

Long centuries ago Elijah threw his mantle around the shoulder of Elisha and immediately the Spirit came upon this plowman who was to be anointed in Elijah's room. And, when Elisha made request of Elijah, his request was that he might have a double portion of the same blessed Spirit that was on Elijah. The request was granted and Elisha did receive a double portion of Elijah's Spirit. After performing double the number of miracles and signs and wonders that Elijah had done, Elisha died and was buried. On a certain day, when war raged in Israel and the warriors were burying a dead soldier, they saw the enemy coming. With haste they cast the dead man into Elisha's tomb, whereupon the dead body, falling upon the bones of Elisha, came forth from the grave alive. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. Therefore even those dead that sleep in Jesus will respond to the Spirit of the Lord when He descends from heaven and will come forth, not in corruption, but in incorruption; not in mortality, but in immortality. God's people are not immortal at the present time, but they will without a doubt put on immortality at the coming of the Lord. They are not incorruptible at the present time, but when the trumpet sounds, the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

The Spirit today is teaching us how great is the necessity of passing our lives here in constant communion with the Holy Spirit. Many who once were baptized with the Spirit are now walking in emptiness. How often I shake my head in utter sadness when someone writes me a long letter, telling of the waywardness and wickedness of some backslidden relative only to hurriedly add, "Of course, they are Spirit-filled." How can you believe such utter nonsense as that? The Spirit of God does not dwell in reprobate people. There was a time when the Spirit of God came upon King Saul and God gave him another heart, 1 Sam. 10:5-9, but because he later walked in envy and strife, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him and an evil spirit began to trouble him. When homosexuals and lesbians sing, "We're filled with the Spirit, there isn't a doubt," they speak the truth, but the spirit with which they are filled is not the Spirit of God, but the spirit of the devil and of antichrist. Every homosexual in the world should read the first chapter of Romans. Then he would know he has been abandoned by God and is now possessed of an evil spirit. No homosexual is saved. How then can he have the Spirit of the Lord?

So we must keep ourselves filled with the Spirit if we are to shine as lights in the world. Phil. 2:5. God Himself is the Father of lights. With Him there is no shadow of turning. Not only is there no shadow of turning, but with Him there is no shadow. The light that shines from His glorious self shines brightly from within, leaving no place dark or any gloomy shadows of doubt anywhere. His light fills the whole house, bringing springtime and morning and warmth of the whole being of man, "and now no condemnation abides to turn away my soul from His salvation. He's in my heart to stay." It is not a difficult thing to remain filled with the Spirit. It is simply a matter of walking in light and the Holy Spirit is light. It is not difficult to be led by the Spirit. All it requires is a complete surrender to Him and a lifetime of walking softly before Him. It is not necessary to be always "putting out the fleece" that we might know the mind of God. The leading of the Spirit of God encompasses our entire pilgrimage. Our Father in heaven has many ways by which His unseen hand leads us into His will. Dark calamities that come like evil specters into our lives are very often the hand of the Spirit, irresistibly pushing us

in the direction He wants us to go and working together for good to them that love God. The awful calamity that overtook Joseph when he was sold into Egypt by his brethren was later known by him to have been the hand of God, sending him to be a mighty deliverer to his people. The calamities, which overtook Paul when he was cast into prison and securely shut up so that he could no longer travel or preach among the churches, have proved to be of greatest blessing to the church of later years. It was through Paul's imprisonments that we have been given the finest of his epistles. And so it happens to us all. God is standing in the shadows, keeping watch amid the dark travail of our souls. He is with us in the den, shutting the mouths of lions, and in the fiery furnace He is loosing our bands. If men would but believe that God is with them in their trouble, they would find that through the turmoil He was leading His people to His desired haven, to blessing and deliverance.

When I speak thus of tribulation, I am referring to men and women who have committed their lives to God and are trusting Him. I am not speaking of those ungodly persons who through their own wickedness add sin-to-sin, trouble to trouble, and sorrow to sorrow. The way of the transgressor is hard and his own wickedness will correct him, but those who put their trust in the Lord may walk assured that He will be with them in trouble. He will strengthen and uphold them with the right hand of His own righteousness. His righteousness is Christ; therefore it is by His hand that you will be upheld.

We mentioned above how Jesus Christ instructed us to keep our lamps burning, and saw how light requires the oil of the Holy Spirit. We are further told that our lamps must be kept trimmed. Now trimming concerns not the oil, but the wick, and I would certainly think that the wick has something in common with ourselves rather than the Spirit. Be there ever so much oil in the vessel, if the wick be untrimmed, there will be a smoky light that grows increasingly dimmer the longer it remains untrimmed. Therefore, it is our God-given duty to trim off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of our mouths. We must lie not one to another, seeing we have put off the old man with his deeds. A thorough searching of the New Testament, together with the Proverbs and Psalms, will do wonders in showing a Christian how to trim his lamp so that his light may shine brightly in the world. I am convinced that there is much more to being a Christian than giving one's testimony, good as that may be. Those who are born of God and walking with Him are soon recognized by the world. It is not long before worldly men behold their chaste conversation, which is coupled with the fear of God. **"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."** Rom. **12:9-11**. A slothful man is brother to a great waster. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee, lest thou be turned aside to follow in the way of the foolish.

Above all we must deliver ourselves from the Babylon system. **"Come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."** **2 Cor. 6:17,18**. We are living in the day when the cry, **"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird,"** Rev. 18:2, is a reality. There was a day when Babylon was riding high, as indeed she seems to be now, but her end is at hand, and nothing can help her. All the frantic moves toward church union and renewal are building her up for a great fall. The Ecumenical Movement, the Charismatic Movement, the moves of the World Council of Churches toward Rome, the Jesus Freaks, the hobnobbing of the church system with heathen religions and Judaism, and the devilish trend toward the ordaining of homosexuals and lesbians to the ministry is proof of her terrible fall. The whole thing is a seething mass of corruption, a boiling pot of iniquity, upon which the wrath of God shall presently be outpoured. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, **"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,"** for strong is the Lord that judgeth her.

The Lord God of heaven is calling loud and clear today to all His elect people, requiring that they leave religious Babylon and walk with Him. But I will add yet another fact. In my opinion even now the Lord is beginning to call His people to abandon Babylon's temporal and political system. Not only is the church system falling. The governments of the world system are falling one by one. They are literally disintegrating before our very eyes. Make no mistake about that. The clay feet of Daniel's image are eroding away in the floods and tempests of this present hour. The mighty British Commonwealth, once representing almost a billion people, has fallen into irretrievable decay. Our brother nation, the United States of America, is collapsing beneath her own enormous weight as fraud, deceit, love of pleasure, love of wealth and luxury, greed and debauchery erode her very foundation and make null and void the beauty of her God-given constitution.

It may be said with certainty that, when the patriarch Jacob called his sons to his bedside, saying "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days," **Gen. 49:1**, he was definitely speaking of the days in which we now live, for these are in truth and in fact the last days. All these twelve sons were to become nations, Gen. 17:5, 16;48: 19, and if we read carefully Jacob's prophetic utterance as recorded in Genesis, chapters forty-eight and forty-nine, with a little research we can identify most of the tribes of Israel as they exist as nations in our day. The existence of Ephraim and Manasseh is indisputable. Gen. 48:19. Wonderful as were the prophecies given to these twelve sons, none of them compares to the prophecies given to the two sons of Joseph, whom Jacob adopted as his own. Gen. 48:5,6. So, laying his right hand on the head of Ephraim, he said that his seed would become a multitude of nations. Gen. 48:19. And to Manasseh he said that he would become a great nation. Verse 49. The word multitude here used in the King James version is translated by some as commonwealth, and indeed Paul uses the term commonwealth of Israel in Ephesians 2:12. There is only one Commonwealth of Nations in all the world. Indeed, only one Commonwealth of Nations has ever existed in this world. There have been many empires, but none of them except the British Empire ever became a company of self-governing nations. Furthermore, there is only one company of nations who has a brother nation that can be called a great nation and that great nation is the United States of America or Ephraim's brother Manasseh. Once we understand that the ten supposedly lost tribes of Israel were predestined by God to become the great free nations of the world, then I affirm that three-quarters of the entire Bible takes on new meaning and the hidden mysteries so often spoken by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets begin to unravel themselves.

If I believed, as many do, that God was no longer concerned with His people Israel, then I would not take space here to mention them, but Paul removed all doubt from our minds concerning God's love for His holy people when he asked, "Hath God cast away His people?" and then emphatically answered his own question by saying, "God forbid; for I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew." **Rom. 11:1-2**. It may come as a surprise to many to learn that the word British comes from two Hebrew words - brith meaning covenant and ish meaning people. Thus the word British means covenant people, or the people with whom God made His covenant.

Now in our times we are seeing the collapse of these two mighty powers. England is broke financially, her empire dissolved, and her leaders completely out of touch with reality. The United States will be five hundred billion dollars in debt this year. They expect unemployment to reach eight or nine million. Scarcity is looming everywhere in the midst of plenty. The greatest depression in the history of the world is in the making and it will grow worse for many months. The sinister feature about all this is that all this distress is being deliberately connived behind the scenes by great financial interests whose purpose is to bring the nation to ruin.

I have stated these things to emphasize the following fact: The downfall of these two mighty Israelitish powers, Great Britain and the United States, is the greatest proof that we are now in the dying moments of this age and the kingdom of God is at hand. When Daniel with great desire sought the Lord for the meaning of his visions, he was told, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth forever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." What does the Lord mean when He expresses Himself thus - "to scatter the power of the holy people? In my opinion I can see only one true answer to the question, and it is this: The great Israel nations, which in God's sight are the holy people because they are covenant people, will in the last days have all their might and power taken from them and scattered as the dust of the summer threshing floor. The fearful disintegration of the Anglo-Saxon nations will continue to the end of the great tribulation, when Christ shall come with His elect to set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.

I know that some of these things may seem drastically new, but they really are not new at all. The problem is that our Christian lives have been so humbugged with Romish tradition, to which we adhere with complete

docility, that God can never show us anything new at all. If I live to be a thousand years old, I shall never forget the admonition of my dear instructor, Elmer Hoff, who said, "The moment you say no, you close the door for God to teach you anything." So let us keep the door of our heart open, and little by little the Spirit will instruct us in the mighty mysteries of the great God of heaven. Be like men that wait for their Lord. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. Many times in God's word we are instructed to watch. Indeed, the Lord has made us like watchmen upon a wall, but in this case we are not looking for the coming of an enemy, but the coming of Christ, the exalted Head of His own body. It is improbable that Jesus meant we should stand by our window, looking for His coming, but it is our God-given duty to watch for the ever, increasing procession of signs that herald the coming of the Lord. The sign of the scattering of the power of the holy people is a tremendous- sign that the end is upon us, and when that scattering is complete, the Lord will undoubtedly come. I may be wrong, but I shall be surprised indeed if we pass this decade before we see the literal coming of the Lord and the end of the age. Should you ask an answer to this hope, I can only reply that there are certain things I am watching, and as they come to pass one by one, there is much greater assurance that the end of the age is not many months away.

It is a singular thing that several times in the word of God the coming of the Lord is likened to the coming of a thief in the night. Peter vividly describes the sudden end of this age in these words: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat..." **2 Pet. 3:10**. It is much more than a matter of passing interest to know that the very things mentioned in this verse are things which can now be accomplished with hydrogen bombs — the melting elements, the fervent heat, the great noise, and the burning up of the works of man. But all this must come to pass that a kingdom may be set up which will never be destroyed.

In like manner Jesus also described His coming as the coming of a thief when He said, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good-man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." **Matt. 24:42,43**. Paul also likened the coming of the Lord to the coming of a thief. "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." **1 Thess. 5:1-4**. Here the Holy Spirit tells us a wonderful thing; first, that the coming of the Lord is to be as unexpected as the coming of a thief. Secondly, he gives us a definite sign for which we should watch, that is, "when they shall say, peace and safety," a thing we hear with ever increasing frequency, then sudden destruction comes upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others: but let us watch and be sober." **Verses 4-6**.

The ever increasing signs are God's messengers to His people, warning them that the greatest events of all history are about to take place - the end of man's six days of labor and misrule, the coming of the King of kings, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the setting up of the kingdom that shall never be destroyed. We cannot expect the world to understand these things, for the Spirit has said, "None of the wicked shall understand." Yet amid their darkness and lack of understanding even the world of the unsaved is in fear and trembling, knowing in themselves that some great event of world, shaking proportions is about to take place. "Many shall be purified and made white and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." **Dan. 12:10**. The things which were sealed to Daniel were sealed unto the time of the end, but they are opening their secrets to the wise now in our day, and we clearly see these things are being fulfilled.

When the disciples asked to be told the signs of the end of the age, Jesus left no doubt as to what those signs would be. He told them, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not." **Matt. 24:21-26.**

These are but a few of the many signs the word of God gives us, but I am certain that almost every Christian on earth has become conversant with the many signs spoken of by the Lord and His apostles and prophets that tell us there will be foul weather in the intervening days that precede the kingdom of God. What better exhortation can we have, therefore, than this: Be ye like men that wait for their Lord.

CHAPTER FOUR UNTO THEM THAT LOOK

We are drawing very near to the end of the age. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. It is much nearer than we think and probably much different than we think. In the years that have passed many theories and doctrines have been formed concerning the coming of Christ, most of which, I fear, were the product of the natural mind and had little to do with the actual truth. The further we go with God the more we realize how little truth we have really known, and we realize, too, that the little we have known or thought we knew has hindered us from going on to the fullness and the glory of the coming of the Lord.

When our Lord came to earth some two thousand years ago, the scribes, Pharisees, and doctors of the law had their stereotyped doctrines and theories about the coming Messiah, but, when the King finally came, His coming was so contrary to their set theories that they did not recognize Him at all. The idea of the King of Israel's being born in a manger was nonsense to them. The idea that he was to be lifted up on a cross was an even greater stumbling-stone. They were not in the least prepared to accept or receive any of these things because such things were contrary to all their preconceived ideas. So they gave their word against Him and hung Him on a cross saying, "Let His blood be upon us and upon our children." But the tradition of the church today is even more involved than the traditions of Israel. For centuries Christians have talked of the second coming of Christ. They have filled books with arguments about how and when and for whom He will come, but I fear that, when He does come, many will never know a thing about it, or, if they do, they will reject Him because He will not have come in accordance with their theories.

There are a number of scriptures that I would like to consider with you. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, there will be little need of explanation. First of all, however, there are a few things we should try to grasp and a few things we should let go.

No doubt there is a place for sound doctrine, but how good it would be if we could realize that doctrines as we know them are only articles of faith that have been set forth by certain sects for their people to accept and believe. Most of us imbibed the doctrines of the sect among whom we first believed. Doctrine that is set forth in this manner is not true doctrine. It is likely to have a fragment of truth but at best be only in part. It was likely living and real to the man to whom it was first revealed, but his successors merely received it as a tradition and it meant little or nothing to them and changed their lives not a whit. Doctrine that is not progressive in its scope is valueless. When a revelation becomes a tradition, it is practically worthless and serves only as an opiate to deaden the minds of those who accept it.

We are going to have to do more than accept dead doctrines. We are going to have to see the living Christ, for He is the Word of God and the Doctrine of God. It is going to take more than sermons on holiness and sanctification to make us holy and sanctified. We are going to have to see Him and be changed into His image. It is going to take a great deal more than meetings and human fellowship to bring us to a knowledge of God. We shall have to meet Him as Thomas and Paul and John met Him. We must hear His voice speaking to the deep recesses of our hearts. We must speak to Him and hear His answer and His command. Church meetings have been a blessing to us in our spiritual infancy even as the country school house was a blessing in our natural infancy. But church meetings have no ability to produce Christian maturity. Maturity can only come by personal association with Christ Himself. I am willing to stake my life and what feeble ministry I have on this assertion: no man or woman can ever become mature until he has cast off the yokes and bondages of human tradition and religion and has met Christ personally, spoken to Him face to face and heart to heart, and continued to walk in the ever increasing light and glory of what he saw. The Apostle Paul struck the keynote to

the whole thing when he said, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

Once a man has seen Christ, he has no need to confer with men, for man's traditions and ideas will stink in his nostrils and all human suggestions, thoughts, and ideas will be found to be desperately constricted, confined, and short of the mark. As the feeble flickering light of a wax candle fades before the rising of the glorious sun, so all human doctrine and understanding fade into insignificance and nothingness before the glorious rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Just as sure as we live and move, the next great event in the order of things is that those who believe and are faithful are going to know the transcending glory of His appearing and they will see Him in His beauty. That one glimpse will do more for us in a second of time than all the meetings we have attended, all the songs we have sung, and all the doctrines we have listened to in our whole life.

Have you ever wondered what is the difference between a Pharisee who laboriously, fervently, and reverently adhered to the minutest commands of the law and a man like Paul who, though he made no effort to keep the law, had a far higher and richer standard of holiness than the Pharisee? I'll tell you what the difference is: Paul had met Christ personally. His eyes had beheld His wonderful beauty and purity and with that beholding he had been changed into that same image. To walk as Christ walked from thenceforth was not a matter of slavish imitation of a hero or an idol but a matter of being. He walked like Him because he was like Him, for his eyes had beheld Him. Yet the Pharisee, adhering strictly to his tradition, was only a slave to what he believed and at the end of his life was no more like his pattern or his doctrine than he was the day he began.

Has not the above also been the picture of the Christian? Here and there someone has met the Lord and been changed into His image, but the vast majority of so-called "born-again" people spend their lives in the shallows miserably trying to be like Jesus so that they will go to heaven when they die, but with the other side of their nature reaching out to partake of as much of the things of the earth as they feel they dare. No man who has heard the sweet sounds of heaven's music can lend his ear to earth's rasping discords. Much less can those whose eyes have seen the King in His beauty be entertained in their parlors by the adulterous seed of Hollywood. It is not a matter of do's and don'ts. It is a matter of whether or not we have seen Him.

How I wish that for a while at least you could forget your continual groaning and moaning for fellowship with people and for the rest of your life concentrate on finding fellowship with Him. How I wish you could quit groaning for meetings and the wonderful days of the past and meet Christ personally for the first time in your life. You are not going to find Christ in meetings any more. If you are going to look for Him there, you are going to be disappointed, for the times are changing and old things are passing away. A new day and a new era is coming when men shall know God and His mind will dwell in them and they will walk in the light and glory of His will.

There is no greater authority on these things than the word of God itself. Paul the Apostle was ordained of God to bring the Christians the teachings of the church age. He knew how a church meeting should be conducted and it must have been a glorious thing at times to meet together as he taught the people. But it is a source of wonder to see that right in the midst of his instructions about spiritual gifts and all the other wonderful things that were to take place in a public gathering he soared away into the Spirit to tell us of a more excellent way — a glorious way where all the former things would fall into decay, where prophecy would fail, tongues would cease, knowledge would vanish away, and preaching would be no more. Certainly none of these things are necessary in that realm where we meet Him face to face. Surely there is no need of seeing through a glass darkly when we have seen face to face. Surely there is no need of partial knowledge and partial prophecy when we know Him as He knows us.

How sad my heart often gets when I hear someone trying to explain from 1 Cor. 13 how we should show love. With all respect I must say that no one is ever helped by such teachings, for at best it can only make him an imitator and he is no more like Christ by being an imitator of Him than a parrot is like a man because he imitates him. The foundation and root of the whole matter of love is that God is love and that he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. There is no love apart from God for God is love, and God has manifested His love toward us in that He gave us His Son that we might have the love of God in us because His Son is in us.

Our great need is not a return of the good old meetings of the past with all their tongues, interpretations, prophecies, hearings and miracles, for you can have all these things, together with much more, and still have absolutely nothing. Our need is to meet with Christ personally and individually and there find all the needs of a groaning creation are met by the fullness that dwells in Him. Love is not a thing. Love is a person, and God is that person.

Let us see now and take note of some of the strange and wonderful promises He left us for the last days. I am fully aware that the church has already explained away many of the wonderful things He left us as a sure inheritance. But these promises of Christ are true and, when they actually take place in those who believe them, their fulfillment is going to bring about the transformation of the ages.

We are not following some cunningly devised fable when we look in faith for Christ to manifest Himself to us personally. He has told us by His word of truth that "unto those who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation". **Heb. 9:28**. There are many people today talking about a rapture when they believe they will be caught away suddenly into heaven, but there are very, very few people who are looking for Him. If you can rid your mind of the church tradition of rapture for a while, you may be able to see more clearly what the scripture means when it promises that unto them that look for Him shall He appear. We have grown too busy in our numerous activities to be looking for Jesus to appear to us as He did to Mary, Peter, Thomas, and Paul and transform our lives by His glorious presence. But the hour is at hand when Christ will appear to those who are looking for Him and this will surely take place right while the multitude of Christians are busy with the usual forms and ceremonies of church activity. He will have come as a thief in the night and they will be unaware of it.

It would be well worth our time to consider prayerfully just what is actually stated in the promise of Heb. 9:28 which says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto those who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." I am sure we have never yet grasped the tremendous import and meaning of this promise, but to give ourselves opportunity to comprehend what is meant I should like to quote it from one or two other translations. First from the Amplified version: "And as it is appointed for (all) men once to die and after that the (certain) judgment, even so it is that Christ, having been offered to take upon Himself and bear as a burden the sins of many once and for all, will appear a second time, not carrying any burden of sin nor to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who are (eagerly, constantly, and patiently) waiting for and expecting Him." **Heb. 9:27-28**.

This is a promise of God and can no more pass away than any other of God's promises. It clearly describes the purpose of the first coming of Christ that is, to bear the sins of the world - but it also describes the purpose of His coming the second time, which is to bring full salvation to those who look for Him. That statement in itself explains Paul's remark in Romans 13:11, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awaken out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The two statements go hand in hand. It is a grave mistake to think that we entered into the fullness of salvation when we believed. Indeed we were believers. Indeed we were saved, but the nearer we get to the second coming of Christ the nearer our salvation comes, for He is going to appear the second time to bring us to the fullness of it.

Weymouth's translation of **Heb. 9:28** reads thus: "Christ also, having been once offered in sacrifice in order that He might bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, separated from sin, to those who are eagerly expecting Him to make their salvation complete." And Moffat: "Christ, after being once sacrificed to bear the sins of many, will appear again, not to deal with sin, but for the saving of those who are on the lookout for Him."

The Lord Jesus greatly puzzled His disciples by saying, "A little while and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." **John 14:16**. This statement so puzzled the disciples that they said to each other, "What is this that He saith unto us, a little while and ye shall not see Me; and, again a little while and ye shall see Me; and because I go to the Father? They said therefore, what is this that He saith, a little while? We cannot tell what He saith." That statement has puzzled Christians of all ages. It has caused wonder in us all and because we have not understood it, we have come up with many theories and

strange answers. I have sometimes thought that Christ's answer to the question was intentionally ambiguous, but as I read it now it seems to be a clear description of all that has happened to true believers from His first appearing to His second appearing. It portrays a weeping, lamenting, sorrowing, travailing church contrasted by a laughing, rejoicing world, but He tells them, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day ye shall ask Me nothing; verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you."

The traditions of the past have so dimmed our understanding that every truth is side-tracked to be made to conform to the doctrines and teachings of a Babylonish church. Thus it is that when we speak of Christ's appearing unto those who look for Him, our minds fall into the thought of a rapture and once again we begin to look for a moment when the whole Babylonish church is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the whole world is left to the Antichrist. I cannot accept it. The truth is that the existing church is not looking for the Lord. It is too engrossed in the pleasure of the world and in its numerous activities and programs to want the Lord to come, but Christ will appear to the ones who are looking for Him and hoping that every shadow is His shadow, every knock at the door is His knock, and every footstep is the sound of His feet. Their hearts are crying, "Oh, Lord Jesus, how long?" Their lips are repeating the prayer, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

There is a beautiful story in Luke 24 that tells of one of the many appearances of Christ and of the transforming results that followed. The blessed Lord had been crucified and laid away in the tomb. With the death of this great prophet of God who they thought should have redeemed Israel faith and hope had ebbed from their lives as the tides of the sea ebb from the shores leaving unknown rocks and sinking sands. The sun, darkened for three hours at Calvary, had now set beyond their little horizon and with it the last faint rays of hope had faded into darkness. Two disappointed and heartbroken disciples trudged wearily down the road to the little village of Emmaus. They might as well go home, they thought. There was nothing else left to do. As they plodded their weary way homeward, their rough hands of toil brushed away the blinding tears that crowded unbidden o'er their sight. Choking back the sobs of sadness and disappointment, they communed with each other and recounted with brokenhearted bitterness the events of the past few days. As they communed and reasoned, a shadow fell across their path and a stranger drew near who, walking with them, asked the meaning of their sorrow.

"And, behold, two of them went the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him, and He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it should have been He which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women of our company made us astonished which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came saying they had also seen a vision of angels which said that He was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulcher and found it even as the women had said; but they saw Him not.

Then He said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went; and He made as though He would have gone further, but they constrained Him saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew Him and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures; and they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen and hath appeared to Simon, and they told what things were done in the way and how He was made known by the breaking of bread."

My heart leaps within me for joy as I contemplate this wonderful story and anticipate the glad hour when He shall appear in some like manner to you and to me and to all others who love His appearing. I do not know the day nor the hour of His appearing, but I do know that, when our eyes behold Him, our tears of sorrow will turn to pearls of praise, our broken chords will vibrate once more, and in a moment of time we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. From the distant mountain peaks of faith comes an echo clear as vesper ringing. It is the voice of Job sounding from out the centuries past. "I know that my Redeemer liveth and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and if after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another." This is the kind of appearing that is going to make the difference and change our lives and make us new creatures. And when it happens, it will do more for us in the twinkling of an eye than all the sermons, teachings, and doctrines have ever done in a lifetime. Furthermore, those unto whom the Lord has thus appeared will be able to accomplish more for the earth in a moment of time than in a whole lifetime spent in the shallows of our present state.

I have often thought of the wonderful words "no man can see God and live." Oh how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me to reverently say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live as they used to live, but they are transformed. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into that same image of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure they are changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion. There is no possibility of any man's ever being the same again or living as he used to live once he has personally met the Lord and his eyes have beheld Him, the King in His beauty. "As for me," said David, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I wake, with thy likeness." My own heart answers Amen. That is when I, too, shall be fully satisfied.

There are few recorded instances of Christ's appearing more enlightening than the account of Christ's personal revealing of Himself to Thomas. It is a sobering thing to know that a man could be with Jesus for three years and yet never really see Him. But truly a man could be with Jesus three thousand years and never see Him until it pleased God to open his eyes and understanding. Thomas was naturally slow to believe. By his very nature he was inclined to be a doubter. In any case the stories about the resurrection of Jesus sounded like idle tales in his ears. It may have been as a result of this doubt that he was absent when Christ appeared to the other ten, for "Thomas called Didymus was not with them when Jesus came." Was he not the man who had said, "Lord, we know not where thou goest and how can we know the way?" And was it not he who at Lazarus' death had said, "Let us go that we may die with Him," and was he not now saying, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." But he did not know what a transformation would take place in his life when his eyes would see the resurrected Christ. How he longed to see the Lord, but, like many of us doubters now, he was almost beyond hope that he would see Him again. He did not know that one glimpse of the Son of God would pierce the gloomy mists of doubt and throw a rainbow of hope about his shoulders. "Reach hither thy finger," said Jesus, "and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing." And Thomas answered and said unto Him, "My Lord and my God!" Gone were the gloomy doubts. Gone were the mists of fear and unbelief. Thomas had seen the risen Lord. He is transformed by the presence divine. Church history records that, after seeing Christ, none of the disciples ever exceeded Thomas for his fervent faith and labor of love until the day he gladly laid down his life for Him.

Saul of Tarsus was a hard-headed bigot if one ever lived. It is difficult for a man who has been strictly trained in tradition from childhood to have any inclination to change. We cannot help but admire the man and his background as it is recorded in sacred writ. Few men have ever been able to boast of a better record after the natural than Saul and well he was aware of it. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness of the law, blameless. Phil. 3 5-6. He had been taught by the great teacher Gamaliel, and had risen above many who were his equals. His zeal for God and the law stopped at nothing less than a determined effort to stamp out Christianity at all cost and by any method. With this thought in mind he was on his way to Damascus to bind and chain the Christians and bring them to Jerusalem when Jesus Christ met him and revealed Himself to Him.

As he rode along the road to Damascus, his mind was filled with hate both against Christ and against Christians. His heart rejoiced at the thought of the persecution and slaughter he was about to bring upon them. Yet his heart was not all bad, for he was doing it ignorantly in unbelief and he thought he did God a service. Suddenly a light above the brightness of the sun shone upon him and he, falling to the earth, heard a voice speaking to him. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" he asked, and the Lord replied, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And he trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And He said, "Arise and go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Years later when Paul was writing to the Galatians, he said, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Flesh and blood and sermons of men can never do for anyone what Jesus can do. A whole volume could not rightly give account of the works and the glorious life of this man after Jesus revealed Himself to him. But Paul increased the more in strength and confounded the Jews, which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ. Acts 9:22. No life has meant more to the world than Paul's after he saw the Lord. He must have realized how much he owed to the revelation of Christ in his life when he said of Jesus, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once... after that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles, and last of all He was seen of me also as one born out of due time. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, and yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." **1 Cor. 15:5-10.**

The greatest need of Christians today is to meet with Jesus. One moment of such an open revelation of Him will bring about a transformation such as nothing else could bring. Whether the Lord appeared in the New Testament or the Old, the result was always the same. It brought complete transformation to the one who met Him. What a message is brought to our hearts by Job when he said, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear." Even this did indescribable good to his soul, for no man was more righteous than Job. But when the next phase of his experience came, he exclaimed in awe, "But now mine eye seeth Thee," and he was a completely transformed man. The glory of God's presence had made him look desperately unclean until now he cried in penitence, "Wherefore I do abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Many times, no doubt, you get desperately restless because of the apparent inactivity that besets you. I certainly do, but in waiting on God He has spoken to my heart and made it crystal clear that until my mind is completely free from every last vestige of Babylon's harlotish system, I shall not see His blessed face. Nothing is more real to my spirit than the truth that by God's grace we must come out of her. There is no use in coming out of one phase in Babylon and then starting up the same old thing over again in another place with a little different setup, for that really only amounts to the birth of one more harlot in the same great mysterious system of Babylon. There is something deep within me that tells me that the kingdom of heaven is not going to be launched from the same old launching pad we have used for the past two thousand years. It is going to be as different from the systems of the existing church as the ministry of John the Baptist was different from the forms and ritualistic ceremonies of the Pharisees. People will think us fools and fanatics to hold to such notions, but this is the way it will be. I have no hesitation in saying that I do not believe in the church's frantic programs for the conversion of the heathen and of the world. It never has worked, it is not working now, and it never will work. What the church now does and what Jesus and the apostles did are not the same thing at all. They went in the power of God. Today they depend on organization and money. I do not believe that the church system is right in proclaiming that, if the heathen are not reached now, they will be lost forever. Such human teaching makes God's wisdom foolishness, His omnipotence, impotence, omniscience thoughtlessness, His love hate, His purpose aimlessness, and His glory shame. It makes the devil to be stronger than God, and makes an all-wise, almighty God depend on the impotence of men. The Bible contains marvelous promises for the heathen and when He is ready to reveal Himself to them, they will come. The church like the Pharisees compasses land and sea to make a proselyte and often they are worse than before.

If we really searched the scripture to find out what God is doing in this age, we would soon find out that we are not in the midst of some frantic scramble to drag as many unwilling victims as possible from an inferno that somehow got out of God's control, but rather we are in a perfectly ordered plan in which God is calling out a

people and preparing out of them a people for the government of the kingdom and of the ages to come, and in the dispensation of the fullness of times - the dispensation following the kingdom - God's grace will be extended to every creature. Can any sensible man deny that this is what Paul taught in **Eph. 1:9-11**: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in Him. In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." That is minutely the plan of God. The churches' gruesome doctrines of rue and torment in a blazing hell for sinners who have never heard that God had a Son would seem to me to charge the blessed Lord with crimes more heartless and inconsistent than those of Adolph Eichmann.

The desperate crying need of the true Zion is to be completely delivered from the daughter of Babylon. Our true condition is perfectly described in the words of the prophet Zechariah. **Zech. 2:7**. "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon." The true church, the elect of God, has dwelt so long with Babylon that we imagine she is our true mother. Like ducklings hatched by a chicken we accept her as our mother though all our ways are contrary to her. Babylon has invaded the minds of people until they are at a loss to think without her. But the Lord has begun to purge away the filth of the daughter of Zion by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. Isa. 4:3-6. It must be of this that Zechariah spoke when he said, "And He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan was standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel, and he answered and spoke unto those that stood before him, saying. Take away the filthy garments from him; and unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment." **Zech. 3:1-4**.

In connection with the above it is clearly seen that nothing will deliver us from the filth of Babylon like meeting the Lord face to face. Was that not Paul's experience when he met Christ? He took all his past goodness, all his ancient tradition, all his natural descent, all his righteousness after the law, and threw it on the dung pile and reckoned that everything that had been a gain to him in the past was now nothing but a loss. Phil. 3:4-9. It will be exactly the same with you and me. All this Babylonish tradition with all its commendable works, its righteousness, and its program will be found to be like salt that has lost its savor - fit only for the dung pile.

This Joshua who stood before the Lord clothed in filthy garments is you and me dressed in the garments of Babylon (the great church system). But notice, please, that this Joshua met with the Angel of the Lord (which is Christ). He stood before Him and new garments were put on him. A fair miter was placed on Joshua's head (this is the mind of Christ), and he was commanded to walk in the ways of the Lord. This is the will of God. Ah, what a difference it makes to meet with Jesus. How soon the filth of the carnal mind begins to disappear with all its human ways of looking at things, and that glorious fair miter, the mind of Christ, begins to change our lives with their carnal outlook, causing us to walk in the will of God and become men to be wondered at. Verse 8. It makes us branches of the glorious vine, and bids us call every man our neighbor under the vine (Christ) and under the fig tree (God's chosen Israel). Please read verses 8-10.

There is never time nor space to consider these blessed truths as we should consider them. We will have to omit from our study many of the personal appearances of the Lord as recorded in the scripture and consider them in our closets of prayer before the Lord. The appearances of Christ to individuals and companies of individuals were so frequent throughout the New Testament that I would say we had every right to look for and long for that transforming experience ourselves. What a tragic loss there would have been to the story of the resurrection if Jesus had not appeared to a weeping woman who stood numb with grief, peering into an empty sepulcher for the body of her blessed Lord. Hearing footsteps behind her, she turned and saw Jesus standing, and knew Him not. "Why weepest thou?" He asked. "Whom seekest thou?" And she, supposing Him to have been the gardener, answered amid her sobs, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." Jesus said unto her, "Mary!!!" It was the voice she knew and loved so well. There was no mistaking it. That was the voice, which had commanded seven devils to leave her body. She had heard that voice call men from out the tomb and still angry storms by a word. Yes, she knew it well. "Rabboni!!!" she exclaimed with enraptured awe, and fell at His feet. But He bade her not to touch Him, saying, "**Go to my**

brethren and tell them I ascend unto My Father and your Father and to My God and your God." **John 20:11-18.**

"I am the resurrection!" Angels smiled
That day in spring they rolled the stone away
While humans wept. They could not yet believe
That conquered death could never hold its prey,
But in that grave life stepped from out a shroud.
Life fears no shrouds nor death's vales dark and wild:
The everlasting arms are lifting Him As tenderly as mother lifts her child.

C. S. Price.

What assurance would have been lacking had He not appeared personally to the disciples as with locked doors they sat huddled in fear of the Jews, mourning and weeping over what seemed to be the greatest loss the world had ever sustained. But see how hope banishes fear as light banishes darkness when He stood in their midst, saying, "Peace be unto you," and showing them His hands and His side. Perhaps one of the greatest understatements of all time is contained in the words, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." **John 20:19-23.**

What a change took place in Thomas as he cried, "My Lord and my God!" at the appearing of Christ, and in Peter as he girt his fisher's cloak about him and cast himself into the sea to hurry to Him! John 21:2-4. What indescribable joy must have filled the two Marys as Jesus met them saying, "All Hail," and they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him! Matt. 28:8,9. See also Acts 1:3-11 and Cor. 15:7. If Jesus had not appeared personally to Paul, do you think we would have the undying truth today that we read in all his epistles? Had He not appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos, would we have had the glorious truth of the Revelation? Would John himself have known that fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, which he wrote about afterward in his epistle, saying, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." **1 John 1:3-4.**

I may be wrong in what I am going to say, but I think there is excellent reason to believe that every writer of the New Testament had met Christ personally and individually. I am not referring merely to His life on earth, but I mean that at some time after the resurrection Jesus had appeared to them and, because He had thus appeared, their lives had been so changed, their minds so transformed that they simply were not the same men and women they were before He met them. God forbid that I should seem mysterious in my talk, but there must come a day when His promises will find their fulfillment. It is not a catching away into the sky that we need. It is a revelation of Jesus Christ to our individual hearts. Then will our eyes and our understandings be opened and our innermost beings transformed. We need that which will make Christ to be far more than a historical character. We need to meet Him and see Him as the Son of the living God.

The glorious appearing of Christ is called That Blessed Hope. Let other men spend their time in arguing the how, why, when, and wherefore but let it be that you and I, who realize that the world's greatest need is men who have met with Jesus, have heard His voice, have seen His face, and have felt His transforming power, begin our earnest watching that we may be found ready and waiting when He appears. Christ will appear to those who look for Him. He is coming for those who are watching. What I say unto one I say unto all. Watch!! He will not intrude into the picture show to reveal Himself to you. He will not even interrupt our T.V. or earthly amusement. Neither will He interfere with those who are engrossed in worldly plans. If we are going to see Him when He comes, we are going to need to be watching and listening for Him.

How well I remember my old boyhood home out on the boundless Canadian prairies. Our farmstead was twelve miles from the nearest town and in the pioneer days our only means of travel was by team and wagon. I do not think there is any place on earth that can be so completely silent as the vast prairies at night time. Their wonderful solitude causes one to stand in His presence. One of the most wonderful experiences of my life has been to stand alone in that immense vastness and listen intently to try to catch some faint sound of movement or life of some kind. With not even a breath of air moving there was no sound at all, and whenever there was a sound it could be heard for miles. How often, when father or brothers had gone away to the village in the

morning and were returning late at night, we would stand outdoors and listen for the sound of wagon wheels in the distance. Returning at intervals, we would listen again and again until at last we could hear the sound we were waiting for. Then we would light the dim old kerosene lantern and be waiting on the doorstep to welcome them home. I shall never forget those good and wonderful days. But tonight I am not listening and waiting for the sound of a wagon rumbling over the plains. I am standing at the door waiting, looking, longing for Jesus to come; and He is sending His message before Him, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

There is a great and damning fault among Christians that seems to be past explanation. It is a fault that has developed and grown more grotesque as the years have come and gone. Men and women have come to desire and covet spiritual things, not for the glory of God and the honor of His eternal purpose, but that they themselves might become great men in the earth. Many a man has spent long periods in fasting that he might attain a great spiritual gift, yet all the time he is supposedly seeking the gift, his talk shows that his mind is full of hope that he will become a great and powerful minister to whom people will look with awe and pride. This is wrong seeking and a very great evil. Many a man has sought after the gift of healing - not because he was burdened for the sick, but because the gift would bring him honor among the people. He expected it would bring him crowds and fame and money. Oh, let men search their hearts before they ask of God lest they ask amiss to consume it upon their own lusts. James 4:3. The result of such asking is spiritual death. It is of the carnal mind and hateful in God's sight. The carnal mind is always desirous of spiritual gifts. It likes to appear honored of God and accepted. That is why there are so many false prophets, false teachers, false healers, and false miracle workers in the world. Men who love people to think they are the great power of God will, for all their apparent wonders, hear God tell them on that day, "I never knew you." We have an example of this kind of man in **Acts 8:9-10**: "But there was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime used sorceries and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, to whom the people gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." There are such men in our day who have similarly bewitched the people. They clamor for spectacular gifts that they might have a spectacular following. This is not the way a man should seek a gift.

I greatly fear that many people will desire to see the face of Christ in the same inquisitive manner - not because they love Him or long to be like Him, but only to see what God would look like. Their interest is more on the level of a crowd rushing to see the President or the Queen or of nosey little children crowding around to catch a glimpse of the victim of a tragic accident. In Exodus 19:12,21 we have a perfect example of this very thing. At the time of the law God commanded Moses in these words: "Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about saying, Take heed unto yourselves that ye go not into the mount or touch the border of it: - and the Lord said unto Moses, Go down; charge the people lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." Imagine that! Lest they break through to gaze! It was only their curiosity they wanted to satisfy. They were inquisitive, prying, peeping Toms. Their only interest in God was to gape and stare.

I am not exaggerating when I say that the average Christian has a similar attitude toward God and miracles. It is better not to approach to God at all than to approach with the attitude of a sight-seer.

David said, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning." **Psa. 130:6**. This is the desire men should have when they seek the face of Christ. Men and women who with burning love and desire stand weeping for His presence will see Him when He comes and be found ready and waiting to be changed by the glory of His presence into that same image. Their longing prayer shall be, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flocks to rest at noon." **Songs 1:7**. "By might on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth, but I found Him not. I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but found Him not. The watchmen that went about the city found me; To whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth." **Songs 3:1-5**.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient. Stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." **James 5:7-8**. "We know that when He shall

appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth Himself even as He is pure." **1 John 3:2-3.** And they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER FIVE LOOK TO YOURSELVES

In the life of each one of God's people there should frequently come a time of soul searching and stock taking. It is not enough to hold beliefs about sonship and the kingdom of God and all such blessed truths, for there are many who cry, "Lord, Lord," who are unfit for the kingdom of God. There are, I fear, almost endless thousands who prophesy and do wonderful works who are not known to God at all. The fact that a man may pray for the sick and see some healed does not mean that he is a manifested son of God; neither does it mean that he has any special standing with God at all. We were warned long ago by the apostles and by the Lord Himself that the church system would have its store of those who would bewitch the people with miracles. In my opinion it is high time that God's people opened their minds to the indisputable fact that both the Antichrist and all his ilk will be such masters of deception that they will completely deceive their own selves and, if it were possible, even the very elect also, for Paul forewarned God's people of him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. **2 Thess. 2:9-10.** It is of terrifying significance that the apostle follows this statement with this warning: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **Verses 11-12.** To whom did the Spirit of God give such dreadful warning but to those who "received not the love of the truth", verse 10, or in plainer words, to those who did not love the truth?

As the years have passed by, experience has taught me that it is absolutely necessary for every Christian to spend time by himself alone with God, away from the assembling of the multitude, away from the voice of preachers, away from the opinions of people, away from books, away from programs, and away from teaching, that he might come unto the backside of the desert where no one can speak but God, where the Holy Spirit can point out the inconsistencies of his life. I do not speak of the inconsistencies of others, but of the inconsistencies of his own life.

One dreadful indictment against God's people in our day is that they have become "yes men" and head noddors, going along with silly programs of silly people who are great organizers and builders but who speak and act from the fertility of their own minds rather than from acquaintance with the eternal purposes of the Most High. The apostle Paul likened himself to a trained boxer who made every blow count. "I therefore so run," he said, "not as uncertainly. So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." **1 Cor. 9:26.** Too much of our running today is with uncertainty. Every man is running, running, and doing, doing, but few know where the goal is. Everybody is fighting and doing battle, but for the most part they are beating the air. Let us assure our hearts of this one cardinal and fundamental truth: "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted will be rooted up." **Matt. 15:13.** And we might further add that every race that is run with uncertainty, together with all the fighting that is merely beating the air, will be of profit to no one and will receive condemnation rather than reward. Too many of God's people are like the two drunk men who rowed all night to get to the other side of the lake only to find in the morning, when they were sober, that they were still anchored to the wharf. Whether we appreciate the allusion or not, the solemn truth remains that many great works are being done through the ingenuity of men rather than the direction of the Holy Spirit, and we labor in vain.

We cannot declare too emphatically that the most important thing in the life of any child of God is to know God's will, and you will not know God's will until you have delivered yourself from the confused voices of the multitude around you. You will not discover God's will by enquiring of people that your heart may be assured by their opinions. They simply do not know the will of God for you. You cannot order your life by a prophecy or supposed prophecy that was given concerning you. Far too many people are saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when the Lord has not spoken. I sometimes receive letters that are full of prophecy concerning myself. Occasionally one will witness to my spirit and be a comfort to me, but I never allow my life to be directed by them, for we must first prove all things and holdfast to that which is good. Paul taught that we should not

despise prophesyings but that we should prove them and judge for ourselves whether or not to be influenced by them. This he practiced in his own life when the prophets said that he should not go up to Jerusalem. Acts 21:4-13. Though by obeying them he might have spared himself much suffering, he also knew for himself what the mind of the Lord was for him, for God had taught him by the Spirit that bonds and afflictions were his lot no matter where he would be.

A burning love for God is the first and foremost essential in knowing God's will. It is she who with love and devotion takes time to bathe the feet of the Lord with her tears and anoint them with the precious ointment of consecration who discovers the blessedness of walking in the will of God rather than she who is constantly cumbered with much serving. The woman who washed His feet with tears and dried them with the hair of her head was too obsessed with her devotion to God to trouble about the dissenting of scribes and Pharisees or to be concerned with that greedy covetous one who would sell the ointment with feigned generosity toward the poor rather than lavish it upon the head of the Eternal One. It is when we pour out our love at the feet of Christ, talking little and listening much that we come to the knowledge of His will.

If I may now testify from lifelong experience, I will tell you a wonderful secret concerning God's will. In all my life I have never known God to divulge the fullness of His mind and will at any one time about any one thing. But I have discovered that, as I walked with Him, loving Him and desiring to be directed by Him, He has led me one step at a time, one day at a time, revealing one thing at a time. Among the many closed doors in the wall He would open one and bid me enter. He has led me by misfortune, by enemies, by storms, by traitors, by false brethren, by flat tires, by inspiration, by open doors and closed doors, and by simply doing the thing at hand that needed to be done. God has not directed my life by great bursts of heavenly revelation but by circumstances that were often most mystifying at the time. When those who were my enemies rose up against me, blocking my path and plotting my ruin, I found this to be God's certain way of changing my direction and ushering my life forth on a course of blessing I had not dreamed of nor planned. The surest leading Joseph ever had in his whole life was when his wicked brothers plotted his ruin and sold him into Egypt as a slave. In later years he knew it was God, not his brothers, who had sent him to Egypt. What better thing could have happened to Moses than the disaster of having to flee to the backside of the desert? Even the wrathful act from which he fled was the hidden but guiding hand of God. The shipwreck of Paul on the Island of Melita was just as much the leading of the Lord as was the vision in which a man prayed him saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," for through his shipwreck many heathen were saved and a church was established on the Island of Melita.

Never give yourself to the spectacular at any time and least of all where the direction of the Lord is concerned. Learn that calamity and difficulty are all part of your training just as are success and prosperity. Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth, for all things are working together for good to them that love the Lord and to them who are the called according to His purpose. **"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:38-39.**

The hour in which we now live is a time fraught with much danger for every child of God, and, though I am loath to declare it, it is undoubtedly true that those who most desire to attain the greater promises of God are the ones who are the most beset with every peril of the way, for they like lonely pioneers are pressing into the unknown, and, unless they keep their eyes fixed on God and on Him alone, they will travel many a side road or find themselves going in circles even as they forever do in that wilderness whence we came out.

Though we may be alert for danger from without, the greatest danger always lies within ourselves. In these last days above all others men have become filled with self-confidence and puffed up with a sense of their own ability. There is nothing more dangerous than this. Both our ability and our wisdom are but foolishness in the sight of God, and should we consciously or unconsciously set our hearts upon them, we find ourselves leaning on our own resources, devoid of the Spirit of God and abandoned to our own devices. Now when a man begins to lean on his own devices and depend upon his own ability, his works are no longer known of the Lord and he has come to the place where the Lord must say of him, "I know you not." How well did Paul learn that we should never trust ourselves when he said, **"We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not**

trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." **2 Cor. 1:9-10**. Our safety is secure when we pass the death sentence on self and trust in God who raises the dead.

These are perilous times because men have become lovers of themselves rather than lovers of God. Indeed, many Christians and a multitude of preachers use God and His work for a pretence and a false front behind which they may hide, but take the mask away and you will see self sitting on the throne, covetous self, soliciting money for the work of God when in reality it is self that wants it; deceptive self, proclaiming the building up of the kingdom of God when in reality he is building up his own kingdom; false self, proclaiming the mighty works of God when in reality it is naught but the sleight of men (hand) and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. How thoroughly did Paul foresee the end of the age when he wrote to Timothy? "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high, minded lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." **2 Tim. 3:1-5**. These are not conditions existing in the world alone. These are conditions that run rampant throughout the entire church system, which is no longer the true church, but Mystery Babylon.

These are perilous times because so many of God's people do not understand the message of the hour, a message peculiar to us now, designed of God for this hour and none other. Day after day I am confronted by the indisputable fact that God's people do not understand the message of Babylon. There are, indeed, a few who do understand, but for the most part there is little understanding in them, for many have become like men possessed of evil habits who, though they see their wrong and try to reform, yet again and again fall back into the same pit whence they were digged. If God reveals to you the confusion, disorder, and abomination of the professing church with its multiplied systems of religion, whose God is not the Lord, but the system and the program, so that you come out from among them and deliver yourself from them, what have you gained by your deliverance from denominationalism if you immediately join yourself to some other system that dares to call itself undenominational? Do you not know that its purposes are just the same as the purposes of the larger group? God does not call men out of one Babylon into another, but He is calling you out of Babylon unto Himself.

Christians today are forever chorusing the words, "We need each other", but they seem to have forgotten that there is One they need ten thousand fold more than they need each other, and that is they need God. The words of Jesus to the church at Ephesus were, "I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love." **Rev. 2:4**. These solemn words are as true in this last hour as they were when spoken to the church at Ephesus long ago. Our Lord did not tell them that they had lost their first love, but that they had left their first love. The first love that any Christian has is for his matchless Lord and Redeemer. Christ is all and in all to him. Christ is all that matters. The rich, the poor, the destitute, the sick, and the dying are content to rest in His marvelous love and in the strength of His everlasting arms. The new-born Christian rejoices in the love of God and in the eternal hope of being with Him forever.

In our first love we were not concerned about doctrines and denominations. The dogmas and theories of men were forgotten in the joy of our new found love. We were unaware that all about us rages a brutal and merciless struggle in which men who long ago had left their first love now compassed land and sea to make proselytes for their own petty cause. In our first love we did not know that preachers and people who had once basked in the sunlight of God's love were now engaged in titanic struggles against each other, as though the pet dogma they preached was important. But it is not important. There is nothing in heaven or earth as important as loving God. If any man thinketh he knoweth aught, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know, but if any man love God, the same is known of Him. To love God is better than sacrifice. To love God is better than any offering. To love God is better than doctrine. To love God is far beyond the sickly thing that men today insist on calling fellowship. We were not saved and rejoicing in Jesus Christ, our first love, for long before the wicked harlot system began to entice us away from our devotion to God, holding before us a set of doctrines and a set of rules, preaching that this doctrine was right and that doctrine was wrong until we began to find ourselves engaged in vain and fruitless j anglings with men who had once loved God above all else, vainly

proclaiming ourselves victors on the field of controversy, and all this in the name of God and in the defense of Him who needs no defense from anyone.

How often our hearts have rejoiced as we have seen sinners saved at a common altar! With tears streaming down their faces they rejoiced in their new, found love of God and, clasping each other in the embrace of brothers, they gave glory to Him whose blood had made them one. But how our hearts have been sickened when during the next week or two foolish and unscrupulous men were teaching these happy converts something else besides loving Christ. While one was being taught to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the other was being taught to be baptized in the name of Jesus. While one was learning that God is a trinity, the other was learning that there is no God except Jesus, and while one was learning the doctrine of Calvin, the other was learning the doctrine of the Armenians, so that, when they next met, instead of embracing as brothers in Christ, they drew their swords, sharpened keen by the stone of human reason, to pierce each other through the heart and remain spiritual enemies as long as life should last. They had left their first love and embraced a second love that would keep them at war and be a wall of partition between them as long as they would both live.

No, my friend! If you have recently heard the voice of God calling you out of the disorder and confusion of Babylon, there is something you need infinitely more than fellowship with man. You need to return to your first love and learn to have fellowship with God. You need a sort of spiritual honeymoon when you can leave houses and lands, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers that you may be alone with your Lord and become acquainted with Him. The reason you are so anxious to get to meeting is because they have through years of habit become uppermost in your mind. Apart from them you cannot conceive of God; neither can you conceive of finding God apart from them. You have become like the woman of Samaria who, in spite of her lack of spiritual life, was full of argument and ready to start a debate with the Lord Himself when she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." You see how she associated God and worship with places and things? And that is the confused spirit of Babylon from start to finish. People who have walked in its deceptive ways cannot conceive of finding God or worshipping Him anywhere except in a building and among a crowd. They have never learned that the heart of the multitude is usually far from God. Our Lord Jesus Christ would have no part with her argument, but told her the truth that I, too, would tell you now. **"Woman," he said, "believe Me, the hour is coming, and now is, when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father, but the true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."** Cf. **John 4:21-23.**

What does that immortal saying mean to you as a worshipper of God? Worship in spirit and in truth cannot be found in the rituals and ceremonies of Babylon, but in the adoring contemplation of a heart rejoicing in the love of God. The system we call the church and which I call Babylon is becoming more confused by the hour as she seeks in her confusion and frustration to make herself pleasing to all men. I have on my desk a clipping from the newspaper, dated Jan. 6, 1967, with the heading, "Atheism under study." Quote: "Vatican City: The Vatican secretary for non-believers will establish a center for the study of Atheism in Rome in co-operation with the eternal city's religious colleges and seminaries, it was announced Thursday." End of quote. Is it any wonder that the glory of God has departed from this system of confusion? Is it any wonder that, having departed, the Lord is now calling His faithful people to depart also? And have they so little understanding that, having departed, they will again wander back into some religious shed that is in reality the same thing in different attire? Let us come out and let us come out unto God, returning once and for all to OUT first love.

The word of God has warned us that strong delusion would be rampant in the earth in the last days and that it would be the result of men's having no love for the truth. Truth in the final analysis is the Lord Himself, for He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Delusion stalks like an evil specter in the world, in the church system, in the courts, in the government, in society, in universities and schools, and in any place you look. That which is evil is accepted as good and that which is good is rejected as evil. Darkness is heralded as light and light is shunned as darkness. The bitter things are devoured as sweet, the sweet things are despised as bitter. The things that God in His wisdom had declared to be immoral man now exalts as the new morality. Paul taught us to be aware of the oppositions of science, falsely so called, yet this same science, which is forever changing its theories, is exalted as truth while the word of God is relegated to the realm of myths and fables. Does it not appear that even the laws of the land are weighted in favor of the criminal rather than the innocent, the burglar instead of the burglarized?

The delusion that is in the world is also rampant in the religious systems of the day. The fact actually is that delusion has its beginning in religion rather than in the world, for delusion begins when God's people leave their first love and begin to build around themselves. Love for power creeps into the hearts of the ministering class unawares. They begin to leave the simplicity of the gospel and the exaltation of Jesus Christ. They make things complicated with program and doctrine so that the hearts of men are centered on them instead of on the Lord Himself. Instead of teaching the eternal purposes of an almighty and immutable God that can neither be frustrated nor annulled, they make God out to be the victim of evil circumstances brought about by that arch fiend, the devil. The people are indoctrinated to believe that, unless they throw all their weight of influence, labor, and finance behind the preacher's man-made scheme, God will certainly come off the loser and the devil the victor. Thus the hearts and minds of men are turned from the simplicity of Christ to the complications of men.

The more the government of man comes in, the more the government of God is crowded out, until the gifts of God wane and the ingenuity and cleverness of man takes their place. The more men are educated and learned in the various arts of public ministry, the less they depend upon the Spirit of God until the prophet no longer speaks by the Lord but from the storehouse of his books and carnal understandings. Thus the appeal ceases to be made to the spirit of man, which is one essence with the Spirit of God, and is made to the intellect of the natural mind, which is an enemy of God. For the natural mind is an enemy of God. It is not subject to the law of God, nor can it possibly be.

Once this appeal is made to the natural mind, the church is no longer the home of the meek and lowly followers of Christ, but the abode of those who say, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." But they do not know that in spiritual things they are wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. Thus it comes to pass that the church, which once shone with the glory of the sun of righteousness, now stripped of her glory, sits in the miserable rags of her prostitution. The purity and holiness, the righteousness and truth that made her the light of the whole earth have been snuffed out and she has become smoke in the nostrils of all mankind, parading her selfishness, pride, intolerance, and worldliness.

It is so easy for the self life to begin to work in God's people. The danger is ever present of beginning in the Spirit and ending in the flesh. The more machinery and program we gather about us the more danger there is of drifting into the use of manpower instead of walking in the Spirit and working by the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost. We add program to program and machinery to machinery, not by the leading of the Lord, but by our own initiative. Then, when we find there is no spiritual power to drive our machinery, we resort, as Samson did, to the arm of flesh, which can prove itself so simple and so refined that we deceive ourselves into believing that the flesh we use is in truth the Spirit of God. This is a most dangerous thing. The great danger of these human programs is this: Once they are begun, necessity demands that they must be kept going. Otherwise there will be much loss. More often than not many people have been involved financially and, should the program halt, there would be financial loss. Therefore necessity demands that it must be kept going at all costs. As the Spirit of the Lord withdraws from it, the ingenuity and cleverness of man takes over more and more until all that is left is a great organized effort, a big noise, a sensational work with the outward appearance of a work of God, yet motivated by the power of man and self.

My heart greatly fears such involvement, for personal experience has taught me the grief of being saddled with things in which God has no interest. Even now it is a grief to my spirit to see men, who but a few years ago were rejoicing in their freedom from the confusion of Babylon, now greatly encumbered with their own program and the machinery to run it, as link by link they fashion a chain of bondage that will bind them like slaves to a work from which God has departed, and which must be henceforth carried on by their own steam.

Let us therefore lay aside every weight and the sin, which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. There are many things, which, though they are not sins, are weights that hinder us in the race that is set before us.

Men who carry weights in races may be counted to be losers before they ever start, for men who run in races strip themselves that they might obtain a corruptible crown, but we run that we might attain an incorruptible crown. Let us therefore run that we may attain. If we are to attain the spiritual heights to which God has called

us, there must first be a clean break with the world and the flesh and the devil and all his works. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated. There must be only one love in your life and that love must be centered in the realm beyond the veil of the flesh where God dwells in all His purity and holiness. Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth, for you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Then, when He shall appear, you also will appear with Him in glory.

There must be no mingling of seed, no mixing of good and evil. Fellowship with infidels of whatsoever sort they be must be as out of bounds as fellowship with Belial. You have no doubt noticed how in the Old Testament types God instructed that they were not to plow with an ox and an ass in the same yoke, for the ox is a clean animal while the ass is unclean. They were not to mix wool with linen, and they were not to mingle the seed of the field. All these things were done to demonstrate to us that God's people are not to be a people of mixtures, mingling the clean with the unclean, the things that are of the earth with the things that are from above, the flesh and the Spirit, the corruptible and the incorruptible. We are to be God's people even as Paul taught us; "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." And again, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with believers." Yet again, "What fellowship hath Christ with Belial, or what communion hath he that believeth with an infidel?" If God has taught us that we must not sit with the drunkards in the tavern or visit the houses of harlots, then what business could we possibly have in such places of shame? And if God has taught us that the existing church system is Babylon and confusion, then what business have we frequenting those places, since God has commanded us, saying, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins"

The very spirit of the age in which we now live is to mix everything and everybody together so that all appear to come out of one mold. It is the working of the spirit of Babylon, which never can be anything but confusion. Man is doing his best to mingle the seed of God with the seed of Satan. He is endeavoring to mingle the church with the world and religion with politics. Nothing would be more pleasing to the spirit of this evil age than to be able to say, "There is no difference between the children of the world and the children of God". Indeed, a Lutheran minister recently declared, "There is no difference between the church and the world. They are two parts of the same thing." How different is this teaching from the words of the Bible, which says, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Again, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." And again, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." And yet again, "All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These are not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

There were many who came to Jesus for instruction while He dwelt on earth, but there were three in particular who came, each with a different need of heart, and each in turn received his needed exhortation; and the exhortation they receive should be given much consideration by us all.

First, there was the scribe who said, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," to whom Jesus replied, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." **Matt. 8:19-20.** One should never come to Christ saying, "I will follow Thee," without having first counted the cost, for the cost will be revealed in many unexpected ways and perhaps in many unpleasant ways as well. Those who follow God will never be the darlings of the world, and neither will they be the darlings of the church; and, if you ever become either the darling of the world or the darling of the church, then you are not truly following God. Make no mistake about that. The men who today are almost worshipped by their followers are not following God. They are displacing God. Whenever you find people who are all taken up and absorbed with a man, referring to him and speaking of him continually, exalting him as some great one, then beware, for that man has succeeded in exalting himself more than he has exalted the Lord. True men of God have never been exalted by their contemporaries, but have endured the tribulation of which Stephen spoke when he said, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One: of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." **Act. 7:52.**

It is easy to sing, "I'll go with Him through the garden," without being mindful that the garden through which He passed was not a garden of roses, of singing birds and budding fruits, but lonely, dreadful Gethsemane, the one and only pathway in this present world that leads to the center of God's will. It is easy to sing with the

multitude, "A tent or a cottage, why should I care," while you are living in the lap of luxury, but that song may have a melancholy tune in that day you find yourself in a hut where your best furniture is an apple box and your mattress a pallet of straw. It is easy to vow, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest", without considering that, though foxes have holes and little birds have nests, the Son of man, whom you would follow, hath nowhere to rest His head.

Then to another man Jesus said, "Follow Me." He replied, "Let me first go and bury my father" Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." To another who said, "Let me first go bid them farewell which are at my house," He said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." **Luke 9:59-61.**

Centuries ago three heart-broken widows, Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth, stood on a dusty road in the ancient land of Moab. Naomi was returning to the land of Judah and her two daughters-in-law had decided to go with her. But as they walked, Naomi with weeping said unto her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown? Would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." **Ruth 1:8-17.**

We shall not try to explain the truths of a story that need so little explanation, but here we have two young women counting the cost, and, after counting the cost, one decides to go back to her own country. The other decides to leave everything that was ever dear to follow God into a land wherein she would be a stranger. If such decisions are firmly made in God, they pay dividends in the end such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man. You have probably noticed, I am sure, that among the four women mentioned as progenitors of our Lord is the name of Ruth the Moabitess. Matt. 1:5.

"Let the dead bury their dead that may be a saying not easily understood in our day, but it simply means that there are plenty of unregenerate people living in the world to take care of the dead things that belong to this present age without our needing to distract our attention from the Lord to attend to them. We should be too intent upon the prize that is set before us to waste our time looking back to see how well we have done. I don't think the Lord is very interested about what kind of furrow we plowed away back there, nor in how many times we have fallen and risen again. He is concerned that we keep our eyes forever forward, leaving the past in God's hands. Therefore "let thine eyes look right on and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." **Prov. 4:25.**

Then there was the rich young ruler whose love Jesus tested by saying, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and come, take up thy cross and follow Me." And he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Jesus, seeing him go sadly away, said to those about Him, "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven, and again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." **Matt 19:23-24.** God has no objection to a man's having great riches, but whether he loves his riches more than he loves God is manifest by what he does with them, and he may rest assured that before his life is over God will prove to His own satisfaction whether of the twain he loves the most, his riches or the kingdom of God. It has been proven long ago that it is not rich men who freely give of their abundance into the treasury of the Lord, but the poor, who of their penury cast in their all. "He gives not best who gives the most; but he gives most who gives the best. If I cannot give bountifully, yet will I give freely, and what I want in my hand I will supply by my heart." (Warwick)

We are without doubt living in the closing hours of this dispensation.

The sun is setting now and bands of light,
Like rosy fingers, steal across the skies.
Down in the sheltered vale the deep'ning night
Like a dark mantle o'er the tired earth lies.

Deep shadows creep along the country lanes,
And birds are winging homeward to their nests.
Bright little lights wink out from window panes
And bid the weary toiler home to rest.

The hour has come for God's sons to be gathered unto their Father. We must now learn what the true church is. The true church consists of those blessed ones who have heard His voice and followed Him. They are not members of the professing church with all its warrings and strife nor are they members of any faction of it, but they have heard God's voice saying, "I have called them. Behold, thou art Mine. Because thou hast loved Me, I have loved thee and put My Spirit within thee. Thou art members of My body, of My flesh, and of My bones. Thou art my sons and members in particular of the Christ company, for through the love of God your Father and the grace of Jesus Christ, God's Son, thou hast become members of a vast family of sons, members in particular of that one body of sons, of which body Jesus Christ is the eternal head and elder brother.

"It is through Him and through the shedding of His blood that thou hast thy redemption; therefore thou art His and His alone. Thou art a thing apart from all people but His people, chosen in Him before the foundation of the ages. Thou dost not belong to the world or to any of the systems of it. Thou hast no part in the ten thousand voices of Babylon, for I have called thee from among her citizens to be a peculiar treasure unto Me.

"I will now breathe upon thee and thy flesh shall wither, even as the flesh of Jacob withered in the presence of the angel of the Lord. **Gen. 32:25.** And thou shalt rise to walk in newness of life that all men may know that thou art My sons, a peculiar treasure unto Me. The fuller's soap shall be applied, even the power of the blood of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, until all thy spots and wrinkles shall disappear, and thou shalt be clean, even whiter than snow. For as Christ is spotless, so shalt thou be spotless to be presented holy in His presence with neither spot nor blemish upon thee.

"Furthermore, in this final hour thou shalt be refined as gold and silver are refined that all dross may be taken from thee. Think it not strange, therefore, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, for this is the refining and the perfection of the soul. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, taking joyfully the spoiling of all earthly goods that heavenly good may abound and be thine eternal riches. Thy gold shall be like unto transparent glass where neither evil nor dross can hide, but only the purity of God's eternal light. Thou shalt be both pliable and yielding unto Me. Give no more your hearts to this world nor to any of the things which are in it, for the riches of the world serve only to turn the heart away from God whom thou shall love with a love above all loves, a love compared to which all other loves are but hate, for only in loving the Lord thy Father with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind canst thou reach that maturity of loving thy neighbor as thyself. Then will I anoint the Christ within thee with the holy anointing oil of My Spirit, and thy perfume shall flow among all the nations of the earth in a blessed reign of righteousness that shall fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters fill the seas."

God in this hour is doing a great thing in the earth, making the ears of all who hear to tingle. Silently as the daybreak comes back when night is done and the crimson streak on ocean's cheek grows into the great sun, so without noise or fanfare He is laying His hand upon His chosen ones, ordained in Him before the foundation of the ages. He is bringing them first into unity with His own Spirit, making them one with Him, for God does certainly know that only in unity with His Spirit can the unity of the brethren be found. This is His church and the redemption of a groaning creation.

CHAPTER SIX THE TIME OF THE INTERIM

Seven men stood talking together. They were Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James and John, and two other disciples of the Lord. John 21:2. Their reason for being together is very evident. Not only were they friends of long standing, but they were all disciples of the Lord. The earth-shaking events of the past days had

knit their lives into closer union, as tragedies always tend to do. The topic of their conversation is not difficult to guess, nor is it difficult to imagine the consternation that now filled them with uncertainty and dread. What man does not feel a measure of uncertainty when he faces the unknown, knowing that no other has walked this way before?

These men had seen things that no man before them had ever seen. Their ears had caught the sweet sound of a message so transcendently glorious that even the soldiers exclaimed, "No man ever spake like this man!" He told them of the glory of an age to come, an age in which they with Him would sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. He had spoken of a kingdom wherein all was blessedness, all was right, and all was righteous. They had been with Him on the mountain of beatitudes and their ears had heard with joy His manifold blessings pronounced upon those who had the spirit of the kingdom of God in their hearts. Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed they that mourn; blessed the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and blessed are His own when men shall revile them and say all manner of evil against them falsely for His sake.

Never could man devise such a kingdom as this. All other kingdoms from the foundation of the world have been ruled and governed by man's stupidity, never prospering for long because of the deep corruption of the human heart, fashioned as they were in the mold of man's fallen nature. Jesus told them of a kingdom that would be the direct antithesis of all former kingdoms, a kingdom in which the love of God would both rule and be shed abroad in every heart.

"Upon the mountain Jesus sat; the hillside by the beach
Grass-carpeted cathedral where He could speak, and teach
Those flaming, burning words of truth that priest and demagogue
Would never tolerate at all in church or synagogue.
"His own cathedral He had built; had built it by His word,
And 'neath its vaulted panoply the glory of the Lord
Would pale the light of noonday sun; for what He said that day
Would blaze and shine eternally, when worlds had burned away.

"Back to their tasks the crowd had gone, and He was left alone
Save for a little company that He could call His own.
What use was there for restless crowds - the worldly, giddy throng
Might listen to the music, but never hear the song.

"Blessed are ye," the tones rang out, repeated o'er and o'er!
Galilee pressed with watery hands the keyboard of the shore;
And from her heaving bosom rose the music of her waves,
For heaven was calling earth to tell that only Jesus saves.

"For can the sermon on the mount be lived by human life?
Can sinful man ascend so high above his sin and strife?
Is there the possibility that he can strive and strain
Through a thousand consecrations that life to attain?

"Forgive us, Lord, is such we think, for this is not the way.
Oh, give us ears to really hear what Thou didst say that day!
We want life. Oh, vision blessed, from us, Lord, never part,
For we can only live it when Thou livest in our heart."

Charles S. Price.

This poor, bleeding world speaks of love while hate is deep-seated in the heart. They seek for lasting peace, but the Prince of peace they turn away from their doors. No nation can have good laws without giving honor to Him from whom all law comes, even Him who on Mt. Sinai proclaimed a law so good, so pure and holy, that no people on earth, no, not even the godless nations, have ever been able to pick a flaw in it. Some immoral and deluded folk have called it outmoded, but they quickly find disobedience to its precepts brings nations to ruin, as we now see on every hand.

Jesus had not only told them of a kingdom to come in which He would reign supreme, King of kings, and they, His devoted consorts, would reign with Him, but He had warned them that He must first suffer many things, be rejected by His people, and be put to death - all of which seemed to be incompatible with and contradictory to the things He was teaching. As though He would amaze them more, He had spoken of His rising from the dead and of an unspeakable hour yet to come in which all mankind would hear the trumpet call of the voice of God's Son and would come forth from their graves, some to aionian life and others to aionian destruction. It seems all clear to us now, but to them it was not clear. Their minds were confused with the very weight of the truth so fervently spoken to them and their understanding became incapable of grasping the awesome and wonderful message he proclaimed.

Like so many Christians of our day, these men rejoiced in the things they heard, but their hearts could not comprehend nor were they able to understand the vital truth and reality of the message. They "listened to the music, but never heard the song." How often through the years I have encountered this lack of comprehension among the people of the Lord! They have eyes, but they do not see. They examine the outer shell, but never taste the kernel within. They say they understand, but their spirit has not grasped the truth. Someone will ask, "How do you know they do not see or understand?" The answer is so simple. Truth transforms the receiver and flows from him so that deep calls unto deep. During the past years scores of people have told me that they have seen the truth regarding Babylon and that the entire, existing church system is indeed Mystery Babylon. You will have to write a very large book, my brother or sister, if you are going to convince me that you have seen the truth about Babylon while you still remain within her prison walls. I know you have not seen it. When men say they have seen this pertinent truth, yet they still remain faithful to the system either in its organized or unorganized state, they are deceived. They have seen nothing. Many thousands are now professing to preach what they proudly call the sonship message. Ah, my brother, talk is cheap indeed. It is not he who proclaims the theory of sonship who is God's son, but he who has the Spirit of His Son.

The minds of these seven men who stood and spoke together were confused indeed. The spirit within had not grasped the truth of death and resurrection. They had actually seen Him die and now, wonder of wonders, they had actually seen Him alive, a fact assured by many infallible proofs. If anyone on earth should have believed the message of the resurrection, it should have been Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene, yet these two faithful women, who during His life doted on His every word, had come early to the sepulcher, not to see Him alive, but, laden with sweet spices, to embalm His dead body and wrap it in endless yards of cloth that death might hold Him captive forever. But, when they came, they found the tomb no longer closed and sealed, but open wide; yet their sorrowing hearts could not believe that He was risen. He was not in the tomb and for this they wept bitterly. Surely someone must have stolen Him away, or perhaps the gardener had removed Him. Then He spoke, saying, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" yet she knew not that it was He until He spoke her name, as so oft before He had done, and then she knew. Oh what rapture ravished her despairing soul as the unbearable burden of grief, doubt, fear, misunderstanding, and disappointment fell like lead at her feet! Her tears of sorrow became glistening diamonds of happiness and joy as His wonderful voice called out her name. "Rabboni!" she cried in ecstasy as she fell to worship at His feet. It was only a word that He spoke, but it was enough to drive away the distress of a lifetime and fill her being with joy for eternity.

And so it will be with you, my precious brother or sister. One word, falling like a gem from His lips in love and pardon, will change your whole life and everything in it. That is the way it was with Thomas when Jesus appeared to him. He never could believe a thing until it was proved to him. Therefore, when he heard that the Lord was risen from the dead and had been seen by many of his brethren, he said with the heaviness that doubt always brings, "Except I see the print of the nails in His hands and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Eight days later the Lord appeared to His disciples again and this time Thomas was present. "Reach hither thy hand," He challenged, "and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas,

hearing and understanding the full force of the resurrection by the Spirit, cried out in wonder and amazement, "My Lord and my God!"

"He speaks and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing."

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me," spoke the risen Christ to a desperate man warring against the overwhelming convictions within his heart and kicking against the goadings of the Holy Spirit in His soul. Saul, hearing a voice but seeing no man, cried out from the depths of his anguished spirit, "Who art Thou, Lord!" for beyond doubt he knew it was the voice of the Lord. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," was the instant reply. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," and Saul in astonishment cried aloud, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Then said Jesus, "Go into the village and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And when Ananias was come to him, he laid his hands upon him and the Spirit of the Lord entered into him as the blinding scales that had bound his spirit in outer darkness all the days of his life fell from his eyes and he rejoiced in Jesus Christ the Lord.

"Jesus is all this poor world needs today.
Blindly they strive, for sin darkens their way.
Oh, to draw back the grim curtains of night!
One glimpse of Jesus and all will be bright.
All that I need is in Jesus.
He satisfies; joy He supplies;
Life would be worthless without Him;
All things in Jesus I find."

And now his ransomed soul was singing a theme that never left his heart through all the days of his sojourn on earth:

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the cross of Christ, my Lord.
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood."

Let me interject a foundational truth at this point. It is a truth seldom, if ever, heard among the people of God. The preachers and evangelists studiously avoid it, but it is fundamental to all our understanding of the work of God in this present age. It is a truth given by no less an authority than God's only begotten Son. The following two scriptures vividly point out God's method of choosing those who are elected to be saved in this age: First, "No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him..." **John 6:44**. The second is this: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." **John 6:37**. Christians blindly strive under the mistaken idea that, if they will only meet certain conditions, God will reply by bringing every man into the fold of Christ in this present age. My friend, this is a very great error. It is about as far from the truth as anything could possibly be. God does not intend to bring all men into the fold now. If that were His intention, He could do it with but one word of His omnipotence. When God's eternal voice speaks, saying, "Let there be light," then light immediately floods the universe as it did in the beginning. There is no need for a candle nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. That light could not be matched by ten thousand suns, for the light that shone out of darkness in the beginning is the same light that lightens every man that comes into the world. It is the light that shines into benighted souls, bringing the life of the ages to men who are sleeping in earth. "Samuel! Samuel!" called the Lord, and a sleeping boy sprang from his bed to reply. "Mary," was the only word Jesus spoke, and a weeping woman fell at His feet in utter joy. "Saul! Saul!" Jesus called to a disconsolate and determined persecutor, and he quickly replied, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And so it will be when He calls to you, your child, your husband, or your wife with His still small voice speaking to the inner ear. Whether it be John, George, Henry, Joan, Phyllis, or Louise, all will fall at His feet in penitence and brokenness the moment He speaks, crying, "Here am I, Lord! What wilt Thou have me to do?"

It is useless to try to gather all the world into the kingdom in this dispensation, for that is not God's purpose in this age. No man can except the Father draw him. Those who insist on bringing all the world in now are trying to do in this age of grace the work that God Himself has said should be done in the dispensation of the fullness of times. In the dispensation of the fullness of times, His immutable word has declared, He will gather all things into Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in Him. Eph. 1:10. "All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me," said Jesus, and you may be sure that this is the truth. At the end of this age there will not be one soul missing of all that number who were predestined to come to Him, and, when the kingdom age has run its course, there will not be one missing of all who are appointed to come to Him in that blessed age. So also we may declare for that wonderful age of the ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times, for God's word has faithfully declared that in that blessed age of all ages every missing sheep will be accounted for as God gathers together in one the all things into Christ.

Let us not vainly bash our heads against the wall in frantic attempts to accomplish things that are outside God's intention; for this age. Let us not try to bring the millennial kingdom in during the age of grace. It just cannot be done. Oceans of tears cannot change God's appointed purpose. Neither let us try to do in that glorious age to come what God has reserved for the fullness of times. All the good resolves, the labor, and the tears will never change that which God has appointed to be.

My heart earnestly cries that the day may speedily come when God's beloved people will know the peace of walking in harmony with the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. No praise is ever brought to God by our endeavoring to do things He does not want done. The world : will not know until the light of eternity what harm and distress the preachers have done who have taught the people that, unless they get saved now, they are doomed to unremitting and eternal ; fire. They have not helped by saying that, should we fail to • preach hell fire, men will live ungodly lives. Has this preaching kept the world from ungodliness? Is it not more wicked now than at any time since Noah? Could things sink much lower than they are in spite of all the threats of hell and rue and torment? What the world needs is not vain threats of punishment, but an understanding of what the will of the Lord is. This knowing the purpose of God is the greatest need among Christians today. I do not say you should not pray for the ungodly, but I do say that, if you are walking in the Spirit and being led by the Spirit, then your prayers will be directed by the Lord in whatsoever direction He pleases, and there will not be so many wasted prayers and useless efforts. Then prayer will be answered and His name glorified. Millions now are praying for another revival in this age like those that have gone before, but there will be no revival any more in this age. The next revival will come in the heat of the great tribulation when many saints with soiled garments wash them white and make them clean in the blood of the Lamb.

I suppose I will make some enemies, but I must tell you this truth nonetheless. I do not believe that the things we are seeing now are true moves of the Spirit of God. We hear it said on every hand that God is pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. My brother, if this were so and if this were the truth, then the world would not be sinking deeper into sin every minute of the day. All revivals of the past had the effect of lifting the people and the nations, but the charismatic movement, the Jesus people and the Jesus freaks, are sour substitutes and confused counterfeits of the real thing. There is no conviction of sin, no crying for mercy, no true repentance, no coming out and being separate, no refusal to touch the unclean thing, but the whole thing marches on, drunk with the blood of true saints and with the martyrs of Jesus. There is only one message for the saints who still remain in the church system, which is Babylon. It is the message I have ceaselessly uttered: "Come out from among them and be ye separate," saith the Lord, "and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17-18**. Why should anyone silence or soft-pedal the truth just because he is afraid of the results or why should one think that by preaching a lie we might accomplish in this age what God has reserved for the ages to come? We have noticed how Jesus, when asked to explain His reason for speaking in parables, plainly stated, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." **Matt. 13:11**. How foolish of us that we have failed to hear Him say that His parables were spoken that seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear, but not understand*. **Matt. 13:34, 35**. Would anyone but the Son of God have uttered a statement like that? And yet He did it, and it was all truth. Well did the Saviour know that another day is coming when the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. **Isa. 35:5**.

So these seven men stood together talking about all the things that had recently taken place. Many and varied were their thoughts and opinions concerning these momentous happenings that had given rise to the doubts and dreads that flooded across their minds, filling their souls with gloom. Was it true that every hope and aspiration planted in their fertile hearts had come to an end like a dream in the night? Had this man, Jesus, with all His wisdom, His power, assurance, and miracles really passed from them like a whiff of sweet perfume? Would He appear to them again or was this to be the end? Were they to be like so many others zealous, but thoroughly deceived?

Mankind, it seems, needs a lifetime just to learn that God is never in a hurry; neither is He ever slack or tardy in His appointed times. Oh, how often men go astray when they fail to wait until the Spirit makes His next move - a move that is always different from the one that preceded it. The Bible is replete with illustrations of this human failure to await the times and seasons of the Lord, at the same time clearly showing the difficulties that arise when we grow impatient with God. We may not understand God's reason for keeping Moses forty days in the mountain while the children of Israel impatiently awaited his return, but there was a reason, and the failure of the people and the failure of Aaron to wait on the Lord brought wrath from the Lord on the whole camp of Israel and much hardship and judgment, too. It will be well for us to take notice that their failure to await God's time gave them the unpleasant task of having to wait all over again for another forty days.

We are not told why Elijah, who demonstrated such faith and power before the prophets of Baal, had to flee away to Horeb. Perhaps he did not have to flee at all, but, as with most of us, his human inclinations led him to believe that there must never be an interval between one great event and another. Why should Christians impatiently believe that there must never be a waiting period when no voice from heaven is heard and no sign is given that God is in their midst? God's people should never put their faith in signs and manifestations. They should never depend on blessing, but on the faithfulness of God, who does all things in their appointed time. Healings, baptisms, speaking with tongues and all such signs and wonders have their place, but rest assured that, if you build your faith on them and come to depend on them, you will find yourself as deserted and comfortless as a crow in the ocean. Any man or woman whose spiritual experience depends upon what they see or what they feel will always be living that see-saw kind of experience that has them shouting the victory on the mountain tops one day and moping

in the valley of despair the next. The saint who really trusts in God maintains confident assurance in his heart, teaching him that the immutable Lord will do exactly what he has purposed to do, and, furthermore, that he will do it in His own time and in His own way. Nothing can let or hinder Him and no power in the universe can accelerate the divine time-table, no, not even by one hour.

It is both heartening and assuring to read such scriptures as these: "**When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son...**" **Gal. 4:4**. The faithful saints in Israel had longed for the coming Messiah. Through lengthening ages they patiently waited, but it was not until the clock struck the appointed hour that the long-promised Son appeared among them, and even then it was not to reign, but to die. It was some thirty years later that our Lord Jesus Christ lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour is come." What hour was this of which He spoke? Why, my impatient brother, it was the hour that in wisdom God had set before the world began. That momentous hour had been set even before time began, and human kind had waited for its coming for at least four thousand years. But with the certainty of a sunrise at the exact time appointed the hour came and the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, appeared to be slain in actuality just as God had decreed.

You have read how the Lord said to Abraham, "At the time appointed I will return unto thee according to the time of life and Sarah shall have a son." The Lord did not hasten His purpose because Abraham and Sarah were growing old. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Only Abraham and Sarah could see any difficulty to the fulfilling of God's purpose. They alone seemed to think the Lord had forgotten His promise, and so they tried to improvise some scheme of their own that might bring the promise to pass. Let me assure you, my brethren, that God is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness. Therefore let us learn that, if the Lord shows no interest in the accomplishment of anything, then it is much better to leave that thing undone. But be assured of this: When the time comes for God's purpose to be fulfilled, He will raise up His elect

servants to do it. Furthermore, He will have that one groomed, prepared, well-trained and ready to accomplish the task His wisdom has decreed should be done.

Why do so many people imagine that unless they do the task it will never be done? Have you ever found the Lord lacking a man when He had a job to be done? Never in the history of the world has such a thing been known. He has His Noah ready, and His ark, too, when it comes flood time. He has His Abraham ready, sealed and trained in obedience, when He is ready to raise up a new nation for His name. He had His Joseph locked up in jail all ready and waiting to become the second ruler in Egypt and with wisdom to begin storing up grain in Egypt against the famine that was coming on the world. He had His Moses, a forgotten man, in the backside of the desert, prepared in meekness and wisdom for the great task of leading a nation out of slavery. Back among the sheep on the hillsides of Judah He prepared a stripling to take the throne of Israel at the appointed time. We could continue speaking of the prophets and of John the Baptist, of Saul of Tarsus and of Martin Luther, and so many thousands of others through the years who appeared in God's time to serve their generation and fall asleep. No, my brother, God is never a moment behind time and He is never slack concerning His promises. Just now, in this self-same hour in which we live, our God is preparing a people for His name. Let the world rush on in its ignorance and pride and let the preachers preach how they please. Let Babylon swagger and stagger as she drinks herself drunken with the blood of the saints, but, all the while mankind is flirting with her and her harlot daughters, God is preparing a people for His name. They will not seem to be in the forefront where the world will see them. Their names do not appear in the glaring headlines of the press. Their voices are not heard on the radio nor are their faces seen on television; but, as a chick is prepared in the egg shell and as a baby is prepared in the darkness of the womb, so God is preparing His elect that at the time appointed He will manifest them to an astonished world. In the dark and hidden places our Father is preparing His sons, and, while He does it, the world looks on uncomprehending of the glory of the thing it sees.

It does not enter their heads
that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord,
and protection, His holy ones.
The virtuous man who dies condemns the godless who survive,
and youth's untimely end the protracted age of the wicked.
These people see the wise man's ending
without understanding what the Lord has in store for him
or why he has taken him to safety;
they look on and sneer,
but the Lord will laugh at them.
Soon they will be corpses without honor,
objects of scorn among the dead forever.
The Lord will dash them down headlong, dumb.
He will tear them from their foundations.
They will be utterly laid waste, anguish will be theirs,
and their memory shall perish.
They will come trembling to the reckoning of their sins,
and their crimes, confronting them, will accuse them.
Then the virtuous man stands up boldly
to face those who have oppressed him,
those who thought so little of his sufferings.
And they, at the sight of him, will shake with coward's fear,
amazed he should be saved so unexpectedly.
Stricken with remorse, each will say to the other,
say with a groan and in distress of spirit:
"This is the man we used to laugh at once,
a butt for our sarcasm, fools that we were!
His life we regarded as madness, his ending as without honor.
How has he come to be counted as one of the sons of God?
How does he come to be assigned a place among the saints?
Clearly we have strayed from the way of truth;

the light of justice has not shone for us, the sun never rose upon us.
 We have left no path or lawlessness or ruin unexplored,
 we have crossed deserts where there was no track,
 but the way of the Lord is one we have never known.
 Arrogance, what advantage has this brought us?
 Wealth and boasting, what have these conferred on us?
 All those things have passed like a shadow,
 passed like fleeting rumor.
 Like a ship that cuts through heaving waves -
 leaving no trace to show where it has passed,
 no wake from its keel in the waves.
 Or like a bird flying through the air -
 leaving no proof of its passing;
 it whips the light air with the stroke of its pinions,
 tears it apart in its whirring rush,
 drives its way onward with sweeping wing,
 and afterwards no sign is seen of its passage.
 Or like an arrow shot at a mark,
 the pierced air closing so quickly on itself,
 there is no knowledge which way the arrow has passed.
 So with us: scarcely born, we have ceased to be;
 of virtue not a trace have we to show,
 we have spent ourselves on wickedness instead."
 But the virtuous live forever,
 their recompense lies with the Lord,
 the Most High takes care of them.
 So they shall receive the royal crown of splendor,
 the diadem of beauty from the hand of the Lord;
 for He will shelter them with His right hand
 and shield them with His arm.
 For armor He will take His jealous love,
 He will arm creation to punish His enemies;
 He will put on justice as a breastplate,
 and for helmet wear His undissembling judgment;
 He will take up invincible holiness for shield,
 He will forge a biting sword of His stern wrath,
 and the universe will march Him to fight the reckless.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM.

The elect of the Lord are now in a time of patient waiting as they are being prepared for the hour when man in God's image shall reign as the wisdom of God decreed in the beginning of the ages. This is not a time for God's elect to get excited about the worsening condition of the world, nor is it wisdom to try to turn the tide of events in the world. No man who ever lived has been able to do this. Even Jesus Himself made no such effort. Well He knew that to everything under the sun there is a season and a time. He told us with great conviction, **"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do."** **John 5:19.**

How long our seven friends stood talking I do not know, but we may be sure they had plenty to talk about, and talk they did until one of their number, a man named Simon Peter, decided it was time to make a move. "I go a-fishing," he said, and his friends all agreed that they would go with him. You may not agree with me, but in my opinion it was not a bad idea at all. Their Lord was taken from their head. He had been crucified and, though they knew for certain that He was risen from the dead, he had given them no instruction whatsoever to indicate what their next move should be. When a child of God has no instruction from the Lord or any leading of His Spirit, then it is well to do whatever may be conveniently done. Thus these men decided to spend this interim hour in that old occupation they knew so well fishing.

There are many things to admire about what they did. They had no instruction from their Lord, so they attempted nothing of His work without His direction. They called no meetings, preached no sermons, held no prayer meetings. They had wives and families to support during this time of interim. What better thing, therefore, could they have done than to spend their time in honest enterprise until some new direction was given them from above? Perhaps someone will insist that these men should have spent their time waiting on the Lord. Well, in my opinion that is just what they were doing, and, when the appointed time came and the Lord appeared to give them instruction, He found them as detached from their occupation as they had been in the beginning.

We are in an interim period now just as they were in an interim period then. They stood at the end of the dispensation of law and the beginning of the age of grace. We stand between the end of the dispensation of grace and the beginning of the dispensation of the kingdom of God. I am not suggesting that we all go fishing or even that every man return to his secular work, but be it known to every saint that things are rapidly changing and all the glorified hosts of the universe are preparing themselves as heralds of the morning. The kingdom age, the greatest age that has ever been, is now at hand - the age when God's Son will reign on David's throne and all God's chosen sons will reign with Him.

From north and south the people meet
To lay their trophies at His feet,
While western empires own their Lord
And savage tribes attend His word.

This is not a time to go rushing out to convert the world. This is the time of the sun rising. The crimson streak on ocean's cheek will soon grow into the great sun, yea, the Sun, the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings. The acceptable year of the Lord is at hand. Two thousand years ago He began to preach the gospel to the poor. He told of a day when all the broken hearts would be mended by the miraculous power of His life. He told of a day when captives would be set free forever, whether they were captives of men or captives of their own sins. He preached that the blind would recover their sight and the bruised would be set at liberty. All these things he demonstrated daily during the three and one-half years of His earthly ministry as He delivered men from evils, healed their diseases, opened their eyes and their ears, touched the maimed so that their limbs grew back on and raised the dead to life again. These things He did were merely demonstrations and samples of the fullness that shall bless mankind, yea, all creation, too, in that acceptable year of the Lord.

Long ago he preached the acceptable year of the Lord, but the dead He raised to life were doomed to die again. It is wholly possible that many who were healed of their diseases fell sick again and passed away, and so it may have been with them all, but it will not be thus in that blessed age which prophets and sages called the acceptable year of the Lord. Isa. 61:1-2. In that glad day there will be no sickness. It will be abolished from the face of the earth. There will be no more blind, for blindness will be dethroned, not by the skill and genius of men, but by the decree of the King of kings and Lord of lords. There will be no lame men in that day nor will any be deaf and dumb. All such things will be disannulled. In that day there will be no more violence and no more war. These, too, will be effaced from His kingdom - abolished, dethroned, disannulled, forever effaced and forever obliterated that the glory of His kingdom should be without alloy and nothing should hurt or destroy in all His holy mountain.

Those seven men were standing in the interim between the dark and the daylight as we are in the interim now. I know not when our Lord shall come, at morn or noonday fair, but in my heart I know that we are as near to the Omega now as Adam was near to the Alpha in the beginning. It is true we do not know the day or the hour when the Son of man shall come, but it is also true that "ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night or of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." **I Thess. 5:4-8.**

The world is in travail. Make no mistake about that. Everywhere we hear men speak of peace and safety, but, even while they proclaim it, travail has seized upon them as upon a woman with child. A woman with child cannot hope to escape her hour of travail. Neither can the world escape its travail, for a manchild is being born.

Again I say we are in the interim. All things as we have known them are doomed to pass away that the things which we have known only in the Spirit may encompass the world in its glad tomorrow. You have probably noticed that all dispensations ended in travail and upheaval. Innocence ended with man's expulsion from the beautiful Eden of God. Conscience ended with the flood that engulfed the whole world in its watery grave. Human government ended with the destruction of the machinations of Babel and the confusion of tongues. The age of promise ended with the children of Israel in captivity in Egypt. The dispensation of the law came to its close amid the rending rocks and darkening skies that dreadful, predestined day at Calvary, when the Son of God offered His body, soul, and spirit for the reconciliation of the world and all that is therein. The dispensation of grace, that is now ending, will find its culmination in the greatest upheaval of all time - a time of trouble such as has never been before and never will be again, a tribulation so great that except those days should be shortened no flesh could possibly be saved, a day of tribulation so great that every being on earth will be held by the power of its grip. But it, too, will pass. It is only a moment and the Lord will appear with ten thousands of His saints to set up His kingdom and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Then

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Long centuries ago in Seir the cry went ringing forth: "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" And the answer came quick and clear and strange, "The morning cometh, and also the night." **Isa. 21:11-12.** A strange reply, indeed, but oh how fitting and true it is of our day! It is not a contradiction as it may seem to be. The morning and the night are both coming, and they will arrive together. Whether it will be morning or night to you depends on what ground you stand upon. If we stand in Him with our ransomed hearts embracing the glory of His appearing, clearly loving His purpose, the glory of His aionian morning will wrap its kindly mantle round our shoulders, but if we stand with the unbelieving, fixing our hopes upon the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh, then all before us will be night; and so it shall be that that which is sunset for one will be the glory of the sunrise for another, for the morning cometh and also the night. We are waiting for the final crash and we will not have long to wait. The collapse of all things belonging to man's vain kingdom is at hand, but the flashing of lightning and the roaring of thunder, which will bring the age to a close are also the eternal heralds of the acceptable day of the Lord.

Oh what bursting there must have been in the heart of Mary as the sublime words of the Magnificat flowed like a waterfall from the inner recesses of her ransomed heart! "My soul doth magnify the Lord," she exulted, "and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Luke 1:46-47. The glory that filled her soul that day was born of the knowledge that the Christ-child was forming within. The glory that fills our ransomed souls today is born of the knowledge that the hour of His manifestation is at hand - the hour when the government shall be upon His shoulder to order and establish the kingdom with judgment and justice, even from this time forth unto the age of the ages.

"I go a-fishing," said Peter, as he stood in the interim, and they all replied, "We also go with thee." They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No. And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish, which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

"Jesus saith unto them, **Come and dine.** And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third

time that Jesus shewed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?** He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.** He saith to him again the second time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?** He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, **Feed My sheep.** He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?** Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, **Lovest thou Me?** And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto Him, **Feed My sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God."** **John 21:3-19.**

The story is told of a wayfaring man who in his journeyings came upon a most beautiful estate. As with delight he viewed its well kept magnificence, he enquired of the chief steward who the owner might be. "He is away on a journey," was the reply, "and we do not know when he will return." "How long has he been gone?" the traveler questioned. "Fifteen years," was the steward's reply. "Fifteen years!" cried the wayfarer. "Why, you keep this place as though you expected him tomorrow!" "Ah, no!" replied the steward, "we keep it as though we expected him to return today."

It is the time of the interim. It is the beautiful time of waiting and watching for His coming. It is the time to listen for the glad heralds of the morning. It is the blessed time of the interim.

It may be morn; it may be night or noon.

We know He's coming soon!

CHAPTER SEVEN

WAITING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE

"Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble." Because of the fewness of our days we are continually beset with the tendency to HURRY. Modern man seems to hate the thought of WAITING. He wants everything right now. We secretly imagine that, if we do not hurry, our lives will pass by without the realization of our dreams and ambitions. Thus man, who loves riches, hastens to be rich and sinneth. He who desires fame hastens to seek it. "Work for the night is coming" seems to be the theme of every man. Even the Christian is by no means free from this tormenting demon of haste, for he, too, proclaims his ambition for his life, hoping to see it accomplished before God calls him.

Now we would not say it is wrong to have an ambition and I would be the last man on earth to condone the idler who finds his greatest pleasure in avoiding or delaying every task as long as possible, for Bible history certainly substantiates the belief that all the men God ever called were men of devotion to duty. There is not a slacker among them. Neither laggards in love nor dastards in war were chosen by Him. Many whom He called were sweating under the burden of their toil when the Spirit of God first touched them and, bidding farewell to their herds of cattle, their flocks of sheep, their fishing nets, their yokes of oxen, their custom's offices, their merchandising and their tent making, they followed wholeheartedly and with a good will in the path of His choosing.

Even so today men and women of all walks of life are counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord. They are reckoning the things, which are not as though they were. They are counting the things, which are invisible as though they were clearly seen. Like Abraham they are looking for a city, which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, and, in searching for the glory of that invisible city, their eyes look past and beyond every visible city of earth. The eye, which is capable of seeing the invisible is a wonderful eye indeed. It is the eye of faith with the pupil of hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? Hope is the very instigator of faith. Hope springs from obedience; indeed, it inspires obedience. It erases embarrassment and shame from the faces of all who rejoice in it, for hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh it is a tree of life.

Faith and hope are twin sisters. In all my life I have never known any person to have faith until they first of all had hope. Such a thing is impossible. For thirty and eight years the impotent man lay by the pool of Bethesda waiting for the moving of the waters. John 5. For thirty and eight years he had hoped against hope that some

day he would be the first to step into the water to receive healing from its troubled wave and, thence rejoicing and praising God, he would walk away from the pool a healthy man. But bitter frustrating disappointment held him in its vice-like grip, for always after the troubling of the water, even while he desperately struggled to get in, someone else less needy than he stepped in before him and once again his hopes of healing were dashed to the ground. Then one day Jesus came walking through the mists of his despair speaking the soul-thrilling words. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Faith immediately leaped from the very bosom of hope to put her hand in the hand of God. Life flowed from Christ like a river into a broken body and from the heart of faith and hope came love. Thus they abide forever - faith, hope, and love - but the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13:13.

It is God who raiseth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were, Rom. 4:17, honoring even the hopeless who against hope believe in hope according to that which He hath spoken. Rom. 4:18. We all admire the faith of Abraham, and well we might, for he is the very father of the faithful. Abraham was not a man of many works but a man who believed God. It was in hope that he believed. Even when there was no cause to hope and every visible thing was against hope, yet against hope he believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations and heir of the promises of God. Rom. 4:18.

It was for the joy that was set before Him that Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. And it is for the hope that is set before us that we are today following Christ, which hope we have as an anchor for the soul both sure and stedfast and which entereth into that within the veil. Heb. 6:19. It is with such assurance of hope stedfast to the end that His sons follow Him through valleys where the shadows of death fall about them, through deserts where no water is, through fiery furnaces and lions' dens, through lonesome days and heartless misunderstanding, through reproach and unbelief and all the varied circumstances which only the wisdom of God can devise to make them strong in faith, giving glory to God.

The prize of sonship in God is a prize beyond the scope of human imagination. To be a son of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ that "as He is so are we in this world" is a hope which defies all possibility of description. Even faith falters before the wonder of its possibility and only hope smiles up through her tears of joy to whisper it shall be so. Never belittle a man who says, "I hope so", for such a man is embracing that which hope alone can embrace, and all who scoff at hope are scoffing at that which abides forever. "Hope thou in God," said David, "for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." Psa. 42:5.

When the apostle John spoke of sonship, he spoke of that which is the love of God and the hope of all mankind, the love of God in granting sonship to man and the hope in man that he might become a son of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, (mature sons), but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure. 1 John 3:1-3. The hope that burns like a fire within the breasts of God's elect sons is the inspiration that inspires them to purify their lives that they might be pure even as He is pure. Hope delivers men from despair, filling their hearts with courage to find a way where no way is and to embrace victory where there is naught but defeat. It makes toil-weary men cry, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God." Psa. 42:11.

It is when hope flies out the windows of your soul that ravaging despair walks in the door. When hope has fled, men walk with downcast countenance, making their way back to their fishing nets, returning to old traditions and abandoning themselves to despair. Listen to the words of the two heartbroken disciples as they plod their weary way to the town of Emmaus. "We trusted that it had been He who would have redeemed Israel." Luke 24:21. But things had not gone as they had hoped and because of this they were in the grip of despair. That is why love is a little greater than hope, for, while hope sometimes falters, droops, and faints, love never faileth.

When the apostle Paul was voyaging to Rome, the ship encountered the fierce storm Euroclydon. Acts 27:14-20. The hardy sailors toiled tirelessly to save the ship, throwing the cargo into the sea and casting out the tackling, but when neither sun nor stars appeared and no small tempest lay upon them, all hope that they

should be saved was taken away. But there was one man aboard who had not lost hope. He was still praying, still fasting, still hoping, still trusting and believing. When all others sat in despair, Paul stood forth in the midst and said, "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete and to have gained this harm and loss, and now I exhort you be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God (Jesus Christ) whose I am and whom I serve."

A far greater storm than Euroclydon is settling down upon the world. A more tempestuous gale by far is about to blow upon us. Even now there must be many faithful Christians who wonder if the tempest that howls about them will be too great for their frail bark. You will wonder if perchance you have taken the wrong ship or if perhaps you should have stayed in the safety of the old harbors of Babylon. The things you hoped would happen have not happened, but hope on! The light that once seemed so close at hand that but a few short steps would bring you to it now has retreated to another horizon and seems as far away as ever. But hope thou in God, for you shall yet praise Him.

The great discoverer, Christopher Columbus, in his hope of discovering a north-west passage to India taught the world lessons in hope and patient endurance that have never been surpassed. Through uncharted seas he sailed, consoling and encouraging the hearts of his near mutinous men who longed to turn back and abandon the hope that lay before them. Of his epic voyage into the unknown the poet wrote:

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind, the gates of Hercules,
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said, "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone;
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
"Why, say, 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day,
My men grow ghastly wan, and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you may say, at break of day,
'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"
They sailed and sailed as winds might blow
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say-"
He said, "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight; He curls his lip, he lies in wait
With lifted teeth as if to bite; Brave Admiral, say but one good word,
What shall we do when hope is gone?" The words leaped like a leaping sword,
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness.
Ah, that night Of all dark nights!

And then, a speck,
"A light! A light! A light! A light!"
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

Joaquin Miller

The most necessary thing in all the Christian walk is to have that blessed hope ever firmly before us. Such alone are capable of laying hold of the promises of God, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. If you are going to turn back, by all means turn back now, for the hour of trial is at hand that will try every man that dwelleth upon the earth.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver; as an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold so is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear. Prov. 25:11,12. There are times in the life of every man when a word of encouragement is needed along the way. We all need exhortation here and there, for the journey may become long and the burden great until we know not which way to turn. For this very reason the good Lord has filled the Bible with exhortations to faithfulness. Examples have been left us by other men and women who with like passions as our own sailed through stormy seas, enduring cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned and sawn asunder, tempted and slain with the sword. They wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. The world was not worthy of them. Yet by their faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And for all this faith, hope, and endurance they all died without seeing the realization of their hope. But hope is hope and faith is faith and the word of God is the word of God, both sure and steadfast. Such realities as these can never be cancelled by death, for God counts the things that be not as though they were in preparation for the day when He will waken the dead from their temporary sleeping that they with us together may in resurrection partake of all His promises. See Heb. 11:32-40.

Now after the apostle had thus exhorted the people to steadfastness of faith by calling to their minds the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before and who all endured such suffering and tribulation, he exhorted them further by saying, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself lest ye be weary and faint in your minds."

It is so easy to become weary and faint. Time after time hopes are deferred and our hearts are made sick. Oh, how often we could say with the two disciples who journeyed that night to Emmaus, "We had trusted that it should have been He who would have redeemed Israel." Like Elijah we see cloud in the sky that promises rain, but instead of its increasing to a mighty storm as it did in his day, it withers away like a mist before the rising sun. We see world events shaping up that seem to herald the soon coming of Christ and the glory of His kingdom, but they too pass by without event. We hear of great religious moves and upon investigation discover that they are clouds without water. We hear reports of men with great gifts only to find that they are clouds and wind without rain, for that is the judgment of God against all who boast of false gifts. Prov. 25:14. We walk in sweet counsel with men, as David did with Ahithophel, only to see them become enemies and return to the husks of swine, or, having loved this present world, like Demas they wave good-bye and depart for the easier and well-trodden paths. Then, too, it is not at all uncommon to become weary with one's self and the often weaknesses and infirmities of our own nature. Anxiously we glance about us for signs of developing sonship only to behold how unChristlike we really are. Without are fightings; within are fears. We look for the ruddy tints of health only to behold a haggard face and forms that droop and faint in the long walk of faith.

Thus we commune with our own hearts, wondering at the pitiful emptiness that so often engulfs us, until we hear the voice of the Lord ringing through the corridors of our soul, refreshing as a cool breeze in time of harvest. "Hast thou not known, has thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fail, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles (sons of God). They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." **Isa. 40:28-31.**

I am convinced that every Bible writer knew far more about spiritual fainting spells than he knew about being carried heavenward on billowy clouds of glory and blessing. Those warriors of the cross knew the meaning of the words, "Take up thy cross and follow Me." They knew only too well that all who would follow Him must be ready to forsake mothers and fathers and children and every manner of friendship for the sake of the burning light that shone within them. They knew that the path of sonship might lead through poverty. They were not ignorant of the fact that their greatest enemy would prove to be, not other people, but their own flesh, and for that very reason they would be called upon to hate their own lives (after the flesh) also. They knew and you know and I know that any man who loves his father or mother, his son or his daughter more than Christ is not worthy of Christ. Yes, and you must love Him more than your own life besides, for your life is no longer your own. Ye are bought with a price. Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not. Gal. 6:9.

How often, when I have thought of the above text, I have wanted to reverse its words and say, "We shall faint if we reap not," for that is often the reason so many people fall out by the wayside. But I think there is a whole world of truth bound up in the inspired words, "one sows, another reaps, but God gives the increase."

Now our Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, gave us a wonderful remedy to save us from fainting. "Men ought always to pray," He said, "and not to faint." Prayer is the greatest antidote against weakness of heart and faintness of spirit that was ever put in man's possession. What a regrettable thing it is that Christians in the blindness and confusion of all ages have thought to use prayer as a means of either begging or forcing God to do the things they wanted Him to do. How often I have heard men pray, beg, plead, and demand of God, insisting upon what they foolishly thought were "throne rights", as they tried to press home their requests. But just as often I have seen them go away empty, only to return again to repeat the silly process. This is not prayer. It never was prayer and it never will be prayer. So often we have heard it said that, "prayer is the utterance of the soul's sincere desire." Though these words have been quoted almost as a text of scripture, yet it is not the whole truth, for man, being what he is, may have many, many sincere desires in his heart, yet every one of them may be contrary to the will of God. As long as Christians are dominated by the carnal mind, their prayers will be based upon the longings of their own hearts rather than on the will of God. Prayer is not much speaking. Prayer is not frequent repetition. Prayer was not given that men might impose upon God the childish desires of their own will. If the years as a Christian have taught me anything regarding prayer, it is this: The greatest element in prayer is the silent waiting of a surrendered will that asks from the hidden depths of the spirit, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Be still and know that I am God."

How happy is the man who knows that God is God, supreme, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, and divine, holding in His mighty head all the plans and purposes of endless ages, bringing to pass each edict ordained in His infinite mind before ever a creature was, raising up kings and putting them down, exalting nations and discarding them at will, creating darkness wherein men stumble and the light that drives darkness away, ordaining His elect from before the foundation of the world, calling them to justification and glory according to His purpose, raising up vessels of dishonor to serve their ignoble purpose in this age and to be visited with grace after many days. Eph. 2:7. Oh, how great Thou art! And what strength they sustain who kneel before Thee to hear Thee unfold Thy glorious plan! Happy is the man who has found in prayer this source of strength and life.

What a universe of difference there is between the man who thus searches out God's mind and will and him who comes with rapid speech to recite a thousand impetuous demands which are neither heard of God nor

remembered by him who prayed them. Such an intercessor is scarcely better than he who without thought or heart searching intones his prayer with melancholy voice from a prayer book.

"Therefore, seeing we have received this ministry, we faint not, knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not, but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." **2 Cor. 4:1, 14-18.**

In the book of Judges, chapter 8, there is a record that should encourage every fainting soul. All day long Gideon with his three hundred men had pursued the hosts of the Midianites, and "Gideon came to Jordan and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint yet pursuing." Faint yet pursuing! What a heartening message that really is! For years perhaps you, like Paul, have pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. For months you have fought a good fight and strained every nerve like a mighty athlete to win a prize. You have suffered many a defeat. You have stumbled and fallen by the wayside times without number. You have seen the most stalwart men halt their step and return to the weak and beggarly elements of the flesh. You have marveled at the slowness of your pace and the oft recurring signs of your own carnality. Prophecy has failed; tongues have ceased; knowledge has vanished away. Well, let everything in the world fail. Though you are very faint, keep pursuing, for God, who cannot lie, has said, "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

When the path before is rough,
And the rocks in ridge and bluff
Bar your progress to the distant peaks sublime,
When your strength and heart are breaking,
Take pride in the fight you're making.
Throw your rope around the high rock and climb.

Watching and waiting go hand in hand. Oft repeated and fervent are the exhortations of scripture to watch and be watchful. When Jesus spoke of the coming of the Lord, He said, "If the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken up; therefore, be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." **Matt. 24:43.** The world today abounds with signs loudly proclaiming that the end of the age is upon us and the coming of the Lord is near. It is our duty to watch every sign even as he that reapeth watches the weather and the sky, heeding both winds and clouds, often listening to the weather reports that he might know what manner of weather is coming. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." Remember these exhortations to watchfulness. "Tarry ye here and watch with Me." "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." "For the Son of man is as a man making a journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Take heed; watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning, lest coming he find you sleeping. And what I say unto one I say to all. Watch." **Mark 13:33-37.**

Paul the apostle continued these exhortations to watchfulness, saying in **1 Cor. 16:13**, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong." And again, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober." **1 Thess. 5:1-6.** In like manner also Peter, being mindful of the fearful destruction that came upon the careless and sordid generation which was disobedient when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was in preparation, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water, said, "The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore

sober and watch unto prayer." **1 Pet. 4:7.** "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, for blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garment, that he may have right to the tree of life." **Rev. 16:15.** A watchman is simply one who watches, and I am inclined to think that the work of a watchman, though of vital importance whether in peace or war, must be one of the most tedious tasks ever given to man. Weary nights and days are spent in lonesomeness, oftentimes in the cold, many times in danger from enemies of varied sorts. Yet to fall asleep when watching or to be careless or remiss for but a moment may mean disaster to a whole nation.

There is an impressive little story in 1 Kings 20:35-43 which should inspire us all to watchfulness. King Ahab had allowed Ben-Hadad to escape out of his hand and, in order that he might condemn himself with his own words, one of the prophets feigned this simple monologue: "As the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and, behold, a man turned aside and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shall pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it. And he (the prophet) hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets. And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased." Now the words that stand out so clearly in this parable are these: "While I was busy here and there, he was gone." People are so inclined to forsake watchfulness while they attend to the fleeting tasks of this present life. They allow some love for the passing to make them forget the permanent. They allow their minds to be taken up with play so that, instead of watching unto prayer and developing their spiritual nature, giving earnest heed to the precious hope of sonship in Christ, they spend their spare time grasping for the bursting bubbles of this present life, never realizing that what we are tomorrow today we are becoming. Thus, while we are busy here and there, the very thing that is most important escapes us.

It is not only those who are absorbed with earthly toil or earthly play who let the valued prize escape them, but thousands of Christians today are so busy here and there with every manner of religious work that all spiritual growth has come to a standstill. Do you keep forever on the run for church and society until all your spare time is taken up with this confusing maze of activity so common among Christians in our day? If so, you are not growing in the wisdom and knowledge of Christ and, if we may use the parable in this way, while you are busy here and there, you will wake up to find that He is gone, and you are drowned in your activity. God does not want your work. He wants you.

The true watchman, keeping his lonely vigil, is not to be meddling in affairs for his own amusement even though the hours are long and idle. His duty it is to say, "My Lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime and I am set in my ward whole nights," **Isa. 21:8-12**, that when one calleth to him, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" he with knowledge and understanding may reply, "The morning cometh and also the night." For of a truth we are coming to a period of time when both the morning and the night shall come at once, morning to the watchers and night to the sleepers. What I say unto one I say unto all. Watch!

Now watching always implies waiting. Whether you are watching for a king or a thief, whether you are expecting good or evil, there is always the time of waiting. The word of the Lord to the prophet Habakkuk places watching and waiting side by side. "I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon the tables that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak and not lie; Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry." **Hab. 2:1-3.**

Though the word of God is sure and steadfast and can never fail, standing sure even though the heavens and earth pass away, yet, because His promises are almost always long delayed and we are inherently impatient, we are prone to grow weary of our waiting and begin to say, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." **2 Tim. 3:4.** Undoubtedly it is true that all things do continue very much as they have done since the foundation of the world. There is no doubting that fact.

Mankind is more absorbed than ever with the things of earth. He is bound and determined to make the world a better place to live in, forgetting all about God, who alone can make life worth living, whether in riches or in poverty. So concerned have we become with trying to better this life that we have forgotten that better part which God has reserved for those who look for that blessed hope and wait for His Son from heaven.

History is not lacking in evidence that men have almost always continued the heedless profligacy of former generations right up to the very moment when disaster fell upon them. In Noah's day they continued their reprobate living to the very day the flood came and took them all away, marrying and giving in marriage, divorcing and remarrying, exulting in violence and wickedness until every imagination of their hearts was evil continually. Naught did they heed that mighty preacher of righteousness who in spite of his years of toil and faithfulness had no converts outside his own household. Then, in the midst of all their riotous living, the flood came even as God had said.

Things continued on as usual in the city of Sodom to the hour and minute of its desolation. God, they thought, saw none of their vileness and, if He saw, surely He cared not a straw. Their filthy conversation vexed the soul of righteous Lot who dwelt among them. What thought had they for God? What care had they for any warning of impending destruction? Even the close relations of Lot - his daughters and his sons-in-law - scoffed at his warnings, for he seemed to them as one that mocked. Gen. 19:14. But by the time the sun was risen upon Zoar the next morning, God rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah and overthrew those cities and all the plain. Verses 23-24.

Did not judgment suddenly come upon Egypt in the days of Moses? And on Babylon likewise in the night Belshazzar was slain? And was not Pompeii suddenly destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, the excavated ruins of which today bear witness of its sin?

Let us not then grow weary with waiting, for **"the thing is true, though the time appointed is long."** Dan. 10:1. Let us rather do as Daniel did and receive from God the understanding of it.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Matt. 24:45-50.

It is doubtful if any man fully understands the parable of the ten virgins, but though we may be somewhat in the dark as to the exact meaning of the parable as a whole, the lessons it teaches need not be missed by anyone. The ten were virgins, waiting for the bridegroom. The bridegroom tarried; they all slumbered. Suddenly, at darkest night, at midnight, the cry went out! "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." The hasty trimming of their lamps, the disappointing discovery by some that their oil had dwindled and their lights were almost gone out, their hasty departure to buy oil, the arrival of the bridegroom and his departure while the foolish virgins were absent, their consequent exclusion from the feast and their loss for the age to come — whatever else this parable may teach, only the most unthinking man could fail to see from these points the great need and vital necessity of preparedness.

Waiting is a wearisome task. The minutes seem like hours, the hours like days. Have you ever waited for the midnight train only to find it was an hour late? That hour is longer than any other as sleep and restlessness overtake you. The coming of the Lord seems to be always delayed - not because He postpones it as some think, but because we set our hopes and fix our hearts on some specific reason only to find we are wrong and must still abide His time. It is here that we are inclined to slumber and grow careless in our watching and impatient in our waiting. It is then we fall asleep or become busy here and there only to find Him coming at an hour when we are unaware.

The Lord made a promise to Abraham that Sarah his wife would bear him a son and that his seed would be as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea for multitude. We have read how the years dragged by in the life

of this man of faith until he was well stricken in years and his wife far past the age of childbearing. Already they had resorted to means of their own design in a human endeavor to promote the promise of God, for Abraham, at the bidding of his wife Sarah, had taken Hagar the Egyptian that through her might come the promised seed and God's covenant be fulfilled. In the course of time Ishmael was born and Abraham evidently believed that God had accepted his artificial method of fulfilling His promise. But when Abraham was one hundred years old and his wife ninety, to his amazement and apparent chagrin the Lord returned to speak to him again and to renew the promise that Sarah would have a son. Sarah, upon hearing the voice of the angel, laughed at the thought that a woman of her years should bear a son. But the angel, rebuking her for her laughter, assured her that about a year from then she would indeed bear the promised son. There is a sort of pitiful weariness in the words of Abraham: "Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee!" He had grown weary in his faith and hoped that the promise of God had been fulfilled in Ishmael and that he would need to trust no more. Please read Gen. 17:1-19. 18:1-15.

I cannot fully explain just why the Lord appears to delay His promises. The real truth of the matter is that He never does delay His promise. It only seems that way. Man, short-lived as he is, naturally thinks that God's promises must immediately be fulfilled, forgetting that God has His own appointed time for the accomplishment of all His will. In the omniscient mind of the Lord the day and the hour has been set for the fulfillment of His every purpose. Paul said, "In the fullness of time God brought forth His Son." He did not bring Him forth one day ahead of His plan, nor did He bring Him forth one day late. Jesus Christ was born on the day appointed of God before the world began. When Jesus faced the cross, He lifted His voice to His Father in heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come". That mighty hour of His death had been planned before ever there was a world or an age. One hour earlier would not have done; one hour later could not suffice. There is neither haste nor delay with Him. God runs the whole universe so perfectly on time that every watch in the world is set by its rotation. When Jesus spoke of His second coming, He said that no man knew the day nor the hour of His coming, but the Father only. God does not delay any of His promises. Long ago He ordained the exact day and the exact hour for the revelation of His Son. When the scripture says, "God waited in the days of Noah", we must not think that He waited beyond the time appointed. He waited only until the appointed hour, and then the flood came. It is wrong to imagine that God is now delaying the end of the age or the coming of the Lord because of the unbelief of the world. God will not delay one second beyond the time appointed. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, but He will not wait nor tarry one moment beyond that time appointed by His omniscient mind before the ages began. No! The Lord is not delaying His coming. The time is long, Dan. 10:1, evidently much longer than anyone has expected, but He will surely come and will not tarry. See Job 7:1, Dan. 8:19, 11:27, Acts 17:26.

"Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." God has never changed the methods by which He brings into our lives the qualities and virtues He desires. Evidently He has some special design in mind for patience, for of all the many virtues of His Spirit He strives most earnestly to produce patience in the experience of His people. In seeking for spiritual perfection, we have likely forgotten long ago to pay any particular attention to patience. We have likely forgotten, if we ever knew, that, when patience has been permitted to have her perfect work within us, we ourselves become perfect and entire, wanting nothing. This is a wonderful hope indeed, and should cause us much meditation and searching of heart. The moment we understand that all God's apparent delays are permitted to bring about the state of perfection that He deems perfect, then we can with joy and gladness settle down to long, long periods of patient waiting, possessing our souls in patience and love.

There is not too much value in praying for patience unless, of course, you are willing to take God's mysterious way of producing it. Our heavenly Father will not hand patience to you on a golden platter just because you prayed for it. He has His own way of bringing patience into your soul. This is His way: "Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit." If you request patience from God, sooner or later you will be partaker of tribulation of one sort or another. It is unavoidable, for this is God's wise dealing and His divine method of producing patience acceptable to Him.

As you read the word of God, you will notice that patience has a special relationship to the coming of the Lord. A goodly number of times the two are mentioned together. James, for instance, says, "[Be patient therefore,](#)

brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." **Jas. 5:7-8.** Then again there is that most beautiful scripture written by Paul which seems to stop one dead in his tracks while he meditates on its glory and possibility: "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ." **2 Thess. 3:5.**

From these scriptures it will be clearly seen that patience is a virtue much desired of God. He Himself is the God of all patience and His design is that we, too, should be likeminded. See Rom. 15:5. Is it any wonder then that in the infinite process of our becoming like Him He should strive endlessly and with all patience to reproduce all His attributes in the nature of His sons? Would to God in this important hour that all His people would joyfully yield themselves to His will even as clay yields itself in the hands of the potter. Instead of running pell-mell seeking every spectacular thing that clamors for our attention, let us diligently add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love, for these are the attributes of the divine nature. 2 Pet. 1:4-8. We must through patience and hope receive God's promises; therefore, with patience possess ye your souls. Though the great Abraham believed God, it was not until he had patiently endured that he received the promises. Let us not expect then that our Lord will treat us with less devotion, for we are all the children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 12
SEED FOR THE SOWER AND BREAD FOR THE EATER

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-7

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PREFACE:

The title of this book, Seed for the Sower and Bread for the Eater, is borrowed from Isaiah 55:10. In its six chapters I have made no attempt to develop one particular theme, but rather to plant kernels of truth which, united, will become one loaf.

In the great body of Christ the many members, differing markedly from each other, nevertheless form but one body, Rom. 12:4,5, and that one body the fullness of Christ. Thus we, being many greatly differing members and ministries, become one bread (loaf). 1 Cor. 10:17.

No truth is in itself a separate entity, but all truths are integral parts of one glorious whole, emanating from and vanishing into Him who fills the universe with Himself. As in the days of the Caesars all roads led to Rome, so all truth both flows from and leads to our wondrous Lord and Christ and through Him to our gracious heavenly Father.

May these somewhat diverse chapters lead us only to Him, who is the source of all truth.

The Author.

CHAPTER ONE
DIVINE REVELATION

As this age of grace moves towards its inevitable close and the kingdom of God draws near, the diverging paths of the carnal mind and the spiritual mind become ever more distant the one from the other. As the tides of the old age ebb away and the surges of the new age roll in from the ocean of God, the natural mind becomes less and less capable of comprehending any of the things of the Spirit. Centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." **1 Cor. 2:14**. Whenever, therefore, natural men with natural minds endeavor to investigate the things of God, we should know at once that all such investigations are doomed to end in error, false conclusions and utter failure.

We live in an hour when the natural man with his human mind vainly imagines he can understand anything and everything. He supposes that a mind capable of trips into the stratosphere and journeys to the planets is capable also of comprehending the things of God. Be assured, however, that just as blind men are completely incapable of seeing the marvels of the natural creation all about them, so the natural man, however learned he may be, is completely incapable of comprehending the depths of the things of God. A deaf man may sit and watch the great symphony, but not one sound of the music thrills his ear. Indeed, the motions of the conductor and the obedience of the players may seem meaningless, boresome, amusing, or even stupid to him. But, should his ears be opened what a change there would be! Oh that men would cease from their striving to understand spiritual things with natural minds!

Of our natural understanding it was written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10**. Who is it that knows the things of man save the spirit of man? And who is it that knows the things of God save the Spirit of God?

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught Nicodemus that two distinct realms exist all about us, one belonging to and confined by the flesh and the other belonging to the boundless realm of the spirit. The realm of the flesh is the earthly realm. It is of the earth earthy. It is the realm of the physical incapable of anything beyond the sphere of the five senses. Those who dwell in the realm of the five senses are never able to partake of anything but death. Their eyes are not filled with seeing. Their ears are never filled with hearing. The sweet perfumes of earth must be smelled and re-smelled. Our taste, like the fire, is never satisfied. Every device in our day and every permissiveness is used to cater to the sense of feeling, yet it is never full, but always empty. Because all these things belong to the realm of the flesh and consequently to the realm of death, they are born only to die. The natural realm is hermetically sealed off from the spiritual and can never by its striving reach the spiritual realm. It must be lifted from above, born from above. Just as it is impossible for a stone by infinite striving to become a plant, or for a plant by taking thought to become flesh and blood, so it is impossible for the natural man by any means of his own to enter the realm of the spirit. How vain are the hours of "taking thought"! How useless is penance or self-righteousness! Vain are all works and righteousnesses because man, born of woman, is hermetically sealed in the realm of the flesh and no striving of any sort can make him a citizen of the heavenly realm.

Jesus, who knew this truth better than any of us, directed the mind of the inquiring Nicodemus to the eternal fact that two distinct realms exist, the one of the flesh and natural, the other of the spirit and the kingdom of God. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was a great teacher, but his poor natural mind was incapable of rising any higher than to marvel at the miracles he saw performed on every hand. There are multiplied thousands of Christians just like that. They can recognize that some supernatural thing has occurred, but the mysteries of the kingdom are completely hidden to them. To explain to them the deep things of God is a waste of time, because their ears are incapable of hearing spiritual things. They have eyes, indeed, and good eyes at that, but they are not open to the realm of the spirit. They cannot understand the heavenly because they are living in the natural realm far below the realm of God.

It was not enough that Nicodemus could recognize a miracle when he saw it. Our Lord has ambitions for His beloved higher far than that. Therefore Jesus told him the secret that would open his spiritual eyes and his spiritual understanding to see and comprehend the things that belonged to the kingdom of God. "Ye must be born again," He told him. We must be born from above. Our spirits must receive light and life and understanding from God. Then and only then will we be able to see the kingdom of God. I am afraid many, if not all, of us hold twisted and oblique ideas concerning the new birth. We have lowered it to the realm of an evangelistic process, accomplished at a time when people walk to an altar and confess their sins to God. It is more than that, much more, and at the risk of much misunderstanding I would be inclined to say that we are born again and again to realm after realm in God as we are changed from glory to glory and as we proceed from light to light throughout our Christian lives. Paul, who was caught up into the third heaven, never attempted to tell us about it, because he knew it was beyond our realm.

Some years ago I was traveling in the state of Georgia. Some well-meaning Christians had erected a sign by the highway, which read: "Except a man be born again, he cannot go to heaven." Well, what they said is almost certainly the universal opinion among Christians, but, really now, it is not what Jesus said, is it? He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He did not mention heaven. One of the sorrows of my life has been the pitiful discovery that very few Christians every go beyond the ABC's of the things of God, and what has been more startling still is the discovery that tens of thousands who have once received the baptism of the Holy Spirit are as blind as they can be to the great eternal purposes of God. To multitudes of Christians the cross is only historic. Their Christ has become a little church Christ, all wrapped up in the swaddling clothes of creeds, ethics, doctrines, and systems. The purpose of God to them consists of trying to save as many as possible from a raging inferno which somehow got out of God's control and into

which all will fall who have not seen things their narrow way. What they need is a birth from above that will unfold to their hearts the limitless lengths, the boundless breadths, the deepest depths, and the heavenly heights of the wisdom, the love, and the knowledge abounding in the purpose of the Lord.

The great audience at Athens listened patiently to Paul's sermon about the unknown God, Acts 17:22-34, but the moment he mentioned the resurrection, they mocked. The natural mind cannot understand the words of Jesus, "Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, ye have no life in you." The unregenerate preacher flounders through his human interpretation, but only the spirit that is born from above can fathom its depths. The Christians of our day have their heads stuffed with church tradition. Tradition has become a false bible to millions who hold it in such reverence that even scripture itself is made to conform to their tradition. They willingly wrest the Bible into any shape to make it conform to their creeds and substantiate their doctrines. Like the Pharisees of old they make the word of God of none effect by their traditions.

If I say that Sunday Schools are nowhere found in scripture and that such a procedure was unknown in Bible times, I will make enemies for myself at once. Christians by the countless thousands will spring to the defense of this unscriptural tradition. Yet you can search both New Testament and Old Testament and you will never find a hint of one anywhere. Should I say that Bible Schools were never known in New Testament times nor ordained of God in Old Testament times, some will surely say I am mad. But can you point to one man any dispensation who ever entered God's ministry from such an unscriptural source? True ministries are made when men hear from God as did Gideon, Moses, or a hundred others. They were never made by studying homiletics, or the doctrines of the denomination, or the arts of the precentor. No man can speak with greater authority on this than I, for as Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, so am I learned, and that by experience, in all the ramifications of Babylon. There is scarcely a dungeon in its prison house where I was not incarcerated. If you want to know the depths of Satan, you will find it in the Babylon system. Nothing can be more blinding to the sight, nothing more dulling to the ears, nothing more numbing to the senses than the sectarian systems of Babylon with all her human tradition. This "foolish woman is clamorous. She is simple and knoweth nothing. She sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city to call passengers who go right on their ways. Whoso is simple let him turn in hither; and, as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." **Prov. 9: 13-18.**

From which seminary did Abraham graduate? Where did Enoch learn the truth, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints?" Who taught Moses that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth?" Did not the Egyptians, in whose wisdom he was learned, teach him that the earth was flat and stood upon four pillars, and that man came from a grub that wallowed in the delta of the Nile? What college taught Daniel the course of the ages? How did he know that in our day "many would run to and fro and knowledge would increase?" What school of the prophets taught Isaiah to say, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and ye shall call His name Immanuel?" Is it not true that the astonishing thing about the twelve apostles was that they were ignorant and unlearned men? Yet the thing that staggered the minds of the learned and the ignorant alike, forcing them to listen to and take note of them, was that they had been with Jesus. If there is one exception to this rule, it must have been the learned apostle Paul, who was a Pharisee of the strictest sect, brought up at the feet of the educator Gamaliel. As far as the Jew's religion was concerned, he had it all - circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, touching the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, and touching the righteousness of the law, blameless. Phil. 3:5,6. But see what he did with all this theology when the revelation of Christ shone into his soul, when God drew back the curtain of the flesh and broke down the barriers of tradition that he might see beyond the teachings of carnal men with carnal minds to be born anew into a higher realm where the invisible things of Him are clearly seen.

It was after this that he wrote, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me... immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." **Gal. 1: 15-16.** It was after God's Son was revealed to him that he said of all his previous learning and all his exactness under the law, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own

righteousness, which is of the law, but which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." **Phil 3:7-11**. When Paul received his revelation, he called his former tradition "the Jew's religion," **Gal. 1:14**, and that is just what it was. So also it is true that church tradition is only a religion. It is not Christianity.

Is it not true that Martin Luther, learned in all the ritual and ceremony of Rome, abandoned it all and cast it away as filthy rags when the Holy Spirit shone the heavenly light upon these sacred words: "The just shall live by faith." Being thus born of the Spirit, he saw beyond the monotonous drone of ritual and ceremony into the glorious freedom of God's sons. Limitless realms, hitherto invisible, were opened wide to his spiritual eyes.

His spirit that had known naught but the wearisome drudgery and bondage of sectarian tradition, which never in a thousand worlds could offer peace, now beheld with open vision the glories of the kingdom of God, limitless as space and boundless as the trackless universe. Emerson wrote these beautiful words so profoundly true to those who walk in the light and revelation of our blessed Lord: "Our eyes are holden that we cannot see the things that stare us in the face until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened. Then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream." That, my friends, is really what revelation is. It is when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, takes the things of God and shows them unto us.

The harlot systems who eat their own bread and wear their own apparel, yet insist upon being called by Christ's name to take away their reproach, talk in circles all around truth, but never understand it. They speak of the new birth, but never enter its precincts. They theorize about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but never receive the Spirit. They talk of the blood, but never feel its cleansing power. They preach the kingdom of God, but its king they do not know. They talk of sonship, but the Spirit of God's Son is not in them. Christ, who formed the universe and by whom all things consist, is reduced by them to a little church Christ, a sort of a doll in a manger, who Himself would fade away and be forgotten if we did not do our best to keep His tradition alive. Christ to them has become historic. How weary I am of that thing!

Every year I grow more weary of Christmas, of Good Fridays and Easters. I know Christ was born in a manger. My soul blesses the message of Calvary and the limitless lengths and depths, breadths and heights of God's wisdom and love vouchsafed for us there! My soul thrills that He rose again! But, oh, how much people miss when they dwell in history! Wonderful was the birth in the stable at Bethlehem, but more wonderful by far the day when Christ was born into the heart of this sinful man. Marvelous is the story of Calvary, but more marvelous still to know that, when He died, I died with Him. When He lay in the grave, I lay in the grave with Him. When He rose from the dead, I rose from the dead in Him. When He ascended to heaven, I ascended to heaven in Him. When He was seated at God's right hand, I sat in heavenly places in Him. When He comes again, I will come both in Him and with Him, and when He reigns, I will reign with Him. Marvelous beyond compare is the grace of God that says to you and to me, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." What, brother Paul? What was that you said? That I am a member of Christ even as my hand is a member of my body, or my eye or ear or nose is a member of my body? Yes, that is what he said. And Jesus above all others knew that we, His heaven-born sons, are the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. It was Jesus Himself who prayed to His Father, "**That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us.**" **John 17:21**.

For centuries the nominal church has read the sublime words of our Lord, "In My Father's house are many mansions", without the spirit of revelation ever making known to their hearts that the many-mansioned house which God is building is indeed the mystical body of Jesus Christ, the fullness and completeness of Christ. "Ye are God's building," said Paul. "Ye are God's husbandry." "**You are therefore no longer mere foreigners or persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are members of His family. You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Jesus Christ Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord: in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit.**" **Eph. 2:19-21** (Weymouth).

Listen to the prayer of the apostle Paul as he prayed that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation would fill the minds of the saints of God. Well he knew the dullness of the human heart and well he understood that without

the spirit of revelation no man could even begin to see the limitless glory and wonder of God's purpose for the saints, the elect of God and members of Christ's body. This is his prayer: "I always beseech the God of our Lord Jesus Christ - the Father most glorious - to give you a spirit of wisdom and of insight into mysteries through knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened so that you may know what is the hope which His call to you inspires, what the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power in us believers as seen in the working of His infinite might when He displayed it in Christ by raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavenly realms, high above all other government and authority and power and dominion, and every title of sovereignty used either in this age or in the age to come. God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:17-23.** (Weymouth). Is that not a staggering, awe-inspiring marvel of spiritual revelation? Not only that we are "complete in Him", but that we are the "completeness of Him" who everywhere fills the universe with Himself! It is when by the spirit of revelation we grasp these inscrutable wonders that we are changed by His Spirit from glory to glory, and we are born anew to walk the elysian fields of revelation and understanding in the precious knowledge of our wonderful Lord.

"Whom do men say that I am?" Jesus asked His disciples, and the reply He got was typical of the understanding of the natural mind, for it can never rise higher than the realm upon which it now is. Naught but the revealing light of revelation can draw back the curtain and let the wonder of truth shine through. Many were the opinions of natural men with natural minds, but all of them were wrong, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. "Some say you are Elijah," they replied. "Others that you are John the Baptist. Others again say you are Jeremias, or one of the prophets risen again." "But whom do you say that I am?" the Lord enquired. And Peter with a confidence born of the glory light of revelation replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then said Jesus, as if to add another blessedness to His beatitudes, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Then our Lord open the gates of revelation to Peter concerning himself, saying, "And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." **Matt 16:13-18.**

There has always been something wrong with the way men have interpreted that verse of scripture. Peter is not and never was the foundation of the church, "for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." **1 Cor. 3:11.** No man can see that foundation except by revelation from on high; neither can he build upon it nor discern that, which is being built. Because there is no spirit of revelation among Christians, they have in the blindness of their minds looked upon the denominational system and called it the church, and, worse still, they have broken even that wretched thing into a thousand pieces and called them the churches. Test it for yourself, my friend. You will not talk to any professing Christian very long before he will ask, "To what church do you belong?" And, when you give your answer and name your denomination, you identify yourself, not as a member of the mystical body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, but as a member of "that shameful thing", Jer. 11:13, the Babylon system of harlot sects, who eat their own bread and wear their own apparel, but call themselves Christian to take away their reproach. My answer to those who would enquire of me as to which church I belong is simply this: "I did not know there was more than one church." It is said that when St. Lucien was asked by his persecutors, "Of what country art thou?" he replied, "I am a Christian." "Of what family?" "I am a Christian." "What is your occupation?" "I am a Christian." To Lucien Christ was all, whether of citizenship, occupation, or family; and this, my friend, will be true of you when you see the truth as God reveals it.

Christ, then, is a revelation, and without a birth from above no man can see Him as He is. The body of Christ is also a revelation from above without which no man can perceive that we are the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. The church, the ecclesia of God, is a revelation from above without which the church will be to you nothing more than a conglomeration of man-made organizations, sects, and denominations. But, when God by the Spirit reveals His church to you, your eyes will behold a mystical temple rising from the lowly earth to the vaulted heavens, built of stones, indeed, but every one a living stone fashioned without hands to form a living habitation for God through the Spirit. How unutterably small do these organizations of man appear in the light of such heavenly glory! They are chaff that the wind will drive away. Do not boast to me, much less to God, that your organization is growing faster than all the others, as though

God cared for that, for what will it profit to grow to the skies only to be cast down and driven away as chaff in the wind of His anger?

People are always referring to the divisions in the church. You are wrong and misinformed, my friend. There are no divisions in the church and there never have been any; and, lest anyone think their eyes deceived them, I shall repeat it. There are no divisions in the church and there never have been any. "But," you object, "look at them all about you! There are almost a thousand denominations." No, my friend, you are looking at the wrong thing. Those denominations are not the church; they are Babylon. Their speech and language is as confused as were the people at Babel. When the angel revealed Babylon to John, he saw on the woman's forehead these words: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Rev. 17:5. Babylon, too, is a mystery, a very great mystery. I am inclined to think that one of the greatest mysteries about her is her ability to deceive all nations, Rev. 18:23, and make the millions of earth believe that she who is robed in purple and scarlet, she who is drunken with the blood of saints and the martyrs of Jesus, she who has a whore's forehead, is in truth the bride of Christ, the chosen of God. This is without doubt a great mystery. It is a mystery that has deceived us all at one time or another, Mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, posing as the spotless bride of Christ.

There is another mystery, a sacred mystery. It is the mystery of the body of Christ, which for centuries slowly but surely has been rising in the Spirit, founded upon the Rock of Ages. God with infinite care and patience has been choosing its members one by one, putting His Spirit within them, assigning their places to them. By spiritual joints and bands and that which every joint supplieth He has been forming them into one body of sons and, when all is complete and He draws back the shrouds, all creation will behold the wonderful sight of the sons of God, the mystical body in the image of Jesus Christ. Even now all creation stands on tiptoe, waiting to behold the wonderful glory of the sons of God, of whom Jesus is the firstborn. Then shall the triumphant shout fill the heavens and echo among the everlasting hills, "Behold, I and the sons which God has given Me!"

Sonship, too, is a revelation. I do not belittle or depreciate the value of spiritual gifts, but it is pitiful to find little groups of people everywhere wasting their time playing with spiritual gifts. They seem to vainly imagine that spiritual gifts qualify them for sonship. To every man who believes on Christ the door is open that he might become a fully matured son of God. The scripture has said, "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become sons of God; even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." **John 1:12.** Sonship does not consist of mighty works or the operation of great gifts. You can have them all and still be nothing. Paul told us this when he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" **1 Cor. 13:1-3.** If God has granted you a spiritual gift, you may bless Him for that, but never allow yourself to think for even a moment that great meetings, many conversions, miracles, healings, or supernatural displays of any kind whatsoever are evidence of sonship, because they certainly are not. There is not one iota of evidence in all Holy Scripture that would lead us to believe these are any sign of sonship. Surely the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:22 should lay that thought in the tomb forever. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

There is a spirit that goes with sonship. It is the spirit of His Son. Paul calls it the spirit of adoption (sonship). Words fail to unfold its mystery because it is divine. It is beyond human explanation and can be understood only by those whose hearts throb in unison with Jesus Christ, God's first-begotten Son. No teaching can disclose the sacred blessedness of that man whose heart can say, "God is my Father and I am His son!"

"Abba Father," the spirit of sonship cries!
Tis deep calling unto deep.
Far, far beyond the scope of natural man lies
The sons' great eternal realm.
Naught but the spirit of sonship

Can take the veil away.
Naught but deep calling unto deep
Will bring in God's new day.
Night and day must the cry go forth
From deep down within,
Cleansing, purifying, changing,
Till I am fashioned just like Him.
Then in all His glorious fullness I shall come.
Deep will call to deep,
"Abba Father, I am Thy son!
FATHER! I am Thy Son!"

Mrs. Frances Quantz.

There is no possible way of measuring the vastness of God's plan or of understanding all that His infinite purposes embrace, but the honest searcher must soon conclude that no purpose is dearer to the heart of God than sonship. In sonship lies the hope of all creation. This is the hope of the Creator and this is the hope of creation as well. Built into the innermost being of all created things, whether animate or inanimate, there is a secret knowledge that some day, sometime, somewhere, all will be restored when the sons of God, all in the likeness of their elder brother, deliver creation from its thralldom and decay into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

Does it not reveal what lay in the heart of God that He should say, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness," and, having so said, He brought forth a Son of God? Luke 3:38. You may not believe it now, but if like the blind man you will pray, "Lord, that I might receive my sight," then God will open your understanding and touch your brow with the finger of revelation. Then will the eyes of your understanding be enlightened and you will know that all God purposed in the beginning will be accomplished just as He planned. Your eyes will see that the fall of man was not a tragedy; neither was it a victory for the devil nor a momentary triumph on his part. The fall of man and the closing of the gates of Eden were all part of an eternal purpose, which to this hour only the Father fully understands. Trials would be of no value at all if we understood them at their beginning. It is of faith that it might be by grace. Rom. 4:16. Testing would not be testing if we knew the outcome from the start. There would be no room for trust or faith if we knew the end from the beginning. Happy is the man who can walk the weary path of fiery trial with faith in his heart that, when the trial is over, he will be more in the likeness of God's Son than at the beginning. Blessed is the man who endures temptation, knowing that it is of the Lord, assured in himself that the trial of his faith worketh patience and patience, having her perfect work, makes him both perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Jas. 1:4.

How miserable is the Christian who gropes along through life devoid of understanding, blaming the devil for every trial, temptation, and affliction. In sickness he blames the devil. In loss he blames the devil. When temptation and trial come, he blames the devil. Wake up, O man! Look beyond the shadows and you will see the Lord. The eyes of your understanding will be opened to see that for sons of God great tribulation is a must, that patience must have her perfect work, that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. How harmful are those sermons by which men are taught that God is always in the sunshine, the affluence, the merry, and the bright! Nonsense, man! God has always perfected men through much affliction. The moment you understand this, you will say with Paul, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." **2 Cor. 12:9-10**. We do well to sing, "So I'll cherish the old rugged cross," but we do wrong to flinch the moment it is placed upon our shoulders, blaming the devil for it and trying our best to get rid of it. The fault with multitudes of God's people is that to them the cross has become historic; it is never experimental. It is to be shunned rather than cherished and embraced, yet by its power still the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

What does it mean to you, my brother, when you hear God say, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth"? Is chastening from such a hand of love to be attributed to the devil, or is it rather the kindly hand of the Father bringing a son to perfection? Of Jesus our Lord it is written, "Though

He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered: and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." **Heb. 5:8-9.** "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." **Heb. 2:10.** Therefore, "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Heb. 12:3-4. "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children (sons), My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." **Heb. 12:5.** Instead of blaming Satan for your afflictions and trials, your temptations and reverses, look through the storm and you will see the hand of God. Look to Him for wisdom, and of His great understanding He will teach you. When you lay your head on a pillow of stone in the night of your despondency, your dream will disclose God at the top of the ladder and you will awake in the morning with these words on your lips: "Surely God is in this place and I knew it not."

It will be a glad day for you when your prayers cease to be demands, when you stop telling God what He must do for you, for your children, for your relations, for the heathen, the church, and a thousand other paltry human desires. It will be a great day, I say, when your voice falls silent to these vain requests and instead from the depths of your spirit you whisper, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. Lord, open mine eyes that I may behold Thy eternal purpose and my place in Thy plan. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Much of the praying done by Christians is utterly useless. Has God become senile that you must remind Him? Is He deaf that He cannot hear? Has He forgotten that which was committed to Him? What makes you think that you and your children and your relations must at all cost be spared from any cross or suffering? Better far it would be to earnestly enquire of His wisdom that you might understand the mysterious way His wonders are performed. Could Jacob have saved his son Joseph from slavery in Egypt, he would certainly have done so, but what harm and eternal loss there would have been. "All these things are against me," cried the despondent old man, but he knew not that God was in the whole scheme nor that behind all lay the mystery of His eternal purpose.

In the depths of my heart I believe that the long, long night of waiting is almost at an end. God's family of sons, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the ages, has almost filled up its sum. The feet members of the body of Christ are being shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The gospel of peace is for the kingdom age. It will be the kingdom gospel. The sons of God will proclaim it. So bright will be the light of their shining that all men shall know God from the least to the greatest. The kingdom will be the age of the bridegroom, the dispensation when Jesus will be the head and the sons His many-membered body. This will not be the body of the bride, but the body of the bridegroom, Christ Jesus with His many brethren. Rom. 8:29. For one thousand years shall they reign with Him in His throne, bringing deliverance and universal peace to all creation.

In those blessed days shall the bride, our lovely Eve, be brought to the glory of her female perfection and it shall come to pass in the end of those days of blessed millennial glory that the heavens will open and from its glory will descend the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, prepared and adorned for her husband, the many-membered body of Christ. Upon her lovely head shall rest the glory of God, and her light shall be like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal. Here at the end of the kingdom age the marriage of the Lamb takes place, for man has returned to God, male and female, in one "image of God". Then shall the new temple appear, for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. Rev. 21:22. The marriage of the Lamb of God to His bride will signal the beginning of the age of the ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times when God shall gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Him. Eph. 1:10. There shall be no more male or female, but "man in God's image" as it was in the beginning. There will be no more Adam and Eve, but they two shall be perfect one, though a multitude that no man can number. Man in God's image, the child of omnipotence, a pure virgin, after the form of the Eternal, a fountain of meekness and love flowing as living water from the heart of the Eternal, filled with chastity, modesty, purity, and wisdom — man at last and forever in the image of God.

When our Lord Jesus Christ unfolded the truth concerning the bread of life as related in the **sixth chapter of John's** gospel, He found the people willing to follow Him to a certain point, but, when He told them that He, the Son of God, was the bread of God that came down from heaven, immediately they were greatly offended. And when He said, "**Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood ye have no life in you,**" many of His disciples said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Jesus, seeing their offence and understanding the dullness of the

natural mind, left us this truth: "It is the spirit that quickeneth (makes alive); the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." **Verse 63.** But from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.

Natural men with natural minds can never see nor comprehend the realm that lies just above them. But I am sure that, if any man will bow his heart in humility before God, confessing the limitations of his natural mind and the blindness of his heart, if he will ask the Lord to open his eyes and give him understanding, then, before many days have gone by, a spiritual light will flood his mind with the truth he needed to know. Then he will see what he had not seen and he will know the Spirit has taught him that which man could not teach. Christian people have put far, far too much faith in men, far too much confidence in preachers and teachers. They seem to have forgotten the admonition of John who warned the people against the seducers of every age. "These things," said he, "have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it (the anointing) hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **I Jno. 2:26,27.** The anointing is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father. This is the Spirit of Christ, who filled the waiting souls at Pentecost and has come to abide in the hearts of all who believe. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in this age to lead us into all truth. You have surely noticed that John wrote, "The anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth." Not only does the anointing teach us truth, but the anointing is truth. Our minds may be confused with all manner of nonsense and misconceptions from men who claim to be teachers, but when the Spirit teaches us, the Spirit is truth. The truth is teaching us the truth.

So important was it that we should receive the Spirit and honor Him as our instructor that Jesus left us this parting message: "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: But ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you ... At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." **John 14:16-17,20.** The method of instruction used by the indwelling Holy Spirit has been clearly laid down by Jesus Christ Himself. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." **John 16:12-14.**

The Holy Spirit never speaks of Himself, but He always glorified Christ. What He hears of the Father (verse 13) He shows to us. And if we will live in contact and harmony with Him, He will instruct us concerning things to come. Whenever, therefore, we see a man rising up into prominence and receiving the ovations of the people, we may readily know that, regardless of what he has to say, Christ is not being glorified, for in whomsoever the Holy Spirit is Lord, Christ is lifted up and glorified in the hearts of the people so that He alone is seen, and seen as God's only begotten Son.

"All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He (the Spirit) shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." **Verse 15.** This is the spirit of revelation. It is the Holy Spirit of God, the blessed Paraclete, the Comforter, the Advocate, who dwells in us. Nothing is unknown to Him, for He is omniscient. To those who seek His wisdom He takes the things of God and shows them unto them. During my life many precious people have asked me questions I could not answer, but there is nothing that He does not know nor anything He cannot teach. He even extends His blessing to the world at large, for when He has come, "He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin because they believe not on Me, of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." **John 16:8-11.**

In the last days knowledge shall increase. Dan. 12:4. In the past ten years we have seen all the accumulated knowledge since Adam doubled, and in the next five years it will probably double again. But not in the world alone shall knowledge increase, for there is a company of people rising in the likeness of Christ.

They are entering beyond the veil of the flesh into a realm where man with his complicated rockets and computers cannot enter. It is the realm where God dwells in the Spirit, a realm closed to natural minds as surely as the animal world is closed to the mineral world. It is in this realm that His Spirit calls us to dwell. Here we must live and move and have our being.

Long ago in Israel the Syrian armies had surrounded the little town of Dothan. In their hands were orders to capture Elisha the prophet of God who had consistently revealed Syria's plans to the king of Israel. When the servant of the prophet saw the city surrounded by chariots and horsemen, he cried to Elisha, saying, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" And Elisha prayed and said, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." **Kings 6.**

The continual burden of my heart, dear reader, is this: Cease from thy dependence upon the wisdom of man. Say to thy Father in heaven, "Open my eyes, and anoint my understanding that I may behold Thy glory, for by beholding I shall be changed into Thy likeness."

CHAPTER TWO YE SEE YOUR CALLING

Our spiritual progress is often painfully slow. What Christian has not longed for greater spiritual growth, divine maturity, and vibrant life in Jesus Christ? There is not a healthy Christian anywhere who does not long to be delivered from this present evil world and from the lusts that bar our progress to the fullness of life and the foul disease which still sickens the body, turning strength into weakness, vitality into apathy, and vigor into exhaustion and the rottenness of our bones!

When men and women are sick in body or in mind, there must be some simple underlying cause for their illness, and, if that cause can be discovered and the misadventure corrected, health and life will flow into the body as waters flow when an obstruction is removed. Sit for an hour with your right leg crossed over your left knee and your foot will possibly go to sleep. You need not call the doctor to cure the trouble. All you do is uncross your legs and the restricted blood, freely flowing through the veins, will immediately restore it to life. Tie a tourniquet around your wrist and your hand will go numb; remove it, and life is restored. Leave it there too long, and the hand will die. Remove the cause of sickness and the body is well. Treat the symptoms and the malady remains. Countless thousands are at this minute facing a painful death from lung cancer because they insist on filling their lungs with tobacco smoke. They need neither medicine nor operation; all they need to do is discard the unholy cause of their illness. Long centuries ago the glorious Lord gave His people Israel a set of physical health rules, and with them He also gave a set of spiritual laws, telling them plainly that, if they observed those things, they would endure none of the diseases of the Egyptians. Deut. 7:15. So true and faithful was His word that King David, exulting later in the wonder of God's faithfulness, said, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes." **Psa. 105:37.** When our minds grasp the significant fact that two million, five hundred thousand men, women and children wandered in that burning wilderness for forty years without a doctor, a hospital, an ambulance, a stretcher, a pharmacy, an aspirin, or even a crutch, then we can better understand how meaningful is obedience and faithfulness to God's command, and how necessary it is to discover the root of all our trouble and remove it out of the way as a man would dig up and remove from his pathway a stumbling stone that often had hurt his feet and distressed him by many a fall.

It is not our purpose here to deal with physical diseases or divine healing. Neither do I wish to speak of the many evils that continually beset Christian men and women, but if by God's grace He will open our eyes that we may see the path of life while our spiritual minds grasp His eternal purpose, then all spiritual apathy will vanish away, and our growth in Christ, our progress in wisdom and understanding, will be multiplied exceedingly, and, beholding Him, we shall be changed into His likeness.

There is nothing worse in life than aimlessness, nothing so dreary as purposelessness. Many years ago, during the great depression, a brother wrote me a letter. Speaking of the difficulties that beset him, half in jest but with evident sincerity he made this unforgettable statement: "I saw wood to eat, and I eat to saw wood - each that I might do the other!" Would you not think that a man would soon lose his ambition if he knew his whole life was condemned to such a mundane existence as that? Purposelessness will soon destroy a man and reduce him to something less than a cog in a wheel, as it has been so wisely written: "Where there is no vision the people perish."

And now I will venture to say that stagnation and death have overtaken millions of Christians because, whether they realize it or not, their very existence as children of God has become purposeless to them. It is certainly true that the preachers continually buoy them up by placing before their flagging minds the hope of a blissful heaven and, failing that, the torment of a blistering hell, but what purpose would there be in these if the heaven they preach is naught but a resting place and the hell they declare is but a place of torment? To me it is no great wonder that Christians themselves become apathetic and the world is full of backsliders and unbelievers. I speak with great respect and godly fear when I say that we must rid ourselves of all these childish dreams that portray the redeemed in heaven with nothing to do forever but laze about in a palace and shout hallelujah while unbelievers in hell have nothing to do but blaspheme and suffer torment eternally. The God I know to be infinite in wisdom, full of compassion, tempered with loving kindness and tender mercy, and above all else abounding in purpose, is only dishonored and slighted by such childish doctrines as these. "He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever."

Lest there be many who would imagine me to be cynical, we will leave the negative way of looking at things while together we go to explore the ineffable glory of the distant hills. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help," sang the sweet minstrel of Israel, and it is only when we lift our eyes to those mighty mountain peaks of God's intention and purpose that our souls are thrilled with their unimaginable prospect, our spirits lay hold of the eternal promises and joyfully we strip off every weight that with patience, endurance, and faithfulness we may run the race that is set before us. Jesus Christ, the oldest and tallest brother in our family, is the author and finisher of that faith which turns our eyes to the "Mt. Everest" of our hope, toward which we run with patience, walk with faith, and, having done all His will, at times we simply stand, our loins girt about with truth, our lights burning, and our eyes beholding the beckoning peaks afar.

My fellow pilgrim, have you ever paused long enough from your activity to become gripped by the force and eternal significance of these four words: We are God's workmanship? Why don't you take off the rest of the hour, or perhaps the rest of the day, just to let the Holy Spirit fill your mind with the abounding significance and the everlasting importance of those four words? God's people read the Bible with less concern than they show when reading Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

They recite its supernal promises as flippantly as they would recite 'Mary had a Little Lamb', and so by memory devoid of thought or meditation we rhyme off such profound truth as this: "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." I make the following statement without fear, for I know I speak the truth. Grasp it, then, with all your soul and spirit and with the power of your godly mind, for to see the truth of my statement is to lay hold on eternal purpose and even life itself. God's most important work in the earth today is you. The important thing is not others, as the preachers are forever crying. The important thing in this age is the calling and perfection of you and me and all the elect who are to form His spiritual body. This is the work of God! We are God's workmanship, and during this age that master craftsman, the Almighty Lord Himself, full of wisdom and abounding in counsel and might, never lifts His eyes from His precious masterpiece to attend to anything else until that work is complete.

Listen now with infinite care to the plan He divulges to the faithful and believing soul. Give sincere and reverent audience to His words as the Holy Spirit unfolds for our learning just what the master workman is doing and why He is performing the task with such infinite care. Though all the prophets from the beginning of the world have spoken of the 'restitution of all things', Acts 3:21, there are special concentrations of the truth of restoration in various places of God's holy word. Without doubt Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is one of the most outstanding sources of revelation on this so great a truth. In it the apostle diligently applies his great knowledge and spiritual understanding of the mystery of God's will, Eph 1:9, first by showing us what the divine will is - "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ", **Eph. 1:10**, and, secondly, by teaching us that, in order to carry out that irreversible intention, He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Eph 2:6-7. It is for this reason and for the accomplishing of this all encompassing restoration that God in His great wisdom is now raising up an elect and chosen people in the very image of Jesus Christ, that in the ages to come they might show the whole universe of God's creation the "exceeding riches of His grace." It is because of this universal intention that the almighty Lord is now in this age concentrating His infinite wisdom on the task of preparing chosen sons to carry out His purpose, and that we are called "God's workmanship."

With this knowledge in mind it is not difficult to see Paul's spiritual reasoning as he traces the progress of the elect from the time when they were dead in sins and full of the world's base cravings to repentance and faith and life in Christ until, seated with Him in glory and perfection, they shall demonstrate to both principalities and powers in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace. Thus the apostle declares: "To you also, who were dead through your offences and sins, which were once habitual to you while you walked in the ways of this world and obeyed the prince of the powers of the air, the spirits that are now at work in the hearts of the disobedient - to you God has given life. Among them we, too, once all passed our lives, governed by the inclinations of our lower nature, indulging the cravings of that nature, and were in our original state deserving of anger like all others. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the intense love which He bestowed on us, caused us, dead though we were through our offences, to live with Christ - it is by grace that you have been saved - raised up with Him from the dead, and enthroned us with Him in the heavenly realms as being in Christ Jesus, in order that, by His goodness to us in Christ Jesus, He might display in the ages to come the transcendent riches of His grace. For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and that (faith) not of yourselves. It is God's gift, and not on the ground of merit - so that it may be impossible for any one to boast. For we are God's own handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works which He has predestined us to practice." **Eph. 2:1-10.** Weymouth's Translation.

The moment the Holy Spirit reveals to our hearts the infinite wisdom of God's eternal purpose and intention, then everything everywhere begins to fall into place and order from the fall of men and angels in the beginning to the restitution of all things in the end. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end (of the resurrection) when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. ... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" **1 Cor. 15: 20-26, 28.**

Such truth as this requires deep spiritual thought and meditation. Do not read it lightly and go away to forget it or you will be like a man beholding his image in a mirror, who goes away and forgets what manner of man he was! Let these truths sink down deep into your heart with much prayer, searching, and meditation, for it is no light thing that the God of all wisdom and understanding should have chosen you before the foundation of the world and sent His Son to redeem you that you might be raised from the mire of sin to sit with Him in His glorious throne, that in the ages to come the universe itself, together with myriads both of angels and of men, might see displayed in you the unsearchable riches of God's grace. That this is the teaching of Eph. 1:7-11 and 2:5-10 who on earth would dare deny?

Long ages ago the holy prophets, who every one spoke of the times of the restitution of all things and the grace that should come unto us, enquired and searched diligently "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." **1 Pet. 1:10-12.** "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." **2 Pet. 1:10-12.**

"Ye see your calling, brethren," and, seeing it, we count all things but loss for the excellency of that knowledge. Once the vision of His intention dawns before our wondering eyes, all else becomes mere chaff that the wind drives away. Earth's possessions become a burden, money naught but a very temporary means of exchange, fame a thing to be scorned, praise a thing to pass unnoticed, pleasure a joy found only in doing God's will, and suffering naught but a means of grace. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." **2 Cor.**

7:1. It is my earnest prayer to the Father of all light that he will open "the eyes of your understanding, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe (toward us believers)." **Eph. 1:18-19.** It is no light thing, my brethren, that heaven's high and exalted throne should decree that man was to be made in God's image and be given dominion over beasts and fish and birds. By a declaration so seemingly small the Lord is proclaiming that man, when perfectly in God's image, will be given dominion over things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth, as Paul so wonderfully taught concerning God's first exalted and perfect Son: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at (in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." **Phil. 2:9-10.** And, having uttered such incomparable truth, he made fervent plea to us that we, as redeemed men coming into "that same image," should work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for he said, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure," and that we should do all things without murmurings and disputings, that we may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we shine as lights in the world. See **Phil. 2:12-15.**

A very wholesome fear possesses my heart, continually urging me to warn God's children that few - oh so pitifully few - Christians ever show that they are taking God's calling seriously or ever render anything more devout to Him than mere acquiescence and lip service. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they might be sanctified through the truth" said Jesus. It is the truth that sanctifies and sets men apart unto God and it is the truth, coming from the heart and hand of the sanctified Christ, that sets men free from the absorbing, encroaching, time-consuming bondages of this deceptive age of make believe and unreality. My brethren, are you indulging in the ruinous error of making much of this present evil world? Are your labors spent in hope of laying up treasure on earth? Have you not heard that here moth and rust corrupt, and thieves - even thieves built into our financial system in the form of taxes and inflation - break through daily to steal? Do you set your heart on things! Things to see, things to taste and touch, things to feel? Do you know that all things are changing and passing away, as the poet wrote in plaintive words:

Change and decay in all around I see!
O Thou, who changeth not, abide with me.

It is perfectly true that that which changes and never remains the same is unreal rather than real, for today it is one thing and tomorrow it is something else, always fading, always degenerating, always passing away, and never remaining the same. Though we know all these things and nod our amens to what is said, still Christians, like their brethren in the world, are always busy here and there, doing this and that, paying court to all that belongs to the realm of the visible, never stopping to consider that only the things that are not seen are eternal.

Do not embrace the deception that you must be up and doing for God. That is a great deception. It is not found in the word of God, but is foisted upon gullible people by ambitious preachers, seeking to build up a kingdom for themselves. Only this week I was shocked into indignant speechlessness to hear of a preacher in Texas who had exhorted his radio audience, because of the shortness of the time and the urgency of his message, to give all that they possessed (to him, of course), even if it took the baby's milk. As a result of his covetous deception one brother had given \$49,000, leaving himself and his family penniless. How great will be the judgment of such vile deceivers, and I shall not hesitate to say that the ministry of the Babylon system is full of these experts in cunning craftiness and sleight of men, who devour widow's houses and for a pretense make long prayers for the sick, or the unsaved, or anything else that will bring them an extra dollar. Cursed be their deception, for it is very great. Their sins have reached unto heaven and fearful will be their destruction from the presence of the Lord.

The false alarm has gone out over the world, and it always sounds so right, crying, "Others! Others! Others!" But many are going to say at last, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." **Songs of Solomon 1:6.** "The pastors have become brutish, and have not sought the Lord: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered." **Jer. 10:21.** "Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard, they have trodden My portion under foot, they have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto Me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." **Jer. 12:10,11.** Our best possible preparation to be a blessing to others is to make sure we have first kept our own vineyard and lived in personal communion with the Holy Spirit, experiencing in ourselves the things we teach. Does not the scripture plainly tell us that the husbandman that laboreth must first be partaker of the fruit? 2 Tim. 2:6,7.

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord who exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord." **Jer. 9:23-24.**

There is a truth stated by the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 1:26 that should hold us well nigh spellbound when we grasp its meaning. The statement is very simple and, like so many great truths, it is easily passed by, going completely unnoticed. But you, O people of God, partakers of His high and holy calling and sharers together with Him of the sonship for which creation groans, should give continual meditation and consideration to these inspired words. Paul, having stated that Christ is both the wisdom and power of God, and that the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God stronger than men, said, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." It is these words - "Ye see your calling, brethren" - that we wish to earnestly consider.

I am sure I speak the truth when I say that every man who sees and knows his calling by the Holy Spirit will bend every effort to conform to and prepare himself for that calling for which he was created and which was given him before the world began. He will willingly lend his ear to instruction and bend his heart to keen and earnest devotion that when at last his ministry is entrusted to him he will be both worthy and full of the wisdom and understanding of his heavenly calling. We may be well assured that our heavenly Father, infinite in wisdom and omnipotent in power, will fill the lives of the faithful who share His calling with every kind of instruction to prepare them for the kingdom call, which now we do but dimly see.

"Ye see your calling, brethren," and all who see it will embrace the cross of correction, of chastisement and suffering. They will with joy lay aside every hindering weight. They will strip for the struggle that they might run with patience and endurance the race that is set before them, not running merely, but running as he who expects to receive the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. "Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize"? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air, but I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." **1 Cor. 9:24-27.** I am prone to believe that the greatest wisdom a child of God can possess is displayed in his eager submission to the instruction, the correction, and the disciplinary chastening of the Lord, "in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." **2 Cor. 6:4-10.** He, who in all these things can see his calling and live assured that each victory, each rebuke, every correction and chastening, every sorrow and joy are things devised by eternal wisdom working together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose, serves Christ, is acceptable with God and approved of men. Rom. 14:18.

"Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty (after the flesh), not many noble (after the flesh) are called." Since this is undoubtedly true, we need not look to great men of this age and wise men after the corrupt wisdom of this age to be the ones who will share the government of the age to come. It remains, then, for us to see that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (that is, God has chosen the things which the world calls foolish to confound the wise), and God hath chosen the weak things of the world (that is, the things that the world deems weak) to confound the things that

are mighty; and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." **1 Cor. 1:27-29.**

Since, then, God has rejected the wisdom and power and honor of this world and its system and has chosen instead a people that the wisdom of the world considers foolish, dishonorable, stupid and weak, we should easily see that divine wisdom has chosen us, who for His name are so despised, that no flesh should glory in His presence. It is unto those who glory not in the wisdom and power of the world, but who glory in the wisdom and power of God and stand in Jesus Christ our Lord, that of God are made wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, according as it is written: He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. 1:30-31.

The only thing we know for certain is Jesus Christ and Him crucified, buried, risen from the dead, ascended to heaven, and seated at the right hand of the Father that henceforth all principality and power, might and dominion, both in this age and in the ages to come are made subject to Him and are under the might of His control. Our wisdom is in seeing Him "as He is," 1 John 2: 2, not merely as He was. We may know nothing else either of manner of life, laws, ordinances, or doctrines, but to see Him as He is, is to see the wisdom and power of God, for the scripture is abundantly clear and the Holy Spirit witnesses with unspeakable clearness that what He is all other sons by God's infinite grace are now becoming. He is the firstborn from among the dead ones; a vast body of sons will be raised because he was raised. He was crucified; they were crucified in Him. He was buried; they were buried in Him. He was raised; they were raised in Him. He ascended to God's right hand; they are ascended in Him. He was seated to reign; they are seated in Him. Even in this present age the apostle John waxes so bold that he says, "As He is, so are we in this present world."

My brother, my sister, you may be so unlearned that you cannot recite the alphabet, so unwise that you could not make one right decision, so weak that all men would oppress you, and so dishonored that none would associate with you, but if your spirit has beheld these things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, then you have attained a wisdom which this world knoweth not. If you have seen yourself crucified in Christ, buried, risen, and ascended in Him, then you are seeing that which angels, who excel in wisdom and strength, have desired to look into; for you have seen yourself in Him, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Far above the noise and strife of these six turbulent days of man's labor, mismanagement, inequity and evil government the coming King sits enthroned, awaiting the fullness of man's day as David, the anointed but not crowned, patiently awaited the day when God would remove Saul from Israel's throne and give the kingdom to him. With the coming of that wonderful day will come the completeness of the body of Christ, which is the fullness of Christ, one and all in the image and likeness of that first Son, who through the furnace of affliction was made perfect by the things He suffered. The first man Adam was made a living soul. The last Adam was made a life-giving Spirit. Behold him as among the saints He stands, proclaiming with triumphant voice as the sound of many waters, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last... I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**" **Rev. 1:11,18.** The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. Oh, how good it would be, my brethren, if our hearts could grasp the infinite truth that we, too, who came into this world as a "living soul" have now by partaking of Christ's life become a life-giving spirit, and we who once were of the earth earthy have in Him become "a lord from heaven". How unsearchable are Thy judgments, O Lord, and Thy ways past finding out; for from Thee everything comes, by Thee everything exists, and in Thee everything ends. Glory be to Thy exalted name forever and forevermore!

"I am the vine; ye are the branches" were the living words that fell as the dew from heaven from the sanctified lips of God's Christ. As the branch grows out of the vine, so in like manner do we grow out of the vine, which He is. The vine bears the branches. The branches bear the fruit. But, as branches can bear fruit only as they remain integral parts of the vine, so also do we bear fruit only as we abide in Him. "**Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine; ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.**" **John 15:4-5.**

My brethren, there must come a time when we as Christians release forever our hold on the world and its foolish deceptive toys. There must come a moment when God the Father and the glory of His high calling in Christ overwhelms our spirit, our soul, and even our body with such celestial desire that with gladness of heart and rejoicing of spirit we joyfully lay aside every weight and every besetting sin to run with patience the race that is set before us, always looking only to Jesus, the Prince captain, the apostle and author of our faith. There must come a time when the Christ mind within us resolves that for the joy that is set before us we will embrace and endure the agonies of any cross. We will despise unashamed any shame that is placed upon us. There must come a time when we gladly forget the things that are behind, and, looking forward with unclouded vision to the glories that lie before us, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us commune together of things that will greatly help our walk in God, for the Spirit of God teaches me that God's people will not - yea, cannot - forget the things which are behind until the glory of the things which lie before has laid hold upon them, captivating their hearts, enthraling their vision, and quickening their steps as they urgently press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He who wears a thin and ragged coat will wrap it close about him and keep it as a precious thing, though in it his body shivers with cold, until a new and better garment is offered to him. Then, despising the old, he will cast it from him to embrace with joy the new. God's people do not - yea, cannot - release their hold on the fleeting things of this present evil age, persuade them as we will, until their vision has caught a true glimpse of the eternal. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

People, having heard the truth, readily say "A men", but they have, I fear, accepted the message only with their heads. They have not seen it in their spirits. They read of Babylon and all her abominations and with startled breath, they cry, "How awful" But they continue right on to abide in the system, mingling themselves with the sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. See Isa. 57:3-4. The call of the Spirit, "Come out of her, My people" has fallen indeed upon their ears, but never has it echoed as the voice of God through the wide corridors of their spirits. Often they read of sonship, but see it only as some grand thing to be attained rather than an immortal life springing from the incorruptible Christ seed to be nurtured and nourished as the precious life of the Son of God, swallowing up death with life and corruption with incorruption.

What do you think, my brother, was in the mind of Paul when he said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things..." See **Phil. 3:7-9**. Was he not telling us that to gain those things which men of this world can gain is to suffer spiritual loss? Was he not also teaching that in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord everything he had thought good and commendable was in reality comparable only to dung? Foremost among the things he counted as dung were his own religious attainments, his circumcision (in the flesh), his tribal ancestry, his Israelitish descent, his blamelessness as a keeper of the law, and his zeal in persecuting what he thought was false.

What then shall we say of other attainments? Who can doubt that in this day of luxury, ease, and affluence God's children are priding themselves in attainments more corrupt than these - pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness. Exod. 16:49. As long as the earth abides, there will be those Christians who, like Esau, are intent on gaining a mess of this world's pottage, but on the other hand there will be those blessed ones who consign all earthly treasure to the trash heap, if by any means they may attain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In our times of meditation we have probably thought deeply of the words of Paul in **Romans 8:29-30**. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son... Whom He did predestinate, them He also called and whom he called, them He also justified; and whom he justified, them He also glorified." There is no more straightforward statement in scripture than the one quoted above. It details each progressive step from God's foreknowledge in the beginning to our glorification in the end. Glory is not heaven. Glorification is the coming of man into the image of Jesus Christ our Lord, who Himself was the image of the Father. Most of the talk we hear about man's free will is absurd and utter nonsense. It is the product of

the shallow, earthbound thinking of earth's theologians, who with their natural way of looking at things imagine that the will of the almighty and immutable Lord can be frustrated by the childish whims and fancies of the creature He Himself made. Christians speak of man's free will in tones of reverent veneration as though it were a thing so sacred that even God Himself would tremble to touch it or interfere with it in any way. There is no greater fallacy among men than this, and I can find no scripture that teaches it. The scripture denies such a doctrine by such direct statements as these: "It is not of him that willeth nor him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy ... Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will and whom He will He hardeneth." **Rom. 9:16,18.** Paul, speaking of the fall of creation by the wisdom God had given to him, wrote to say, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20.** Even our own predestination is according to the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory who were the first to put our trust in Christ. Eph. 1:11. God's "intention" is never thwarted, even though He raised up men like Pharaoh to resist His will.

Though the scripture asks the question, "Who can resist His will," and the answer is obviously, "No one," there is an abundance of evidence to show that men and women, when called by God, have a responsibility committed to them that will decide their spiritual progress. Can you not hear Paul saying to the Galatian Christians, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" And Jude, writing to encourage God's people to be steadfast in their faith, spoke of the Israelites who wavered and rebelled in the wilderness, saying, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." **Jude 5.** This same Jude also spoke of ungodly men who had crept in and turned the grace of God into lascivious-ness, adding with great significance that these very deceivers, who were endeavoring to ruin the Christian faith, were "before of old ordained to this condemnation." **Jude 4.** When once a soul has turned to God, the Lord gives him the opportunity to make his calling and election sure, and tells him with no uncertainty to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in him to will and to do His good pleasure.

I suppose it would be quite possible to give a thousand principles and directives by which we could instruct Christians in the ways of God and show them how to grow up into maturity, all of which would be wonderful instruction and extremely necessary to spiritual growth. It is easy enough to say, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." **2 Pet. 1:5-7.** It is very blessed to be able to add the precious promise that goes with this good instruction, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." **Verse 11.** Yet, for some reason that is very hard to explain, perhaps ninety-five out of one hundred Christians are quite apathetic toward all these promises. Some do not even know they are there and few have given them serious thought or meditation. There is a definite reason for their apathy and neglect. The secret will be partially found in the words that follow.

The reason so few people fervently follow the one true God, our Father, but are playing about with "gods many and lords many," loving money and the things that money can buy, setting their hearts upon possession of things, loving the world and pampering the flesh, which is nothing but the physical body, letting it rule their spiritual lives and give direction to all their activities, then consoling themselves with their church activity and resting assured that, when this life is over, they will all go to heaven and do nothing but shout and play a harp forever — the reason, I say, is simply this: They have been so banded by the childish instruction and skim milk diet of the church system that their spiritual eyes have never once beheld the great mind and heart of God. Have you ever noticed how some of the prophets and apostles put great emphasis on beholding! Listen to David, that man after God's own heart, as he tells of the chiefest desire of his life. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." **Psa. 27:4.**

No sooner do we speak of "beholding the Lord" than God's dear children begin to think of dreams and visions. Personally I can think of nothing more wonderful than to have my spiritual eyes opened that I might see even the shadow of His passing. The glory of the vision Isaiah described in the sixth chapter of his prophecy is beyond human imagination and was undoubtedly the most transforming experience of his life. We do not have time nor ability here to describe the vision that transformed the life of Job when he "saw the Lord" or to tell of Moses who spoke face to face with God and beheld His glory, nor do I know what the vision of the fullness of

Christ must have meant to the beloved John as he stood in God's presence on lonely Patmos, and fell as one dead before the glory of what he saw. Such things are too wonderful for me, though I know the hour is coming when all who have walked by faith will behold at last things more glorious far than these.

Though my eyes have not seen these sacred glories by a vision in the day or in the night, I now attest that the eyes of my understanding have at times been transfixed as they have caught faint glimpses of the wonderful glory of His unfolding purpose that flows like rivers of revelation from His infinite mind. The desire of David's heart was to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple, which desire he likened to a famished hart, panting for a water brook. Here lies one of heaven's hidden secrets — to enquire in His temple. In this day of grace you are the temple and Christ, the wisdom of God, dwells in you. With grace He imparts His mind to those who are willing to cast away their own frail wisdom and the ragged garments of their own understanding. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." **Isa. 40:28-29.** God will unfold the magnificent wonders of His ineffable mind to those who diligently enquire. Yea, by the purifying wind of His Holy Spirit He will sweep away as clouds of useless dust those heaps of human tradition, piled layer upon layer by scribes and Pharisees, priests and popes, bishops and canons, yet clinging still as grime to us all, bunding our eyes and numbing our minds to the eternal purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

Our eyes will behold the Lord, and, beholding Him, we will be transformed when first we see that above all things, before all things, and responsible for all things is God - immortal, invisible, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable and omnipotent, full of all grace, abounding in loving kindness and tender mercy. How wonderfully do the words of Paul glitter with inspiration as he concludes his thrilling instruction in Romans, chapters 9, 10, 11! His glad heart bursting with the knowledge of God's immutable purpose, he cries, "How inexhaustible God's resources, wisdom, and knowledge are! How unfathomable His decisions are, and how untraceable His ways! Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? Or who has advanced anything to Him, for which he will have to be repaid? For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends] Glory to Him forever! Amen." **Rom. 11:33-36.** (Goodspeed)

On the night in which our Lord Jesus was betrayed He spent many hours instructing His disciples in the ways of God. He told them that he was the door to the sheepfold, and also the shepherd that enters the door. He told them of a corn of wheat that would fall into the ground and die and, dying, would bring forth a vast harvest in its likeness. He washed their feet and in washing them declared them to be partakers of Himself. He gave them the cup of life; for the life is in His blood and His was the blood that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. He had told them of the Father's house, which we ourselves are becoming, and of the Holy Spirit who would fill the house and abide in it forever to make it one body with Himself. "I am the vine and ye are the branches." He had told them, "and the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine." After instructing them in these and many other things, He lifted up His eyes to heaven in a prayer of benediction upon all He had said, and, being carried away in the Spirit, He spoke to God of other things still far beyond the understanding of their finite minds. "Sanctify them through Thy truth," He prayed, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me ... Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." **John 17:17,21,24.**

"That they may behold My glory," He prayed. Brother and sister of mine, if we behold Him as the creator and see Him as the author and finisher of all infinite purpose, we are beholding His glory in a way that tradition-ridden men can never know. If we behold Him as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the one from whom everything comes, by whom everything exists, and in whom everything ends, we are beholding truth (and He is truth) which the blind guides of Babylon's realm have never seen, and, seeing it, we are transformed by a wonderful renewing of our mind. Millions of Christians are willing to accept the truth of Paul's words, "from Him everything comes," but they would rather die than believe that "in Him everything ends." To this I can only say that, if that which had its beginning in God is at last to find its end in hell, then I fear I know not the ways of Him from whom everything comes, by whom everything exists, and in whom everything ends.

The simple beholding of truth works a mighty transformation in any man. Beholding Him who is truth, we are changed - not once, not twice, but continually - from glory to glory, for "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18.**

In the beginning of these pages we set out to declare that God's great work in the earth for this age is you. God did not intend that all the world should be converted in this age. If that were His purpose, He would accomplish it overnight, for He turns men's hearts as He turns the water courses and the winds. His purpose in this age is to call out a people for His name, an elect people who know God and see their calling. His purpose in this age is not to heal all the sick, the lame, the maimed and the blind. If that were His purpose, He would send forth His word and heal them. It is not a lack in our faith that keeps the Gentile or the Jew from believing now. The great lack is in our understanding of God's program. Neither is it a lack of faith that fails to heal the sick. The lack is in our understanding of the program of the Lord. Millions are dying of dread diseases, not because God denies them healing, but because of the way they abuse their bodies. We have only to consider the junk foods people eat to understand why so many are sick. How can mankind pour down gallons of pop and beer and all manner of hard drink, meanwhile filling the temple of his body with poisonous smoke and his stomach with every devitalized food that lies handy and expensive on the shelves of the supermarkets and expect to have good health? If we are looking for a miracle, then I would think the plain fact that such abusers of themselves are still breathing and not in the grave is as great a miracle as one could imagine. Christians as well as unregenerate men will need to bitterly repent of their evil ways before the Lord will do anything for them either in body or soul. "The curse causeless shall not come," the scripture declares, Prov. 26:2, and many a man would find relief from his illness if he took time to search out the cause. Only yesterday I met an acquaintance on the street. After greeting me cheerfully, she placed her hand over her mouth to suppress her coughing. "I see you have caught a cold," I said with an air of sympathy. "Perhaps a little," she said, "but it is mostly smoker's cough." Then, I said, "you should quit smoking." "Yes," she replied, "but I have no will power." The conversation ended there, but it illustrates the truth His Spirit speaks: The curse causeless shall not come. The lady did not need healing; she needed to quit smoking.

Be that as it may, let us behold God's purpose for this hour. Let our hearts be filled with this message: Our all-wise Father is calling out a people for His name. No one in heaven or in earth can defer His intention; neither can they hasten it, limit or change it. Rejoice, then, with heavenly joy that God has chosen you in this age. Rejoice that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life for this age. It was not written there for the age of law nor for the age of innocence or conscience, but you were chosen to be perfected in this age of grace. It is because you were predestined that you were called. It is because you were called that you were justified; and it is because you were justified that you are now on the path that leads the faithful to glorification. Your name was not put in the book of life because you were better or greater than someone else, but because God chose you and ordained you that He might commit unto you the word of reconciliation for the age to come when all men, through the ministry of God's sons, shall be brought to the fullness of the knowledge of God. There was nothing in us that we deserved to be chosen. The God of Jerusalem said to her, "Thy birth and thy nativity is in the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou was born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee..." Ezek. 16:3-5. We were chosen rather for weakness than for strength and for our foolishness rather than our wisdom, for God has chosen the weak things to confound the mighty and the foolish things to confound the wise, and the things which are not to bring to naught the things that are that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Thus ye see your calling, brethren, and how the wisdom of God has chosen the foolish, for they, knowing the baseness of their own foolishness, cast it aside that the mind of Christ might fully dwell in them. We see our weakness, brethren, and, seeing it, we lay aside our paltry strength to partake of Him who said, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." And we, seeing our own blindness, no longer say, "We see." Sin lies continually at the door of the carnally minded because they are forever saying, "We see," but forgiveness and vision is for him who only sees by the Spirit of God.

There was a day in the long ago when God's chosen people Israel stood before Mt. Sinai. The cloud and fire of His divine presence covered the mountain and the voice of God called to Moses to come up into the mount.

There in the presence of God the law was given, which Paul in **2 Cor. 3:6-7** speaks of as the ministration of death. "The letter killeth," he tells us, "but the Spirit giveth life." When we quote this we should always ask, "What is it that the letter kills?" The answer is very simply this: The letter does not kill the Spirit or the man. The letter, or the law, kills only those things that are supposed to die. It kills man's sin. It denounces his carnality. It judges the wickedness of his evil heart and thus, being our stern pedagogue, it brings us unto Christ.

Have you ever wondered why it was that the face of Moses shone after he had received this law that kills? Well, there is a wonderful glory in death to self and death to sin and the carnal mind. That glory will soon fade if the Spirit does not come with it to give us the life of God. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. That is death, indeed, and that is glory! There is a wonderful glory in the cross because there was done that which the law declared should be done. There in Christ the world was crucified. There in Christ I was crucified. There in Christ the Spirit was purchased and shed forth to give God's life to us and start us on that journey to incorruption, immortality, and aionian life. How can the lips of mortal man proclaim the glory which God has prepared for them who are called according to His purpose? It may not be until that day when we, the sons of God, stand with our elder brother on Zion's lofty mountain that we can fully realize the wonderful glory of our calling and how profitable it has been to "make our calling and election sure." "as the dew of Hermon, Zion, Deut. 4:38, and as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commended the blessing, even life forever-more." Psa. 133:3.

"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they, which were not defiled with women (that is, sects and denominations): for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." **Rev. 14:1-5.**

CHAPTERS THREE YE SEE YOUR CALLING

In the previous chapter we wrote concerning the high and holy calling of God wherewith the Lord has called us to glory and virtue in preparation for our reigning with Christ. We showed by the use of many scriptures that God's greatest work in the earth during this entire age of grace concerns those elect believers who are being changed into His likeness in preparation for the high calling and ministry in the kingdom of God to come. I started to say that God's principal work in the earth today is you, and that is the truth. Satan, by using the tradition of the elders, has turned the vision of God's children away from the truth of their high calling, leading them to embrace endless and meaningless fables that have little or nothing to do with God's true and merciful purpose. Everywhere and on every hand Christians have become obsessed with the crude notion that God's purpose for this age is to evangelize the whole world and snatch as many sinners as possible from the flames of an eternal hell. This grotesque absurdity has become part and parcel of the unspiritual thinking of the vast majority of Christians. It is a false notion, a spurious doctrine that makes omnipotence weakness, omniscience ignorance, immutability changefulness, and mercy merciless and cruel. Furthermore it makes purpose purposeless, order disorder, and foreknowledge chaos and confusion.

The plan and order of God for this age was stated by the apostle James with clearness, brevity and eloquence when he, speaking to the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem with the anointing of the Spirit upon him, uttered this remarkable statement: "Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles (nations) to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this (that is, after He has taken out a people for His name) I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (ages)." **Acts 15:14-18.**

Once God's plan for this age, outlined above by the inspired lips of the apostle James, has gripped your heart and laid hold of your understanding, then you will clearly see that everything - yes, absolutely everything in this entire age - is working out just exactly as the omniscient God intended that it should. God is taking out a people. He is not calling all people now. He is taking out a people for His name. Jesus is the Christ. To be in Christ means that we have taken His name. To be in Christ is to be a son of God, born of incorruptible seed as Jesus is a Son of God. To be in Christ is to be a member of the body of Christ. To be a member of the body of Christ is to be a king, a priest, a royal generation, an holy people. To be a sharer of His glorious name is to be prepared by God for the kingdom age in which those chosen ones shall show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Being thus called to bear His name is to be prepared to reign with Him in the kingdom age, in which age the Lord will begin to gather the residue of mankind and eventually all the Gentiles whosoever and wheresoever they may be. That is the true purpose of the resurrection and judgment of all who died in unbelief. Once you see the clearness of this plan, confusion drops away like a millstone into the depths of the sea and the order of the very creation of God begins to take its place.

Perhaps we should turn from our thoughts of the calling of God long enough to say that there are a few things that must be understood before any man can find order or reason in the Bible. First, we must accept the fact of God's foreknowledge, that God, omniscient (all-wise) in wisdom and knowledge and almighty in power to carry out every decree, both knew all things and planned all things and all people long, long before ever the ages began. Secondly, in consideration of His foreknowledge, we must accept the truth that whom He did foreknow He did predestinate, and whom He did predestinate, them (and them alone) He also called; and whom He called He justified; and whom He justified, them He glorified (that is, He brought them into the image of Christ). See Rom. 8:28,30. The church system today, including the more evangelical movements, give only fainthearted lip service to these cardinal truths, but in heart they neither believe nor accept them. According to their doctrine God is calling everybody now, and their acceptance or rejection of His call is made to depend upon the invented lie of man's free will. This is not truth, and the plan and purpose of God will always be a confusion to all who embrace such falsehood and accept it as truth. We ought rather to believe what James said in the statement we have already quoted, which concerns God's unalterable program both for this age and the ages to follow.

There is also a definite statement made by the apostle Peter that is immeasurably important if we are to understand God's great plan for the ages. That statement concerns the restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21. The reason God's children make such frantic, though futile, efforts to compass land and sea to get everybody converted in this age is because they cannot see that God is first calling out a people for His name that through them in the kingdom age and in the dispensation of the fullness of times He will gather all things into Christ. Be it known that in this age God's special purpose and program is to take out a people for His name - that is, a people to bear the name of Christ, the in-Christed - that in ages yet to come (and there are several of them) these elect saints shall rule the world and gather all things in earth and heaven into our wonderful Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. See Eph. 1:10.

Only a few weeks ago a man wrote me a letter in which he bitterly denounced the teaching of the "reconciliation of all things." He said it was "Satanic" and refused to have this paper sent to him any more. When people call these doctrines Satanic, they unwittingly blaspheme the Holy Spirit, for it was He and none other who inspired Paul to write these words: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." **Col. 1:20.** It was the Holy Spirit who said that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5:19. So I say again that until we are able to embrace God's immutable intention of reconciling all things unto Himself, we will never be able to clearly see God's plan for this present age nor for other ages yet to come.

To return to our original thought I shall again repeat that God's great purpose in this present age concerns your high calling in Christ. In this present age you who have believed on His name are the apple of His eye. You are His pride and joy. You are His unfolding of the infinite mystery of the ages. Over you He watches day and

night, baptizing you into all manner of trial, tribulation and suffering that the trial of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Him whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls; which salvation is so precious and its end so great that even angels have enquired into it, and prophets, who by the Holy Ghost prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, have diligently searched what manner of time the Spirit which was in them did signify when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that, not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. See 1 Pet. 1:10-13.

The fact that we are God's workmanship leaves no room in us for a dilatory, don't care spirit. The elect of God are always conscious of their heavenly calling. They are the ones above all others who see their calling, and, because they do, they seek no more the things that belong to this earthly realm; they seek instead the things which are above. A Christian who by the Holy Spirit sees His calling is certain to be a person who is filled with a tremendous desire to co-operate with God in all His dealings. The man who yields himself, not to love the flesh, but to love God is one in whom the work of the Holy Spirit goes on apace, but the man who is forever resisting God's bidding and spurning His correction, twisting and squirming like a bad little boy in a barber chair, will find himself often suffering the chastening rod, and hot indeed will be the fires in his tribulation.

In the hour in which we live thousands of God's people are coming to a true realization that we are now living in the closing days of this age of grace. There can be no doubt about it. Read any Bible passage concerning the end of the age and you will be convinced that we are now seeing the things spoken of both by the prophets of the Old Testament and by the apostles of the New Testament, but above all by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. A very casual reading of 2 Timothy 3:1-9 should convince even the rankest unbeliever that the words of Paul are accurate, exact, and completely descriptive of the hour in which we live. There is not one prediction spoken in these nine verses concerning the last days that would in any way seem to be latent or lacking in the wild, reckless, violent, permissive age in which we now live.

I need not spend hours trying to convince my reader of the fact that we are now in the end of the age. Even the world of the ungodly knows that the sands in the hourglass of the age are fast running out and our days are numbered indeed. I have thought much on these matters, and in meditation about them there has come into my innermost being a great longing to help all God's dear children come to a sober and spiritual evaluation of all things which concern their high calling in Christ. It is not my purpose to be harsh or critical but to persuade all men to turn their backs on the world and all its religious systems that they might walk in the way of righteousness. It becomes necessary at times to strongly rebuke the evils of our day, for, if we refuse to rebuke them, God's people are never awakened nor made aware of the snares that tighten about their necks. People have written to tell me that only a few years ago they thought I was much too harsh and critical concerning the Babylon system, which we call the church, but as time has passed by and they have become better acquainted with her unending evils that reach to heaven, they have come to the conclusion that I was not nearly hard enough. It is only as we walk in the light of His truth that the darkness becomes more abhorrent and the light that streams from the everlasting hills of God becomes ever more blessed, filling our hearts with the sunshine of His love and revelation and our innermost beings with the vitality of the Lord.

As these things have filled my heart and mind, I have wondered betimes how much longer the blessed Lord would give us time to hear these precious truths. We are the children of the light; let us therefore walk in the light as He is in the light that we may have fellowship with one another and that the blood of Jesus Christ might cleanse us from all our sins. God's dear people in this hour are as sheep without a shepherd. They wander about looking for pasture, for drink, and for rest while the hirelings fleece them but feed them not. We will find truth only in Christ, my friend. Nowhere else can it be found, for He is truth. Time and again I have stated in these pages that there will be no more revivals in this age. The "times of refreshing" we have known in the past will be no more. The next great revival will be at the beginning of the kingdom age when Israel—all twelve tribes of them—will be awakened from their long sleep and their partial darkness. Oh, what a revival will come

in that day when they shall say, "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" And He shall say, "These are they with which I was wounded in the house of My friends." Then shall they mourn as for their first born, (for He is the first born of all creation). Then shall the sons of God reign in glory with Christ in His kingdom, while Israel, the repudiated wife, prepares herself to become the bride. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." **Zech. 12:10**. "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends. Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." **Zech. 13:6-9**.

I do not profess to understand all these things. We all see through a glass darkly and our present understanding is very limited, for we know nothing yet as we ought to know. Nevertheless, do not be deceived by the wishful thinking and vain talk of men who seek to persuade you that this age of grace will end with a mighty world-wide revival. Every preceding age from Eden till now has ended in gross darkness and this age will be no exception. "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" To this I reply that faith will be found only in the hearts of the very elect, who patiently wait and with longsuffering endure the faithlessness and perverseness of this untoward generation. The noisy, clamorous movements in progress at the present time are the product of man's clever organization. It is not the Spirit moving upon the face of the deep. When the year is over, there will be greater darkness than ever. There is always enough apparent success in evidence to convince the simple minded, but if you test the spirit of these feigned revivals, you will know that there is no true inner witness that it is the work of God. God is holy beyond the highest heaven and cannot be approached by hard rock music or by those irreverent and blasphemous people who shout, "Hey, God!" The ecumenical movement, the Charismatic movement, the Jesus movement, and Key 73 all come under the same heading. We are now seeing in them, not the coming together of the body of Christ, but the gathering together of the tares to be burned.

As Jesus was ministering to the multitudes, He gave them a parable concerning the wheat and the tares, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." **Matt. 13:24-30**. In this year 1973 — known to millions as Key 73 — we are seeing the unusual phenomenon of one hundred and forty denominations with as many different creeds — Catholic and Protestant — gathering together to present "the claims of Christ" to every individual in North America, but, sad to say, very few of these people are aught but strangers to Christ and His grace. This is the work of man and not the moving of the Holy Ghost. It is the gathering of the tares.

At the time of this gathering of the tares another great work is in progress. It is the gathering of the wheat into God's storehouse. **Matt. 13:30**. Though tares resemble wheat in appearance, there is a vast difference in their value. Wheat is the very staff of life, but tares sicken the stomach, causing sluggishness and making the headache. They are not fit for food and should be avoided. Oh, that in this hour of separating the grain from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, and the gold from the dross, God's people would go unto Him without the camp and forget their idle dreaming of a return to former days and of great revival!

For many years now I have been warning God's elect that the ending of this age will witness an abominable union of all sects and denominations, Protestant and Catholic, together with a number of the pagan religions thrown in to fill the golden cup of iniquity to the brim. Side by side with this confusion will be some sort of world

government so that Mystery Babylon the great will include both a world government and a world church. Thus does this debauched whore sit, filled with the names of blasphemy (more than one hundred and forty of them), arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication and on her head a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Rev. 17. Drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus, she boasts within her evil heart, "I sit as a queen and am no widow, and shall never see sorrow." Rev. 18:7.

It gives me great pain to write words of condemnation and I find no joy in disclosing evil, but will you not awaken to see the abominable trend of this hour? Those who have read my writings through the years must surely remember that I have not ceased to warn of the coming union of Rome and her harlot daughters and of the whole world system as well, but to be warned does little to lessen the shock when the spoken truth matures in reality before our eyes. Did you see the front page picture of Golda Meir of Israel shaking hands with the Pope? And the picture of Billy Graham receiving a vestment at the hands of Cardinal Spellman? And now Kathryn Kuhlman, the idol of so many people, is also seen visiting the Pope, shaking his hands and receiving his blessing. In the last years the President of the United States, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Queen of England, together with high officials from the Communist countries as well as India and Japan have all been trekking to Rome to pay their homage to him who "as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." I shall say no more here except to warn that the end is near. The message for us to hear is "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

Would God that I had the voice of a trumpet that I could sound from the highest mountain peak the message that we are now in the end of the age! Jesus is coming to set up His long awaited kingdom. The time for the resurrection of the "in Christ" is now at hand. The graves will be opened for all those who have been found in Christ, and they with their Elder Brother will stand on Mount Zion to receive their crowns of glory. The following quotation from 2 Esdras 2:38-48 is clear of this hour. "Arise and stand, behold the number of those that be sealed in the feast of the Lord; which are departed from the shadow of the world, and have received glorious garments of the Lord. Take thy number, O Zion, and shut up those of thine that are clothed in white, which have fulfilled the law of the Lord. The number of thy children, whom thou longest for, is fulfilled: Beseech the power of the Lord that thy people, which have been called from the beginning, may be hallowed. I Esdras saw upon the mount Zion a great people, whom I could not number, and they all praised the Lord with songs. And in the midst of them there was a young man of high stature, taller than all the rest, and upon every one of their heads he set crowns, and was more exalted; which I marveled at greatly. So I asked the angel, and said, Sir, what are these? He answered and said unto me, These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God: now are they crowned and received palms. Then said I unto the angel, What young person is it that crowneth them, and giveth them palms in their hands? So he answered and said unto me, It is the Son of God, whom they have confessed in the world. Then began I greatly to commend them that stood so stiffly for the name of the Lord. Then the angel said unto me, Go thy way, and tell my people what manner of things, and how great wonders of the Lord thy God, thou hast seen." Apocrypha. Compare also Revelation 14:1-5. Saints who see their calling — their high and holy calling in Christ — find neither room nor time to live slipshod, careless lives. Rather they, seeing their calling, give all diligence to make their calling and election sure by unending devotion in prayer and fasting. Searching the word and digesting it as the enlightening rays of the Holy Spirit fall upon them, they add to their faith with godly diligence every spiritual grace. To faith they add God's virtue; to virtue, knowledge from on high; to knowledge, temperance — that primary and all essential Christian grace; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love — not the wretched, abhorrent thing the world calls love, but that love which is of God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the bloodwashed heart. Love is of God, little children, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.

As the wicked Belshazzar, king of Babylon, commanded that the stolen vessels of the Lord should be brought into his ungodly orgy of feasting and drunkenness, so the Babylon of this world system and the Babylon which is the church system has stretched forth an unsanctified hand to filch every sacred truth and sacrament and make them the plaything of their wicked and gross misconduct. No word has been more abused than the word love. It is the theme of every raucous racket that men today call song. That which God abhors as lust the system proclaims as love. What God names adultery and fornication the winebibbers of Belshazzar's feast call

free love. Even the vileness of sodomy and lesbianism is honored with the name love. Ah, wicked and perverse generation, for the idleness of thy words God shall bring thee into judgment and thou shall have thy part in the second death as the word of God has declared, until thou learn that love is of God, and until sin and evil have departed from thee through the bitterness and thoroughness of thy repentance!

Do not be one with those idle talkers who are always saying, "We must show more love." This is desecrating the love of God by bringing it down to the realm of a mere human trait. Love is not human. Love is of God. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Love does not come into the believer's heart by his trying to imitate Jesus. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and comes to fill the Christian's heart when he walks in the Spirit. "I am the vine; ye are the branches," said Jesus Christ the Lord. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye (bear fruit), except ye abide in Me... He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." **John 15:4-5**. The order is simply this: the vine bears the branch, the branch bears the fruit, and the fruit is formed by the life of God flowing up from the very roots of the vine. A man who tries to "show love" can be likened to a man who hangs artificial grapes on the branches just for show. Such presumption makes a pretty show, but both are equally false. It is natural for a grape vine to bear grapes. It cannot bear anything else. It is natural for an apple tree to bear apples. That is the very nature of the tree. It is divine nature for the Holy Spirit to bear His varied fruits. That is the essential life of that Holy One who proceeds forth from the Father. He it was who came into our hearts when we believed. It was He who overshadowed us when the incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever was placed within the womb of our spirit, and, as we walk in Him and He in us we have OUT fruit unto holiness. We have our holy fruit, and the end of this, Aionian life.

If we walk in the flesh, following the dictates of the physical body, we will find ourselves delighting in the works of the flesh. The flesh does not produce fruit; it produces works. Thus we are told that "the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." **Gal. 5:19-21**. The world walks in the flesh and in the flesh alone, continually craving full satisfaction for the five senses of the body. Because of this craving for fleshly satisfaction ever increasing corruption is manifest continually.

"But," says Paul - and but is always a big word when used in holy scripture - "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (faithfulness), meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." **Gal. 5:22-23**. Against such there is no law, neither in heaven, nor in hell, nor even among the godless nations of the earth. Love is the fulfilling of the law because love is the intrinsic nature of God and the law of God is the expression of that nature. This nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is divided into three sets of three. Love, joy, and peace are the personal heritage of every believer. His spirit sings of the love of God. The love of God is often the theme of his conversation. He feels the love of God, for love is of God, and he that dwells in God dwells also in love. God loves the saint and the saint loves God. In finding joy, he has found that which no worldling has ever known. He who is filled with God's Spirit experiences joy, not only when all is well, but also when enduring the cross. He is like his Lord, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised its shame. The Spirit-filled saint knows peace such as the world cannot give nor take away. "My peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you," said Jesus. "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid." That is God's peace. The world proclaims peace when no peace exists either in their hearts or in the world. The sages tell us that peace is the absence of war, and many other such clever and eloquent things they say, none of which even remotely describe His peace that flows like a river amid the wilderness of this warring world. The calm assurance that let Jesus sleep when the violent storm was swamping the boat, the godly confidence that gave the rest of a dreamless sleep to Peter as he lay between two soldiers, awaiting death on the morrow, is the peace that Jesus gives. Love, joy, and peace - the fruit for our personal blessedness, growing richly on the branches of the true and living vine!

I shall not take time to describe at any length the fruit of longsuffering, goodness, and gentleness, but these three are the fruits of the Holy Spirit being manifest through us toward mankind. Meditate upon these three and you will become aware that all these did our God manifest toward us when we were far away from His fold. It was His longsuffering, goodness, and gentleness that led us to the foot of His cross. In like manner the Holy

Spirit, dwelling within, displays through us to all creation that blessed fruit of longsuffering, goodness, and gentleness. The knowledge of God's eternal purpose is spiritual food for longsuffering, goodness, and gentleness, for we, seeing the plan of God even in the present blindness and unbelief all about us, suffer long with much gentleness and goodness, knowing the glorious end the Lord has in view. The final three - faith (faithfulness), meekness, and temperance - are manifestations of the Spirit through the believer toward his heavenly Father. The faith we have is not in ourselves; neither is it in our fellow man. Faith must always be anchored in God. Hast thou faith! Have it to thyself before God, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him. He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." **Heb. 11:6.** Meekness, too, is a fruit unto God. Those who walk in meekness before God will manifest meekness before men. Meekness knows no rebellion against God, though he who possesses it may, like Moses, call down fire from heaven on the enemies of the Lord or bring the plagues of Egypt upon a rebellious Pharaoh. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him" is the true spirit of meekness. Temperance is a fruit before God. He that striveth for the mastery is temperate before all things. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible (crown).

As time passes by and we come nearer and nearer to the end of this, the sixth and final day of man's labor, an ever increasing number of people are filled with a God-given longing to depart from the forms and ceremonies of religion that they might come to know the Lord and to be like Him. From time immemorial the saints have lifted plaintive voices to sing with irrepressible desire:

There's a longing in my heart for Jesus!
There's a longing in my heart to see His face!
I am weary, O so weary, of traveling here below!
There's a longing in my heart for Him.

Many have tried to be like Him by imitating Him, but imitation will never do. Parrots and monkeys take delight in imitation and learn the talk and actions of men, but their imitation never makes them one bit more human. Neither does our imitation of Christ in any way change our hearts or make us more like Him. There are far too many people who feign Christ-likeness, but in the end they deceive themselves more than other people. Nevertheless, there is a way, ordained by God, by which men who were born in sin may attain the image and likeness of the Lord.

Before we attempt a brief discussion of that subject, let us call to remembrance that we are born of incorruptible seed. The Christ seed has been placed within our hearts and we are begotten of God. From that Christ seed within Christ is being formed and we are coming to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Nothing can be more certain than that Christ in us is the hope of glory. I have often stated that the glory of God is the image of Christ. Thus slowly and steadily, as time passes by, the Christ image is forming in us until at last it shall be said by all the in-Christed, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me." Nothing can stop this sonship progress, but there are many things that can impede it and there are, thanks be to God, many ways by which that wonderful progress may be helped toward its fullness.

David, the king of Israel, was much more than a king. He had a God-given gift of music and song, and, like our Lord Jesus Christ, he was also a true prophet. Acts 2:29-30. Many and varied were the difficult experiences of his life and, though it seemed that some of them would crush his very soul, each and every one of them worked steadily for his eternal good just as our tribulations, our pitfalls, our weaknesses, and our fiery trials are also working together for our good. We will all discover at last that our inherent weaknesses made us draw our strength from the living Christ. Every day we live we are learning that the natural man has no power or strength to resist evil. Man himself is inherently evil, born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Because of this inborn weakness he learns through many trials never to trust in himself or to lean upon the failing arm of flesh, but to find his overcoming power in the omnipotent Spirit. Our constant failures and our proneness to yield to the ever present overpowering lusts of the flesh should be incentive enough to cast off the tattered garments of our self-righteousness and self-confidence that we may make the Lord our strength, our righteousness, our shield, and the lifting up of our heads. Every man on the face of the earth has his little day of trusting in his own righteousness and in the paltry strength of his own arm, but, before many months have passed, we discover to our sorrow that we are men and not God, and our horses are flesh and not Spirit. Isa. 31:3. He that helpeth

shall fail and he that is helped will fall down. Only Christ, dwelling within, can make us stand. He is our victory. Our help cometh from the Lord.

Few men who have ever lived became more aware of their fatal weaknesses than did David, king of Israel, the man after God's own heart. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," he mourned. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest... . Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shall make me to know wisdom." From Psalm 51. David found great strength and transforming power in "beholding the Lord." "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." **Psa. 27:4**. When he prayed that he might be delivered from men of the world and from those who have their portion in this life, he said, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." **Psa. 17:14-15**.

It is not until we grasp the significance of this worshipful act of beholding as taught to us in the New Testament that we as the maturing sons of God begin to understand its infinite importance. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, unveiled a vast mine of hidden wealth when he uttered this simple but mightily revealing statement: "But we all, with open face (unveiled face) beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18**. In this sublime passage the apostle is showing us in the clearest possible fashion how true and faithful children of God are changed into the exact image of that first perfected Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "No man can see God and live," the scripture proclaims (Exod. 33:20), and I think all who read these lines must assuredly know that the opposite is also true. No man can see God and die. Did you ever read of any man who saw God and died? It is true that some of them, as John and Daniel, fell at His feet as dead, but He picked them up and stood them on their feet again. The truth the Lord would have us see is that, when we behold Him, everything dies that should be dead and all that should live lives with the life of God. No man or woman on the face of the earth who has caught even the faintest glimpse of the glory of the Lord has ever been the same again. There has been awakened in his heart a God-likeness and a new, unfading glory so that the more he beholds that glory the more he is changed.

The disconsolate Job, sitting in pain amid the ashes of his desolation without a ray of hope anywhere near at hand, was beholding the Lord as His great purpose was being unfolded before him. In those moments of his grievous mortification he saw his Lord with an eye that was not physical. His spirit searched far beyond his painful afflictions and the blinding fears of his bereavement. It climbed to mountain peaks far above the unkind and disrespectful derision of his friends, and in the very presence of death itself forth from his troubled spirit there came one of the most significant sentences ever to cross the lips of man. "I know that my redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." **Job 19:25-26**. This saintly man knew something of the infinite value of beholding the Lord, and well he knew that all who would behold Him and not another would be changed into His likeness.

It is only human for us to grow visionary when we hear such things as these. We begin to wonder when we, too, will receive a vision of the Lord that will have the wonder working effect on us that it had on Isaiah, on Daniel, or on Ezekiel or John when they saw the Lord. The truth is, my brethren that we will probably go through life without any such vision as was given to them. Many, indeed, have seen His face and heard His literal voice, but as for me, my Lord has always kept my physical eyes veiled to all such supernal experiences, though I, like so many others, have longed with a great longing to see His face and be changed by that vision from glory to glory. Always remember, saint of God, that whatsoever the Lord chooses to do in all His wise dealings with you is by all means the best and most blessed thing for your development and growth in His likeness.

Wonderful as it would have been to sit with Elisha at the gates of Dothan and listen with delight as the man of God prayed, "Lord, open his eyes," and to have felt the divine hand remove the mortal scales of darkness,

revealing the hills and the mountains full of the hosts of the Lord, I think it is even more wonderful to listen to Paul as he prays for the saints; "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: (now notice this) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." **Eph. 1:17.**

There are other eyes, my brother, my sister, besides those two, which are in our heads. There are spiritual eyes, which Paul here speaks of as the eyes of your understanding. In my opinion it is far more essential that the eyes of our understanding be enlightened that we may see what is the hope of God's calling, and behold the glory of His inheritance in the saints and the exceeding greatness of His power toward us believers - this, I say, is more important than that our natural eyes should see the mountains filled with the chariots of the Lord.

Do you know what it is that has dragged the church system into this awful maelstrom of confusion? Do you know what it is that has brought the appalling darkness that now covers the earth and this gross darkness that covers the people? Do you know what it is that has made the gospel so insipid that sinners spurn it? It is simply this: The eyes of God's people and the men who pretend to be ministers of the Lord are fast closed. They do not know the plan of the Lord nor have they heard of the riches of God's inheritance in the saints. They do not know that God has already reconciled all things to Himself through Jesus Christ His Son; neither do they know that when the body of sons is complete there will be a restitution of all things. They do not know that man is being prepared to restore and rule the whole universe, as the Almighty decreed in the beginning. Having the understanding darkened (Eph. 4:18), they have become alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their hearts. God's people need to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. They need to look to God that the eyes of their understanding should be enlightened that they might behold the beauty of the Lord and the glory and power of His magnificent purpose, which has been working and progressing unerringly since time began.

I am not anxious that men and women might have wonderful visions and dreams on their beds, but I am filled with hope that they might lay aside every weight and the paltry sins that easily beset the soul to run the race with patience and to lay hold on the prize that is set before us. This is beholding the Lord. For the most part God's dear people are much too busy with the passing trinkets of time to behold the beauty of the Lord. They spend too little time doing the things that make for revelation, spiritual understanding, and sonship. They are so busy running to meetings, listening to sermons, joining in projects, getting involved, serving lunch, watching T.V., and making money. All such things make popular religion very pleasing and satisfying to the flesh, vainly puffing up the natural mind; but, if you want to behold the Lord, hear His voice and receive His understanding, you will have to pray while others sleep, read the truth while others read trash, find fellowship with God while others find fellowship with one another, and be in watchings off while others watch T.V. If you want to remain a spiritual infant, the best way to do it is to get involved with programs and meetings of the church system, and I will guarantee that forty years from now you will still be the same hustle-bustle Christian that you always were with no new light and no new understanding of God's purpose and no real sign of spiritual growth.

Behold God in righteousness. Behold Him in redemption. Behold Him in reconciliation. Behold Him in the restitution of all things. Behold the richness and glory of His inheritance in the saints. Behold Him as through the true church He displays to principalities and powers the immutable aspects of His wisdom. Behold Him as in the ages to come He gathers all things in heaven and in earth into Christ. Behold the blood of Christ that speaketh - yea, speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, crying, not from the ground for vengeance as Abel's blood, but speaking from heaven itself in pardon, cleansing, forgiveness, justification, and glorification. Behold the Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father in heaven, implanting the Christ seed, transforming the believer, empowering the saint, enlightening the eyes, leading the way in righteousness, baptizing into the body of Christ, hastening our growth until we come to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ, that wonderful first Son, our oldest and tallest brother. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

We are possibly all acquainted with the English word metamorphosis, which means a passing from one form or shape to another; transformation with or without change of nature, etc. Now this English word metamorphosis is derived from the Greek word metamorphoo. It is used only four times in the entire New Testament, being translated by three different English words: transfigured, Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2; transformed, Rom. 12:2; and

changed, 2 Cor. 3:18. Perhaps the best known example of a metamorphosis is that of the worm that enters its cocoon and goes into a state of death-like sleep, in which it passes through the various stages of change and transformation, emerging at last transformed into a beautiful butterfly.

Transfiguration is the final glory stage in the Christian's change and transformation. It is the redemption of the soul and the body, both being transformed into the image of Christ. Jesus is God's first perfected Son. He is our ensample and forerunner in everything. What He has become, through grace we are becoming. Our blessed Lord clearly showed us that this change, this transformation, and this transfiguration would be complete at the resurrection. It will be our excellent glory throughout the entire kingdom age. For this reason He said to His disciples, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." Thus, after six days had been accomplished, He took them up Mt. Zion, which is Mt. Hermon, and was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun and His garments were white as the light, and in that wonderful glory of transfiguration they heard the voice of the Father proclaiming, "This is transfiguration, and this, O beloved, is the glory to which God is leading all His beloved sons!

Do you not see, then, that it is a most remarkable thing that Paul, writing to the Romans (Chapter 12, verse 2), used this same word metamorphoo when he said, "Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ..."? Do you realize that the apostle is telling us that the renewed mind, which is the mind of Christ living and dwelling in us, is one of the great steps that bring us to transfiguration and change? Transfiguration and transformation are not merely robes that will be cast about the shoulders of every dilatory, worldly church-goer. They are not so much a blessing bestowed as they are a blessing attained. That is why Paul said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." **Phil. 3:11.**

Now, in conclusion, we see this word metamorphoo used once more as Paul exhorts the saints to behold the Lord. Here the word metamorphoo is translated changed. Paul writes, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed (transformed, transfigured) into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:17-18.** I say again as I have said many times before that the glory of God is the image of Christ, and Paul here tells us clearly that our beholding Him causes that blessed metamorphosis to begin, yea, not only to begin, but to continue from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the things which are not to bring to naught the things that are, that no man should glory in His presence. But we shall not glory in our flesh, nor in our attainments, nor in our might, but we shall glory in the Lord, and, beholding His face in righteousness, we shall be changed, transformed, and transfigured into that same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. To this you are called, my brethren.

Ye see your calling, brethren, how our Lord Jesus Christ has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light to be sharers together with His celestial likeness, to be transformed into His image, to be partakers of His body, of His Spirit, of His flesh and of His bones; to share with Him His glorious throne and to sit with Him to judge and reconcile the universe in the age of the ages, which is to come.

O Lord God almighty, holy and true, in hope of the prize that Thou hast set before us, we gladly relinquish our hold and loosen our grip on the paltry things of time and sense, that we may strip for the race and, casting aside every weight, lay hold on the prize that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

CHAPTER FOUR THE TRUE LIGHT

Man will never be able to advance very far in God until he becomes aware that within himself and all about him there are two definite and distinct realms. There is a natural realm and there is a spirit realm. There is a natural man and there is a spirit man. The first (man) is of the earth earthy; the second is the Lord from heaven. A marvelous world of progressive truth, hidden to most yet in full view of all, speaks forth eternal wisdom in the

words of 1 Cor. 15:45-50. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Two definite realms, two distinct kingdoms, dwell within and round about every man and every woman on the face of the earth. There is a natural realm that belongs to the natural man and there is a spirit realm that belongs to the spiritual man. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body; there is a natural man and there is a spiritual man. See 1 Cor. 14:39-50.

There may be those who will doubt when I say that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth was not only a real coming and a perfect manifestation of the Son of God, but it was a symbolic coming as well. Not only did Jesus Christ come to the world, but His whole existence here among men was a sign of things to come. This was clearly indicated when the aged Simeon, holding the infant Jesus in his arms, blessed Mary and Joseph, saying, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against." **Luke 2:34**. Jesus Christ was a sign son heralding the coming of an entirely new race of man, a new creation born from above, who would no longer walk after the dictates of the natural man as did the first Adam, but after the dictates of the spirit man as did Jesus.

Jesus Christ and Adam are contrasting types. The first Adam is of the earth earthy; the last Adam is the Lord from heaven. The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a life giving spirit. It is our lot to bear the image of the earthy Adam and then to bear the image of the heavenly Adam. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." **1 Cor. 15:48, 49**.

Alas to us all that church tradition has made us believe that to bear the image of the last Adam, Christ, we must wait until some far off day after we have departed out of this life. But this was not the dismal hope in the spiritual minds of the men who, by the Holy Ghost, wrote the pages of the Bible. They well knew that grace and power would be given that men might walk here and now even as He walked, forsaking the natural realm and becoming foreigners and strangers to it while they lived their lives in the glory light of the spirit realm. Even here our Lord Jesus Christ was a definite sign of things to come. The life that He lived in the flesh was not the life of an earth-bound natural man, daily fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. His life was the manifestation, not of the outward man, but of the inner man - not of the body, but of the spirit. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," He said, and "I do always those things that please the Father." The natural man cannot please God because the natural man has always proved to be an enemy of God. It is only when the natural man is on the cross and the heavenly man reigns supreme that he is capable of bringing forth fruit unto righteousness.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth," said Jesus. "The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "Never man spake like this man," declared the soldiers who were sent to arrest Him, and their words were truth and soberness. His words were not the words of earth's wisdom, gathered up from man's tradition and his human way of looking at things. His words flowed forth from the world of the spirit, the realm where all is clear to its citizens and no ignorance can exist, the sphere where all is light and darkness cannot hide. While the first Adam with all his progeny was completely of the earth, Christ, the last Adam, was the Lord from heaven. Thus these two belong to realms removed by infinity from each other.

In the world that exists all about us good things and evil things are manifested side by side. On a certain street may live a Jezebel, a Haman, or a Judas while in the same block may dwell an Elisha, a Daniel, or a Deborah. Tares flourish in fields of wheat while disease and insanity dwell with health and soberness. All about us one may see godliness and ungodliness, truth and lies, war and peace, justice and injustice, chastity and debauchery. Whence do all these things come? They are naught but an outward manifestation of the things that abide in the hearts of men. If we turn our eyes from that which is without to look upon that which is within, we will see that good and evil abide in our own heart, the evil being the manifestation of the nature of the first Adam which is of the earth, earthy in all his ways, and the good being the manifestation of the spirit which is renewed in the image of Christ, the last Adam, who is the Lord from heaven.

The Christian has not been born of the Spirit very long before he becomes aware that two natures are at work within him, one manifesting the works and the fallen nature of the first Adam and the other manifesting the work and nature of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul himself experienced the desolating power of this twin nature when he said, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." **Rom. 7:21-23.**

The inner man is the human spirit, reborn and indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The middle man is the soul, the very seat of the carnal mind and the Adamic nature. These natures are always at war with each other, because the reborn spirit seeks only to do the will of God while the carnal mind desires only to satisfy the cravings of the fleshly body, the outer man, in which it lives. The carnal mind, i.e., the fleshly mind, is the slave of the physical body and because of this it seeks to bring pleasure to the body by lavishing upon its five physical senses all the enjoyment it can. It employs every ancient device and invents many new ones besides to delight the nostrils with fragrance, the palate with flavor, the eyes with ravishing scenes, the ears with delightful sounds, exalting the goddess of sex upon the throne of this age for the sake of physical sensation and feeling. The spirit on the other hand belongs to another realm. At the moment of our conversion it was born from above and renewed in the image of God who created it. All its love and ambition is in the heavenly realm and all its delights are the things in which God Himself delights. It rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in truth. It abounds in hope and faith. It brings forth fruit unto eternal life. It is the nature of an apple tree to bear apples, and it is the nature of the reborn spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. A spiritual man never tries to show love or joy or gentleness or temperance any more than an apple tree tries to grow apples. The fruit is borne, not by effort, but because of the nature of the tree. An evil tree brings forth evil fruit because it is evil, and a good tree brings forth good fruit because it is good. By their fruits ye shall know them. The man who says, "We must try to show love" is yet without understanding as to the source of love. The love that such a man tries to show is as artificial as would be the act of tying apples on a briar. Love is a fruit that grows on the vine of the spirit and cannot grow anywhere else.

All who read these lines have probably also read the words of Paul: "If you live after the flesh, you will die," but have you ever wondered why it is that all who live after the flesh must die? You will answer, "It is because the flesh is sin," but that is not the answer, for the flesh is not sin but simply flesh. The true answer lies in the indisputable fact that there is no life whatever in the flesh; therefore those who live after it and for it must eventually die. It is the spirit that quickeneth (makes alive). The flesh profiteth nothing. Therefore the man or the woman who fritters away his whole life intent upon giving pleasure to the natural man continually, delighting the physical senses of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, will find in the end that, not only has he deprived himself of spiritual life, but even his physical life is fading from him as well. The thing that could have been a blessing to him has become an offence instead because he rejoiced in the body, which has no life rather than the Spirit, which makes alive. Thus abides the eternal truth, "If ye live after the flesh you will die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." On the other hand the man who lives after the Spirit, rejoicing always in God's will and caring not a straw for natural things, soon finds that he is partaking of life, because just as it is true that the flesh profiteth nothing, so also is it true that the Spirit giveth life. The flesh cannot give life because there is no life in it. So contrariwise the Spirit cannot give death, because there is no death in it. Thus they who live after the flesh must surely die, and they who live after the Spirit are quickened unto life eternal.

Sooner or later all who name the name of Christ must discover that their greatest hindrance to spiritual progress lies not in others but in themselves. It is not enemies without that hinder our progress with Christ and stunt our spiritual growth. We must learn that the true enemy lies within the walls of our own being. The old Adam nature is not in harmony with our renewed spirit, which has partaken of the nature of Christ, the last Adam. Their interests lay poles apart and, as heaven is higher than the earth, so are their affections and loves divided. The evil of the Cain nature still hates the righteousness of Abel. The Ishmael of the flesh still hates the Isaac of promise, and Esau, the man of the earth, longs to kill Jacob because of the spiritual birthright. As Christ has no fellowship with Belial nor he that believeth with an infidel, neither can there be rest in our own being as long as such an evil as the natural man is allowed, not only to exist, but to flourish. But thanks be to

God who hath said, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8:13.

There is a word of warning that should be interjected here. It is a great pity to discover that, the moment one speaks of putting to death the works of the flesh, people immediately bring themselves into some useless bondage. They begin making rules and regulations to govern the fleshly nature. They won't do this and refuse to do that. They won't eat this and won't drink that. They insist on reading so many chapters of the Bible each day. They covenant to spend so many hours each day in prayer. They must not laugh, but be sober and super-religious. I tell you from God that none of these things are of any value in combating the flesh or putting its works to death. Have you not noticed that Paul said, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live?" The only way to crucify the flesh and put to death the deeds of the body is to start living in the glory and wonder of the Spirit, recognizing that centuries ago our old self was crucified with Christ. Once a man partakes of the quickening life of the Spirit, what further desire has he for flesh that worketh only death? Why, the very act of partaking of the Spirit is in itself death to the flesh. Once a man has tasted the fruit of the Spirit, what further place is left in his life for the death dealing fruit of corruption? Thus the tasting of the Spirit is in itself the crucifixion of the flesh. The moment one feels the boundless glory of immortality, will he not abhor mortality? Will not he who is made partaker of incorruption hastily cast away corruption as an unclean and hateful thing? Do you not see, then, that to lay hold on that which is spirit is the all important thing, because he who lays hold of the Spirit, being unmindful of the flesh, flees far away from its corruption and death to lay hold on the transcending glory of the hope that lies before him. It is a great pity that for centuries men have been taught to mortify the flesh by human efforts and by their morbid forms of religion, crying touch not, taste not, handle not, when they should have been taught to lay hold on life, and in laying hold on life, death and corruption would have fled from them and they would have been lifted far above its miry clay.

You have possibly wondered why it is that in spite of all the healing meetings and the anointing with oil to heal the sick only a small minority ever are blessed with physical healing, and sickness and disease increase every day. You wonder where the trouble lies. You condemn your lack of faith or the unbelief of the people or coddle some other such excuse. The trouble does not lie in any of these things. The trouble is that men try to cast off death instead of putting on life. They are like Paul who sought the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh would depart from him. It is not the departure of the disease you want. It is the partaking of life. Long ago a woman came to Jesus harassed with a grievous issue of blood that had plagued her for twelve years. She had spent all her money and had suffered many things at the hands of many physicians in a vain effort to get rid of her disease, but after all her efforts she was nothing better but rather grew worse. One glad day, as the restless crowd thronged about our Lord, a faith came into the heart of this little woman telling her that, if she would but touch His garment, she would be whole, and pressing up through the stubborn crowd, she reached out her hand to touch life itself and life, surging into her broken body, destroyed the power of death and she knew that she was whole.

It is of no value for the sick to battle with their sickness. They cannot cure it nor drive it away. Their only hope is to lay hold on life, for the entrance of life breaks the power of death and delivers the prisoner from his chains. Death can no more abide in the presence of life than darkness can abide in the presence of light. For a man to try to crucify the flesh by rules and regulations, laws and ordinances, is as useless as drawing the window blinds to keep the darkness out. It is the Spirit that quickeneth and giveth life. Therefore, concentrate on the Spirit and make no provision for the flesh that you should obey any of its desires.

It is of utmost importance that we begin to see all things as God sees them. The sooner we forsake the natural and flee away to the realm of the Spirit, the better off we are going to be. If we insist upon delighting ourselves in the natural realm, we can never receive nor understand the things of the Spirit of God. It is when we delight ourselves in the Lord that He gives us the desires of our heart. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Higher learning and college education do not and cannot bring an understanding of the things of God to our hearts because the two belong to different realms. They are citizens of two different worlds - worlds in which that which is wisdom with God is foolishness with man and that which is wisdom with man is foolishness with God. The scripture uses great plainness of speech when it says, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and its words are just as plain when it declares, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of

God, for they are foolishness unto him." **1 Cor. 2:14**. See also 1 Cor. 18-25. Let no man deceive himself, thinking himself to be some exception to the rule. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Since, then, these things cannot be spoken against, we may assure our hearts that it is God's good pleasure to reveal the hidden things that belong to His realm to those seeking hearts who realize the blindness of the natural mind and come to Him for wisdom, light, and understanding.

Centuries ago the apostle John wrote the words, "The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining." **John 2:8**. (Weymouth). The darkness of the carnal mind is an appalling darkness. Refine it how you will, it cannot possibly see the things of God. The natural mind may adopt the theories of truth from hearsay. It may imitate all the motions of religion, perform endless religious rites, and abound in forms and ceremonies. It may diligently keep days and new moons and Sabbaths, refrain from eating certain foods, and maintain a regular encyclopedia of do's and don'ts, of things one must not touch, must not eat, and must not do. It may also keep an equally large list of things one must do. Yet all these things, done in the darkness of the natural mind are naught but the religion of the flesh and are of no help whatsoever in drawing us closer to God. They are as useless in gaining favor with God as the offering of Cain or the repentance of Esau.

The true light begins to shine in the heart when the revelation of God bypasses our human understanding to shine with eternal light, absorbing the clutter of religious ideas gathered up from a lifelong tradition, and to illumine the spirit with the very thought and purpose of God. It reaches beyond the tedious lessons diligently taught by masters and professors in Bible colleges, universities, and schools of higher learning. It reaches beyond the dismal and wearisome affirmations of priest and preacher with all their human wisdom, instruction and tradition, bringing to the human heart the knowledge of the Lord. The light, filled with spiritual truth, shining from the very presence of God, enlightens the human spirit and fills it with light and understanding that none of the princes of this world can know or see.

How often has my spirit rejoiced as I have contemplated the story of revelation so clearly demonstrated in the conversation between Jesus and His disciples as recorded in Matt. 16:13-17. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say That thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Do you see how fruitless and painfully blind and without spiritual understanding is the natural reasoning? The natural mind could present many reasons for imagining that this Jesus was none other than John the Baptist. No doubt His crowds of listeners and His baptisms in water led many to think that He was John. Others had equal arguments that He was Elijah, perhaps because of His miracles and the supernatural element that surrounded His very existence. Still others had good arguments to substantiate their claims that this man of sorrows and acquainted with grief was none other than the weeping Jeremiah. But they were all wrong, for there was not an ounce of revelation in any of them, but only human reasoning. No ray of true light had shone from above into their spirits. Well do their vain arguments resemble the hodgepodge of church doctrines fought and warred over by the princes of the various religious denominations of the day! Every one is convinced in his own mind that he has all the arguments to substantiate his case and all the answers to the questions of his opponents, none knowing that the true light comes not by human learning, but by the clear shining light of God revealing the truth to the human spirit. With this in mind let us then read the remaining verses of the passage: "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."

That is what revelation really is. It is when the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and shows them unto us, for Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." **John 16:13-14**.

It may be difficult for some to understand what I will now say, but it is undeniably true. Though you should hear the words of truth spoken by Elijah, Peter, or an angel of God, you will not understand it nor will it transform your life except the Holy Spirit take the truth and reveal it unto your heart. You may listen to the anointed preaching of the apostle Paul or hear the words of grace such as no man ever spoke from the lips of Jesus

Christ Himself, yet you will neither see nor understand unless the Holy Spirit takes the truth and floods your spirit with light and understanding. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." **2 Cor. 4:6**. The fact that, when Jesus or Paul preached the truth, some believed while others cursed and cast stones proves as nothing else can that the natural mind is completely blind to spiritual truth and must remain that way until the revelation of the Son of man, as the lightning shining from the east even unto the west, floods the darkened mind with the understanding of the Lord.

Few facts of history are more familiar to the Christian than the story of the life and conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He was a man of much learning (Acts 26-24) brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the ablest instructors of the day (Acts 22:3), diligent in the Jews' religion and learned in it above many who were his equals, concerning the law blameless, full of religious zeal, abounding in argument and ready with proofs, hating Christ and every sermon that concerned Him, persecuting unto the death all who were in His way. Yet one day the light of revelation shone as lightning into the darkness of his spirit, revealing that Jesus was indeed the Christ. Falling down upon the ground in astonishment, he cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" What transforming glory was it that changed the hated Jesus of Nazareth to "Lord"? It was the true light shining into his heart, revealing in a split second what all the toilsome years of study had failed to reveal. With what joy did Paul write many years later, saying, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me. ..." **Gal. 1:15-17**. Oh, what a change is made in our lives when the darkness begins to pass away and the true light begins to shine.

It is by no means infrequent that well-meaning people write to me greatly offended because of some truth I have written. Some are so enraged that they tell me things about myself that I never knew before. Others exhort me and beg me to repent of my evil teaching, refusing to listen to anything further that I may say. When God has revealed a transforming secret to your heart, brethren with whom you have had sweet communion for many years will cast you as profane from their midst and refuse to associate with you any more. We should not wonder at this phenomenon, neither should we be resentful or angry, for revelation positively cannot be comprehended by the natural mind. It is just as impossible for the natural mind to comprehend spiritual truth as it is for a blind man to see the flowers in the garden or the birds in the trees. When we see a blind man on the street, we do not condemn him because of his physical disability, but instead we offer him our arm to lead him safely through the intersection. He cannot see for the simple reason that he is blind and none but God can open his eyes. Why then should we feel either impatience or anger at the spiritual blindness of men since their blindness is even more acute and their darkness more intense? Can any but God open their eyes or cause the scales to fall from them as they fell from Saul of Tarsus? Acts 9:18. Dare we, then, blame these blind men for their blindness since God has seen fit to "give them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day," and has said, "Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back always (for an age)?" **Rom. 11:8 and 10**.

Does not the scripture say of Israel, "Blindness in part has happened unto Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in?" **Rom. 11:25**. Is this blindness of their own doing or is it part of the purpose of God? If it is part of God's eternal purpose, then no amount of preaching, work, or expense will remove the veil from their eyes. But the same God who declared that blindness in part had happened to them also emphatically stated that they will all be saved, saying, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." **Rom. 11:26**. It was God who said, "Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back always (for an age)," and it is God who will heal them of their blindness when the appointed time shall come. For He has said, "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid, but rather through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles. ..." **Rom. 11:11**. To declare further the mystery of His purpose He asks this surprising question: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?" See verse 12. We shall hasten now to say that the hour of their fullness is very, very near at hand.

Many of God's people have made the mistake of seeking for revelation, hoping that God would reveal some new and startling thing to them that they might thrill their audiences with their preaching. This is wrong and will

bring nothing but deception and false imaginations and human notions to puff them up in pride. The true light that shines is not a light from without but a light from within. It is Jesus Christ Himself as the bright shining of a lamp giving light to all the house. The more we love Him the more He opens His heart to us. The more we listen to His voice the more we will hear Him speaking words such as no man ever spake, instructing our hearts in purposes that have lain hidden from the foundation of the ages.

Once two bewildered and heart-broken believers communed in sadness on the lonely road that leads from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Their steps were heavy with their grief. The more they talked of the events that had transpired the deeper their sorrow grew. The more they puzzled for the answer to their problem the deeper the mystery became—till one drew near from the deepening shadows to walk as a comforting spirit by their side. "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" He asked. "And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He, which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but Him they found not." **Luke 24:17-24.**

What a dilemma these dear people were in! They had built their hopes to the skies and in one dread day all their dreams lay in ashes at their feet. Wrong ideas and many fallen hopes fill our lives because we build castles in the flickering light of the candle of human understanding instead of the revealing rays of the true light which He is. But, when our hopes have fled away and our ambitions lie in ashes at our feet, then we will find that it was Jesus Christ we really wanted after all. It is when the things that charm us crumble in dust that our love returns to Him and He once more stands by our side to speak the words of truth and revelation to our heart. When His revealing voice sounds in our ear, the traditions of men, like outcast devils, flee away to hide in the nether darkness from which they came. It is when we are at the end of our own understanding that Jesus speaks. He does not reveal His purposes to the ambitious priests and preachers of our day. They are usually far too full of their own purposes and their ambitions for the conversion of the world and the building up of their puny kingdoms. Well did the prophet speak of them, saying, "They are all gone astray; they have turned every one to his own way. Their mouth is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit." But broken hearts with earthly hopes and ambitions gone are ready to listen to the wisdom of Him who caused light to shine out of darkness and the visible realms to be formed from things invisible.

"O fools," He said, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." **Luke 24:25, 26.** This must have been the most revealing sermon ever preached and the most wonderful revelation of truth ever given to mankind. Who but Christ Himself could begin with Moses and all the prophets and expound unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself? Is it any wonder that their hearts burned within them as He spoke with them in the way. Need our own hearts be surprised that at the blessing and breaking of the bread their eyes were opened and they knew Him? A greater and more perfect revelation of Jesus Christ will lie at the end of our every enlightenment. For three years they had walked with Jesus of Nazareth, but now He is risen from the dead to stand on the resurrection side of the tomb. Only those who, in the blazing light of revelation, stand with Him there can ever know that He is alive and has become the head of a new creation of deathless men who live for evermore.

"And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed..." **Luke 24:33-34.** If we by the Spirit of God can draw near to each other for a few moments, we will talk of things of eternal importance. We will see how important it is that we should have the spirit of revelation in all things.

See now the truth of the statement, "the body without the spirit is dead." It is undeniably true that there is a body lying in yonder coffin, but because it has no spirit in it and the soul, too, has departed from it, it is therefore dead. It is dead to itself and it is dead to all who stand about it. It is even thus with truth. Truth may be there for all to see, but without the spirit of revelation it is dead to us and we are dead to it. Even the body of Christ was dead until the Spirit raised Him from the dead. And it is overwhelmingly evident that the truths He spoke were often no more than idle tales to those who heard them. Jesus, while walking with His disciples, spoke of His death and resurrection, but they understood not what He said. After His resurrection He showed them His hands and His side, yet they believed not for joy and wondered. Luke 24:41. "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." **Luke 24:44-45.**

We may know a truth as an historical fact and yet not know it as a spiritual reality. The cross of Jesus Christ is a fact of history, written not only in the Bible but in profane history as well. It can no more be denied than the history of Julius Caesar or the account of his assassination, and to many millions it is of no more purpose or significance. It is the spirit of revelation that makes us know that the cross bore God's Son upon it and that the blood that flowed from His wounds was better blood than the blood of Abel. It is revelation that assures our hearts that through the shedding of His blood a fountain was opened for all sin and all uncleanness. It is revelation that tells us that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." By it our joyful hearts declare that through the disobedience of one many were made sinners, but through the obedience of one many are made righteous. Countless millions who believe the resurrection as an historical fact carry a crucifix about their necks because they have never seen by the Spirit that He is not dead, but alive—not on the cross, but at God's right hand. Oh, what a breathtaking shock it must have been to the disciples when Jesus opened their understanding to the truth of the resurrection! The shameful death of their Master, which was to them an immeasurable tragedy, was now salvation, not only of themselves but of all the world besides. The resurrection, which until this blessed moment was but an idle and impossible tale, was now a living reality. How well did the apostle Paul explain the wonders of our faith when he said, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." **Heb. 11:1.**

With deep sorrow of heart I continually behold the spectacle of men and women emphatically declaring that the entire church system in this the end of the age is the mystery Babylon clearly spoken of throughout the Bible and described in the book of Revelation as the great harlot. But do these people who declare these things come out of her as the scripture bids them do? No, indeed, they seldom do. Instead they continue to throw their lot in with her abominations, refusing to walk in the simplicity of the way of Jesus Christ. And why do they remain within the fold of that harlot system? It is because of one thing and one thing only: They know with their minds that she is mystery Babylon, but the solemn and staggering truth of it has not been revealed to them by the Spirit. They have seen it with the natural mind but not with the spirit. Two millions watched Christ die as "sitting down they watched Him there." **Matt. 27:36.** But the knowledge that God's Son was dying for them all had never dawned upon them, and only the merest few knew the eternal fact.

The hour is at hand when great Mystery Babylon will have come to the fullness of her drunken, swaggering reign. Apostasy is rampant in the land. Protestantism and Catholicism with all their divisions and heresies are even now one in spirit. Apostasy is rampant in those backslidden sects who call themselves orthodox. A dreadful, blinding, delusive spirit fills the land with false prophecy, false teaching, false miracles, and worthless conversions. Well did Isaiah speak of this generation when he said, "... The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink. They err in vision, and they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." **Isa. 28:7-8.** And well did the apostle Peter write their epigraph. "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." **2 Pet. 2:22.**

May God grant each one the spirit of revelation and understanding that we may come out of her now to lay hold on the hope that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER FIVE ALL AND IN ALL

From earth's teeming millions of all ages there is a people rising in the image of Christ. They are neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but to them Christ is all and in all. As the elect of God, holy and beloved, they are putting on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. As God forgave them, so they extend forgiveness to all men, for the love of God in their hearts is the golden chain that links all their virtues. They do not overlook sin nor excuse those who despise God, but by the wisdom God has given them they are certain that all things are working together for the good of those who truly love God and have been called by Him according to His infinite purpose. The knowledge of God's eternal purpose explains all things to their hearts whether they be things good or things evil. It teaches them that their bitterest and most obstinate enemies as well as their devoted friends have been raised up by God for the purpose of refining them that they might be perfected and God's name might be known in all the earth.

There is a nation rising in the earth who is seeking only the things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Their loving affections have been transferred from the perishing things of a dying world to the imperishable things of an eternal realm. As Christ died on the cross of Calvary and rose again the third day to a life incorruptible and immortal, so they each day reckon themselves dead indeed unto this age and all the sin in it that when Christ who is their life shall appear, they may also appear glorified with Him. Though they live on the earth, yet they have become dead to worldly contacts. They have nothing to do with dirty mindedness or immorality, uncontrolled passion or evil desire. They do not lust after other people's possessions or goods, knowing that covetousness is as serious as the sin of idolatry, and because of such sins the wrath of God falls upon the children of disobedience. Let us never forget that we once had our part in evil when we lived in the old life before we were saved, even as Peter exhorted the people, saying, "For the time past of our life may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries," and "that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

"Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." Therefore set your affections on things above, and not on things of earth; for ye are dead to the earth and your true life is in Christ. Therefore put off anger, wrath, malice, lying, blasphemy, and filthy communications and put on the new garment of a life from heaven, of mercy, kindness, humility of mind, longsuffering, forbearance, and peace, for all these linked together by the bond of God's love make you perfect in Him. God's divine power in Christ has given us all things that pertain to a life of godliness. Through the knowledge of Christ God has called us to a life of glory and virtue, for it is through Him that God has made His greatest and most precious promises available to us, making it possible for us to share God's nature here and now and also to escape the corruption and degeneration that lust has produced in all the world.

There is a people rising from the dust of the earth to sit together with Christ in heavenly places. Though they live on the earth and dwell among men, they are strangers and foreigners in the earth, for their true citizenship is in heaven. Here they have no continuing city but they seek one to come whose builder and maker is God. Because they are strangers in the earth, they never feel at home in it. Their speech does not agree with the accent of those who are of the earth earthy. Because they are foreigners, they are pilgrims. Therefore they pause not to build mansions here, but daily pitch their moving tent toward that better country,

Our Lord Jesus Christ said. **"For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me... for things concerning Me have an end."** **Luke 22:27.** That is, all the things written must find their fulfillment in Him. He is before all things and by Him all things consist. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him all the fullness of God dwells embodied. "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." Every purpose of God the Father finds its full expression in Christ, the Son of God, and also at last in that blessed company of elect, who with Christ and through Him attain the ineffable wonder of sonship as members of the household of God that Christ may be the eldest in a vast family of brothers.

The things concerning Me have an end! No word was ever freighted with greater truth than this, for nothing in God can ever be attained apart from Him. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, because by the blood of His cross He has reconciled all things to Himself, whether they be things in earth or things in

heaven." Should it then be thought strange that God should decree that all things thus reconciled by Him should also find all else in Him who has thus reconciled them? So great is God's joy in His Son, Jesus Christ, that He has purposed in His heart to prepare a whole body or race of sons in the exact image and likeness of His only begotten Son, who is Himself the express image of God, and the first born of every creature. In that momentous hour of the eternal fiat," Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness," God Himself was proclaiming His irrevocable purpose to include all of Adam's race in the image of His Son, for I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is manifest to the world in Jesus Christ our Lord. "For God has made all men prisoners of disobedience that He might have mercy upon them all. How inexhaustible God's resources, wisdom, and knowledge are! How unfathomable His decisions; how untraceable His ways! Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him, or who has advanced anything to Him for which he will have to be repaid? For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen." **Rom. 11:32-36.** (Good-speed).

It is by the moving of the Holy Spirit that we are brought into the image of Jesus Christ. As there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, so also there is no other power that can bring us into sonship and the image of Christ except the power of that blessed Holy Spirit who proceedeth forth from the Father and the Son. John 15:26. It was the Holy Spirit who moved upon the face of the waters in the beginning bringing order out of earth's chaos and light out of darkness four days before the sun was set in the heaven. Gen. 1:14-19. It was the Holy Spirit who overshadowed the virgin Mary to form the blessed Son of God in her womb, and it was the Holy Spirit who came forth from heaven at Pentecost at the behest of Christ to begin the formation of that elect company who should at last bear His image and His likeness and be called the family of God. All that God decrees He decrees by His Son, and all that God performs He performs by His Holy Spirit. He sendeth forth His Spirit and they are created. He reneweth the face of the earth. **Psa. 104:30.** "The wind (the Spirit) bloweth where it h'steth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." **John 3:8.** "Day and night Thy hand (Spirit) was heavy upon me," said David. **Psa. 32:4.** The Holy Spirit is the hand of God, bringing order out of chaos and life out of death. It is He who convicts the ungodly of sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11); of sin because they believed not on Christ, of righteousness because Christ has gone to the Father, death being unable to hold Him, for no cause of death was in Him, and of judgment because even the prince of this world is judged.

It is a source of heaviness to me that so few people have any knowledge at all concerning that blessed personality, the Holy Spirit. Through ignorance men rob Him of personality and describe Him as an influence or some mystical power that they are to grasp and use. But the Holy Spirit is not an influence or an impersonal thing. The Holy Spirit is a personality as distinct as God the Father or God the Son, and yet with them as truly one God as our spirit and soul and body are one man. Eight times over in John 16:13-14 the personal pronoun He is repeated with reference to the Holy Spirit who was sent by Jesus Christ to form the church. "Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." No man has seen God at any time, and no man with an ounce of respect or reverence would ever profess to understand God, but, if we see in the blessed Holy Spirit nothing more than a mysterious power that we can get hold of and use, we will derive nothing from Him at all. But, if we reverence Him as a divine Person, full of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of truth that has actually come to dwell in us forever to transform us into the very image of Christ, then our life will be lived on an entirely different basis, being molded and fashioned by God that worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. Even now, while we live and breathe, the elect of God, the first fruit whom He has chosen, experience within themselves the reality of this truth: "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I shall be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:16.**

Personally I always refuse to participate in the j anglings of self-styled theologians, for they know neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. A theological argument is like a dog fight in a flower bed; the only thing that is settled is the flowers. I do not need a professional theologian to explain to me that I am spirit, soul, and body in one man, for that is beyond man's ability to explain. Neither do I need a Doctor of Divinity (pardon the expression) to explain to me how God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one God. It is beyond you and beyond me; so let us believe it and refuse to pry into it.

Every man who is coming into the blessed sonship, which God has ordained has received the Spirit of sonship which Paul calls the Spirit of adoption. By that Spirit we recognize God to be our Father. As smoke rises spontaneously from burning incense, so without external stimulus from hearts filled with the Spirit of sonship the cry ascends, Abba Father, (our Father), and we with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3:18. Thus it is the Spirit of the Lord that changes men from one glory to another until at last the ultimate goal is attained, even the glory of the image of Christ.

At this very moment the people of God are in various stages of glory, for there are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, and the glory of the terrestrial is one (one glory) and the glory of the celestial is another (another glory). 1 Cor. 15:40. Then there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another of the stars; and even among the stars one differeth from another in glory. 1 Cor. 15:41. So also are God's people now passing from one stage of God's glory to another if they are permitting the Holy Spirit to work within them, for we all with open face, beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3:18.

It would be impossible to over-estimate the enormous importance of the work of the Holy Spirit within us, for it is He and He alone who is overshadowing us that Christ might be fully formed in us and we may grow from little children whose sins are forgiven for His name's sake to young men who are strong, having overcome the wicked one and in whom the word of God forever abides, 1 John 2:12,13, yes, that we may be changed from the glory of the stars to the glory of the moon to the glory of the sun.

The importance of the Holy Spirit's moving within us is magnified by the awesome fact that we know not what we should pray for as we ought. Rom. 8:26. Oh, how often people pray and pray for this and that! They pray because they were asked to pray. They pray that God will grant them their personal desires and ambitions. They pray for the removal of a trial or some thorn in the flesh. They pray all around the earth for everybody and everything they can think about, but perhaps not one sentence of their multiplied prayers came from the burden and longing of the Holy Ghost within them. Because we know not what we should pray for as we ought, we should recognize without delay how desperately we need the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit who stands ready to help our infirmity and make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. "And He that searcheth the hearts (God the Father) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." See Rom. 8:26,27.

It is a good thing to have set times of communion with God when we can make ourselves available to God. Nevertheless, long experience has taught me that all those who earnestly long to yield themselves to the Holy Spirit must of necessity make themselves available at all times, for the Holy Spirit is like the wind that bloweth where it listeth. We cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. Neither can we tell when it is coming nor when it is going. The Holy Spirit will just as likely call us to intercession in the middle of the night as in the middle of the day, and those people who will obey His loving urge on all occasions will find themselves being changed from one glory to another, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Indeed, we may not know what the burden of the Spirit is as He groans within us, but He that searcheth the hearts understands every longing and interprets every groan and sigh of intercession according to the will of God. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." See then how Paul places sonship and spiritual travail together. **Rom. 8:26-30.**

All things that happened to Israel happened to them for examples to us upon whom the end of the ages are come. 1 Cor. 10:11. If we would observe with greater attention, we would also see that every detail of the life of Jesus Christ was an example to us and a direct teaching of things to come. Thousands today are talking about sonship; yet how pitifully few have even a remote idea of how sonship is to be attained. Anxious people point to this renowned healer or that outstanding person as an example of sonship, but fame and notability have nothing whatever to do with sonship. Miracles, signs, wonders, prophecies, tongues or faith are not signs of sonship nor even evidence of God's good pleasure, for one may have all these things and yet be as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal or, worse still, be unknown to God and cast out. Matt. 7:22-23. Never put your confidence in any of these things. Sonship is not a reward for services rendered. Sonship is a relationship with God the Father.

Two thousand years ago an archangel from heaven came to a lowly virgin woman with a proclamation from God. The wondrous fiat he bore was that the Christ child should be formed within her. She was amazed at the announcement and doubted how such a thing could be because she was an unmarried woman. Therefore she asked the very logical question, "How shall these things be seeing I know not a man?" Luke 1:34. What better question could this troubled woman ask than the question, "How shall these things be?" And is not this the question that we have asked a thousand times twice told? How shall I attain sonship? How shall I come into that glorious manifestation of the sons of God? Yes, indeed, we have asked the question, repeating it many times, but the answer is the same to us as it was to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, and that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

The angel announced a natural birth to Mary, but he is announcing a spiritual birth to us. All natural things are exactly opposite to spiritual things; therefore, the physical Christ-child that was formed in her was to be separated from her, but the Christ that is formed in us by the Spirit of God abides with us forever until we say in truth, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me." He will never be separated from us, but abide within us forever. It was this very truth that thrilled the soul of Job as amid his grief he murmured, "I know that my Redeemer liveth and He shall stand at the latter days upon the earth, and, if after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job 19:25. Yea, and we will sing with Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden; For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His Name. And His mercy is upon them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy. As He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever." Luke 1:46-55.

Oh, that men and women who long after spiritual reality and truth would turn their ears away from the high sounding rubbish preached by the mouthy puppeteers of our land! Oh, that they would cease from following after men to enquire of them and imbibe their vain philosophy! Oh, that they would call a halt to running hither and thither seeking after the spectacular, and in place of all such vanity behold the glory of the Lord as His Spirit moves upon them like a gentle whispering wind that they might be changed into that same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. What place do silly modern trappings have in our transformation into that same image of Christ? Do melodious quartettes with well, trained voices, robed choirs, and jazzy instrumentals cause men to behold God's transforming glory that they may be changed by His Spirit into the perfect image of Christ? Do you think that the resplendent glory that shone like a sun from the face of Moses when he returned from the mount was the result of a jitterbugging hand-clapping meeting where pseudo saints strummed their guitars and sang "My, didn't it rain" or "Joshua fit the battle of Jericho?" No! My God, no! He stood in God's presence where if so much as a beast had touched the mountain it would have been slain; and so terrible was the sight that even Moses said, "I do exceedingly fear and quake." I have no hesitation in saying that, should the glory of the Lord appear today, these childish entertainers who earn their living by amusing gullible Christians with their antics would not know which way to look, for they know nothing of God's glory, but are deceivers of themselves and of the people as well.

The hour has come; yea, the hour is past for us to cease our running after the harlot daughters of great Mystery Babylon. Shall the sons of God today behold the fair beauty of the daughters of men as they did in Noah's day? Shall we in our day repeat their wicked error? In those terrible days before the flood the sons of God made marriage with the daughters of men and the result of that adulterous union was that there were wicked giants in the earth, men of renown. Gen. 6. With that union wickedness knew no bounds in the earth. This dreadful truth has struck me like a thunderbolt, for I perceive that the same terrible circumstance is happening all around us. Men who are called and chosen of God are every day making their adulterous marriage with the harlots of Babylon. The result of this union is that there are giants in the earth today, men of renown, evangelists and preachers of international fame, who use their abilities to gain converts, and after they have gained them, they send them back to the "church of their choice" that they also may squander their living

and waste their gifts in the service of a harlot system that awaits the fearful judgment of God. As it was in the days of Noah, so should it be in the days of the Son of man. There were giants, men of renown, then, and there are giants in the earth now, men of renown whose names have become household words internationally. I have no confidence in anything that pretends to be a spiritual move, which leaves its converts in a harlot system already under the curse of God, waiting His fearful and instantaneous judgment. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, feeding themselves without fear. Clouds they are without water, carried about by (doctrinal) winds; trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all and to convince all who are ungodly of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." **Jude 12-15.**

If we will turn our hearts away from the religious vanity, the churchianity, and the fraud that everywhere besets us, and turn our eyes upon Christ Jesus, we will find that He is all in all. God's people are guilty of a great error in that they have sought so many things. They have sought salvation, truth, righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, spiritual gifts, healing power, sonship, and a host of other things but oh, what a universe of truth is bound up in this simple statement, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" **Rom. 8:32.** See what a tremendous weight of truth is sheltered here, teaching us that God gives all things with His Son Jesus Christ, and apart from Him He gives nothing. This does not mean that God gives us Christ as a Saviour, and that afterward we are to commence seeking truth and wisdom and righteousness, for Christ Himself is truth and there is no truth apart from Him. To know Him is to know truth, walk in truth, speak in truth, be filled with truth, and at last to be truth itself.

Furthermore to know Him who is truth empowers one to immediately recognize all that is error. The more we come to know Christ, the more we come to recognize the flagrant error of so much that is taught in the name of truth. If the doctrines that men try so hard to prove run contrary to the very nature of Christ, then know that all that is contrary to His gracious Spirit is error. For years without number the evangelicals in their missionary fervor have taught that all heathen men will be condemned forever to groan in eternal flames in unremitting torment because they did not accept Christ, their ignorance of His existence being no excuse whatever. I have no hesitation whatsoever in calling this a lie, because everything about it is contrary to the very nature of the blessed Christ I know. It is contrary to His love, contrary to His kindness and mercy, contrary to His foreknowledge, contrary to immutable wisdom, and contrary to His great and all inclusive redemption, of which it is stated that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

It is not our purpose here to settle doctrinal errors or to refute the traditions of men, but rather to show that all who truly know Christ become acquainted with His ways. Thus they know instinctively whether or not the things they hear concerning Him are born of truth or born of error. David in his Psalms said, "He made known His ways unto Moses; His acts unto the children of Israel." There is a great difference between the children of Israel, who as bystanders saw the acts of God, and Moses, who knew

God's ways simply because he knew God. I have heard people talk and talk like gleeful children returning from a circus about the little things they have seen God do in their midst, but all their glowing talk was a heaviness and a grief to my spirit, because all they knew concerned the acts of God which they had seen, but God Himself they did not know.

Christ, then, is truth, and to know Christ is to know truth. We do not find truth by thumbing through the manifold opinions of men, picking out a morsel here and a nugget there. We come to know truth by knowing Him. Centuries ago our Lord Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate. Pilate asked, "Art Thou a king, then?" To this Jesus replied, "Thou sayest that I am a king." To be crowned as a king was not the purpose of Christ's first coming. It was the Jews who had accused Him of wanting to be a king." Therefore He replied, "Thou sayest that I am a king." After saying this, He told Pilate what His true purpose of coming into the world really was, saying, "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." **John 18:37.** To this statement Pilate asked, "What is truth?" And if he had waited for a reply, he would not have heard a long dissertation on a multiplicity of doctrines, but the same simple statement that thrilled the enquiring Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." **John 14:6.**

How well did David say, "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy and at Thy right hand are pleasures for ever more." Psa. 16:11.

In our associations with Christian people we find many who would give almost anything if they could attain to a great gift of power but it is seldom that men covet wisdom. Yet "wisdom is the principal thing." Wisdom is better than rubies and more to be desired than fine gold. Fools despise wisdom and instruction but the Lord layeth up sound wisdom for the upright. Therefore let wisdom enter into thine heart. Happy is the man that findeth it, for he shall receive favor of the Lord. If we make wisdom our sister, understanding will be our kinswoman. If we exalt her (wisdom), she will promote us, and if we embrace her, she will bring us honor. Wisdom is a crown of glory to our head and an ornament of grace about our neck, but the fear of the Lord is the very foundation of wisdom.

God has made Christ to be our wisdom. 1 Cor. 1:30. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2:3. Because they are hidden in Him, then it is impossible to find them anywhere else except in Him. The natural man never understands the things of the Spirit of God. They appear foolishness to him, for he does not dwell in Christ, but in the world. There is one wisdom from beneath and another wisdom from above. The first is of the earth earthy; the second is of the Lord from heaven. They are as opposite as day and night. In fact, they are the day and the night.

The apostle Paul had learned a wonderful thing when he came to the Corinthians, saying, "When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and my speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power." He knew, too, that Jesus Christ was God's wisdom.

Oh, to know that God gives nothing apart from Jesus Christ! He does not give us wisdom. He gives us Christ and in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom. How eloquent then were the words of Paul: "Let this mind dwell in you which was also in Christ Jesus," for the mind that dwelt in Christ Jesus was the Father's mind, the mind that holds within its omniscient greatness every secret of the universe whether terrestrial, sidereal, or celestial, secrets which He Himself had made and hidden within the greatness of His own mind to be shared by those who let His mind dwell in them. How inexhaustible God's resources of wisdom and knowledge are! How unfathomable His decisions, how untraceable His ways!

Should all the things of wisdom be written that should be written, they would fill not only the pages of this tiny book but the world and the universe as well. The day utters God's wisdom; the night showeth His understanding. When unlearned and ignorant men have been with Jesus, all men take note of them. Neither can they resist the wisdom and understanding with which they speak, for the Lord has made Him to be the wisdom of God, and all who dwell in Him dwell in wisdom. Without question a man could study all his life concerning the wisdom of God and, though he might marvel at it, yet he could not possess it, for wisdom is not a thing to be learned, but wisdom is a living person, and that person is Jesus Christ the Lord.

God's righteousness is neither a moral standard nor a code of ethics. God's righteousness is Jesus Christ. Apart from Him all our righteousnesses are filthy rags and putrefying sores. To come to the heavenly Father saying, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even this publican," is to come trusting in our own righteousness, and to go away unjustified. But to come to God as a sinner, believing only in the righteousness of Christ, which He freely offered to all the world through the shedding of His blood, is to find cleansing from every sin and righteousness in His sight. Christ is God's righteousness, and He is our righteousness, and all who believe in Him are justified.

The righteousness that comes to men through Jesus Christ is based not on achieving, but on believing, for the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which comes by faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe. No difference is made among men, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; but we are justified freely by God's grace through the great redemption God has provided in Christ Jesus whom God has made a propitiation (that is, one who completely satisfies the law-giver) through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the

remission of sins, that God might be a just God and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus Christ. Compare Rom. 3:21-28.

There is no righteousness anywhere available outside of Jesus Christ, whom God hath made our righteousness. God looked for judgment but behold, oppression. He looked for righteousness but, behold, a cry, Isa. 5:7, (the cry of the oppressed). Christ is made unto us righteousness, 1 Cor. 1:30, and we are made the righteousness of God in Him. 1 Cor. 5:21. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, Rom. 10:10, and with the mouth confession is made that it has been found in Christ. Thus we are found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness of God, which comes by faith in Jesus Christ. See Phil. 3:8, 9.

In considering a subject so vast as this we must freely admit that one could go on and on forever, never finding a suitable place to stop. Scripture can be added to scripture, type-to-type, and prophecy to prophecy to demonstrate times without number that Jesus Christ is all in all. What an eternity it would take to exhaust this one truth: God hath made Him to be wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption! Hundreds of men have spent their whole lifetime studying the lowly spider, of which there are now fifty thousand known species with more being added every year. Others spend their whole life probing the mysteries of the human brain, but find its mystery far beyond the reach of man. If earthly things are so far beyond our wisdom and ability to comprehend, how can we ever expect to fathom the wisdom of God, His righteousness, the power of His sanctification, or the marvels of His redemption? No wonder Jesus said, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

All the truths of the resurrection can be learned by diligent study but there is one truth that cannot be learned by study, and that is that Jesus Christ Himself is the resurrection and apart from Him there is no resurrection. In vital union with Him there is not only resurrection, but also a complete absence of death, for He is both resurrection and life. We delight to hear the story of Martha and Mary at the tomb of Lazarus, and of Jesus who dried away their falling tears as He transformed their theories of a far-off resurrection day to a living reality that they might see that the resurrection was not a doctrine, but a person, not the almost hopeless waiting for an event too distant for reality, but the wonderful nearness of a Christ in whom there was no death, but only life eternal. Well had Martha said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." How could he have died in the presence of eternal life? And furthermore, how could he remain dead in the literal presence of the resurrection?

Many years ago the renowned D. L. Moody was called upon to preach his first funeral sermon. Not knowing what to say at a funeral, he searched his mind in vain for a suitable topic. At last he thought of a seemingly good idea. He would look through the gospels for one of Jesus' own funeral sermons. To his amazement he made the marvelous discovery that Jesus never preached a funeral sermon, but broke up every funeral He attended by raising the dead to life again.

"I am the resurrection"; thus He spoke
In lovely Bethany one cloudy day
To weeping sisters; yet those living words
Healed not their wounds, nor dried their tears away.
Naught did they see but death; the chasm wide
Was deep and dark and cold. They did not know
Eternal life was standing by their side.

"I am the resurrection". Yet they wept,
Though Life Eternal looked into their eyes;
For resurrection came to visit earth
When Jesus left His home beyond the skies.
So Life walked down that day with human feet
To where death trembled in the graves dark gloom;
Life challenged death; he dropped the keys and fled
And with Christ's life a man came from the tomb.

"I am the resurrection"; angels smiled
That day in spring they rolled the stone away;
While humans wept, they could not yet believe
That conquered death could never hold his prey.
But in that grave Life stepped from out a shroud.
Life fears no shrouds, nor death's vale dark and wild;
The everlasting arms were lifting Him
As tenderly as Mother lifts her child.

"I am the resurrection;" Jesus walked
Beneath the trees that He Himself had made;
And watched a broken hearted woman weep
Outside a tomb where all her hopes were laid.
If He could bring a dead man back to life,
If by His word death vanished from the tomb,
Could He not bring back hopes that now are dead
And resurrect lost joys from nights dark gloom?

"I am the resurrection"; Jesus spoke;
One word fell from the lips of endless Life;
One word; a name; but that was word enough
To banish all the darkness, fear and strife.
Raised from the dead were Mary's hopes and joys,
Gone were her sorrows; gone her doubts and fears;
She understood then what we now should know
Eternal Life is walking through the years.

"He is the resurrection"; and today
We walk the road with Him in life anew;
The resurrection life He gave to them
Is life that He now wants to give to you.
He is that Life; He gives it freely when
We bid Him enter never more to part.
You find it not beyond the starry skies.
You have it when you have Him in your heart.

Chas. S. Price

Oh, that God's people would learn that it is in vital union with Him that we have all things, for He is all, and all things are ours in Him and in Him alone!

Saints of all ages have earnestly looked for "that blessed hope," the appearing of the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. But as they have looked for His appearing, they have done with it as with all other things. They have changed that blessed hope into a doctrine to be quarreled about rather than to see and feel and know His coming here and now. There is a coming of the Lord when every eye shall see Him, when even those who hate Him will see Him in the clouds of heaven, when even the beast from the pit will vainly try to make war against Him. This will be a wonderful hour, and my own heart longs for that glorious day far more than anything I can possibly imagine, but there is something transpiring now in our midst. There is a secret coming that can be known, but never explained. So essential is it that all who partake of it will not only see Him when He comes in glory, but they will be with Him when He comes.

We have read the story of the seventh chapter of John of how the brethren of the Lord advised Jesus to show Himself openly and manifest His works to the world, for, said they, "There is no person that doeth anything in secret and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world." **John 7:4**. Indeed, from an earthly standpoint they were right, but with Him it is different, for He seeks not to be known openly to the world and to the gazing eyes of unbelieving men, but secretly unto those who know Him

and love Him above all else and long for His presence. Therefore it is written that, when His brethren were gone up to the feast, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Verse 10. And while all the people milled about, saying, "Where is He," He was right there walking about among them, known not to the arguing crowd but only to that little company whom He could call His own.

There is a secret coming that is taking place now as a few chosen people recognize the presence of the Saviour. "Lo, I am with you always," He still says today, and **"If any man love me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love Him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."** **John 14:23.**

As a boy I was raised on a farm, an experience that has been a lifelong blessing to me. There were no idlers around our house. From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof there was always plenty of work to do, but by some stroke of magic we always managed to crowd in an abundance of fun. We had no fancy swimming pools with trained life-guards, just the good old swimming hole with frogs and ducks and garter snakes to enjoy the fun with us. We had no elegant ice arenas, just the frozen lake from which we often shoveled two feet of snow before we could skate; but oh, what fun we had! No one, thank God, had ever thought of such a time wasting brainwasher as a television.

We were hard bitten individualists pushing back the vast frontiers of our wild west, always thinking for ourselves. As little boys we made games of the work we saw the men do. When the giant threshing machines came around in the fall, we played threshing machines. We concocted our engines and separators. We imitated the shouting of the men, the hissing of the steam, the fire in the boilers, the turning of belts and the whir of pulleys, and the clanging of the giant steel monsters as they waddled about. We even changed our names to names that seemed more suitable for thresher men, such as Bill and Jack, Ray or Chet. But for all our threshing and all our noise not one kernel of grain ever trickled from our toy machines.

The people of God have become like this. They are interested in sound effects and fanfare more than in reality. They are more concerned about the noise that follows the train than about the train itself. They are far more concerned about the signs following the believer than about the believer that the signs follow. They are more interested in the conglomeration they call doctrine than they are in Jesus Christ who is the truth. They are more interested in redemption than in the Redeemer, more enthused about the work they are doing/or Christ than they are about Christ Himself, more worried about the tradition of assembling together than whether or not He is in the midst of them, coveting earnestly the best gifts but giving neither thought nor heed to the more excellent way.

We have come to a tremendous hour in this, the end of the age. We have come to a time when all the sons of God are going to have to differentiate between the false and the true. We are at the place where we must cast aside the ragged garments of our traditions which we have worn as truth and embrace Christ, who is Himself the truth. We are going to have to cease running here and there to find some man who can show us the way, and embrace Him who said, "I am the way." Our endless search for life must end in the abundant realization that Christ Himself is life everlasting. Seek no longer to justify yourself either in the sight of God or of man, for by Him we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Cease in God's name from searching for shepherds and pastors to lead you, and learn the reality of truth in these words, **"I am the good Shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep,"** **John 10:39.** Learn that He is not only the Shepherd, but also the door to the sheepfold, John 10:2, by which the shepherd enters that He might call all His sheep by name and go before them that they should know no other voice but His. John 10:3-6.

Apart from Him there is no resurrection, for He is the resurrection, and all who know His voice here and now will know it then and come forth in that wonderful day when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth. Does your heart cry aloud for sanctification? There is no sanctification apart from Him. Does your soul yearn for righteousness, wisdom and redemption? They cannot be attained apart from vital union with Christ, for God has made Him to be wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Oh, that men would cease their lifelong search for all these things and seek only union with Christ who is the wisdom of God and the power of God. To seek the blessings of God apart from Him is to search for water in a burning wilderness where no water is, but all is yours in Him; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. 1 Cor. 21-23.

Woe to us, for in our day every concerted effort is being made to occupy the minds of the people of God so that they never concentrate on Christ or come to any real knowledge of Him. Professing Christendom, including the people who profess to be born again, have their lives so crammed and cluttered with the manifold programs of the church system that they will finally awake to the fearful knowledge that they do not know Him. They have spent their lives keeping the vineyards of others. But their own vineyards have they not kept. Song of S. 1:6. So busy are they with the demands of the harlot daughters of Babylon that they have forgotten the proverb, "By means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread." **Prov. 6:26.**

Let us cease from the vanity of longstanding tradition and learn the truth of this text: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." **Cor. 8:6.** "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." **Rom. 8:32.**

"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" **Song of Sol. 1:7.**

As in water face answereth to face and as deep calleth unto deep, so those who seek the Lord find Christ, and in Him all things.

CHAPTER SIX LOVEST THOU ME?

In the hearts of many thousands today God has created a deep and holy longing for true sonship. Few, if any, fully understand the moving of the Holy Spirit within them; neither do they always know the meaning of the prayer within their breast. The eighth chapter of Romans appears to be the very heart and centre of all sonship teaching. It is here that Paul plainly states, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts (God) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit (the Holy Spirit), for He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." **Rom. 8:26-27.** The remaining verses unfold God's marvelous plan to bring man to sonship, a purpose ordained before the ages began. Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Sonship is the hope of all creation, and sonship is the hope and plan of God. "Let us make man in Our image and after Our likeness" was the immutable purpose of God in the beginning and, because all God's purposes are immutable, there never can be variableness nor shadow of turning. The universe is soon to see a whole race of sons in the very image of Christ. This is the new creation, and this is the fulfillment of the scripture "Behold, I and the children which God has given Me." **Heb. 2:13.**

There is a great difference between the realm of the sons of men and the realm of the sons of God. Were it not for the grace of God in Christ Jesus, the gulf between the two realms would be impassable. "But you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." **2 Cor. 8:9.** He who was the Son of God became the Son of man that we who were but sons of men might become sons of God. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that we can do to attain the sonship which God offers, but that glory can be attained by letting Jesus Christ live and abide within. The hope of glory is Christ in you, and Christ in you is the hope of glory. Christ is the redeemer, and sonship is the ultimate in the plan of redemption.

Jesus Christ Himself is the first and foremost step toward sonship. Would God that men and women would cease their search for spectacular things and seek only to know Christ and love Him for what He is and who He is. If a man seeks wealth, he gets what wealth can do. If he seeks fame, he gains but a fading leaf. He may attain spiritual gifts but find himself devoid of love. He may prophesy, speak in all manner of tongues, and perform all manner of miracles, yet still have nothing. He may fill a life with blazing zeal only to hear the final words, "I never knew you. Depart from Me." But he who makes Christ his constant quest shall abide in Him and bring forth much fruit. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends." **Rom. 11:36** (Goodspeed).

It is to our eternal shame that Jesus Christ has become a back number in all church circles today. The works that men strive to do in the name of Christ have pushed Him right out the door and usurped His throne. While men have preached salvation, they have forgotten to love the Saviour. While thousands have sought healing, they have forgotten the Healer. They have fervently sought spiritual gifts, but the Giver they do not know. They have sought blessings but have forgotten the Blesser. They have run after miracles but left the Miracle Worker behind. They have sought loaves and fishes, but not the Lord who gave them. Oh, how soon men forget the fountain of life and, instead of pointing all men to Him, they try to fill their little buckets with its life-giving water and run off to start something of their own. For three days Jesus had healed the sick in the wilderness, and, when the fasting people almost fainted for bread, He fed five thousand men besides women and children with the loaves and fishes that a little boy gave from his lunch basket. The next day they sought earnestly for Christ, and, when they had found Him, He said to them, "Ye sought me not because of the miracle, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." How unutterably sad is such a picture, yet we must admit that this is a true portrait of ourselves who have for years sought all manner of things from God's hand, but God we have not sought and Christ we have not known.

I do not believe it is right to seek for things apart from Christ. Why have people become possessed with such a mania to seek for things? The choicest gifts of God are snatched at by the careless, the uninitiated, the unprepared, and the unbelieving as though they were items of merchandise on a bargain counter. People are forever laying claims to sonship, gifts, miracles, dreams, visions, new names, and many other such things, but they seek not to know Him. They have never walked with Him through Gethsemane and have no desire to do so. Love for crowds and applause of men has forbidden many to stand with Christ in the lonely rejection of Pilate's hall, and their love of the things that belong to this age has arrested them lest they should follow Him all the way to Calvary's hill of sorrow to be crucified unto the world and see the world crucified unto them.

The things which I write are not written to condemn, but these things are written for the sake of those whose hearts are set on paying the price of full sonship, which price is so great that only the poor in spirit will be able to pay it. We are standing now at the very doors of the kingdom of God. The dawning light of a new age is brightening the eastern sky. The mournful notes of the night are giving way to the joyful songs of the morning. The breezes are laden with sweet perfume from the realm of life. The weeping that has endured for the night is being hushed, for joy is coming with the morning. The year of great decision has come. The day has come to cease from the nonsense of playing church. The hour has come when Jesus Christ must become all in all. We must stop seeking things and start loving Him. Surely the very heart of Christ is continually saddened by man's quest for the loaves and fishes he hopes to get from God, for, while men diligently seek for all these things, they love not the Lord nor are they acquainted with His ways. Everywhere today Christians seek the blessing of the kingdom, but they have not sought the kingdom. Few have had a great coronation day when Jesus Christ, the King of kings, was enthroned in the kingdom of their hearts. They call Him King, but heed not His scepter. They call Him Lord, but listen not to His will or command.

Many centuries ago a scribe came to Jesus with the question, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said, Well, Master, Thou has said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he had answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." **Mark 12:28-34.**

The law of love is the greatest of all laws, and we need have no hesitation in saying that, if Israel had been able to keep the first commandment, there would have been absolutely no need for the other nine; for what man on earth who loves God with all his heart and soul and strength and mind would ever steal, covet, kill, commit adultery, bear false witness, fail to honor his father and mother, or disrespect the day the Lord made holy? Upon this first commandment hangs all the law and all the prophets, and all the will of God is fulfilled in it. Is it any wonder, then, that the blessed Master, upon hearing the discreet answer of the scribe, said, "Thou art

not far from the kingdom of God." True love for God is both the fulfillment of the law and the guarantee of the kingdom.

The Lord has the most wonderful way of driving truth home to our hearts! We are told of another man who came running to Jesus under similar circumstances, but with a very different heart. This young man was very anxious to attain to life and spiritual blessing. He was like millions of Christians in our day who are zealous for all manner of spiritual things. They would gladly run from coast to coast to be in a healing meeting. No journey would be too great to hear something new. They will even spend hours in prayer in the hope that they might receive a gift from God or that they might accomplish something for God. But there is one thing sadly lacking, and it is the thing they lack that keeps them ever on the run, seeking this and that to try to fill the aching void which Christ alone can fill.

So this young man came running to Jesus and, kneeling before Him in great earnestness, he asked, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto Him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus, beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me. And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." **Mark 10:17-23**. Here was a splendid young man, diligent in all the things of God, but he did not love God as much as he loved things. He was rich in money and possessions, and these, being uppermost in his life, had pushed God off the throne of his heart and sent him sadly away. Having fallen short of the love of God, he fell short of all the commandments, and he fell short of the kingdom as well.

The church system is full of rich people. Many of them have little money, but they possess the kind of riches peculiar to the Laodicean church. They have their church, their friends, their doctrines, their programs. They don't want to be disturbed; they want to go along just as they are. One of the most deceptive terms ever coined was the expression full gospel. For years I applied that appellation to myself, knowing not that I, like millions more, was miserable and wretched, poor, blind, and naked, and needed to buy of Him. As long as we feel we have the full gospel, our eyes are fast closed to the ever, widening wonders of eternal truth and revelation.

Jesus knew this young man just as He knows all men. He had seen how diligent he was in every form of religion. To all outward appearance there was nothing lacking in his life of devotion to God, yet he well knew there was a desperate lack, for Matthew records his words, "What lack I yet?" **Matt. 19:20**. Well also did Jesus know that it was not God, but earthly possessions, which occupied the throne of the young man's heart. Our blessed Lord always knows and He has the simplest ways of testing the truth of our professions. **So He said, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come, take up thy cross and follow Me."** This is the way divine wisdom demonstrates where the true affection of the heart really dwells. It is easy for man to proclaim how dearly he loves God, but the test of his love comes when God offers him a cross, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest. The cross means death. It means death to all earthly things. It means following Christ to the ultimate of His divine will and pleasure.

It is easy to sing, "Where He leads me I will follow." Millions have sung those wonderful words even while they steadfastly refused the call of the Holy Spirit as He sought to lead them to Christ, and they have gone sadly away to walk in the old ways again. Do not think for a moment that, because you can raise your hand and sing, "Where He leads me I will follow," your consecration is complete. The proof of your love will be found when the Spirit speaks to your heart, asking you to follow Him into some unknown. Will your voice still sing, "Lead on, Thou Captain of my soul", or will it with this young man suddenly fall silent? Many times I receive letters from earnest people who rejoice in the revelation of the hour. They have seen the deplorable condition of the Babylonish church system; they know the Spirit of God is calling them on to sonship; they know God is calling them to leave their old haunts and follow Him into the unknown. They even testify that God has spoken to them to leave the Babylonish church system and follow Him to Zion, but they sadly say they are unable to do it because they have friends and relations back there. Others are afraid to do it because they would be lonesome

and they would have no church home, and so, like the rich young man of our story, they trade the hope of the glory of the kingdom of God for a few visible things that they can possess now but lose later. This young man was not an irreligious sinner who was rejecting Christ and salvation. He was about as full gospel as he could be, but, when it came to taking the cross that is offered to every man, he could not do it. Jesus shook His head sadly, and, looking upon His disciples, said, "A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." **Matt. 19:23-24.**

The real lack in the life of this young man was the love of God. When we love God, time and place, people and things no longer own us. God has become the center of our universe.

He has become the King on our throne: the hub of our wheel is His throne. He is OUT father, our mother, our sister and brother. He is OUT friend, for in Him we live and move and have our being. To love God is better, better far, than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. The love of God is greater far than any cross, stronger than any den of lions, more powerful than a fiery furnace, more able than friend or foe, glorying in its cross, stronger than death, triumphing in the resurrection.

We have been very extravagant in our labor and work for God, but have we been extravagant in our love for Him? Have you ever heard people try to make a bargain with God? Have you ever tried to make a bargain yourself? "Lord," they often say, "if You will heal me, I will serve You. If You will deliver me from death. I will live for You." Thousands of men, crouching in fox holes on a field of battle, have promised God that they would serve Him if they came out alive, but, when they were delivered, they forgot their promise. The truth is that the Lord knew all the time it was fear, not love, that motivated them, but His great love delivered anyway. Let us consider our experience well, for it may even now be fear, not love that causes us to be a Christian at all. The godly Job had the right attitude when he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." It is not our promises that God wants. It is not our bargains nor deals, for He does not heed them. They have their source in the carnal mind. He is calling to all men, "Son, give Me thine heart." **Prov. 23:26.** Well does His omniscient mind know that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." When things of earth are held as treasures, the heart abides with them; the mind dwells upon them. They drag the affections away from Christ, usurping His throne and setting themselves up as king in Christ's stead.

It was a wonderful profession that dear Peter made the night Jesus was betrayed. "Why cannot I follow Thee now?" he asked. "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." **John 13:37.** But what good was the profession, even though he was honest, when Jesus knew that before the morning light he would deny Him three times? It is not the labor of our hands that Jesus wants. It is not the fervent profession of our lips nor our earnest supplication in prayer. His call comes echoing like a trumpet o'er the mountains of time, "Son, give Me thine heart."

Some weeks had gone by since the night that Jesus was betrayed - that night in which He had said, "Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterward." Peter had denied his Lord and like a terrible dream of the night the memory of it haunted his soul. St. Luke records that, when Peter denied for the third time, Jesus turned and looked on him, and Peter, remembering His words, went out and wept bitterly. Luke 22:61,62. As his body shook with sobs and his rough hands brushed blinding tears from his eyes, he understood for the first time why the Master had said, "Thou canst not follow Me now."

How often during life have we all been brought face to face with some reality that has proved our elaborate profession to be a lie! Our proud boasts of trusting God have vanished in the face of illness, our fidelity has been shaken by the ravages of temptation, and our professions of love have drooped and fainted before the reality of the cross we were called upon to bear. The look, which Jesus gave to Peter that night, was full of meaning, pregnant with the goodness of God. It was a look of understanding, a look of kindness, a look of reproof, a look of forgiveness, and above all a look of love for a man who had grossly overestimated his devotion to Christ. To him the sun had set on his horizon forever, and naught but the yawning gulf of despair was before him. But with what love on the morrow did angels say, "Go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." **Mark 16:7**

O, love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;

I give Thee back the life I owe
That in Thine ocean's depth its flow
May richer, fuller be.

Much as God loves His children, none can deceive Him with a glib profession. Great as was His love for Peter, still He knew that even now he was not ready and able to follow all the way. Even the glory of the resurrection did not fully erase the weakness that was there. Our Lord had unmistakably risen from the dead. He had shown Himself to all His disciples and performed many signs before them to prove beyond a doubt that He was risen. The apostle left this faithful testimony: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." **John 20:30-31**. It was after all the infallible glory of the resurrection that Peter said, "I go a-fishing." **John 21:3**. Perhaps no one knows just what motivated this decision. Was it fear or unbelief or just plain frustration? I know not, but at any rate he went fishing along with the other disciples who were with him, and, as may be expected, they caught nothing. The lake that so often had yielded its bounty to them in years past now seems to be completely empty. Their labor was in vain, for they had gone without the Lord. It takes more than zeal to bear us over the desolating ravages of broken hopes and bitter disappointments. How true it is that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." **Prov. 13:12**. But all who will be sons of God must learn by experience that, when faith falters, hope fades, and zeal dies, love abides. It never fails. It is stronger than death. It bridges the oceans of separation, plucks the prisoner from his dungeon, strengthens the feeble knees and the hands that hang down. It will not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed till it sends forth judgment unto truth.

Well did Jesus know that His ministry to Peter could not be complete until He knew that his love for Him was greater than his love for any other thing. The story that follows that unprofitable night of fishing is worthy to be written on the very gates of Paradise. "When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, (bless His name!) but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said unto them, **Children, have ye any meat?** They answered Him, No; And He said unto them, **Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find.** They cast therefore and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea ...And as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread ...So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these** (the fish and the occupation of fishing)? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, **Feed My lambs.** He saith unto him again the second time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?** He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, **Feed My sheep.** He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?** Peter was grieved that He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me. (Undoubtedly the bitter memory of his thrice repeated denial filled him with grief.) And he saith unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love Thee." Then said Jesus, **Verily, verily I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walked whither thou wouldst; but when thou shall be old, thou shall stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this He saith unto him, Follow Me."** **John 21**. Only a little while ago He had said, "Thou canst not follow Me now." But now that steadfast love has filled his heart, he hears the loving command, "Follow Me." And well did he follow Him until that day when they carried him forth and spread forth his hands upon a cross, "Even as our Lord Jesus had showed him."

The world would have lost a priceless treasure had Jesus gone back to heaven before He extracted from Peter the extravagant profession that God knew all things, knew that he loved Jesus, and loved Him above and beyond all other things, in (he universe. It is not enough to love Christ "more than these." It is not enough to love Him more than certain pleasures or more than certain things or certain people. God is not sufficed until we love Him with all our spirit, soul, body, and strength. When such love as this exists in the human heart, it is because God dwells in us; and because God dwells in us, His love dwells in us. Then from the eternal fountain within the love of God flows forth to all creatures and all things. There is no love apart from God, for God is love. If we love one another, it is because God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:12. Oh, how often we have all been exhorted to show love or to try to show love to our brethren! You cannot manifest what you do not possess and it is only hypocrisy to try. What men need is not a feigned and hypocritical

outward show of love, but the indwelling Christ, for God Himself is love and all things are the objects of His love. Love can no more come from an empty heart than water can come from an empty cistern. Either it is there or it is not there. Love cannot be manufactured at will. Of all the detestable things in the world there is nothing so obnoxious and hateful as fond words that cover up a deceitful heart, a "God bless you" that comes from a heart that inwardly curses you, or a smile that covers the fangs of a wolf. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he; Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee; the morsel which thou has eaten shalt thou vomit up and lose thy sweet words." **Prov. 23:7-8.**

Love is not a thing you try to manifest. Love is a person that dwells within. Love is not a transient thing that comes and goes like anger or fear. Love abides. There is a universe of difference between liking and loving. Love has nothing whatever to do with infatuation or sentimentality. Love is a thing apart that cannot be separated from its source, and that source is God. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16.

Our Lord taught us to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." Christians of all ages have made the great mistake of trying to love their enemies when their love for God was far, far from perfect. We cannot love our enemies before we love God. Our profession of fidelity to Christ may be as bold as that of Peter, but our denial of Christ may be swifter still when the test comes. The ten words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", can only come from a heart made beautiful by the fragrant life of the indwelling Christ. We will learn to love our enemies only when the years have taught us that it was the blindness of their hate that made us flee away to the center of God's will. Understanding will teach us that, had it not been for their rejection of us, we, as they, would have missed the purpose of God for our life.

It was a contrary wind that shipwrecked Paul on the little island of Melita, Acts 27:4, but it was that same wind that blew his ship into the harbor of God's perfect will. It was a contrary wind that enraged the sea in the days of Jonah, but it forced him back to Nineveh where one hundred twenty thousand souls were saved in forty days. It was the contrary wind of hate that sold poor Joseph into the slavery and affliction of Egypt, but many years later from an understanding heart he was able to say to his trembling brethren, "Fear not; you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

How often the expression "but God" is used in scripture! Paul says we were by nature the children of wrath, but God, who is rich in mercy with His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. Eph. 2:4-5. "Scarcely for a righteous man would one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die, but God commandeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." **Rom. 5:7-8.** "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase." Joseph had also learned the but God secret. The passing years had helped to erase the bitterness of ignorance from his heart till now he was able to see the purpose of God shining through the dark clouds of his tribulation. He was able to look far beyond the blind hate of his brethren, far beyond the despair of that terrible day when they rejected him and sold him as a slave into Egypt, an act that naught but hate and envy could devise. But now, beyond it all he could see the supreme wisdom of the eternal purpose that had kept his feet through the thorny paths of adversity, bringing him to such exalted glory. Now he understood the meaning of the contrary winds, which at first had blighted his every hope, but at last had placed him on Egypt's throne to be a deliverer to all who trusted in him. It was in this exalted position of wisdom and understanding that he was able to say amid his happy tears, "Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But, as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore, fear ye not." **Gen. 50:19-21.**

Do not try to feign love for your enemies. You will begin to love them when the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in your heart has given you understanding. No man will ever truly love God until, through the understanding God has given him, he clearly sees that God has a purpose for all things that have ever befallen mankind. As long as you say with Jacob, "All these things are against me," **Gen. 42:36**, you can never love. But, when you can say with the understanding of Paul, "All things work together for good", **Rom. 8:28**, then you will know what the love of God really is. Every man or woman who would truly love God and come to the maturity of sonship must sooner or later know the heartache of being rejected by those he loves and trusts. If we follow Christ, there will always come a time when against our own will we will find ourselves walking alone. But lift up your drooping

head and look, for the light that shines before you is forming a rainbow through your tears. When at last the purpose of God unfolds before your wondering eyes, you will praise Him for the fiery trials of the way that tempered your metal and made you fit for His kingdom.

One ship drives east
And another drives west
By the self-same wind that blows.
Its the set of the sail
And not the gale
That determines the way it goes.
Like the winds of the sea
Are the winds of fate
As we voyage along through life.
Tis the set of the soul
That decides the goal,
And not the calm or the strife.

Love is not a matter of trying to forgive and forget or to pretend that no wrong ever existed; neither is it a matter of ignoring the fact that a wrong was ever done, for eventually God will judge all wrong-doers. It is folly to imagine that we can immediately be reconciled to those who have hated us, even though from an understanding heart we can pray with Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge", or though we can pray with Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Yet God is just, and those who have whipped and scourged us must come to true repentance or they themselves will be scourged. If we think we can be truly reconciled to our enemies before both we and they have seen things as God sees them, then we will be bitterly disappointed. Until that good hour came when Joseph's brethren stood trembling before him, hating themselves for their wicked act inspired of their own envy, there could be no true reconciliation. But the moment they saw the panorama of their evil against the wisdom of God, their hearts broke in repentance, and for the first time the love of Joseph, pent-up for years, was able to flood forth upon them.

Wrongs are never cancelled without repentance, but when our spirit sees the value of God's chastening rod, our understanding heart will secretly thank Him for those who so relentlessly wielded the scourge. When Joseph saw the purpose of God, he could thank God that his wicked brethren were used of Him to bring him to the desired haven of God's will. I am sure Jonah must have thanked God for both the storm of the sea and the hell of the whale's belly. It is when we see His purpose that we love them that hate us and pray for them that spitefully use us and persecute us.

In the town of Bethany six days before the Passover a story unfolded that has shed the fragrance of its perfume through the dismal valleys of the ages. Wherever the Gospel has been preached, the lovely story has been told of the night that Jesus sat at supper and Lazarus, who was raised from the dead, sat with Him. While lovely Martha fulfilled her ministry of serving, Mary came with an alabaster box, a whole pound of ointment of spikenard, costing three hundred pence. (A whole year's wages. Cf. Matt. 20:2.) Love, like grief, is always simple, never ceremonious; therefore, because her love was real, she unceremoniously broke the box and, weeping, bathed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the beautiful hair of her head, for a woman's hair is her glory. Then with an extravagance that love alone could devise she abundantly anointed His feet and His head with the precious ointment until the whole house was filled with its fragrance. This was love — simple, pure, unadulterated love for her Lord - poured out affectionately, extravagantly, and unstintingly lavished upon Him. This is the kind of love Jesus sought but could not obtain from the rich young ruler. This is the love He sought from Simon Peter when He thrice repeated the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" This is the love He seeks from us.

Now whenever anyone is found who unstintingly pours out his love to Christ, there are always those wise "do-gooders" about who support their own shameful lack of love for Him by belittling his devotion. With pharisaical disdain they explain how the sacrifice might have been put to better use. It might have been given to the poor, or it might have been given to the missionaries that souls might have been saved. Little do these people know the true value of the love of Christ, for it is when He is lifted up that men are drawn to Him. When His love is manifested in our hearts, sinners are affected by the glory of His love shining through us. Publicans and

harlots, thieves and rogues are touched by the light of His love in us. Then they with true repentance seek Christ through their tears until His love shines from their hearts as well.

We do not need more preachers and more missionaries. We do not need more money or better organization. We need more lovers. It was Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of the Lord, who advanced the plausible idea, "This ointment should have been sold and the money given to the poor." It certainly sounds like a good idea, a plausible thought indeed. Perhaps for a moment it shamed the heart of this precious woman, who seemed to be so thoughtless of the poor. Then Jesus spoke. He held no sympathy for the high sounding nonsense, which Judas proposed. He never looks on outward appearance, but He sees the true devotion of the heart. Judas cared not for the poor and neither did he care for Jesus, but Mary loved Christ, and through Him she loved all mankind. "Let her alone," said Jesus, "Against the day of My burial hath she done this. The poor ye have with you always, but Me ye have not always."

We are living in an age when Christians are full of good works, but too often are destitute of love for Christ. The world has never known such fervent religious activity. People are exhorted to do many strange things to supposedly promote the cause of Christ. Thousands of people have mortgaged their homes to finance the construction of elaborate temples and tabernacles. Money left by thrifty and devoted husbands to care for their widows in their old age has been inveigled from them to further the grandiose schemes of some conniving preacher. The promise to return the money on demand is freely given, but soon forgotten or ignored and the widow left destitute. Widows have written me to tell me that they have been the innocent victim of this conniving treachery. Jesus did not say in vain, "They rob widow's houses and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore they shall receive greater damnation." Widows have always been an easy target for these unscrupulous religious vultures who have forgotten that it is the duty of the church to care for widows - not for widows to care for the church.

It would be impossible to enumerate the multiplied thousands of ambitious schemes foisted upon a gullible people with the hope of extracting more money and devotion from them. The ointment is always being sold to give to the poor, the missionaries, the building fund, the Sunday School, the organ fund, to build a world church or a wilderness refuge against the day of tribulation. But few there are indeed who break the box and extravagantly pour the precious ointment of love upon the head of Christ. Yet this alone will cause the fragrance of His love and light to reach the darkened world.

Love for Christ must be the motivating force of our lives. If we pray because we love to be in His presence, that is good. If we pray because we hope to extract something from Him - a gift, a healing, a blessing, or some other thing, we are wrong and have made ourselves naught but beggars waiting for a hand-out, upon receiving which we go away destitute of love or relationship to Him who gave it. We can receive gifts all our life without either loving or knowing the giver, and children who are given most usually love the least. But he who seeks God's face and yearns to know Him separate and apart from all things, all people, and all activity will in return find that God Himself has become all things to him. He has become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption - yes, redemption for spirit, soul, and body as well.

If Christ is in the boat, it matters not whether the sea is wild or calm. If one whose form is as the Son of God walks hi the furnace of fire, it matters not a whit that they have heated the furnace seven times hotter. If Christ is in the den of lions, the mighty monarchs of the jungle are but purring kittens. It was far better for Peter, fast locked in jail, to fall asleep in Christ's love than to spend the night trying to pick the lock. It is not more fervent activity that we need, for even a Judas can advocate that, but where are those lovers who, breaking the ointment of their devotion, pour it on Christ's head while through their tears of joy they sing,

More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee;
Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee;
This is my earnest plea; more love, O Christ, to Thee.
Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;
Now Thee alone I seek, give what is best.
This all my prayer shall be; more love, O Christ, to Thee.

There is purpose in all things in the world and in the universe - a purpose in man, a purpose in the fall of man, a purpose in the redemption of man, a purpose in temptation, tribulation, grief, pain, and death. There is purpose in light and darkness, in heat and cold, a purpose in joy and sadness, in unity and division. There is divine, omniscient, immutable purpose in every act of God. No man can love God or anybody or anything simply because he is told to love. It cannot be done. When human beings love each other, there is always an underlying reason. It may be beauty, character, or virtue, but there is always a reason. So also true love for God has its birth in understanding. You cannot truly love God because of hope of heaven or fear of hell. True love lives in the simple trust that He doeth all things well. In our affliction He is afflicted. In our joy He is made happy, and all of these, whether joy or affliction, are working for our eternal good, being ordained in love before the world was. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom and with all thy getting get understanding. Loving and abiding go hand in hand. It is always easy to abide with those we love, but most distressing to abide with those we love not. With God abiding is not abiding with, but abiding in, God abiding in us and we abiding in God. Therefore John said by the Spirit, "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning (Christ). If that therefore which ye have heard from the beginning remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father." 1 John 2:24. "And now, little children, abide in Him: that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." **Vs. 28.**

Now since the world and all the world system are enemies of God, we can clearly see that it is impossible to love God and love the world at the same time, for, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Let no man think, therefore, that he can truly love God, yet sit for hours before his television, feasting his eyes and distorting his mind with all manner of corruption, violence, sex, intrigue, suggestion, and advertisement where the low and corrupt are exalted, and the exalted, the pure, the honorable are made low. This is completely impossible. Well, too, do we know that none among us would invite Jesus Christ to sit with us to see it, for it is part of the world, and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Well did Jesus say, "No man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other, or he will cling to the one and despise the other." To cling to the world you must despise the commandment of God, and to cling to God you must despise the world. Many "rich young men" today are missing the kingdom because they love this one-eyed monster more than they love the cross of Christ.

Do you not think it is most significant that John, the apostle of love, should say in the very midst of his teaching, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." **1 John 2:15-17.** These things test our love and devotion to Christ.

Let us go still further, for the world system includes a multitude of religious systems. If we will but superficially examine the existing church system, we will see that it belongs not to God, but to the world system. It uses all the schemes of the world for advancement, it makes gain godliness, it compasses land and sea to make proselytes, and its ministers are educated of men. In the days of Jeremiah, when Israel was doomed to captivity in Babylon, religion was filthy and corrupt. Jeremiah said, "For both the prophet and the priest are profane (worldly). Yea, in My house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Wherefore their way shall be unto thee as slippery ways in darkness." **Jer. 23:11-12.** Then he continues in a message to our modern day, saying, "In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken, yet they prophesied. (A perfect picture of the modern clergy.) Yet if they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My words, they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings." **Verses 21-22.** See Jer. 23:1-4. The mighty Isaiah describes our day as the day when the Lord would turn the earth upside down. In that day, he said, it shall be "as with the people, so with the priest." **Isa. 24:2.** That simple statement described our day exactly, for what the people want, the priest gives them; what the servant wants is what the master must give. What the maid wants is what the mistress gives. In this way Isaiah shows that the religious system and the world system work the same way exactly. "As with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with the master; as with the maid, so with the mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury." It is small wonder then that God has ordained to call His people, His true people, His true sons, His true church, out of Babylon - out of the Babel of religion, for that is the world, and out of the world itself, for that is an enemy of God.

There is only one sure place; it is in Him. There is only one to love; it is He. God is calling His sons to "come out". Not to come out of one system and into another! Not to leave one organization and enter another, but to leave them all and abide in Him. As Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees to follow God to the city, which had foundations, and as Israel left Egypt to dwell beneath the cloud of His glory, so in these last days He is calling a people who will abide in His love, abide in Him and He in them.

I have found this mighty secret, that true unity with the brethren is only attained by those who have found unity with God because they love Him, for "everyone that loveth Him that begat (God) loveth him that is begotten of Him." The church in two thousand years has not found unity among its people, but when this secret is learned, unity of spirit rolls like a tide on the ocean of God's love. When you abide in God's love and God's love abides in you, all the world of friend and foe is loved in Him.

In conclusion let our hearts thrill to the marvelous wonders vouchsafed to us all in the words of 1 John 2:15, Phillips' translation: "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions, and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die.

CHAPTER SEVEN CARRIED AWAY

In these troublous times in which we live a great deal is heard about revelation. People inclined to the spectacular adopt the ever, present hearsay and, their ardent wishes being father to their thoughts, they imagine God has revealed something to them; then, grasping upon some likely scripture that seems to support their fanciful notion, they proclaim it far and wide as a truth from God and a divine revelation. It is not our concern even in the least to either confirm or condemn any of these things except to say that it is well nigh impossible for God to reveal anything to any man while that man is happily absorbed in things just as they are. The all wise Lord does not give revelation to men to better enable them to build up their own work or to establish their little kingdom, but He gives His divine revelation and understanding to those who long to be free from the tyranny and oppression of both people and things that imprison men in the jail of human tradition, binding them in chains of darkness to the incessant treadmill of the religious systems of earth. He gives His revelation to those who long to break the power of their inherited evil will that they might enter into the immutable will of God to become one heart and one soul with the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. He gives His revelation to those who seek the heart of Jesus Christ as the very center of all truth, knowing that truth is not cold calculation but a living person, for He alone is truth. In the knowledge of this holy fact they willingly cast aside the prattle of scribe and Pharisee together with the endless dissertations and sermons of men, refusing to be spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, for they know that in Him, and in Him alone, the fullness of the Godhead dwells embodied.

Before God enlightens the understanding of any man, he will always find himself fed up, sick to death, and disconsolate with things as they are in his realm of unending tradition. Go as far back into history as we wish and we will always discover that, before men were carried away into the great and high mountain of revelation, they had to be separated from the fading, dying, and wearisome systems of their day that their wondering eyes might behold the glory of an age yet unborn and believe with all assurance things which men now consider unlawful to be uttered.

The last book in the Bible is not the Revelation of St. John the Divine, but the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 1. Wonderful, indeed, were the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah. Incomparable was the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was made flesh and dwelt among us as portrayed by the Gospels. Unlawful to be uttered was the marvelous story of the formation of a vast family of sons in His very image as taught by the apostle Paul, but far beyond all imagination of understanding is the revelation of Jesus Christ as it was shown to the apostle John in the book of Revelation, for there we see the consummation of the eternal purpose that from the beginning of the ages was hid in God.

So it was that John was carried away that he might embrace the things of a coming age and behold the Christ in a fullness never before known. If any man on earth ever knew Jesus Christ, it was certainly John, the beloved disciple. He had followed Him into the mount of transfiguration and had heard Him whisper that which was denied all others. He had stood alone with Jesus in Pilate's hall and near the cross with those few weeping women who loved their Lord. Was he not among the first to visit the tomb and the first to believe that the resurrection had taken place? John 20:8. Was it not John who first recognized Him after their fruitless night of fishing? John 21:7. Had he not seen Him ascend to heaven? Yes, he knew Him as perhaps none other ever knew Him, but he knew only in part, and the little He knew would seem like nothing at all compared to the magnificent splendor that was yet to be revealed, a splendor so effulgent that he would fall as one dead before its glorious light of completeness. Rev. 1:17.

How unworthy we are to speak or write of such transcending glory! Is it any wonder that even such an one as John must be carried away by the Spirit before his eye was permitted to behold it? So away from his church work he was taken, away from the hustle and bustle, away from activity, away from the ever present pressing needs of people, away from all assembling, from preaching and healing, away from good men and carnal men, away from conference and argument, away, away, away to lonely Patmos where the senseless crowd could be forgotten and the petty demands of mortals be unheard, where things before deemed important become but a fading leaf in the light of reality-But physical isolation on Patmos was not enough. To be forcefully carried there in body would not do. That was but a beginning, albeit a necessary beginning. It was as John fasted and prayed, loving Jesus Christ and looking into His very heart for truth, that he found his spirit strangely soaring into celestial realms. Stilled was the sweet murmur of the waves on the shore, hushed the sound of screeching gulls. Earth receded; heaven matured and opened to him. "And I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Rev. 1:10-11. Here in the light of God's presence, separated from all that bound him, he saw Christ in a fullness never before imagined.

With each succeeding revelation of truth there comes the necessity to be carried away in the Spirit further and further into those open heavens where things that remain hidden and obscure are made plainly visible. When the time had come for John to see the truth of Babylon, he was carried away in the Spirit to a wilderness. Rev. 17:1-3. There he saw the apostate church, not as the bride of Christ as Christians vainly imagine, but as a defiled and wanton harlot, full of adulteries and everything that belongs to the world system, drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs of Jesus, decked in gold and silver and costly array, and carried by the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit.

It is a never, ending source of wonder to me to find how very, very few people have really been able to see what spiritual Babylon is. No amount of explanation will open their eyes to it. They will freely admit that all organized religion belongs to the harlot system, but on every occasion they excuse their own situation and the group to which they belong. They cannot see because they have not been carried away by the Spirit of revelation. Well did the prophet Isaiah declare, "The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Acts. 28:27. Nothing but the Spirit of revelation from God can show this truth to men. That is why so few are able to see it, and that is why they fail to flee from it.

Still later, when the time had come for the Spirit of God to reveal to John the wonderful truth of the bride of Christ, one of the seven angels came to him, saying, "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife, and he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Rev. 21:2, 9-10.

The revelation of Jesus Christ grows apace, and, as God is eternal, so the great unfolding of His eternal power and purpose will go on and on forever and ever, for ages and dispensations, for God is eternally progressive. The last book of the Bible is a grand series of revelation, each fitting like the parts of a puzzle into one great masterpiece, each blending as the sound of sweet voices into the harmony of a mighty choir. The eternal mysteries hidden from ages and dispensations in the mind of God are freed from their shrouds. The veils are lifted and taken away. Since this strange book is one great revelation given in many parts, it is only normal that, with the unfolding of each new part, there should be a catching away in the Spirit, for mortal men in mortal flesh do not with mortal eyes behold the things that belong to immortal realms because a darkling veil hangs

over their eyes, hiding all things that belong to a spiritual world. Heaven is closed to the natural man. Though its glories are everywhere about him, he cannot see them, for he is a natural man. He is like the frightened servant of Elisha who stood trembling in fear of the armed hosts at the gate, while Elisha sat calm in the presence of the hosts of the Lord that filled the mountains about him. 2 Kings 6:13-17.

To behold the things that belong to a spiritual world we must be carried away by the Spirit into the realms of God, for it is beyond the veil that the glory lies, and it is there that He dwells in the light that no man approacheth. 1 Tim. 6:16. The ministry of Jesus Christ was different from the ministry of any other man, for He was the Son of God. All who will ever come to sonship will attain that goal only through Him. While other men minister with the heavens closed, Jesus ministered with the heavens open. From the moment John the Baptist immersed the Lamb of God in the Jordan, the heavens opened to Him, Matt. 3:16, and during all His earthly ministry they never once closed again until that awful moment that darkness covered the earth at high noon, and with a dreadful cry of abandonment that reached the four corners of the universe He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Everything Jesus did He did under the open heavens. Though those about Him knew it not, He stood continually in the heavenly realm, seeing God, hearing His voice and receiving His commands, surrounded by angels great in power and might, and ministered to by multitudes of heavenly hosts. So great was His realization of the open heaven all about Him that on one occasion He admitted He was in heaven, saying, "No man hath ascended to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven." **John 3:13**. When He healed the sick, He did it under open heavens. When He fed the multitudes, there was no veil that hid Him from God's presence. When He stood at the tomb of Lazarus, He knew that God was there, for the heavens were open and no dark mist hid God's face from Him.

Is it any wonder that such a life and ministry was crowned by unending success? How could desolating failures dog the footsteps of One who did all things with the light of the eternal shining upon Him through an open heaven? Only sons of God are privileged to minister under open heavens and sonship can only be attained through complete union with Jesus Christ. It cannot come by any effort of man however great that effort may be. Apparent success in ministry has nothing to do with sonship. Crowds of listeners, faith that will remove mountains, and a world filled with good works have nothing to do with our attaining sonship. Sonship is only for those who find complete unity with Him. We are far more likely to find it in the lowly than in the mighty, more likely to find it in the lonesomeness of a cottage than in the glamour of a pulpit. We may find it among those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, but never among the satisfied, fat, and flourishing members of this harlot church system whether they are glamorizing a golden pulpit or warming a wooden pew. For while they speak great swelling words of vanity, they do but allure through their wantonness those who had escaped from all who live in error. Sitting on many waters, they commit fornication with the kings of the earth, making the people drunk with the intoxicating wine of their fornication.

How my heart doth loathe this harlot system, which with her bewitching eyes deceives the hearts of men! Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. She has cast down many wounded and strong men are slain by her. Let not thine heart decline to her ways. Go not astray in her paths. She will persuade you with her much fair speech and cause you to yield to her flattering lips until you follow her as an ox to the slaughter or a fool to the correction of the stocks. Harken diligently then, and attend not the words of her mouth.

Full well did Jesus speak forth the words of truth and soberness when He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which UK persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

It is not enough to see as men see. It is not enough to understand as men understand, for the natural mind never can receive the things of the Spirit of God, neither can it know them, for they are all spiritually discerned. Those blessed ones who long to walk far above the natural realm and enter into the realms of God's

understanding must expect that they will first be carried away by the Spirit into those wonderful regions of God. Their souls, their spirits, and even their bodies will become dissatisfied with the sensuous traditions and vain janglings of religious men. In their spirits they will long for celestial places, the realm of heaven open, and God who sees the longing heart will carry them away to the green pastures of heavenly truth.

As long as a man is satisfied with the primitive things of this earthly religious realm and the glamour of all he thinks splendid, he will never be carried away into the magnificent glory of spiritual understanding. He is of the earth earthy, having no desire for anything beyond the scope of his natural mind and the primitive things it can comprehend. There must come a healthy discontent with the primitive traditions that have held men captive throughout the church age, for the church system is now as full of tradition as was Israel in the age of the law. To those who tenaciously adhered to the letter of the law Jesus said, "Ye make the truth of God of no effect by your tradition." Tradition! Tradition! Tradition! Never ending tradition! Sunday schools have become such a tradition that they are accepted as a Bible institution and a commandment of the Lord, but they are only a human tradition and are not once mentioned or hinted at in scripture. Bible schools have become such a tradition that one would be led to believe they, too, are a scriptural institution, but they are not. They are a man-made institution that has filled the world with professional preachers who are nothing more than Bible-thumping copy-cats, clouds without water, carried about of the wind, trees whose fruit is withered, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. These are murmurers and complainers walking after their own lusts. Their mouth speaketh great swelling words of vanity, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. Jude 16. How can any man deny that denominationalism and sectarianism have become a tradition among the people until today it would appear that only a handful of the earth's inhabitants know that God dwelleth not in these temples made with human hands. God did not build these denominations. He does not own them and He has turned away His face from beholding them. They have become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:5.**

The age of human reason is about to collapse. The day of the rule of men is almost over. The rickety tower of man's building, which he hopes will reach to heaven is leaning precariously on its crumbling foundation and its exalted works are tumbling around his head. The world with all its confusion and turmoil is being prepared for the rule of Jesus Christ. Amid the din of war, the confusion of nations, the violence and corruption that abounds to the four corners of the earth, there is a people being groomed to take the kingdom. They are being raised out of the darkness and night of a purely natural realm. They are being carried away of the Spirit into celestial realms that they might know the things that are coming on the world and be prepared of God to rule and reign in the glory and wisdom of their heavenly Father.

Let those who are being thus led of God think it not strange that they are misunderstood by the world and the worldly church around them, for they who walk in the night are clothed upon with darkness, but they who are of the day walk in the light and there is no darkness in them. A man cannot love God and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system is based on the things that men see and feel, taste, touch and smell, and those who are of the world love what is their own. But the celestial realm is filled with that which the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man. These two kingdoms - natural and spiritual - are farther apart than the poles. They are the antithesis of each other. One is flesh; the other is spirit. One is darkness; the other is light. One is of this world; the other is not of this world. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." **John 15:19.**

Thus it was that John was separated more and more from even the very best of people, for, though we may not realize it, even the best of people lie bound in the chains of tradition or are content to spend their lives paddling in water ankle deep. They have never learned that just beyond the roaring breakers lie the fathomless depths of an ocean deep, mighty, and untamed by human power or wisdom. Thus it was that John was by his oppressors carried away, yea, carried away bodily and by force to the lonesomeness of the Isle of Patmos. We may at times well thank God for our oppressors who, for reasons which they think valid and sincere, drive us into separation from themselves and banish us from their presence, for it is in the alone-ness of our wilderness experience that we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. I

know of no man who has reached great heights with God amid the noise and excitement of many people. Meetings and public gatherings have certainly had their place in the past, but

Heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

No man should underestimate the vast importance of separation from people whether it be forced or voluntary. It was beside the burning bush in the wilderness of Horeb that God revealed to Moses a purpose that will never die. In a dank prison cell in a foreign land He gave to Joseph the interpretation of a dream that amazed the whole world and brought a deliverance beyond the imagination of any human mind. Was it not in the captivity of Babylon that Daniel wrote his prophecy a prophecy more up to date than tomorrow's newspaper? Was not John the Baptist in a wilderness until the day of his showing to Israel? Yet of men born of women there has none arisen greater than he. Thus John, the apostle of love, the man who perhaps knew Jesus Christ more perfectly than all others, was carried away bodily and forcefully to the lonely isle into complete isolation and separation from men and their childish opinions. Words fail to tell of the vast importance of such an experience with God. We may never be carried to a deserted isle. We may never be in prison in Egypt, or be forced to flee to a desert as Moses did; but as sure as God is in His heaven every man who ever beholds the surpassing glory of His presence must first have his life crushed out of him by trial and tribulation. He will know the bitterness of being alone. He will know the heartache of being deserted. He will know the frustration that comes from that demon of misunderstanding. He will feel the pains of lies and misrepresentation, and endure with closed lips the taunts and jibes of those whom he loved most as they in gleeful hope declare the judgment of God upon him. "He saved others; let him save himself," they will cast in his teeth. Vinegar mingled with gall will be his drink as they part his garments among them and cast lots for his vesture. "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me" will be his bitter cry as darkness floods the earth and sky. But fear not! The sun will shine again more brightly than before, for each fiery trial ushers him to higher ground and to a clearer atmosphere where the sun of God's love and wisdom shineth ever brighter.

144,000 separate stories could not embrace the wilderness journeys of all the sons of God, but be it known to all that sooner or later those who shall be accounted worthy to attain His glory will feel the pain of forced separation. Fear none of these things as they come upon you, but hide yourself in Him for a little moment until the indignation be over past. The hour is coming when you shall say hi triumph, "These light afflictions which were but for a moment have worked for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

When beneath some heavy cross you fault
And say, "I cannot bear this heavy load alone,"
You say the truth. Christ made it purposely
So heavy that you must return to Him.
The bitter grief, which no one understands
Conveys a secret message from the King,
Entreating you to come to Him again.
The Man of sorrows understands it well;
In all points tempted, He can feel with you.
You cannot come too often or too near.
The Son of God is infinite in grace;
His presence satisfies the longing soul;
And those who walk with Him from day to day
Can never have a solitary way.

Oh that men would quit their whining and pining for past days, for friends they loved and cherished in their yesteryears, stop trying to correct the misunderstandings which have been circulated to give them pain, and, instead, start looking upward through their tears, for they will see a rainbow round God's throne. Look for the hand that guides you through pathless seas and trackless air, for then the revelation of God will begin to unfold and His purpose be accomplished.

There is a power whose care
Teaches Thy way along the pathless coast,
The desert, and the illimitable air,
Lone wandering, but not lost.
He, who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless coast
Thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must walk alone
Will guide my steps aright.

The physical separation of the apostle John from all he loved and held dear was naught but a necessary preparation for the glories into which he was now to be carried in the Spirit. Since God does not reveal Himself except to those who are separated from the throng, how essential then was this preparation in the life of the great apostle, for now, carried by the Spirit into the realms of God, his wondering eyes were to behold a vision of Christ such as no man at any time had even remotely known. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last... and I turned to see the voice that spoke to me, and, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters... Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." Rev. 1:10-18.

This is the revelation of Christ as He will appear at the end of the age. It is not the revelation of Jesus of Nazareth as He appeared two thousand years ago, despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief from whom we hid our faces; not the lowly Jesus who was born in a manger in Bethlehem and rode upon a colt, the foal of an ass, into Jerusalem where He was crucified, but the exalted Christ, Jesus Christ the Head with all His body of sons who have come into that same image throughout the church age. It is the fulfillment of the scripture, "Here am I and the children which God has given me." Heb. 2:13.

Though we cannot now turn aside to behold at length the glory of the fullness of Christ as John beheld Him here, yet be it known to all that it was toward this mighty fullness of Christ that God, the Father, had been building through every age and dispensation. Jesus knew this truth full well when He said, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Oh that those who read would learn that the completeness of God's Christ is not seen in Jesus of Nazareth alone, but in Jesus of Nazareth, the Head and firstborn Son of God, together with that vast family who through the wisdom of eternal God come to sonship during this age of grace, for they are the body of Christ, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, the breast, the arms, the hands, the thighs, the legs, and the blessed feet of Christ, who shall bear upon the mountains of Zion the glad tidings of the gospel of peace even as it is written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace..." Rom. 10:15. (Also Isa. 52:7.) They shall not hear the gospel of ages past, but the gospel of the kingdom of God, which is the gospel of everlasting peace. It is the truth of all previous ages contained in one gospel, the gospel of peace.

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," for Peter had said "Thou shalt never wash my feet." "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me," said Jesus, for full well the Son of God knew that He was preparing this man a place in His own body, the Father's house of many mansions. Likewise He is preparing a place in His body (His body of many sons) for you and me and for all others who through His blood and the fierce furnaces of affliction grow up into Him who is the head and firstborn of many brethren. Rom. 8:29.

John was beholding the completeness of Christ at the end of this age. He was seeing the fulfillment of God's purpose up to the end of this age of grace, Christ with His body of sons so complete in unity that they appear but one man, one son, one body. The voice like a single trumpet was in reality the voice of many waters, and waters, as we know, are people and tongues and nations. The head and hairs were white as wool, as white as snow. The eyes were as a flame of fire, the feet like fine brass as if they burned in a furnace of fire. The breast

was girt about with a golden girdle, and a garment that made all to be one covered the whole body. Full well did John say that this was one like the Son of man, for, as we have already said, this was not Jesus of Nazareth, the lonely Son of Bethlehem, Judaea, and Calvary, but the complete body of the Christ, Jesus the head joined to those sons who comprise the breast, the arms, the hands, the thighs and legs and feet. This was also Paul's vision when he dipped his pen in inspiration and wrote, "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29.** "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, (or all have one Father); for which cause He (Jesus) is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children (sons) which God hath given Me." Heb. 2:10-13.

This is the vision John was carried away to see - carried away in the Spirit beyond the corroding influences of the flesh, beyond the corrupting influences of people, beyond the blinding blight of Christians who see nothing beyond the end of their noses and whose ears are sensitive only to the noise some clatter of the world around them. There are clearer skies than those that fill with mist and cloud above us, a purer atmosphere than this earthly smog we breathe, for there are skies where God's love beams upon us, and air of the Spirit that doth from death relieve. Oh Lord, open our eyes that we may behold wonderful things out of Thy law!

It must have been a wonderful experience for those who stood with John the Baptist long years ago to hear his inspired voice with trumpet tones proclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." But I am utterly bewildered to know with what triumphant proclamation God will introduce to the world this one whose head and hairs are white as snow, whose breast is girt with a golden girdle, whose feet are like burning brass, and whose trumpet voice, like the sweet harmony of many waters, shall echo o'er all the mountains of Zion the glad, glad tidings of the gospel of peace.

Beloved reader, it is to these blessed realms that your spirit should be carried away. Our dear brother Paul once said, "Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." It is so very easy in this age of abounding iniquity to be carried away captive by it, but let us rather beware lest we be led away by the error of the wicked one and so fall from our own steadfastness. 2 Pet. 3:17. The world is full of error. The cup of iniquity is so full that it is running over. The sins of the world are too many and too awful to bear contemplation, for so depraved have become the deeds of men that it is a shame to speak of the things which are done of them in secret. Eph. 5:12. Therefore have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Paul by inspiration once wrote to the Galatians, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" It is so easy to let something small hinder us from running with patience the race that is set before us. It is so natural to grow weary in well-doing and faint by the way. It is so simple to turn our eyes from yonder guiding light to hearken for a moment to the enchanting sounds of earth, leaving our vessel to be dashed upon the rocks about us. One of the easiest things in all the world is to let down, slow up, and take it easy. It is so easy to let down on our life of prayer and communion with God. I am frankly amazed to find only a miserable handful of people who are concerned enough about themselves and the spiritual welfare of their families to halt the day's activities for a time of reading the Bible and united prayer at the throne of grace. Yet it is here above all places that lifelong communion with God is established. It is here that true priesthood begins. If we have become too busy to attend to this most important office of our priesthood, then we are too busy. We are placing first things last and last things first. Activity, work, and business are often thieves and robbers that steal from our spiritual life the most blessed promises of sonship, for all that come before Him are thieves and robbers. No amount of work, no peevishness on the part of children, no fear of friends or relations should be allowed to rob our home and our family of that communion with God which has no substitute anywhere.

It has been my long-standing belief that children should take part in family worship from the very moment they are old enough to lisp a prayer. The moment they are able to falteringly read a verse of scripture, they should take their part in family reading. Children who grow up in this atmosphere will find themselves being kept by the power of God, even when they don't want to be kept. They will not fall readily into the ways of the world, for wisdom will teach them and understanding will keep them. The greatest heritage a father and mother can leave

to their children is not dollars and cents, but an example of sincere godliness. This is infinitely more valuable to them than a college education or a university degree, for without godliness true greatness can never be attained. The fear of the Lord is always the beginning of wisdom.

There will be little value in drawing beautiful word pictures of the effulgent glories of God's plan if, neglecting all, we slip into eternal desolation, for it is better never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us. Of all such it is written, "The dog has turned to his vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." There is no book in the Bible that soars to greater heights of revelation than does the book of Hebrews, yet with what diligence does the writer continually exhort us with such urgent phrases as these: "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Let us holdfast to our profession. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The writer of the book of Hebrews was infinitely concerned for the welfare of those to whom he wrote, for they had reached great heights of understanding and had gone much further than many others in that they had left the mere principles of the doctrine of Christ such as repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrines of baptisms and the laying on of hands, and all the other teachings that belong only to the infancy of Christian experience. These people had tasted by experience the glory of the kingdom age and the good word of God and the power of coming ages, yet he knew that even such as these were still able to fall away and miss the goal of sonship which the priesthood of Melchisedec signifies. Heb. 6:1-12. See also Heb. 7.

God's divine power has given unto us "all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust. And beside all this, giving all diligence, let us add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ... Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ... Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." **2 Pet. 1:3-13.**

The systems of men are collapsing all around us. Countless thousands who once loved only Christ are being carried away to join hands and hearts with the lecherous harlot of Babylon, which every day spreads her damning influence farther abroad. Bewitching mankind with her eyes and with sweet voice as the mythical sirens, she lures humanity to the rocks of destruction. But while the world and the vast multitude of the professing church is being carried away by the ignorance and superstition of this age of reason, see to it that you be not carried away with them, but rather that you be carried away by the Spirit of God into these high and holy places of revelation and experience where humble men are changed by His Spirit from glory to glory until they come into that same image and that same body of Jesus Christ.

Never permit yourself to be carried into modernistic deadness, nor yet into fantastic and spurious revelation that is not revelation at all, but just high-sounding nonsense that gives pre-eminence to human beings and draws no one closer to Christ. I do not want any experience that I can attain apart from Him; neither do I want any teaching disallowed by His word.

Paul told us that in the last days perilous times would come, and, indeed, they are very perilous; therefore, seek not your wisdom from either men or women, but from Christ alone. Seek not to be led by men, but by Christ who is the good shepherd. If you learn to know His voice and follow Him, you will never go astray, but, if you follow men or sects, you will certainly be led into error. "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father that gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." **John 10:27-29.**

Let us not then be carried away into divers and strange doctrines, but carried away to those high mountains of truth and revelation where we are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 13
ESCHATOLOGY - THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
ESCHATOLOGY THE FIRST ADVENT OF CHRIST

Eschatology is the branch of theology dealing with "last things." The word is taken from the Greek eschatos (last) plus ology. Thus the truth embraced in eschatology concerns the final things of the ages. Though few theologians (if there be such people) of the older order would agree with me, eschatology in my opinion should include not only the second advent of Christ, but His first advent as well, since the two advents are really one. It includes the truth concerning the wheat and the tares, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the just, the judgment seat of Christ, the judgment of the nations, the millennial kingdom, the New Jerusalem, the resurrection of the unjust, the white throne judgment, the dispensation of the fullness of times, and the new heaven and the new earth.

From the inspired writing of the book of Hebrews we have this remarkable statement concerning the coming of Christ, showing the purpose of His first appearing and also the purpose of His second appearing: "But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself... and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." **Heb. 9:26, 28.**

No man will ever be able to properly understand the Bible until he is able to see its message as one grand whole. All the things that have ever happened throughout the pages of Holy Scripture must be seen as integral parts of each other. Those who search for truth must be able to stand in the spirit with the Father before the foundation of the ages to behold through His all-seeing eyes the progress of His eternal purposes from the beginning of the creation to the culmination of the majestic plan. When the devout student does this, he will not be looking at a host of hit and miss tactics as the blundering experiments of a frustrated God, nor will he see a whole series of trials and errors, failures and successes, but his wondering eyes will behold one great and glorious purpose, conceived in the heart of God before the ages began, unfolding as a flower irresistibly, irretrievably, and unswerving as each successive age and dispensation reveals its own aionian purpose.

I take strong and uncompromising exception to the unwise teaching of so many would-be theologians who see in Eden a failure, a breach and a rift in God's intention. That the plan of an all-wise, almighty God could be thwarted by the efforts of some lesser creature who is neither all-wise nor all-powerful is unthinkable. This serpent creature was not almighty, but merely a tool in the hand of God without which eternal purposes could not be accomplished. Further, these theologians go on to show that, innocence having been proved a failure, the Lord placed man under conscience. This also proved to be a failure, so man was next placed under human government. This plan failed also. Next God chose Abraham and his seed to be the people of God, placing them under a perfect law, but this also failed, the upshot of this experiment being that God discarded both the law and His people and brought in a new idea through the dispensation of grace. Not many of these theologians have been hardy enough to suggest that grace also failed, yet, if their line of reasoning is correct, surely grace must have failed also, because the evidence of an unconverted, unregenerated world is everywhere about us. Christians lustily sing, "Jesus never fails", during the song service, then listen to the preacher describe a long list of failures during the sermon. Surely this is a contradiction. As long as we hold to

this hit and miss type of understanding, we will never grasp the truth of scripture nor the eternal purposes of the Most High.

It is true that Jesus never fails. The omniscient Lord did not fail in the Eden experience. He accomplished exactly what He had determined before the world began. The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope. Rom. 8:20. The subjecting of the creation to vanity, futility and sin was a necessary and integral part in the long process of producing sons in the image and likeness of God, for it is written, "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." The result of the fall in Eden was never destined to be the eternal desolation of ninety-nine percent of God's glorious creation. The result of the fall in Eden will consummate in the manifestation of the sons of God.

God's plans by wisdom are arranged
And fixed by firm decrees.
Nor can His purposes be changed
The creature's will to please.

Before God made man and placed him in the garden, He made this solemn proclamation. "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness and let us give him dominion." The Psalms of David and the teachings of Paul prove beyond doubt that that dominion was to extend to and include everything under the earth, in the earth, and in the great expanses of the heavens. Heb. 2:5-10. Furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ during His life on earth both said and proved that all power in heaven and in earth was given unto Him. He was the first, the Captain (Heb. 2:10), of the manifested sons of God for whom all creation waits, but He is not the last. He, bless His wonderful name, is but the firstborn of many brethren. Rom. 8:29. He is the corn of wheat that fell into the ground to die that His life, set free from the kernel, might be manifested in the full corn of the ear, the much fruit of the many sons of God who were to follow.

The path to sonship lies directly through the fall, through the bitterness of temptation, the awesome knowledge of good and evil, the dread loneliness of Gethsemane and the agonies of Calvary. What son is he who receiveth not chastisement? If we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if we be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. Heb. 12:7-11.

How could we, brethren, come into the chastening that produces sonship had there been no fall, no temptation, no devil, or no tribulation? Without these withering blasts the hope of sonship would not have been a possibility at all. But some man will say, "Why did not God devise some other way to make sons without the agony of tribulation?" Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, "Why hast Thou made me thus?" Hath not the potter power over the clay to make one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor? Let us stop our carnal reasoning and yield ourselves unto God and watch with grace and patience as His merciful purpose unfolds. Metals are refined and tempered only by fire and only by fire is the metal of sonship made perfect in His sight.

It is not true that God failed in Eden, failed under conscience, failed under human government, promise, law and grace. The truth is that each and every new dispensation brought with it a new horizon of truth on the pathway to sonship. In my booklet, *Six Waterpots of Stone*, I have endeavored to show how the combined truth of each new age becomes the living wine of the kingdom of God, which will be the next age in God's order. The eternal truths instituted and high-lighted in each successive dispensation run in parallel lines throughout the word of God, each contributing to and complementing the other as they progress in magnitude and glory while the ages advance. Could any man believe that the plan of redemption was a hasty idea conceived in the mind of God to offset the results of a disastrous fall in Eden, since the scripture clearly states that Jesus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Why in God's plan was He slain before the foundation of the

world, before Eden, and before the transgression? Surely it could not have been in case man should sin! No! That slaying embraced the knowledge of the whole infinite design, which included both sin and redemption from it. Purpose, purpose, purpose flows forever like a mighty, infinite river throughout the inspired pages of the word of God, coming to rest at last in the boundless ocean of fulfillment, which can be nothing less than the Almighty Himself.

Men talk and speak with joy of the coming kingdom of God, yet to most of us the kingdom of God was never dreamed of until the days when John the Baptist came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But look a little closer and you will see that the seeds of the kingdom of God were being sown long before Bethlehem, Calvary or Pentecost. That kingdom began in embryo in the days of Abraham and developed into a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. When Peter uttered these words to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Asia and Bythinia, the kingdom was growing and coming to maturity in that it was beginning to take its rightful place in the hearts of believing men and women, thus fulfilling the words of Jesus, "The kingdom of God is within you." This, like all else, is part of the ever progressing plan, for how could the kingdom of God be manifest in the earth among the nations of mankind until its laws, its mercy and its grace first filled the hearts and dwelt in the minds of those blessed sons who will soon administer its gracious precepts?

It was not until after the glory of the resurrection that the disciples came to Jesus to enquire, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Would you not say that their use of the word restore shows that the kingdom was long ago planted in Israel? Is it not true that they were the only people on the face of the earth who had ever enjoyed the blessing of the theocracy? Had they not functioned for years as a holy nation, a peculiar people under God's laws, God's prophets, and God's judges? It was only after they demanded a king that the Lord said to Samuel, "They have not rejected you; they have rejected Me." The blessing of that kingdom was taken from them when they placed a man as king and rejected God. When the apostles enquired, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel," Jesus did not say, "No, I will not!" Neither did He hint that it was not His purpose to do so, but He said simply, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which God has put in His own power, but you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Again I aver that whatsoever line of Bible truth one may choose to follow he will discover its scarlet thread running from Genesis to Revelation. Justification by faith did not begin with the apostle Paul, as we are so prone to think. It began with Abel in Eden and was manifest in Abraham, who was justified by faith without the deeds of the law. It was taught by the prophet Habakkuk, who declared, "The just shall live by faith." Heb. 2:4. Indeed, the book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, names a "cloud of witnesses", both men and women, who lived and died by faith long before Paul taught the blessedness of that truth through which all mankind will find grace and mercy.

It comes as a shocking revelation to find in our day certain men and women who deny the apostolic authority of Paul, saying that his writings should never have been in the Bible. This kind of ignorance comes from lack of understanding, for surely such people do not know that Paul's main theme, justification by faith, was taught in the Old Testament in every sacrifice that was ever offered. Was not David justified by faith when, looking with longing beyond the experience of his day, he cried, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me?" **Psa. 51:10**. And again, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken heart and a contrite spirit, O God, Thou wilt not despise." **Psa. 51:17**. Let us then never give place to the evil of trying to destroy the works of Paul lest we be quickly destroyed instead.

We could not have received Jesus Christ as our Messiah had it not been that the coming of the Just One was spoken of by the prophets in many scriptures and foreshadowed in literally hundreds, if not thousands, of different manners - by types, allegories, antitypes, allusions, metaphors, predictions and patterns. Thus, when Jesus came, all who would, could see that this was He that should come. In His meeting with the two brokenhearted disciples at Emmaus, He chided them for their lack of faith and slowness to believe in these words: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered and entered into His glory? And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself." In like manner also Jesus, speaking to the unbelieving Pharisees,

said, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me." The only scripture the Pharisees had was the Old Testament scripture, and "These," said Jesus, "testify of Me." I exhort every child of God to earnestly search the scripture and as you do, you will see every thread of truth, every unfolding doctrine, and every immutable purpose running from Alpha to Omega like mighty rivers of life flowing at last into the eternal ocean of God Himself. As for me, I reject the spotty, hit and miss preaching of doctrines which seem to be so detached from the great stream of eternal truth and betimes I wonder how some Christians can remain alive at all when the sermons they hear are so detached from the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.

Let us now explore with reverence the purpose of Christ in His first coming, when at the end of the age of law He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The coming of Christ, first to Bethlehem and Calvary and again to appear a second time at the end of this age of grace, does not comprise two comings, but two parts of one coming. It is like unto the resurrection of the dead, which, though occurring in three parts, is but one resurrection.

"Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." **Isa. 42:1-4.** "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." **Isa. 53:2-5.**

This was he of whom the eunuch read as he journeyed in his chariot from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, but reading he could not understand. Therefore the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not his mouth: In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." **Acts 8:26-35.**

It is very evident that the Old Testament saints were unable to comprehend the distinction between the first coming of Christ, at which time He would put away sin by sacrificing Himself, and His second coming at a later date, when He would appear, not to deal with sin, but to make our salvation complete. This He will accomplish by the resurrection of the dead, at which time the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.

At His second appearing our corruptible bodies shall put on incorruption and these mortal bodies shall put on immortality and we shall be changed, or transformed. It is here at the second coming of the Lord that our redemption is complete and we stand perfect in Christ in spirit, soul and body. This is certainly the meaning of 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

The Old Testament saints were taken quite unawares at the first coming of Christ. That the Messiah was coming they did not doubt, but that His coming was to be in two distinct phases with two distinct purposes in

view they were totally ignorant. Their whole expectation was the appearing of a mighty conquering monarch who would restore the kingdom to Israel, but they did not expect a man of sorrows who was to be crucified to put away sin and deal with it effectually forever. They expected the glory of the kingdom, but did not know that its glory must be preceded by the suffering of the cross, and in this way they are like unto some of us who hope to reign in glory with Christ, but refuse to take up our cross and follow Him through the crucifying tribulation of this life. The writer to the Hebrews has graphically stated, "Nor yet that He should offer Himself often as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then, must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself... And unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation," or not to deal with sin, but to make our salvation complete. **Heb. 9:25-28.**

It is very clear then that the purpose of each phase of Christ's coming is very different. His first coming was to deal with the sin question and to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. So great and complete was His sacrifice for sin and so thoroughly did Christ deal with the entire sin question, putting it away forever, that Paul, bursting forth in a paean of praise and glory, proclaimed the glad message to all creation, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." **2 Cor. 5:18-19.** And as though that marvelous message were not sufficiently complete, he enlarged the truth further in these forceful words: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." **Verses 20 and 21.**

In the light of so great a salvation and so divine a reconciliation as this, was it any great wonder that the purpose of His first coming should not be to set up His royal throne and reign, but rather to suffer and give His life a ransom for many? For if through the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous; and who dare to say that the many who were made righteous in the second case are not as numerous as the many who were made sinners in the first place! In proof of this Paul five times over in the fifth chapter of Romans shows that the blessed sacrifice of Christ is much more extensive in its glorious results than was the destruction wrought by the sin of Adam. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." **Rom. 5:9-10.** Can we imagine such truth? If enemies were reconciled by the death of His Son, would it not follow naturally then that we who have been reconciled shall be saved by His life?

A precious lesson, which every saint should learn is this: Jesus did not die that I might live, as we have so often heard. The truth is Jesus died that He might give His life to me. We have no life to live in the first place. The unregenerate man is doubly dead, twice dead plucked up by the roots. He is dead spiritually and dead physically. That existence which men call life is not life at all but death. "I am come that they might have life," said Jesus, and His only method of giving His life to you and me was by His own death. It is clearly stated that except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Thus it comes to pass that any man who is in Christ has become a new creation. The life Jesus released in His death has now appeared in the believer to manifest itself in him. "You hath He quickened," said Paul, "who were dead in trespasses and sins." This quickening is the beginning of the resurrection. It is the resurrection or rebirth of the spirit. Therefore said Paul, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life (or alive) because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10.** Perhaps the meaning would be clearer if we stated it thus: "If Christ be in you, the spirit is alive because of righteousness, but the body remains dead because of sin," for that is the meaning. The word goes on to say, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." So then we must understand that, when a man is begotten of God -and his spirit receives the life of God, this is the first step toward a total resurrection which will include the body, the climax of which will be that all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the son of God and come forth, for the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and the dead (bodies) will be raised incorruptible and we shall all be changed, for this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality, and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." As Adam was alive in the beginning in body, soul and spirit, so in the end shall all be made alive to stand in Christ complete in His life and resurrection. **"I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus**

said. "Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." **John 11:25-26.** Believest thou this?

Every believer, yea, every man, should learn the truth that death is not the grave. Death is that condition in which everyone outside of Christ exists. The whole journey from the cradle to the grave is death - not spiritually only, but spiritually and physically as well. The whole existence of unregenerate men whether in the cemetery or in the halls of pleasure is the realm of death. In confirmation of this the scripture has graphically stated, "**She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.**" **1 Tim. 5:16.** Death is the whole realm of the unregenerate man. Whether he is walking about in strength or lying still in the tomb makes not one whit of difference to his condition. He is dead. For this reason Jesus said to the young man who would return to bury his father, "**Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou Me.**" **Matt. 8:22.** The people who were burying the man that lay in the coffin were just as dead as the corpse they were burying. Once we comprehend this indisputable and very necessary fact of our existence, we can understand why it was that Jesus died, not that I might live, but that He might give His life to me. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," Jesus said. There is therefore no way but Him. There is no truth outside of Him. There is no life anywhere in the universe but in Him. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men," and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. No amount of darkness can overcome even the smallest light. Darkness, being merely the absence of light, is therefore of itself nothing. Oh how great is the salvation of the Lord and how wonderfully does His light shine and His life possess all those who believe and put their trust in Him!

It may seem strange to us who live in this present age to learn that the Old Testament saints could not understand the scriptures, which clearly spoke of the suffering, the crucifixion, and the death of Christ. They were completely absorbed with those many other prophecies that spoke of His glory and His kingdom. How clearly Peter points up their blindness to the truth of His first appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself in that notable statement regarding our salvation when he says, "**Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven...**" **1 Pet. 1:10-12.** So we may say with assurance that, though the anointed Old Testament prophets frequently prophesied of the sufferings of the Messiah and the glory that was to follow, they could not understand what they were saying, and when they earnestly sought God as to the meaning of their predictions, the Holy Spirit revealed to them that it was not given to them to understand, because they were not ministering to themselves, but to us who would live at a later time.

Surely it must have seemed like an enormous contradiction to the prophet Isaiah to hear his own voice proclaiming, "**Of the increase of His government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever,**" **Isa. 9:7,** and then to hear the Spirit saying, "**He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.**" **Isa. 53:5.** I doubt not that at times some were tempted to think such prophecy was blatant contradiction and that the prophets themselves were speaking, not from God, but from the confusion of their own minds. Yet, when they earnestly inquired the reason for such words, the Spirit in grace revealed to them that it was not given to them to understand, but that they were speaking to us who would live in another age when all they had said would come true.

The disciples of Jesus, even after His resurrection, showed plainly that they were still very concerned about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. For this reason they enquired of the risen Christ, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" This, of course, was a logical question, but it proved that even they did not understand that, before the kingdom could be restored, they themselves and millions like them would have to be born again and transformed by the power of God and made sons of God in the image of Christ. They must become possessors of the mind that was in Christ, be raised from the dead in glorification and made immortal. Had those disciples been given the kingdom in their present state, they would have made a shambles of it just as their forefathers had done. Well did Jesus know that, before His kingdom could come and prosper, the rulers of the kingdom must first be prepared. "**A body hast Thou prepared Me,**" **Heb. 10:5,** and that body is the Christ body. It is the sons of God, tens of thousands of them, first born of a woman travailing in the wilderness of this

world, then reborn by the miracle of the new birth. Before they reign, they must first be made perfect through suffering. They must have no mind of their own that the mind of Christ might dwell in them. They must have become possessors of His life, His mind and His Spirit. They must become one brotherhood, being baptized into one body by one Spirit. By this intimate union with Him they shall become the fullness of God's Christ. Their united voices must be as the sound of one waterfall, their eyes as a flame of fire and their feet, not iron mingled with miry clay, but as burnished brass burning in a furnace of fire. The hair of their heads must be white as wool with age and experience and on their heads the incorruptible crowns of hope, of joy, of rejoicing, of life and of glory. From their sanctified lips shall glisten the sharp two-edged sword, which is the word of God. Thus shall be the preparation and presentation of those blessed sons of God, who with Christ shall reign and prosper in a kingdom that is to embrace the whole world. "Upon the throne of David to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." But those saints did not see these things, and I know in my heart that many who name the name of Christ in our day have not understood these things either.

Oh that men would learn that this age of grace was never given for the conversion of the world! If so, the world would have been converted. This age of grace is for the calling out of a people who will rule with Christ in a literal reign over the entire earth for a thousand years, during which time the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Thus did that mighty teacher, the apostle James, interpret the word? Speaking of the Gentiles, he said, "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world." **Acts 15:15-18.**

My heart is mightily moved by the awesome, universal and all-embracing scope of the sacrifice of Christ. "Once in the end of the age," saith God, "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The finite mind of puny man cannot even remotely grasp the whole damaging realm of sin nor can man understand why sin came into God's universe, nor are we permitted to know just when it came or exactly how it came. Nevertheless, sin did come and there can be no disputing that fact. The heart of any faithful believer must certainly accept the fact that God, who is both almighty and all-wise, would never allow anything to enter into His creation unless some beneficial purpose was clearly understood in His infinite wisdom. Let us rest fully assured of God's wisdom that even in this hour of restricted understanding we might both possess and manifest perfect faith and confidence in Him who ruleth over all and worketh all things after the counsel of His blessed will. It is a mystery beyond my understanding to know how men and women can claim to believe that God is almighty, omniscient, immutable, omnipresent, loving and changeless and even proclaim these truths, yet in the next breath deny them all by announcing that the entrance of sin into the universe was an accident that God had not foreseen nor anticipated.

Consider again these awesome words: "Now once in the end of the age hath He (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Whatsoever sin is, from whithersoever it came, or whatsoever its results have been in all heaven and earth, Jesus Christ our Lord appeared in the end of an age to put away sin. He did not come to shove it off into some dark corner of the universe where it would go unnoticed for a time. He came to put it away. He came to wash it away and purge away its stain, to destroy its power, to annul its results, to rescue from its throes, to vanquish its thralldom, to heal its scars, to cleanse its iniquity, and to abolish it from all God's universe. He came to put it away. The vast sphere of the mighty working of Christ's sacrifice and complete redemption, the realm in which He put away sin, is clearly stated to be the realm of earth and the realm of heaven. Wherever sin has blighted God's creation, He has put it away. "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." **Col. 1:20.** The scope of Christ's redemption and reconciliation in these realms is clearly stated to include all things (verse 20), and these all things are the same all things He is said to have created in verse 16.

Man cannot be held responsible for God's decisions, nor is God in the least degree bound by the paltry chains of man's humanistic theology. Let man in the vanity of his mind proclaim his doctrine of eternal destruction and desolation if he will, but let those who however remotely grasp the omnipotence and wisdom of God rejoice

with joy unspeakable that He who is immutable wisdom, almighty power and undying love has proclaimed that Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and in so doing has reconciled all things to God. Staggering as is the knowledge that Christ has reconciled all things hi earth and in heaven unto Himself, our minds are completely boggled and overwhelmed as we listen to the apostle's inspired description of the inhabitants of heaven and earth. Certainly it must be that, if God has reconciled all things in heaven and earth to Himself, He must be speaking in particular of the inhabitants of those realms. Jesus Christ was the Creator not only of heaven and earth but of all creatures therein. "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." **Col. 1:16**. All these He has reconciled by the blood of His cross, that at (in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, Phil 2:9-10, that every tongue might be heard confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. "And you, who were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable and unproveable in His sight." **Col. 1:21-22**. Thus are included thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, and men who were enemies and alienated hi their minds by wicked works.

Never in all the inspired writings of holy writ has the thought even once been presented that God was an enemy of mankind or that He needed in any way to be reconciled to man. The reverse is always the truth. It is man who is at enmity with God and it is man who must be reconciled to God. Christ did not come to reconcile God to man as the theologians would have us believe. Ah, no! A thousand times no! He came to reconcile man to God. It was God the Father who gave His Son to be our reconciliation. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In the face of such mighty words of redemption and reconciliation as these, I know not what could possibly be left outside the universal scope of Christ's redemption. How great Thou art, O Lord, and how perfect in all Thy understanding! How complete the redemption Thy grace has wrought when once in the end of the age Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself! We may not behold all the fullness of Thy great redemption while evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, but the mortal blow to sin was struck and Thou didst strike it well when in the end of an age Thou didst appear to sacrifice Thyself and finish a work that would vanquish sin forever. And Thou, in striking down sin and putting it away, hast struck down that brazen thing standing between Thyself and the reconciliation of the universe which Thy hands had made. Our ransomed ears await the paeans of celestial praise when every creature in heaven and in earth and in the sea will be heard singing that anthem sublime, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Man of sorrows! What a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Lifted up was He to die.
It is finished was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high!
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

CHAPTER TWO THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

In every age since the sons of Adam have been upon the earth, the children of faith have lived side by side with the children of unbelief. Search as far back in Bible history as is possible and you will find the wheat and weeds of faith and non-faith growing in the same field together. You will see Cain dwelling with Abel, Ishmael with

Isaac, Jacob with Esau, Joseph with the Egyptians, and Daniel with the Babylonians. You will find the seven thousand Israelites who would not bow the knee to Baal dwelling in the midst of a nation of Baal worshippers who honor Baal as God.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." **Matt. 13:24-30.**

Thus by our Lord's own word it is certain that both the wheat of the kingdom and the tares of the wicked one must grow side by side and God Almighty has ordained that it should be so. It is a solemnizing revelation just to understand that, should the tares be uprooted from our midst in this hour, their uprooting could mean our own uprooting and destruction. "Why does not God destroy the devil and uproot the ungodly and the sinner?" Demands the man who is lacking in understanding, but little does he realize that it is the presence of these very noxious weeds that inspires him to cling fast to the saving, redeeming hand of Him before whose purity even holy angels cover their faces and their feet.

When Jesus was alone and the crowd had gone away, His enquiring disciples came to ask Him to explain the parable of the tares, for surely they too must have wondered why a wise Lord would permit evil to flourish side by side with good. This was the answer Jesus gave them: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the world (age); the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world (age). The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." **Matt. 13:36-43.**

Thus throughout this entire age we have been seeing the children of the wicked one and the children of God, the children of unbelief and the children of faith dwelling side by side like wheat and weeds in a field, and thus it will be to the end of this age, at which time God will begin to separate them one from the other, gathering the tares together in bundles that they might have their fearful part in the purifying brimstone of the lake of fire.

For many years the author visualized a day of judgment in which the Lord would suddenly send His angels to separate the good from the bad, the wheat from the tares, and the sheep from the goats, and I suppose there is nothing seriously wrong with that thought. It may indeed be quite accurate, but, as time has passed, it has become increasingly clear that what some expected God would do in one particular twenty-four day He has now begun to do, as He said, in this the end of the age.

It is very important to understand that an angel as spoken of in scripture is often a messenger and may not always be one of those bright shining ones who stand in the presence of the Lord of Sabaoth. *There are other messengers who come as angels of light, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel (or, marvel not at this); for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.* **2 Cor. 11:13-15.**

Did not our Lord Jesus Christ forewarn us that in the last days there would be an increasing number of false prophets, false teachers and false christs. His exact words were these: "Many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." **Matt. 24:5.** And have we forgotten that Paul warned us all that even in his day the strange, mysterious working which he called the mystery of iniquity was at work (2 Thess. 2:7), and that it would continue with ever increasing power and deception right up until the hour when "he who now letteth" is taken out of the way. After the elect, who now hinder the working of Satan, are removed from the church

system, then he whose coming is after the working of Satan will be revealed with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. 2 Thess. 2:7,9-10.

There is a move going on in the earth, which has the appearance of a revival, but is not a revival. It is a great deception that is intended to deceive if possible the very elect and it is accomplishing its purpose. Within its ranks are many evangelists and preachers of Protestantism, together with bishops, prelates, canons and cardinals of both Protestantism and Rome. These men fawn upon and blandish each other, exchanging gifts and vestments and other honors, and, because their names are widely known among men, they deceive their followers, believing that gain in wealth and numbers is godliness. Therefore precious precept and fundamental truth may be sacrificed for the sake of a carnal unity. Their unity may be the unity of men, but it is not of God. If the great city-wide revival campaigns being conducted across the land were real revivals from heaven, then godlessness would be on the decline in our nation as has been the case in every revival throughout history, but instead evil men and seducers, both inside the religious world and outside the religious world, are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Both religion and revival have become such big business and so lucrative in reward that the church system has become honey-combed with men and women who know not the Lord Jesus Christ, who are not acquainted with His truth and have no call from God to preach His word, yet because they can strum a guitar, sing in a quartette and wiggle their hips while they shout into microphones, transforming the beautiful hymns of Zion that were written in the shadow of the cross into what they dare to describe as hard rock, then they are looked upon as angels and messengers of God. I believe many of them are Satan's messengers, transformed into angels of light, and they are sent to divide the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, and the wheat from the chaff. Let there be no doubt in the mind of any man. These false ministries, often coming from the night clubs of Las Vegas or Hollywood and from other similar walks of life, could well be the angels of whom Jesus spoke, saying, "In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather ye the wheat into my barn." What better method could God employ to separate sheep from goats than that which He is now employing - a method by which that which is false follows that which is false and that which is true follows that which is true? The goats follow after the goats and the sheep follow after the sheep. The wheat is gathered into the bins of the Lord and the tares are gathered into bundles to the burning.

I am intrigued by the word bundles as it is used here by our Lord. In this present hour an almost insane desire grips the minds of the multitude, causing them to believe that they must by all means become members of some sect or group of people, some bundle or bunch whether large or small. Whether denominational or undenominational makes little difference to them just so long as they are joined to something visible. Whether there is unity of spirit or bonds of peace is immaterial to them, but to belong to some group, some sect, some crowd, some bundle is all important in their minds. Whether the preacher feeds them strong corn or husks matters little. The main thing is to belong. To most Christians belonging seems to be their security. These groups I believe are the bundles that are being formed. They are the bundles of tares being prepared for the trysting hour at the judgment seat of Christ when the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. The gold, silver and precious stones will be purified and made better by the fire, but the wood, the hay and the stubble will be consumed. I beseech you therefore, brethren that you seek to know, not the earthly union that comes from belonging to groups, but the heavenly union that comes by belonging to Christ. It is our relationship to Him that will be an anchor steadfast and sure, holding our souls to the solid rock in the hour of trial. The anchor that is cast in Him will keep the soul steadfast and immovable when the billows roll. When the tides of time and tribulation have swept away the foundations of sinking sand and the fires divine have consumed the wood, the hay and the stubble and the bundles of tares, it will be our relationship to Him and to Him alone that will anchor us to the rock that cannot be moved. He who puts his confidence in men and is joined to them will in the end receive what men can do, but he who puts his confidence in Christ and is joined in one Spirit to Him will in the end receive what God can do. It is beyond my understanding to find why Christians who testify that they have listened to the same old sermons year after year, never being pointed to higher ground, still, for all that, insist on being part of that old bundle even though their conscience tells them that in the end it will be burned.

My beloved brethren, we are living in the end of the age. This is the hour when God is sending His heralds to bring a message from heaven. They are crying as the word of God said they would, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins." The Almighty will judge the Babylonish whore, burning up her

works with unquenchable fire and bringing her into the dust of desolation. I well know how Christians hide behind **Heb. 10:25** - "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." But have you forgotten the command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor.6:17-18**. Have you failed to read that message and realize its importance in this hour when the wheat and tares are being separated? It is only when we have first forsaken our relationship with the bundles, the bunches, the sects and the organizations that we enter into mature sonship, and it is only after we enter into this spiritual maturity that we are able to assemble in the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of God's peace. In all other assembling we come together, not for the better, but for the worse.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Such gatherings may be quite unannounced and informal. They may even appear to be accidental and unintended. Such assemblings may occur in a bus, a train, or in the air. They may occur in a shopping mall when saints of like precious faith chat together of heavenly things, or it may be when one saint visits in the home of another. I assure you that those blessed ones who live in the realm of the Spirit will discover the words of Jesus are completely true, "Out of their bellies will flow rivers of living water." There is no more lovely story of an assembling ever related than that recorded in the Gospel of Luke, when three days after the death of our Lord two heart-broken disciples plodded wearily down the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. As they talked together of the dreadful things that had happened at Jerusalem, and communed and reasoned together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, **What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He, which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher: And when they found not His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels which said that He was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. And they told them what things were done by the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread." **Luke 24:15-35**.**

I doubt that in all the annals of Christian history there has ever been a more wonderful, beautiful and profitable assembling together than that which is recorded here. Oh, how I would love to have been there to hear Him expound from Moses and all the prophets the things concerning Himself! In my spirit I know a little of the glory that must have filled that humble abode and the sense of revelation that must have filled their hearts, for as I copied those words I was conscious of that same overshadowing presence, making me know it was He. Have you ever had people speak to you about yourself without their knowing who you are? To be sure it may be rather amusing, but you may learn some things about yourself and even be surprised what other people are thinking. But when Jesus began to expound the scriptures to them, though they knew Him not, their hearts burned within them. Oh, what a sermon He must have preached as He unfolded all the things concerning Himself, beginning with Moses and carrying the blessed theme through all the prophets right down to His own death and resurrection! Never was such a message given or such a sermon preached! This, dear friend, is true assembling, and surely it was a perfect type of what may be when two or three on occasion are assembled to

talk of the things of God, and to their utmost joy they find Jesus Christ the Lord is wonderfully in their midst to teach them the blessed things of God and instruct them in all the ways that they should go. As time and years have added their weight of experience to my life, I have become increasingly convinced that regular church meetings keep God's people in spiritual infancy and dependency. Nothing is more conducive to the making of a one, man ministry and the people themselves become little more than listeners and pew warmers, contributing wholeheartedly to the luke-warmness of the Laodicean condition that is everywhere present through the nominal Christian world.

Concerning the parable of the wheat and the tares, several outstanding remarks demand our special attention, though great importance should be attached to each point Christ emphasized in this notable discourse. According to Matt. 13:36, it was after Jesus had sent the multitude away that the disciples came to Him, requesting Him to declare the parable unto them. Apparently the lesson had been given to all the multitude who listened to Jesus teach, but the real declaration of its meaning and significance in this age came only when the multitude had gone away. May the reader take special notice of this fact, because there are not many good listeners in the world. The average person hears the word, but like a man beholding his natural face in a glass, they go away and forget what manner of men they were. So many hearers hear the word of God, but pay no attention to the truth it brings. Thus, when the word of God is fulfilled before their eyes, they remember not that the things they are seeing are the fulfillment of that which the Lord has spoken. If we paid attention to what was said, we would be neither amazed nor so concerned when the thing He has spoken is fulfilled in our midst. It was to the hearers the Lord spoke when He said, **"When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."** **Luke 21:28.**

On that great day when Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christ, a great light from heaven shone down upon him. From out the glory of that light Jesus spoke to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul, terrified and amazed at the thing, cried out with trembling heart, "Who art Thou, Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." When Saul (Paul) related this heavenly experience years later, he interjected this pertinent bit of information: **"And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me."** **Acts 22:9.** There is a great deal of difference between "hearing the voice that spake to me" and merely seeing a light and noting the strange manifestations that were present. I fear that on most occasions, while one or two actually hear what the Lord says, the majority are either frightened by or delighted with the outward signs and manifestations they are seeing and hearing. On more occasions than one our Lord withheld important information until the crowd had gone home, reserving the truth for the elect.

Back to their tasks the crowd had gone,
And He was left alone,
Save for a little company
Whom He could call His own.
What use had they for words of life?
That giddy, wordly throng
Could listen to the music,
But never hear the song.

On this occasion also Jesus knew that the multitudes would never grasp the hidden truth of what He was saying. Indeed, He plainly stated that the very parables He uttered were given that "seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand." Therefore the explanation was kept for that little flock who could not only hear the music and see the miracles, but would listen to the words of life as well.

I cannot understand why preachers take such great delight in crowds. Of all that is fickle in the whole wide world, there is nothing so fickle as crowds. Seldom are they ever right in their decisions and their thoughts are as changeable as the winds that blow. The same crowd that shouts "Hosanna!" today roars "Crucify Him!" tomorrow. A man will learn as his years mature that in this present life true friends are very few. If you have one friend of the David and Jonathan variety, you have done well, but you may never count on more than half a dozen or so. Even our blessed Lord found human faithfulness disappointing and unreliable when His soul longed for a friend more than anything else in this life to watch with Him in that dread hour of blood and tears that marked His awful Gethsemane.

After the noisy crowd had disappeared and Jesus had gone into the house, the disciples requested an explanation of this important parable and these are the points He emphasized. 1, He that sows the good seed is the Son of man. All good seed is sown by Christ and will bring forth good fruit. Christ sows good seed and none other. Have neither doubt nor fear about that. There is nothing bad or unreliable about the gospel or any of its results. All who receive the ingrafted word will bring forth a harvest in like kind as the seed that was sown. 2. The field in which the seed is sown is the world. The whole world is Christ's field. It belongs to Him because He purchased it. It was because God the Father loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believed in Christ His Son would not perish, but have everlasting life. 3. The good seed that was sown is the children of the kingdom. Not mere professors, but Israelites indeed, men born of the Spirit, washed in the cleansing blood of Christ, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, set apart as clean vessels and tried with fire for the Master's use. These saints walk in obedience only to Christ. They have cast off the works of the flesh. They have put on Christ. They have put off the natural mind and the mind that was in Christ Jesus dwells in them. They are not fornicators, adulterers or unclean. They are not smokers or drunkards or gluttons, for all such lust proceeds from the filthiness of the flesh and displays gross uncleanness of heart and a faulty consecration toward God. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (having woman-like qualities unbefitting a man), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (sodomites, lesbians and the like), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." **1 Cor. 6:9-10.** This is a very straightforward list of requirements and it proceeds from the lips of God and the mind of Holy Spirit. All such things as these, once entertained in any life, must be bitterly repented of and forsaken completely. The cleansing power of the blood of Christ must be sought to purify the heart and the Holy Spirit must be received that grace and power may be given to live as sons of God in the midst of this crooked, perverse, and adulterous world.

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence (illicit sexual desire and lust), and covetousness, which is idolatry." **Col. 3:5.** It is because of these very things that the wrath of God falls upon the disobedient. Verse 6. But now that you are saved and have given your hearts to God, put off all these evil things: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man (Christ), which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him. **Col. 3:8-10.**

Having put off all those wicked things that belong to the world of the unregenerate and the unsaved, begin then to put on the things that belong to the regenerate, the born again, the Christian, the saint, the children of God's holy kingdom. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." **Col. 3:12-16.** Wives must be submissive to their husbands, husbands must love their wives and children must obey their parents in all things. Fathers must not provoke their children to anger. Servants must obey their masters. Servants should not be strikers. Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord. See verses 18-22. Such are the instructions concerning the kingdom of God and such is the character and Christian experience of that good seed of the kingdom of God.

The greatest sermon ever preached was preached on a mountain to twelve disciples. Matt. 5:1. That sermon concerned the kingdom of God. It was a sermon ministered to vividly portray the spiritual character of these blessed people who are the seed of the kingdom. The blessing of Christ is upon the seed of His kingdom. He did not bless the proud of heart, but the poor in spirit. He did not bless those who fill their lives with merriment and laughter, but those who mourn, being touched by the weakness and infirmity of human kind. He did not bless the hot-headed, nor the infuriated retaliator, but men of a meek and quiet spirit; nor did He bless the self-satisfied, but those who hunger and thirst after His righteousness. There was no blessing upon those who demanded the "pound of flesh", but upon the peacemakers; neither was there a blessing for the persecutors of

righteousness, but a blessing upon those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. No blessing fell upon the pompous puppets of the devil who love to make war, but His blessings were abundant for the makers of peace. Let us learn these things and learn them well. Unrighteous men and women will have no part in the kingdom of God and His Christ, but those blessed ones, made righteous through Christ, they and they alone are the good seed of the kingdom.

The prayer we love to speak of as the Lord's prayer reveals from its throbbing heart the very life and character of those happy saints who shall inherit the kingdom of God and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ in an age designed for setting things right. That beautiful prayer displays the attitude of a true Son of God toward his heavenly Father. It manifests the true spirit of sonship, crying, "Abba, Father. Our Father which art in heaven." It breathes in worshipful adoration, "Hallowed be Thy name." True sons of God are filled with reverence and fervent devotion toward God, their Father, for they have learned the greatness of His glory and the wonders of His abounding love and grace, and not toward them only, but to those who are near and those who are afar off and all the creation of God. When I hear men speak lightly or flippantly of God, I know they have not seen Him with their eyes nor comprehended Him in their hearts. When I see them take the sacred songs, which once were written in the shadow of the cross, and debase them to the world's version of "hard rock", then I know that they have not seen God. They know not His holiness, His purity, nor His awesome power, and there is no fear of God before their eyes. When men and angels see God, they fall before the majesty of His glory as John and Daniel fell, for it is written, "No man can see God and live;" and I affirm it is also true that no man can see God and die. "Thy kingdom come" is the hourly supplication of every true son of the kingdom. "Thy will be done in earth" is their prayer. First and foremost is their longing, "Thy will be done in this earth which I myself am." Then shall it be done in this earth where we now dwell. "Give us this day our daily bread," prayed Jesus, while the beloved Paul instructed the saints in the magnificent words of truth, "Having food and raiment, let us be content." "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever (or unto the ages of the ages.)"

The good seed is the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one. Such teaching as this is never popular in any age, no, not even with Christians. We are living in that trying hour when the harvest fields are full of wheat and tares. Sheep and goats roam together in the same pastures. Children of light are expected to walk in the same sordid ecumenical union with the children of darkness, but God is calling His elect to come out from among them, and come out they must if they would reign with Christ in His kingdom. The hour when angels will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend is now at hand. Many will weep and gnash their teeth when their earthly, minded folly is manifest. Put away therefore every corrupting thing of this modern age of abounding iniquity lest they display your shame and become your destruction.

Please notice now that the tares, the children of the wicked one, were sown among the wheat by the devil. When the servants came and asked, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it tares?" Christ replied, "An enemy hath done this." Christ sows only good seed, but later in the night Satan sows evil seed and that evil seed is the children of the wicked one. Note further that the devil sowed this evil while men slept. How many times in God's word we are exhorted to watchfulness I do not know, but the exhortations are many. "Watch and be sober," said Paul. **1 Thess. 5:6**. The word sober here indicates the need for a total abstinence from the unnecessary affairs of this present life, lest we become overcharged and drunken with them. They that are drunken are drunken in the night, and it is then that the tares are sown. "Watch and pray," was the exhortation of Jesus, "lest ye fall into temptation." Temptation is on every hand and the man who does not continually resort to private prayer will certainly be caught up in some temptation, which will render his life ineffective. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things, entering in, choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. Paul said that he was in watchings often. So what we say unto one we say unto all - watch.

The devil, manifesting himself as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, persecuting the saints, casting them into prisons, burning them at the stake, torturing them to destroy their hope in Christ, hailing them before authorities and condemning them to death. These are his tactics as a roaring lion. Fearful as are these repressive tactics they have never been nearly as successful as his deceptions. When Satan's purpose is better suited, he manifests himself as an angel of light. Under this guise he stands in the pulpit to preach the gospel. Only too well does he know how easily Christians are deceived by false apostles, false

teachers, and deceitful workers. How quickly they fall for the ecumenical spirit and how easily they are duped by the charisma that "unique personal power conceived of as belonging to those exceptional individuals capable of securing the allegiance of large numbers of people." It matters not what farcical doctrine is presented, nor how grotesque, fanciful, or exaggerated. There will always be a following of sick sheep who fail to keep their vision fixed on Christ.

Let us never be unmindful of how the faithful apostle Paul warned us without ceasing that in the end of the age that Antichrist spirit would be manifest, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. 2 Thess. 2:9-10. These spirits of deception are in the world and in the pulpits and many are being deceived as Satan's angels transform themselves into angels of light.

Let us consider further that it was while men slept that the enemy sowed the tares. Along with the lukewarmness of this Laodicean age there has come a sleepiness of heart and mind that brings with it that torpid abandonment so common to somnolent, sluggish men. There is no searching of the word, no hours of prayer, no fasting, no watching for the fowler's snare, but instead a dull, languid drowsiness that clothes a man in spiritual rags. It was in this heavy-eyed inertia that the ten virgins found themselves when the bridegroom came. "They all slumbered and slept," and five of the indolent slumberers had let their lamps burn low and failed to replenish their oil. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and we are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit." God has provided many means of grace by which we may remain filled with the Spirit, but if these means are not used, we will find our Spirit-filled lives being replaced by the cares of the world and the desires of the flesh, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things that enter in, so that a total apathy toward God and the things of God develops and is manifested until it often seems the average Christian couldn't care less about the kingdom of God, the coming of the Lord, or His eternal and merciful purposes. Try if you will to enter into a spiritual conversation with them and you will discover that the subject is changed at the earliest possible convenience to be replaced by worldly chit-chat. It is while men thus sleep that the tares are sown and the wheat is crowded out and becomes unfruitful.

In this parable the diligent servants were ready and anxious to root up the tares immediately, but it is not really possible for servants to hastily decide which are tares and which is wheat. The harvest will come at its appointed time at the end of the age. Then the tares will be gathered in bundles to be judged and the wheat will be gathered into the barn.

God's people should be very happy when they are able to live quiet and peaceable lives and to serve the Lord in tranquility without fear of being molested by rulers or governments. I for one am extremely thankful that I have been able to pass my life in a land where great freedom is given for the faith. The opposition to our faith has not come so much from the rulers of the secular system as from the rulers of that system which we call the church. We have not been called upon to resist to the shedding of our blood. While our hearts thank God for the freedom to worship Him without interference from without, even in this liberty there lurks an ever, present danger. Sad it is to relate, yet it is unquestionably true, that easy times and fullness of bread bring with them a spiritual apathy, which is very difficult to understand. Having no opposition to their faith, men become careless and inattentive toward eternal things. Then, while they sleep, the devil scatters his tares and they choke out all spiritual life.

During the first century of the Christian era, church history records, one twentieth of the entire Roman Empire was converted to Christ. This mighty turning to God was accomplished under almost continual persecution. Ten fierce persecutions of the church were carried out by pagan Roman emperors as in vain they tried to decimate and abolish Christianity from the earth. These ten dreadful persecutions seem to indicate the fulfillment of the prophetic ten days of tribulation announced to the church at Smyrna. Rev. 2:8-11. During these fierce persecutions in which uncounted thousands died for their faith in Christ, the church increased in numbers to such an extent that Constantine, 306-375 A.D., made Christianity the state religion of Rome. The question as to whether Constantine was really a Christian has ever been a vexing point, and many different motives have been advanced for his adoption of Christianity. For his own sake it is to be hoped that he was a Christian, but for the sake of the church it is to be hoped that he was not. He was a pitiless, jealous ruler, a murderer of his

father-in-law, his brother-in-law, his sister, wife, son, and nephew. He made munificent grants to the churches, handed over heathen temples for their use, and even exercised the authority of the law in the propagation of the Christian religion. To his administration of state and civil affairs were added the control and management of the church, and the strange sight of a Roman governor presiding over church councils and taking part in debates was seen. Instead of rebuking his meddling in church affairs, the church welcomed him and, like Israel of old in choosing a king to be like the nations around, the church had embraced the protection of a semi-heathen state and suffered its greatest possible degradation in the patronage of a worldly potentate. Thus ended the Smyrna period of church history and, having settled under the security of the Roman state, Christianity drifted off into the dark ages that lay ahead. Beware when all men speak well of you. It is a sure sign that things are not as they should be.

The tares have been growing among the wheat ever since Pentecost, yes, and beyond that. "Even now are there many antichrists," wrote John in A.D. 90, John 2:18, and from that far off day until the present the devil has not ceased to sow his evil tares wherever Christians sleep and fail to watch and pray.

We are living in an hour when both the wheat and the tares are ripening together for the harvest. It would be impossible either to trace or name all the innovations the devil has sown in the fields of the Lord. The very things that are supposed to be good are often evil, turning men's hearts from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus into meaningless fables. Centuries ago Paul warned that the day of the Lord would not come except there were a falling away and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

In spite of all the talk of revival in our day, of Ecumenical Movements, Charismatic Movements, Jesus Movements, Youth Movements, city-wide campaigns and all the other ists and isms, the truth is there is a falling away of such magnitude as perhaps has never been known. Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse, both in the world and in the church system, until one sent to pluck up tares would not be able to tell whether he were destroying tares or wheat.

The calling of the elect out of the Babylon church system must precede the revelation of "that wicked one", who is Antichrist. That, I believe, is what Paul was teaching when he said, "He that now letteth will let until he is taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked be revealed." **2 Thess 2:7-12.** That wicked, whether he be an individual or an antichrist system, does not appear to be either pagan or heathen, for it is written, "He as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." **Verse 4.** Furthermore signs and wonders follow his ministry." Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." The calling of the elect out of Babylon must precede the revelation of antichrist; therefore the present coming out is of infinite importance.

Jesus clearly told us that the wheat and the tares would grow in the fields together until the end of the age, but in the time of the harvest, when these are ripe, the Lord will send His angels to separate them, the wheat to the garner and the tares into bundles for the burning. Before our eyes we now see this division, taking place. Evil men and seducers by their evil seduction are gathering tares after their own kind, but those who are following Christ are being gathered into His garner. They have come out of the systems of men. Christ is their Lord, their life and their light.

Since 1960 the message "Come out from among them and be ye separate" has been constantly on my heart. The message does not tell us to come out of one system into another, but bids us come out unto Christ, and stay out. Make Him your head. Go unto Him without the camp. Take your questions to Him. Receive from Him the answers of wisdom and peace. Do not be led by prophecy except as confirmation, but be led by the Holy Spirit, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. It is a simple matter to be led by the Holy Spirit. It is never a difficult or complicated process. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Learn to have no mind of your own when seeking His mind. It is when we have a strong mind of our own, full of personal ambitions and earthly desires that we are led astray. We become like the man who prayed that God would give him the wife of His choice, but hastily added, "Please make it Mary." That is not the way to seek the guidance from the Lord. He who seeks to know God's mind must first seek to have no mind of his own, and, having committed himself to God, the doors of fate will open and close as the

Father wills. We must never be impatient about God's will, lest we be like Moses, who set out to deliver his people forty years before God's time.

In writing of the tares that fill our fields, I have neglected to speak of the wheat. Suffice it to say that ever since Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been bringing to perfection the true church. The sons of God have been maturing and coming to perfection. They could not have reached perfection had not the tares been growing beside them as thorns in their flesh and pricks in their eyes. It is the time of harvest. The hour of their gathering is at hand. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. With His appearing will come the manifested kingdom of God to spread itself like a mantle over the entire earth. From it the tares will be removed. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

CHAPTER THREE THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

The end of the age is upon us without a doubt. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. That our Lord Jesus Christ has promised to return to the earth is a Bible fact far removed from the realm of doubt. To a world of unbelieving men nothing is certain, but to the believing all that God has spoken is certain and sure. The vision may tarry long, yet we wait patiently for it, for it will surely come. As to the pure all things are pure, so to the faithful all that God has spoken is sure. As to the unholy and profane nothing is pure, so to the faithless and unbelieving nothing is certain and nothing is sure. Faith and trust are beautiful sisters, walking hand in hand among the children of men. They are gifts come down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, to strengthen every feeble heart and revive the oft times flagging confidence of men, inspiring them afresh to lay hold on the immutable promises of God. Faith and trust, like showers of latter rain falling upon the mown grass which we are, revive our spirits and fill us with joy and anticipation and the fragrance of our hope that Jesus will come a second time to restore all things and set all things right.

From reading God's holy word we are brought to the realization that all God's purposes, ordained by wisdom in ages past, depend for their fulfillment upon the comings of Christ. We have already noted that Christ in His first coming appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring in full salvation. Heb. 9:28.

Every student of the Holy Scriptures should strive to see God's eternal plans and purposes as one continuous whole. The divine Architect planned the universal structure in its minutest detail from Alpha to Omega. As the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet make one complete alphabet, each letter dependent upon the other to form the one hundred fifty thousand words of the English language, so every act of God throughout the Bible is a link in the inspired chain of events, forming one complete whole and one divinely inspired purpose. If we were to accept the hit and miss unrelated notions of the theologians, all we would have is a crazy patchwork quilt or a temple without a design, having a thousand porches added on at random as necessity arose. This absurd lack of design and purpose is evident in almost all the preaching of our day. The last great warning given in the Bible is that men should neither add to nor take away from the things that are written, for if they do, they will remove an important letter from the alphabet, a corner stone from the foundation, or a prominent room from the Father's house.

Learn, then, to see the Bible as the inspired blueprint of the all-wise architect of the universe. Learn to see that all things were devised by the infinite wisdom of His mind, whether our tiny minds can grasp them or not, the fall as well as the redemption, the curse as well as the blessing. "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall He not correct? Psa. 94:9-10. Ah, it is true that He who is the Alpha and the Omega is also every other letter besides.

Until we discover that our God is a God of infinite purpose, we will be quite incapable of loving Him as we should; but when we know "His plans by wisdom are arranged and fixed by firm decree," then and then only do we really begin to love Him. There is purpose in creation, purpose in the fall, purpose in redemption, purpose in trial and temptation, purpose in the Lord's first coming, purpose in the church age, purpose in tribulation,

purpose in the kingdom, and purpose in the final increase of His government over all the universe. And, while I greatly rejoice in all these wonders, I shall not forget that there was purpose in my own creation as there was in the creation of the least or the greatest of all earth's numberless inhabitants. Even the day of my birth was designed and decided in the counsels of the Most High. Millenniums before I saw the light of day, the hour was set for my arrival. The place and circumstances of my birth were decided as is also the place and time of my death, because there is a time to be born and a time to die. Eccles. 3:1. When we thus see God in the heavenly light of His eternal wisdom, our hearts abound in ever increasing love for Him from whom all things come and to whom all things return.

The second coming of the Lord, therefore, can never be some after-thought in the mind of God, but a purpose undertaken by Him before the ages in their succession began to unfold their infinite design. The superstructure of the building rests upon this mighty pillar of purpose. The Christ, who is to appear a second time, is the stone, which the builders rejected, but who is in truth the headstone of the corner. Without His return the building can have no capstone, the body can have no head, and all that has ever been carried out in ages past would stand as desolate as a temple which the builders could not finish.

Paul was once faced by certain people who said there would be no resurrection of the dead, but he, knowing that the resurrection was one of the mightiest pillars in all God's plan, showed what havoc would be wrought in God's economy should there be no resurrection of the dead. "Now," said he, "if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." **I Cor. 15:12-15**. Then he further states (verse 17) that if Christ is not raised, then you are in your sins and all who have died in Christ are perished. So we plainly see how drastic and terrible would be the result of removing the truth of the resurrection from God's purpose, or any other of the mighty pillars which He has established from the beginning.

In the light of these things we must conclude that, should there be no second coming of Christ, all our faith would dissolve into vanity. Even the work of Calvary would be completely ineffective should there be no second appearing of Christ. Though His first coming was to deal with sin and put it away, upon His second coming awaits the bringing in of the fullness of salvation which through His travail and bloody sweat He purchased for us.

No promise ever written or spoken could be more straight forward or easily understood than the simple forthright declaration of Jesus found in **John 14:2-3**. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." There are more references to the second coming of Christ in the New Testament than there are chapters in the book, yet it must be accepted that, should there be none other promise than this, these words alone would constitute perfect assurance that our Lord has promised to return to the earth a second time. In the statement, "I will come again," the use of the word again distinguishes His second coming from His first coming. It is the same as saying, "I will come a second time." It is as definite as the statement in **Heb. 9:28**: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time..." The first coming of Christ was strictly to deal with the sin question. He came to put away sin, to cleanse it from the hearts of men, to abolish it from all His universe. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin. He came to purge the conscience from every dead work. He came to cleanse that temple which we are. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He came to abolish it, not only from the world, but from the universe as well that eventually there should be no place in heaven or earth where sin or iniquity existed. We in the present hour do not fully grasp the universal results of this so great redemption because the time has not yet come to see its fullness. "We do not as yet see all things put under Him," Paul said, "but we see Jesus," who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor that He by the grace of God might taste death for every man, and He who tasted death for every man shall at last see every man crowned with glory and honor.

All we need see in this present hour is Jesus, the manifested Son, the One who has conquered sin, now crowned with glory and honor. And, seeing this first Son thus crowned and honored, we are assured with assurance that only God can give that every man for whom He tasted death will also at last be delivered from the thralldom of sin into the glorious liberty of God's son.

In Weymouth's translation of **Heb. 9:28** we have these enlightening words: "... Christ also, having been once offered in sacrifice in order that He might bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, separated from sin, to those who are eagerly expecting Him, to make their salvation complete." There is coming a day and that right soon when our salvation will be complete. At the present moment we enjoy only the earnest of our salvation. We are begotten of God, but not born. Our spirits are alive because of Christ's righteousness, but our bodies are still dead because of sin. But we know that, when our salvation is complete, the same Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead and that quickened our spirits when we believed will also quicken our mortal bodies to make them immortal by His Spirit that now dwelleth in us.

Paul showed us with great clearness that full sonship depends upon, first, the renewing of the spirit and, secondly, upon the redemption of the body. Now adoption in scripture occurs when God the Father publicly recognizes us as His own sons. Adoption is God's public recognition and acknowledgment that we are His sons. The example of this was given at Jesus' baptism when the voice of the Father in voice of thunder clearly acknowledged His sonship in these words: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." **Matt. 3:17**. The adoption of sons has nothing in common with the generally accepted meaning of the word, that is, "to take into one's family or as one's child by legal adoption." We are not adopted sons in that sense. We are begotten. 1 Pet. 1:3. We are born again. But the rite of adoption will be fulfilled when our heavenly Father publicly proclaims that we are His sons just as He proclaimed Jesus as His Son when he arose from the watery grave of Jordan in symbol of resurrection. Our sonship will be complete and we will be recognized publicly as God's sons at our resurrection. At the present time we groan with the rest of creation while we await our adoption. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body..." **Rom. 8:22,23**. So we must understand that the fullness of our redemption is not complete until the physical body as well as the spirit has been born again and thus has fully tasted of redemption. That fullness of our redemption comes at the resurrection of the just, when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality... Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory." See **Cor. 15:51-54** and 1 Thess. 4:16.

From this we clearly see how Christ at His second coming makes our salvation complete. The work He accomplished at Calvary by His death and resurrection, now comes to its completion by the physical resurrection of all believers who lived and died in Christ. Let us not deceive ourselves, however, for even this wonder is incomplete. Only the "dead in Christ" rise first, but other billions shall yet arise at a later time. By far the greatest part is still to come. When Christ rose triumphantly from the dead, He was but the firstfruits of the billions who slept. The resurrection of the just, though counted in millions, will still be no more than a kind of firstfruits. Nevertheless, the sons of God will now be complete and ready to be manifested. It is for their manifestation that all the creation in heaven and earth have groaned for six thousand years or more. **Rom. 8:22-23**. But now at the resurrection of the just at the second coming of Christ the inChristed ones are perfect and entire, wanting nothing, complete in Him and ready to perform those greater works which Jesus our Lord vaguely spoke in the long ago.

The long, long tarrying of the Son of God has not been in vain. From the words that fell from the lips of Jesus just before His crucifixion we have this beautiful gem of promise: "In My Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you." **John 14:2**. Now, my dearly beloved friends, let us be very clear about this. When Jesus spoke of "My Father's house", He was speaking of the Father's house and not your house. I hope God will grant you wisdom to understand that He was not speaking of some beautiful palace on high where we are going to live throughout eternity and twiddle our thumbs and play a harp. My Father's house is the body of Christ, and "ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." Our membership in the Christ body is the place Christ is preparing for us now while He is away. Furthermore the body of Christ is the habitation of God. **Eph. 2:19-22**. The body of Christ is God's house. Every room, or mansion, in that house is a living person, a living stone (1 Pet. 2:5), in which God dwells personally. This is the temple, which is rising upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone, or the headstone. It is a living temple in which every stone is a living stone, saved, baptized with the Spirit, filled with the mind of Christ and the wisdom of God. This is "My Father's House", the temple of His body.

See how wonderfully Paul describes this house of God in His message to the Ephesians. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," **Eph. 2:19-22**. Weymouth's translation of this passage is filled with the glory of its meaning and should be carefully considered. This is what it says. "You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." This is the Father's house. This is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, the temple of the Lord, the body of Christ.

It was to prepare this holy temple, this body of Christ, this habitation for God that Jesus went away. For all the centuries since Pentecost He has been calling the elect to their place in this house not made with hands. He went not only to prepare the temple, but to prepare your place in it, for "ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." From our place in this temple, as Christ has placed us, we will minister throughout eternity in the restoration and habilitation of the entire universe. The government of Christ in ages to come will not be confined to the earth alone, but will include within itself every star and planet in all the universe until nothing has been left outside the completeness of the universal authority. "Praise Him, sun and moon," cried the psalmist. "Praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded and they were created." **Psa. 148:3-5**.

During the long, long night of darkness since Christ left this world to return to His Father, the temple of the Lord has been slowly but certainly rising. The apostles laid the foundation, which is not themselves but Christ, 1 Cor. 3:10, and upon the sure foundation they laid other men have been building, some with works of gold, silver and precious stones and others with works of wood, hay and stubble. The gold, silver and precious stones will survive the fires of the judgment seat of Christ. The wood, the hay and the stubble will be burned up. Nevertheless, the temple is rising and has been rising since the Holy Spirit fell on the waiting host on the day of Pentecost. The temple is now almost complete. The required number of sons of God have been readied, fitted and prepared for the body of Christ. This mysterious living temple, the like of which was never imagined and of which the wilderness tabernacle and the temple of Solomon were but frail, dull patterns, is now complete. It now awaits only the capstone from heaven, the head Son of all the sons, the Lord Jesus Christ. The cornerstone here really means the capstone or the headstone. This innumerable multitude of sons of God, all in one Holy Spirit, all in the image of Jesus, all members of one body, will be "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Many sons, yet one body. A vast multitude, yet one family, God's family, all partakers of one Spirit, God's Spirit. All partakers of one mind, the mind of Christ. This is the body of Christ! This is the temple of the Lord! Through this living temple, in which Christ has prepared us a place, first the world and then the universe will be governed in righteousness. Through the ministry of the these sons the bride of Christ will be formed and through the bride, the New Jerusalem, will come the final restitution of all things, spoken of by all the prophets since the world began.

Can you not see how gloriously the plan unfolds? That Jesus should first come to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, that He should then return to the Father and send forth the Holy Spirit to call out a people for His name? That as they were called, chastened and prepared in the fierce, burning fires of affliction and tribulation, they being thus refined should then be placed by Christ in that rising temple, which God was preparing for His own habitation?. What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? For if we receive chastening, God dealeth with us as sons: but if we receive not chastening, then are we bastards and not sons. And though no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby.

"I go to prepare a place for you," said Jesus; and that is what He is doing now. I cannot possibly overestimate the intrinsic value and importance of our place in Christ, that is, in the Christ body. It is from this holy habitation that the heralds go forth to restore the whole universe unto Him. God hath reconciled all things unto Himself and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation, "My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Christ came at first to put away sin and even now the great reconciliation is

reaching out to every man in his own order. Never will it cease until it has embraced the all things as the scripture declares: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." **Eph. 1:10**. Never will it cease until every creature in heaven and in earth and in the sea is heard saying, "Glory and honor and blessing unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever." **Rev. 5:13**. This is the mystery of His will, which He is making known to us, even the purpose which He purposed in Himself before the ages began.

There is no reason to believe that either the prophets or the apostles had any idea as to the length of time the Lord would remain in the heavens before His work of calling out a. people for His name would be complete. Undoubtedly Jesus did not intend them to know. When they enquired concerning Israel and the kingdom, Jesus plainly told them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which God has put in His own power," and on another occasion they were told that no man would know the day or the hour of His coming. At that time Jesus Himself did not know. Matt. 24:36.

The work of the preparation of the true church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is a great work in incomprehensible importance. What unimaginable loss would have befallen the world if Jesus Christ had not come to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself! But can the mind possibly grasp the importance of the work now in progress? Do we any more than remotely understand how Christ Jesus is at this moment completing and bringing to perfection that whole mystical body of sons who are called to be members of God's Christ, yea, who are the fullness of Christ? These are they for whom the whole creation groans and travails, for even inanimate things seem to know that their thralldom of decay will be lifted only when God's sons are complete and fully manifested. Then will universal travail cease. There will be no more death, no more pain, no more tears, neither sorrow nor sighing, for the former things will have passed away forever.

How blessed it must have been to walk with Jesus in the long ago, to watch as the fever was calmed, to rejoice as the blind came seeing, the deaf hearing, the lame walking, and the dead raised up again! "Never man spake like this man," said the soldiers. Glorious as all this was, can we even begin to compare it with the restoration, which will begin when a vast number of sons of God, innumerable as the stars, begin their work of reconciliation? No, we cannot! Yet Jesus said, "Greater works than these shall ye do," and greater works they will do in His name that will result in the reconciliation of all things.

It is distressing to hear God's people talk about the church and the body of Christ and yet for all their talk actually present no reason for the formation of either. They preach about the sons of God and sonship, but see no great purpose in their manifestation. They speak of the bride, but understand not who she is, the New Jerusalem, the heavenly capitol city, from which proceeds the government of the universe. Preachers cannot grasp the eternal purposes of God. Be it far better that they hold their peace and preach nothing at all.

The great universal program, now well advanced in progress, will continue without hindrance to its fullness. This plan, encompassing several ages, was outlined by the apostle James when he addressed the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The conciseness of his words could not have been inspired by any other than the Holy Spirit. This is what he said: "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." **Acts 15:14-18**.

This, then, is the promise of Jesus. "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again to receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Jesus Christ is as much a part of that spiritual body as we are and we who are in Christ are as much a part of that spiritual body as He is. Perfection and manifestation come only at the resurrection when all who died in faith, not having received the promise of God, will be raised together in glory that they without us should not be made perfect. During this long, long night of waiting God's elect are being carefully prepared to reign. He is choosing them with infinite care before they are placed as sons and thus take their place in the Father's house as temples and living stones built up into a spiritual house. They that are with Him have three outstanding qualifications. They are called and chosen and faithful.

The eyes of many saints have grown dim with watching in this long, long night through which we wait for the coming of the Lord. Be not amazed at this. Our God has not forgotten the promise. A certain period of time has been allotted for the completion of the work of this age of grace. Harvest cannot come until harvest time. This is as certain in the spiritual realm as in the natural realm. Should wheat be harvested before its time, there will probably be nothing but green straw. Should you try to harvest only a few days before the harvest time, you will get only shriveled kernels. Number one wheat is threshed when the time for maturing has been fulfilled. Thus it is also with the pure wheat of the kingdom. So also it is with a natural birth. There is a time to be born. Neither premature nor connotative births are either proper or safe. Birth should take place at the proper time.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." **2 Pet. 3:9**. During this age it is certain that there must be a given number of elect who are to come in to the Father's house before the books are closed and the age ends. When this is accomplished — and it will be accomplished right on time — then the Lord will come and He will come at the time appointed, not one hour earlier or later than was planned in the beginning. Of the first coming of Christ it is written, "In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son." Of the crucifixion it is written, "Father, the hour is come." Of the departing of Jesus from the world it is written, "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." **John 13:1**. So we may clearly see that all things in the plan of God are closely timed. There are no delays and nothing is premature. Even Peter, speaking of his death, said, "Shortly I must put off this tabernacle," and Paul, writing in similar vein, declared, "The time of my departing is at hand."

It is blessed to notice that the promise of Christ's second coming is beautifully bound up in the heart of the promise of His first coming. In the angelic message to Mary concerning the birth of Christ, only one sentence concerned His first coming. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus." **Luke 1:31**. All the rest of the marvelous statement concerns the events that will follow His second coming. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." **Luke 1:32,33**. Though the coming of the Lord is in two distinct parts, it is really one coming, first to put away sin, then during His long absence to gather the elect of the body of Christ, then to return and take the throne of David - or, as James said, "To build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down." Then He will reign over the house of Jacob, which means the tribes of Israel, during the kingdom age while the bride is preparing that the eventual restitution may follow in its train.

The incredible, unspeakable harmony of all these wonders overwhelms my spirit. It is as though heaven's symphony were playing its most glorious oratorio, its harmonious tones sweeping the shadowy valleys and the charming voices of its singers with their gladsome song leaping from hill to hill, echoing and re-echoing from mountain top to mountain top, even unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. The harmony of all God's purposes catch the breath away. It staggers the understanding and captivates the imagination. It causes the devout man to stand in admiration before its greatness, bewildered by its wonder, amazed at its perfection and awed by its irresistible, unchanging progress through eternity.

The Lord Jesus came to earth at Bethlehem as the prophets had foretold. As a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief He had lived among men. In preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the broken hearted, preaching deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, setting at liberty the bruised and bringing the message of the acceptable year of the Lord, He had fulfilled all that was spoken of His ministry among men. According to the word of the prophets He had laid down His life, making His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was deceit found in His mouth. To the amazement of even His most devout followers He was found after three days to have arisen from death to become the firstfruits of them that slept, because the prophet David had said, "Thou shalt not leave My soul in hell; neither shall Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption."

Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;

He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Is this not the very heart of the Gospel -that Christ died for our sins according to the scripture, that He was buried and that He rose from the dead the third day according to the scriptures? See 1 Cor. 15:1-6. And after His rising from the dead He was seen of Peter and all the apostles, and finally of above five hundred brethren at one time. Last of all He was seen by Paul, who said he was the least of all the apostles and not worthy to be called an apostle. I Cor. 15:5-11. Then after forty days it came time for Him to be taken up into heaven, so He led them outside Jerusalem as far as to Bethany and He lifted up His hands and blessed them, "And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." **Luke 24:50-51**. But Luke, writing to Theophilus, took up the story from that moment on, relating to us not only the incidents recorded in his gospel, but also a very blessed and remarkable incident that happened at that time. Thus the record continues: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Ah, what a blessed promise that was on the very day of His departure from them! In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. It is the promise of the Lord, the hope of the church, the desire of the groaning creation, and it will be fulfilled very soon.

The Old Testament writers made many clear references to the second coming of the Lord. Not that they understood their own prophecies! There is little evidence that they did, but, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. they made unmistakable references to the second coming of the Lord, references that could not in any way be interpreted to refer to His first advent. The Bible does not contain the book of Enoch, but the inspired writing of Jude refers to the prophecy of Enoch, who lived under the dispensation of conscience. He gave this prophecy: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds..." **Jude 14-15**. Moses, too, who lived under the law, gave unmistakable witness to the second coming of Christ when he blessed the tribes of Israel, and he said, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them." **Deut. 33:2**. It is nothing short of an inspirational marvel just to see how the Lord puts so many details into one verse even though they may be separated by centuries or millenniums. But with God no time exists and all His acts are part of one complete whole.

The prophets also spoke often of the second coming of the Lord. The real fact is that the prophets understood very little of the first coming of the Lord. They were looking forward to the day when the King would reign and prosper upon the throne of David to order and establish the kingdom, which belongs to the second coming of Christ, but their minds were confused by their own prophecies when they spoke of the virgin birth and the suffering and rejection of Christ. Peter tells us how they enquired and searched diligently for understanding when they spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. 1. Pet. 14:10-11. Furthermore it seems that the Spirit of the Lord did not show them the answer, but told them only that they were not ministering to themselves, but to us who would live at a later date. Verse 12. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion," Isaiah said, and Jeremiah, too, was speaking of the second coming when he said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." **Jer. 23:5**. Zechariah, too, clearly spoke of the coming of the Lord when he said, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley." **Zech. 14:4** He then continues through the remainder of the chapter to describe the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth.

We may therefore be certain that the promise of the second coming is as old as the teaching of the Bible. With our God prophecy is as certain as history. It is history prewritten. The coming of the historic Christ to Bethlehem and Calvary is not more certain than the coming of the prophetic Christ to the Mount of Olives and to Zion. Both

are as certain as God is faithful. Neither time nor changes nor circumstances can in any way let or hinder that glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In like manner the New Testament abounds in promises of the return of the Lord. Paul knew that there would be a great day of resurrection for the saints and he knew, too, that it would occur when the Lord descended from heaven with a great shout of triumph, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, and then the dead in Christ would arise from their graves to stand together for a moment with the living in Christ. Then they all together would be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thess. 4:13-18. This great hope was to be a source of comfort to the saints of all ages. In the present distress it is filled with lasting hope and abounding assurance to many who are weary of this age and all its sin and ungodliness and are looking for the Lord to cut it short in His righteousness. Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

ESCHATOLOGY.

The voice of my beloved!
Behold He cometh
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh forth at the windows,
Shewing himself at the lattice.
My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past,
And the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!

CHAPTER FOUR HE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

"Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world." All people should have the knowledge that all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him who sees and knows all things. Nothing is beyond His understanding. Nothing happens without His foreknowledge, and all things that do occur come to pass because in the scheme of things all is working according to the counsel of His will. Well may every saint find confidence in the knowledge that with God nothing comes by chance. The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord. Psa. 37:23. (The word "good" is in italics.) "*As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.*" **Prov. 26:2.** Both the curse and the blessing come from God, and when our minds are enlarged enough to understand His ways, we are able to see in every curse a blessing, in every judgment a cleansing, and in every tribulation, no matter how severe, a highway leading to the ocean of His peace. When we look beyond the blighting turmoil and confusion of the hour, joyfully seeing the end from the beginning, our hearts glory in the truth of these words of inspiration: "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*" **2 Cor. 4:17-18.**

It is never easy, as we flounder through our slough of despond, to grasp the truth that all our dismal, cheerless afflictions are working for us, and not against us. It is never easy to see how the very affliction we endure is actually preparing an eternal weight of glory for us. Our eternal benefit from the severest trials that mar our

pathway will be greater if we can walk through our fiery furnaces and sit in our den of lions with the blessed knowledge in our hearts that all things are working together for good to them that love God.

Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world, but I must admit with some chagrin that my own understanding of His mighty work and eternal purpose is painfully limited. Eternity itself will not be too long for me to give thanks to Him for the gracious goodness He showed when He revealed that He did indeed have an eternal purpose for all mankind, a purpose first made manifest when He said, "Let us make man (Adam) in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion..." From the greatness of this original purpose the Omniscient has never deviated nor turned aside for even a moment. Through centuries and millenniums of time, through sunshine and shadow, through mists and storms, through war and peace, through turmoil and calm, His all-seeing eye and His almighty power have directed the course of human affairs. Through the dreary valley of the shadow of death, through clouds of outer darkness, through quagmires of carnality and the oppression of the devil He leads His beloved people into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

In the end we will discover to our utter astonishment that every trial was a necessity in the process of our better making, that every temptation was essential to abolish evil without and within and to produce the Christ-life in His saints. "The trial of our faith worketh patience," therefore every trial becomes necessary that patience may have her perfect work. Every fire rids the gold of its corruption, tempers our metal, and makes us vessels fit for God to dwell in, for every affliction is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

It is only right that our study of Eschatology should embrace the judgments of God, for the judgments of God are certainly among the last things. But, while the judgments themselves are among the last things, we must point out that all humanity is preparing itself for judgment in each lifetime, dispensation and age.

It is no particular delight to me to find myself so often at variance with the established traditions of the present or of the past, but surely in our day there is a great dearth of understanding concerning the judgments of the Lord. In all my life I have not yet heard a sermon preached touching the judgment seat of Christ, except the one I preached myself, and that, I fear, was a feeble effort. Though mention has often been made of the judgment of the nations, for the most part we have been left in darkness as to its true purpose and nature. The same obscurity of understanding applies to the judgment of the great white throne, for though it is often mentioned, it is, unfortunately, used as a scare tactic while little information is ever given concerning its purpose. This is also the case where the judgment of God's covenant people Israel is concerned. Their judgment is seldom mentioned, and when have we ever heard an exposition on the subject?

I pray that all who read these lines may be given wisdom to see that there is a season, a time and a purpose to everything under the sun. Solomon proclaimed this truth in **Ecclesiastes, chapter three**, when he wrote: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." In **verse 17** he says there is a time and a purpose in judgment. "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and every work." There is a world of hidden truth in that verse if we will meditate upon it and prayerfully search it out.

"Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is the time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him." **Eccles. 8:5-6**. "To every purpose there is time," said Solomon. Perhaps if we put the indefinite article before the word time, we will understand it better. We would then read, "To every purpose there is a time." The Lord gives a special dispensation of time to fulfill certain purposes and establish definite parts of His plan. This wisdom He carries out in a plan for every age and in His plan for every individual life. Just as nations are tested and tried, so also every individual in a nation is tried. Our wise heavenly Father has decreed that no man will go through life without being tried in the most beneficial way that divine wisdom can devise. On the surface this may not seem evident, but that is the way it is. Even heathen nations and unregenerate men have a purpose in the world, and, because of this, the apostle Peter, writing to the elect saints, made mention of "your brethren that are in the world" and spoke particularly of the suffering and temptation they endure. 1 Pet. 5:9.

It is certain that all things must come into judgment. Nothing anywhere is of any value until it is judged by the Lord, and, having been thus judged, sins can be repented of, errors and mistakes can be remedied, and all can be cleansed and forgiven. For my part I am confident that all God's judgments are remedial rather than

punitive. The general teaching for many centuries has been the reverse — that all God's judgments are punitive and not remedial, but if the searcher for truth will look deeply into the subject, there is abundant evidence that our Father in heaven intends to correct the evils through judgment and bring about deliverance, cleansing and restitution to the groaning creation. The man or woman who flees to the cross in repentance, there to claim the cleansing of the blood of Christ, is then and there both forgiven and made a partaker of Christ's righteousness. This man by his repentance has judged himself and, having found himself to be lost and undone before God, clothed only in the filthy garments of his own self-righteousness, he abandons his sin by repentance to become a partaker of a righteousness much higher than his own. So it comes to pass that this man goes forth from his judgment freely justified in the sight of God, "for," saith the Holy Scriptures, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." **1 Cor. 11:31**. This verse explains the meaning of the difficult passage in 1 Tim. 5:24. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some (sins) they follow after."

I do not believe we will be able to understand the judgments of God or enter into the spirit of them unless and until we have a proper understanding of their God-given purpose. If we are going to adhere to the usual trend of thought which portrays our omniscient God as an offended, pouting demagogue or an eccentric potentate spoiling for the blood of his victims and only happy when there is some fault to find and condemn, we will miss the whole point of judgment and fall into the pit of misunderstanding and error. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" was Abraham's plea as he interceded for the city of Sodom, Gen. 18, but the city fell under judgment because there was no righteousness in it and no willingness to repent. Yet Jesus, speaking of the willful rebellion of His day, clearly said, "If the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." **Matt. 11:13**. Not only does the Judge of all the earth do right, but He is longsuffering and kind, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. On the other hand I dare not minimize the awfulness or the severity of His judgments, for the word of God has said with great plainness, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." **Heb. 10:31**. Toward those who are disobedient, rebellious and unbelieving His love will be shown in severest punishment. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..." **Psa. 110:2,3**. This verse clearly indicates that the stubborn will of every enemy will be made willing in the day of the manifestation of God's power.

All responsible creatures whether great or small will come under the judgment of God. Christians will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Israel, God's chosen people, will be judged for her stewardship. All nations will be gathered to judgment at the coming of the Lord. Babylon, the mother of harlots, will be judged. Angels will be judged. The devil, the beast and the false prophet will be judged, and the unbelieving dead will be judged at the white throne.

In the midst of all the certainty of judgment one truth shines as the sun above them all. That truth was uttered by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, when He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." **John 12:31-32**. That was the greatest judgment of all time, and all who believe in the work He accomplished that day at Calvary will never come into condemnation, but they have passed from the realm of condemnation and death into the realm of justification and life. When Jesus Christ was lifted up on the cross of Calvary, God was giving His righteous Son that all who would put their faith in His life blood would never come into condemnation, but would immediately pass from the realm of death into the realm of life. God the Father did not give His Son to be crucified because He demanded the blood of a victim to assuage His wrath, as certainly is the general teaching of Protestant and Catholic alike. The truth is that He gave up His Son to death because only by the shedding of His blood, in which flowed eternal life, could the life of God be given to you and me and released to all the world. The life is in the blood the scriptures plainly teach. Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:14. My natural life is in my natural blood, but in the blood of the Son of God was life eternal, because He was born of the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus was not able to give us eternal life while as yet His blood was restricted to the veins of His own body. That is why in apparent distress He once said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." His baptism was the baptism of death, and until His blood, through death, was shed and the eternal life within Him was liberated and shed abroad, no man on earth could partake of eternal life. But when at His death upon the cross of Calvary His precious blood was shed, blood better than the blood of Abel, then the eternal life that was in His blood became available to all who would believe, and men and women, receiving through faith the spirit of life from above, were regenerated for the first time in history as He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost (John 20:22) and remission of sins (John 20:23)." The Holy Spirit is life,

my brethren. Yea, He is eternal life. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son of God. The Spirit is the life of the Son of God, and he who hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. So God is proved to be both just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3:26. And we who believe are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3:24.

Now according to the apostle Paul, God hath set forth Him (Jesus Christ) to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remissions of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Rom. 3:25. In this verse we are told of one who had faith in the blood of Christ and it is extremely important that we see who it was who had such abounding faith in His blood. Was it man who had this faith or was it God? It is true that man must have faith in Christ to be saved, but in this twenty-fifth verse Paul was not speaking of man's faith in Christ. He was speaking of God's faith in the precious blood of His Son. If you will read the verse again, you will perceive that it was God the Father who had such super abounding faith in the life blood of His Son that He was able to confidently declare His righteousness to be sufficient to remit all the sins of the past right from the garden of Eden onward to the end, so that it becomes perfectly true that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Furthermore, this verse teaches that Jesus is the propitiation. Now to propitiate means to dispose to kindness. Did God then give Jesus Christ to propitiate Himself? No, He certainly did not, though that notion is the commonly accepted teaching throughout all the church system. But it is wrong. It is thoroughly wrong. God gave Jesus Christ to propitiate man and dispose man to repentance and kindness and love toward God. The whole crude idea that God must be reconciled to the sinner and to the world is completely false. It is erroneous and detrimental teaching. God never needed to be reconciled to the world. It is the sinner who needs to be reconciled to God and it is to the sinner that Jesus comes as God's mediator and propitiator to dispose the sinner to kindness and love toward God and to reconcile the world unto Himself.

I deplore the hateful teaching that makes our great loving God to appear like some pouting deity, petulantly glowering at a fallen world and only propitiated and His wrath appeased by the blood of His victims, and, failing that, to be satisfied only by the murder of His own Son as a substitute. This is not the true picture in any sense of the word. The true picture is that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." **John 3:16-17**. Thus the shedding of the precious life blood of Jesus Christ was not that the wrath of God might be appeased, but that through the shedding of His better blood the eternal life that was in that blood might be released and shed abroad, that all who would believe might freely partake of eternal life, even the life that was forfeited when Adam transgressed and died. Adam could have partaken of the tree of life freely (Gen. 2:16) had he been disposed to do so. But now through Jesus Christ we are justified freely by His grace. Rom 3:24. With Him God freely gives us all things. Rom. 8:32. He gives of the fountain of life freely, Rev. 21:6, and whosoever will let him partake of the water of life freely. Rev. 22:17.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
Will you this moment His grace receive?

The judgment of Jesus Christ on the cross was the greatest judgment of all time. In Christ all the world was judged and by Him all the world is saved, for God sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Many years ago, when I was still a denominational minister, I was one day considering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the world. As I meditated about it, I wondered greatly how it could possibly be that through the death of one lonely man far off in a distant and tiny country all the billions of mankind could have been saved. As I thought thereon and considered the multiplied billions of lost humanity, how lost and woefully sinful they are, it seemed increasingly impossible that such a remote event as the death of Jesus Christ, the lonely man of Galilee, could have been sufficient to redeem mankind and give life to them all. It seemed too big a thing to be true, bordering on the impossible, and I fear a little unbelief began to trouble my soul. Then the Spirit spoke to my heart and this is the question He asked: "How did all these billions of people become sinners?" "Through

the sin of one man," I replied. Then in the words of scripture He spoke again: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:19. "Well now," I exclaimed with joy, "that is the most reasonable thing I have every heard." Oh, how great is God's wisdom and how marvelous is His grace, and all His ways past finding out! For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen!

"Now is the judgment of this world," said Jesus. "Now shall the prince of the world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John 12:31-32. The judgment of the world in Christ is the greatest judgment of all time, and as the ages unfold the result will be exactly as Jesus stated when He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," for "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. "For we must all of us appear before Christ's judgment-seat in our true light, in order that each may receive an award for his actions in this life, in accordance with what he has done, whether it be good or bad." Weymouth. The judgment seat of Christ is the judgment of Christians, men and women who in life had put their faith in the great redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Sin is not the question in this judgment, for sin was purged when we believed. All believers will be judged for their works during life whether those works have been good or ill. The judgment shall declare of what sort our work has been, for we shall see all our works tried by fire.

Jesus Christ is the only foundation of the true church. The true church is that mystical body which is rising on that foundation of Christ to form an holy temple, a "fixed abode" for God, which in ages to come will be the habitation of God through the Spirit. Jesus Christ and faith in Him was the foundation Paul laid, and this was the foundation of the apostles and prophets, for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11. The prophets prophesied of Him who was to come and the apostles established beyond doubt that the Jesus who came was the Christ of whom the prophets spoke. "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" enquired the Ethiopian eunuch. "Of himself, or of some other man?" And Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. Acts 8:34,35. "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner," said the prophet, Psa. 118:22, and Peter, taking up the theme, made the prophecy apply to Jesus Christ when he said, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." Acts 4:11. The importance of this foundation stone becomes immense when we grasp the truth that this same stone, Christ Jesus the Lord, is the foundation of the temple of His body, which is to be. Upon this foundation we build and do our works whether they be good or unprofitable, and it is for those works that we are to be judged when we appear at the tribunal of Christ. Let us then give special care to what the apostle taught concerning the foundation and the things we build thereon. With these thoughts in mind let us further consider the words of 1 Corinthians 3:11-17. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abides which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Such are our instructions concerning the judgment seat of Christ and our works, which shall be judged at that day in a judgment at which only Christians shall appear, converted men and women who have been begotten of God and who are truly the Lord's children. The question here is not sin. The question is the works we have done or have neglected to do. See how clearly the apostle stated the facts of the case. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Cor. 3:13.

In the plan of God fire has a very outstanding place. Even in the natural world fire is the greatest known purifier. Disease and filth may resist water and any type of disinfectant or fuller's soap, but nothing can withstand fire. The garment in Israel wherein was the plague of leprosy was to be burned with fire, Lev. 13:52, because that was the only sure way to destroy the disease, and the house wherein was the plague of leprosy was to be pulled down and carried away to an unclean place outside the city, which I would presume was the Gehenna of

fire. Lev. 14:24. Fire in scripture is often, if not always, a symbol of God. "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire..." **Deut. 4:24.** "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? ...Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee: and upon earth He showed thee His great fire, and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire." **Deut. 4:33,36.** Ezekiel saw the Lord as a fire enfolding itself. Ezek. 1:4. John in his Patmos vision, beholding the Lord Jesus Christ, saw His head and His hair white like wool and His eyes aflame of fire. Rev. 1:14. When the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, He will come "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting (aionian) destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." **1 Thess. 1:7-9.** When John the Baptist spoke of the coming outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he likened the Spirit to a fanned fire, saying, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." **Matt. 3:11-12.** When God appeared to Israel in Sinai, the sight of the Lord was like a devouring fire. Exod. 24:17. When the Holy Spirit fell upon the waiting host at Pentecost, He appeared unto them in cloven tongues like as of fire, which sat upon each of them. Acts 2:4. The number of places throughout the Holy Scripture in which fire is mentioned in connection with the Lord is far too numerous to try to record here, but any student, following the truth through for his own satisfaction, will readily see that fire is a symbol of God.

It is also important that we make a difference between natural fire, with which we are all so well acquainted, and the fire of God, which is spiritual and descends from heaven. The fire that burned in the bush of the wilderness in Moses' day was not the same kind of fire that now destroys our forests or burns in our hearths, and the fire that fell upon the altar of God in the wilderness was not the same fire that was offered by Nadab and Abihu. Lev. 10:1-2. Neither is the fire that fell at Pentecost to be confused with the bonfire the barbarians made when Paul was shipwrecked on the Island of Melita. As far as I am able to understand, the fire of Pentecost and the lake of fire are identical in substance. Both are related to God, the only difference being in their purpose and work, the lake of fire to consume all dross and corruption and the fire of Pentecost to sanctify, fill, and empower that which is already pure.

There is an illuminating passage in **Numbers 31:23** that appears to me to be a type of the judgment we are considering. "Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water." In **verse 22** we are told what things were to be committed to the fire for purification. The gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead - all these things were to be purified by fire when they were brought back by the soldiers from battle, but those materials which could not endure fire were to be cleansed with water.

When Paul spoke of the coming judgment seat of Christ, he mentioned six things, all of which are symbolic and have spiritual meaning. "If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; for the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." **1 Cor. 3:12-13.** The foundation is Christ. Those on this foundation are present not to be judged for sin. Their salvation is not in question. They are there to have their works judged. It is their rewards that are in question, for we are rewarded according to our works whether they be good or bad. The test will be whether or not our works stand up in the fire of God, which on that day will be applied to them. Gold, silver and precious stones are never hurt by fire, but wood, hay and stubble are readily consumed and destroyed by it. No wonder the apostle gives this earnest, if not impassioned, exhortation: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." **Verse. 10.**

Without doubt on that great day, when works are tried and rewards are given, many people are going to find both their labors and their conduct swept away in consuming fire. They will find that, though they are saved, they have not built well. Surely the principles of the parable of the talents, though they concern a different judgment, may be equally well applied here. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his

journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou has not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, here thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him; and give it unto him, which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **Matt. 25:15-30.**

We are not saved by works. We are rewarded for works, but our works are certainly going to be judged of what sort they are. Many unprofitable and useless works are being built upon this foundation. They never will become part of the true building which is the body of Christ, but Christians spend their whole time at them just the same. These works, being unprofitable, useless and bad, will be burned up and destroyed. "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." **2 Cor. 5:9-10.**

Now with reference to the terms gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, let us take some thought as to the meaning of these symbols, for this is certainly symbolic language. From observation of the scripture gold becomes a definite type of God and the things of God. Just as we have seen fire to be symbolic of God, so also gold in scripture is symbolic of God or deity. We may not consider more than two or three evidences here, but gold, being the most precious metal mentioned in scripture, is used for purposes where we would expect to find types and shadows that speak of the Lord. For instance, the golden candlestick, which stood in the holy place of the tabernacle in the wilderness, was in every sense a type of Jesus Christ. The candlestick was solid gold, weighing roughly one hundred fifty pounds. It was a thing of glory and beauty with seven branches proceeding from it and seven lamps burning with fire continually representing the seven Spirits of God. Rev. 1:4. The oil it burned was symbolic of the Holy Spirit and the fire that made the light was not natural fire, but that spiritual fire which had descended from heaven when first the tabernacle was set up. Compare Lev. 9:23-24 with 6:12-13.

Then, too, the Ark of the Covenant, which is a most beautiful type of Christ and His body, was made of wood overlaid with gold. Likewise each of the forty-eight boards of the tabernacle were wood overlaid with gold. Wood in scripture is typical of humanity. Thus wood overlaid with gold is seen to be symbolic of Jesus Christ in His humanity and deity. He who is our ark of the covenant is both God and man in one Christ. Jesus is both Son of God and Son of man. The scripture proclaims Him to be the Son of God, having been born of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. But the same scriptures also show Him to be a man, born of a woman, an Israelite in whom was no guile.

Silver in scripture is symbolic of redemption. This is made evident because all the silver used in the wilderness tabernacle was taken from the redemption offerings of the children of Israel. Exod. 30:11:16. Compare Exod. 26:19-25. Thus, wherever we find silver in the tabernacle, we find truth concerning redemption. All the sockets upon which the beautiful tabernacle stood were sockets of silver. This, too, is where we stand, that is, upon Christ's redemption. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." **Gal. 3:13.**

Wood in scripture is a type of humanity. Wherever we find the thought of humanity, as we have seen in the boards of the tabernacle, we find wood to be the symbol. Stubble in scripture seems to represent the flesh.

Obadiah likens the house of Esau to stubble, and Esau was a man of the flesh, a man of the field, a man of the hunt, more concerned with his stomach than with his birthright. He is not a man of the Spirit. Thus it is said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Stubble is all that is left after the grain is harvested. The flame devours the stubble. Joel 2:5. The prophet Isaiah likens astrologers, stargazers and monthly prognosticators to stubble, saying, "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame..." **Isa. 47:13-14**. It is rather a singular thing to find that in our day so many thousands of God's people are turning from the truth of the prophecies and the certainties of scripture in a vain endeavor to understand their future by astrology and stargazing. The scripture likens all such to stubble, for it is of man rather than of God. As for the hay, the word is so seldom used in scripture that no definite type can be established for it, but I think all will concede that, whatsoever else it may represent; it certainly speaks of those dead works that will be burned up when the fire of God is applied to them.

If gold is a symbol of God and silver is a symbol of redemption, it is certain that precious stones speak of the sanctified believers who are members in particular of the body of Christ. That Christ is a precious stone and that believers of His body are likewise precious stones is very evident from Peter's beautiful statement, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." **1 Pet. 2:4-6**.

Every person who is saved is building upon the foundation that is Christ Jesus. We are either building the good of gold, silver or precious stones or the bad and unprofitable things of wood, hay and stubble that is the human and the carnal. If the works that I do are gold, then surely it must mean that my life is totally involved with God. Am I led by the Spirit of God? Or do I follow my own inclinations? There is a vast difference. The heart of man, even Christian man, can be desperately wicked in this regard. It is not difficult to find men who glibly make great claims of being led by the Spirit of God, but many, alas, are involved in building their own kingdom, though they imagine they are building for God. These people still remain in the Babylon system, working over time to build it up. God has not made me a ruler or a judge of my neighbor's motives, but we do not need to look far to conclude that much of the work done in God's name is in reality the wood of humanity, the stubble of carnality, and the deadness and spiritual dearth of the hay. All work, whether good or bad, will be exposed to the testing fire of God. If it is gold, silver, or precious stones, it will stand the test. If it is only the wood of humanity or the stubble of carnality, it will be burned up and destroyed.

If any man's work can abide the fiery testing of the Spirit and the word of God, then that man will receive a reward for the profitable work he has done. But, if any man's work abide not the fire, but rather is consumed by it, then that man will suffer dreadful loss. He will suffer the loss of all his labor during his lifetime. He will see it all go up in smoke and himself saved, but empty-handed. It will be a disappointing and fearful loss. I have heard some Christians make the idle remark, "Just so long as I am saved, that is all I care." Well, that is not my feeling in the matter. I shall greatly rejoice if on that trysting day I find that I "have not run in vain, neither labored in vain," and I am sure that, if we have faithfully followed the leading of God's Spirit, there need be no fear of loss.

There is a wonderful truth in the words of Jesus, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." **Matt. 10:37-42**. We should surely be able to see from this that it is the perfect attitude of the heart that really counts in the sight of God and not the mighty and spectacular deed, which we have done. To give a cup of cold water to a disciple who is serving Christ is to receive a share in that disciple's reward. The little woman who of her penury cast into the treasury all her living, though it was only two pence, had in God's sight given more than all those wealthy ones who still had much left over after they had

given of their abundance. If she had received bank interest on her penny from that day until now, the aggregate of her wealth would amount to more than sixty figures. The happy boy who so generously handed over his little lunch of two small fish and some buns shared equally with Christ in the feeding of the five thousand and will receive a just reward at His hand. And poor old Simon, who helped Jesus carry His cross to Calvary, will share in the rewards of the blessed One he helped.

Dearly beloved brethren, I honestly believe that a man can know his own heart. Some say he cannot, but I am sure he can. A man can know whether or not his motives are pure or impure. Do you not think that Hophni and Phineas, who were priests in Israel, knew they were doing wrong when they were making themselves fat by demanding the best of the sacrifices for themselves? Did they not know they were doing wrong by lying with the women who came to offer sacrifices to the Lord? They did wrong, even though they were the priests. Do you not think that Peninnah knew she was doing wrong when she tormented Hannah because that dear saint had no children? 1 Sam. 1:2,6. Of course she did. Did not Eli know that he did wrong in not removing his evil sons from the priesthood instead of honoring them above God? 1 Sam. 2:29. Yes, of course they knew they did wrong. They were building on the foundation, but they were building with wood, hay and stubble and, even worse, they were sinning as well.

Christians can know their own hearts and there is plenty of instruction in God's word that will help us to know our hearts and our motives. Does a man not know when he is angry? Of course he does. Does he not know when he is happy? Or when he is sad? Can we not then know jealousy, or covetousness, or pride, or envy, or lust when it dwells within us? Of course we can. Therefore the Lord exhorts his people to "put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Col. 3:8-10. Further more, in the previous verses, 5 and 6, the apostle exhorts us to "mortify — that is, put to death — your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence (lustful, carnal and sensual desires), and covetousness, which is idolatry, for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

Having put off these evil and bad things, which will cause Christians to lose their reward, we may now with joy turn to the more beautiful side of the picture. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." Col 3:12. The Spirit teaches us to be forbearing, not overbearing, forgiving, not vengeful, vindictive, retaliatory and implacable. Forgiveness exonerates and acquits instead of hankering for revenge. If we have had a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave us, so also do we. Above all these things let us put on charity, for love is the bond of perfection. I do not speak of that silly thing that a lost and giddy world calls love, which is only lust, nor that nonsense Christians speak of when they say, "We should show love." Love is not some front we try to show toward men and women who insist on being evil. Love is of God, manifesting itself in wrath against evil and disobedience but in kindness and forgiveness toward those who repent.

The word of God abounds in instruction that will bring sanctification and holiness to our lives if we will give heed to what it says, but so seldom are God's instructions taught or practiced that one would forget they are indeed the instructions of the Lord.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.
Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them.
Children, obey your parents.
Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.
Servants, obey your masters.

Masters, give to your servants that which is just and equal.
Continue in prayer and watch with thanksgiving.
Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.
Let your speech be always with grace.

Be vigilant, sober, of good behavior, hospitable, apt to teach. Not a brawler, not covetous. Having food and raiment, let us be content. The love of money is the root of all evil, They that are rich fall into a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts. But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, meekness, and patience. Lay hold on eternal life. Hold fast the form of sound words.

All such things are gold, silver and precious stones and for faithfulness in them we will receive a reward. All that is opposite to these is wood, hay and stubble. It will be consumed in the flame and fire of God. They who have lived in the realm of wood, hay and stubble will lose their reward and, though they themselves will be saved, they, having suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, will suffer the loss of all things.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that many might be turned from the Babylon system of confusion, that mankind is now content to call the church, with all its dearth of truth and its vain repetition of sermons, songs and prayers that we through communion with Christ might learn how to behave ourselves in the true house of God (which is His mystical body), the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Therefore, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:5-11.**

If we live in that kind of communion with Christ, we will stand at the judgment seat of Christ with the assurance Paul had when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." **2 Tim. 4:78.** What more is required of man than to love God and do righteousness?

CHAPTER FIVE THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

When we began this study of Eschatology, it was not our intention to make an exhaustive examination in an endeavor to prove every point to the satisfaction of the natural mind. Much study is always a weariness to the flesh and, however intensive our search may be, we must never forget that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." **John 6:63.** It is therefore of greater value that we should embrace the spirit of the message rather than convince ourselves of certain facts which we consider to be indisputable. It is better far that saints should joyfully embrace the hope of Christ's second coming rather than that they should pore over exhaustive studies concerning the details of that coming while they themselves experience nothing but apathy toward that which is our blessed hope.

It is very possible that Christians may find themselves like unto the Pharisees of old, who, though they knew much about the coming of the Christ, had no more spiritual understanding than to crucify Him when He came. When Herod enquired of the learned doctors where Christ should be born, without the slightest hesitation they replied, "In Bethlehem of Judea," and immediately fortified their claim by quoting scripture to prove their statement. Matt. 2:3,4. This was all very good, for it is certainly right that we should know the scripture, but, though they knew the letter of the scripture so well, they were devoid of the spirit of His coming and, because the Messiah for whom they looked did not come in exactly the manner they had wrongly concluded He should, they rejected Him completely with hostile insolence and murder in their hearts.

Better be it by far that God's people should have the blessed hope of His appearing burning within their hearts and be found earnestly longing and patiently waiting for Him even though in some details they be misinformed. In my mind today I have some very steadfast thoughts as to the manner of His coming, yet deep in my spirit and with all reverence and love I can truthfully say that I care not how He comes, whether it be on the clouds of

heaven, or in a flash of lightning or whether He comes walking or riding upon an ass. None of these things can mean much to the man or woman who longs for His presence above all else. Their cry is not, "Lord, come riding upon the clouds of heaven," but their earnest hope and heartfelt desire is expressed in these words of yearning, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Do you suppose that mothers and fathers care about the vehicle by which their boys return from the wars? Whether they come on trains or buses or ships or planes, whether they come walking or riding in ox-carts is of minor concern to them. Their only desire is that they come and the sooner the better. Let those who will argue the details, but let the saints cry, "Why tarry the wheels of His chariot!"

In these studies, therefore, which should have taken many more pages to complete, I have tried to inspire the believing heart with expectation, hope, and assurance of these blessed things to come rather than to dwell too long on cold facts that so often prove to be devoid of the Spirit. I have hoped to present the judgment seat of Christ in such a way that believers would lay hold on the hope before them rather than stand trembling in fear. So also with that magnificent hope of the kingdom of God when Jesus Christ shall reign upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. We hope to inspire every believing heart to lay hold on the blessedness of its certainty. First let the kingdom of God be set up in your own heart. There within you let Christ reign supreme. Then you will be able, when the time is ripe, to administer the affairs of His kingdom when it unfolds in all its glory to bring all the world into one blessed government of world-wide peace.

It is impossible for any man to successfully preach the message. "Ye must be born again," before that man has himself experienced the new birth. If we attempt to preach an experience we have not been made partaker of, we dismally fail in our endeavor, for, though our words may be correct, we cannot enlighten our hearers, simply because we have not experienced the truth we seek to convey. I once heard a man speak on the baptism of the Spirit, but, because he had not received the experience, it was not difficult to perceive that he was instructing the people concerning a subject of which he knew nothing. One man with an experience is better far than ten thousand men with an argument. For this reason burdened sinners will seek the advice or some little known saint who lives in a back alley, yet knows Christ, rather than men of letters and learning who know much and have experienced nothing. Long, long ago John Wesley cried, "First believe," and to that my heart responds with a glad amen. Believe first and then will all things be added unto you. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

From this then we learn a great lesson concerning the kingdom of God. Since the beginning the kingdom of God had been placed among men on different occasions, but each time it had sputtered out as a lamp out of oil because the people to whom it came did not have the King dwelling in their hearts. Moses showed how Israel lacked this heart experience when he said, "Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." **Deut. 29:2-4**. What, my brethren, do you think of that? These people had seen all the signs and wonders done in Egypt, their eyes had beheld the marvels of the wilderness journey for forty years, and yet for all their seeing they had not perceived a thing, because the Lord had not given them a heart to perceive. How dreadful a state of heart is this that men can see and hear and not perceive! How distressing a thing it was that Jesus could cure lepers, make the blind to see, stop the violent shaking of palsied men, yea, and raise the dead to life again, yet for all this highly religious men, the most learned in all the land, could in utter spiritual blindness gather together in envy to plot His death and destroy Him from the face of the earth! Is it not evident that there is often a great gulf between seeing and perceiving? Can we not grasp the truth that between the understanding of the natural mind and the understanding of the Spirit there is an impassable chasm?

Thus, because the kingdom of Christ is from above and not from beneath, it became necessary that men should possess more than a head knowledge of it. Their vital need was to experience the kingdom of God in their hearts. Such experience as this can only come by the new birth. Therefore Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Of a truth I tell you that no man will ever reign in that kingdom who has not first known the blessedness of having God's kingdom planted in his heart by the power of the new birth. By the new birth the kingdom of God is placed within us. The King reigns on the throne of our hearts. He rules there. He leads, He guides, He directs. He puts His mind within that the saints may possess the mind that

was in Christ Jesus, which is the Father's mind. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. This is the true embryo of the kingdom of God. It must have dominion within the hearts of its citizens before ever they can establish it in the earth upon which we dwell. Let us then who have begun in the Spirit never try to be made perfect by the flesh, but let us continue to grow up into Christ, who is the head, from whom the whole body, knit together by joints and bands, groweth to an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are builded together to become a habitation for God in the Spirit.

The Christ body, the sons of God, are themselves the eternal habitation of God. They are God's building. They are God's house. They are the house not made with hands. They are "My Father's house" of many mansions. Each believer is a mansion of God to dwell in, a living stone, chosen of God and precious. The body of Christ is the temple of the Lord. That living, holy temple is the throne room of Christ from which the world will be governed in the coming kingdom age. Just as the temple of Solomon was once situated in old Jerusalem, so in the dispensation of the fullness of times the temple not made with hands will be situated in the New Jerusalem, that living city, the walls, the foundations, and the gates of which are the redeemed of the Lord. It is all too wonderful for imagination, and yet so gloriously true!

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting (aionian) fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal." **Matt. 25:31-46.**

The time of the judgment of the nations is definitely stated to be "when the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." **Matt. 25:31.** And the time of the coming of the Son of man is definitely stated to be "immediately after the tribulation of those days." This fact is stated in these words: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be ... Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." **Matt. 24:27-31.**

We shall make no endeavor here to settle any old scores about the exact order of things as they will transpire on that glorious day, but I would remind all who read that the book of Revelation has given us a detailed account of the sounding of the seven trumpets of God. Then we are told that, when the seventh trumpet begins to sound, the mystery of God is finished. Rev. 10:7. It is further definitely stated that, when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the mighty fiat will go forth, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and he shall reign forever and forever." **Rev. 11:15.** Paul also, in his epistle to the Corinthians, made it very clear that at the sounding of the last trumpet, which is undoubtedly the seventh, the saints will be raised from the dead incorruptible. You will notice also that Paul refers to this mighty resurrection

of the saints as a mystery. It is undoubtedly the mystery referred to in Rev. 10:7. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." **1 Cor. 15:51-53.**

It is completely possible and entirely probable that these dead in Christ (1 Thess. 4:16-17) who are to rise first will walk on earth among the living in Christ for a few days before the actual catching up to meet the Lord, just as the saints did at the resurrection of Jesus. This at least appears to be what Paul was telling us when he said, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we, which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord (which coming is immediately after the tribulation) shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." **1 Thess. 4:14-18.**

I do not believe we can be wrong in stating that the resurrection of the just, that is, the dead in Christ, takes place just as it is stated here - at the sounding of the last trumpet. Nor do I think we can be wrong in saying that this sounding of the last trumpet will be just as stated - when the Son of man comes in His glory. Matt. 24:27-31. Neither do I think we can be wrong in affirming that this coming of the Son of man and the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet is immediately after the tribulation and not before the tribulation, as has been generally accepted by so many for so long a time.

The fact is clearly stated here that, when the resurrected saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, they are caught up to meet the Lord. It does not appear that they are caught up to be taken away into heaven, but that they go out to meet the Lord in the air and, having thus met Him, they return with Him in glory. The saints will go out to meet Him just as we might go out to meet an approaching friend, intending to escort him back to our home with joy. We have one such friendly gesture recorded in Acts 28:15. When Paul and his party were on their way to Rome, the brethren in Rome, hearing of their coming, came to meet them as far as Appii forum and the three taverns, whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage. That on a far grander scale is just what happens when the Son of man comes in His glory. The trumpet sounds and the in-Christed of all ages rise to meet the Lord to triumphantly return in glory with Him to the judgment of the nations.

Because the nations of the world will be judged according to how they have treated Christ's brethren, I wish to make the point very clear that it is the in Christ people who are the Lord's brethren. This fact is clearly stated in scripture. First we read in **Romans 8:29**, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brethren." Again **Psa. 22:22** is also very clear on this point, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." And again, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praises to Thee." **Heb. 2:12**. Jesus Himself left us with positively no doubt as to who His brethren are when He said, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." **John 20:17**. Jesus, who is the eldest Son in a vast family of sons, became the captain of their salvation. Therefore it is said, "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons (brethren) unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

It is necessary that we see clearly who the Lord's brethren are because the judgment of the nations, which takes place when the Son of man comes in His glory, concerns this one thing alone. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me," or inversely, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me." It is upon this basis and this alone that the nations of the world will be judged and will either enter the kingdom of God or be cut off from its glory as the Jews have been cut off throughout the entire church age. The Emphatic Diaglott renders **Matt. 25:46** thus: "And these shall go forth to aionian cutting off, but the righteous to aionian life." This I believe to be the correct rendering of the passage. The righteous enter into the aionian life of the kingdom age, but the unrighteous are cut off from it, many by outright death as we shall see and others to aionian correction.

It is doubtful if any judgment could be decided wholly on a national basis. Nations are made up of individuals. Some are excellent people, even though unregenerate, and some are extremely wicked. Nationally Communist Russia is anti-God and anti-Christ in all she is and does and yet for all that millions of her people are saints, serving God under the most extenuating circumstances. This same fact is true of many nations throughout the course of time.

From what we have considered above concerning the Lord's brethren, it should become very evident that it is not the Jews who are in question here. There is no reason to call the Jews the Lord's brethren in this passage. Almost without exception those who attempt to explain the judgment of the nations state immediately that the nations will be judged according to what they have done to the Jews. But the Jews are not Christ's brethren. Whatever evidence have we to say that they are? This is just one more of the many errors of the church system that comes from tradition. We have not surely forgotten the occasion when certain people said to Jesus, "Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak to Thee." Surely Christ's mother and brethren were true Jews if anybody ever was, but Jesus took the occasion to demonstrate forever who His true brethren really are. Therefore He replied, **"Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."** **Matt. 12:47-50.** There is no possible way that any sane person can make the statement, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father," apply to the Jews as a nation, so I think we can safely dismiss the idea as idle tradition. While we are always condemned for saying so, it is undeniable truth that the Jews have been the enemies of Christ throughout the entire age. No fruit has grown upon their national fig tree during this entire age of grace. The brethren referred to here are the true believers, the true church, the company of the in-Christed, the truly saved. In great hate and wicked rejection the Jewish nation demanded that the blood of Christ be upon them and upon their children (Matt. 27:25) and thus nationally they have been "cut off throughout this entire age. Even to this day they still bear the dreadful burden of the curse they called down upon themselves when Christ came to His own, but His own received Him not.

The brethren of the Lord are the believers, the blood-washed saints, and the true church of Jesus Christ. Volumes have been written about the terrible sufferings of the Jews during the past two thousand years but, while we sympathize with them and do not justify their tormentors, they did not suffer for righteousness sake. Christians and the world at large are inclined to forget the terrible persecutions against the true church of Jesus Christ throughout the last two thousand years, during which time almost countless millions of martyrs were persecuted unto death for their faith in Jesus Christ, by sword, by torture, by the rack, by imprisonment in dungeons, by inquisition, by the iron maiden, by the fires of the stake and every other fiendish torment that the devilish minds of Christ-hating men could devise against them.

The ten dreadful persecutions perpetrated against the saints by the pagan Roman Empire destroyed millions of Christians, the Lord's brethren. Church history records that in Alexandria alone as many as eighty martyrs a day were slaughtered for their faith in Christ, but the persecution of the saints under such monsters as Nero, Hadrian and Diocletian were not more severe than the abominations committed by the Roman church system in Spain, in France and even in England. From twenty to one hundred thousand Waldensians were slaughtered in France by decree of the Pope in the year 1209 and endless other thousands all through the dark ages. Even in our days the dreadful aggregate of Christians persecuted to death under the Communist regimes has by some estimates now reached the appalling total of fifty million. The persecutions in Spain, Italy and France and to a lesser degree in England were carried out with the consent and the help of the governments then in power, as is also now the case in the U.S.S.R.

When, therefore, the day comes for the nations to be judged, the fearful determining question will be, "What have you done with My brethren?" What the nations and systems have done to Christ's brethren and this vital question alone will decide whether these nations enter with joy into the kingdom of God or whether they must suffer the correction of aionian cutting off.

If the reader will study an up to date map of the world, he will soon see that outside of the Anglo-Saxon world there is very little freedom of religion left anywhere. Great areas of Asia are under Communism, while India

grovels in darkness that can be felt and will probably very soon fall under the Communist heel. The dark continent of Africa is already under tyrants except in those diminishing areas where Christ is still honored as Lord. If heathen, outside influences have their way, these islands of faith will soon disappear and with them the last vestiges of Christianity in that land. The world scene grows increasingly dark as the enemies of Christ and His brethren, the true church, increase their malevolent, anti-Christian hold, but the day of their judgment is near at hand, and, sooner far than evil seducers and God-hating, rebellious nations realize, the King will appear in His glory and all the holy angels with Him to take His seat upon the throne of His glory to judge the nations. On that day their joy and crown or their dreadful disaster and loss will depend on what they have done with Christ's brethren, the true saints. Some will go away into aionian cutting off, but the righteous into aionian life.

"And O what a weeping and wailing
As the lost were told of their fate!
They cried to the rocks and the mountains;
They prayed, but their prayer was too late."

The details of such a momentous judgment as this must ever remain in the hands of a completely just and righteous God, full of mercy, wisdom and grace. If we poor, puny men with our finite minds try to decide the details which only the Infinite knows, we will succeed only in sinking ourselves more deeply into the quagmire of uncertainty and misunderstanding. Suffice it here to say that nations who have never known the true God or heard that in love He gave His Son for their sins will be judged according to what they have and not according to what they have not. He who knew his Lord's will and did things worthy of stripes will be judged with much greater exactness and severity than he who knew not his Lord's will and did things worthy o stripes. Luke 12:47, 48.

Following this all important judgment of the living nation; of the earth, the long-awaited kingdom age will begin. The importance of this judgment of the nations comes into clearer focus when we learn that it is the nations who will be left on earth after this judgment who will inherit and inhabit the kingdom of God for its entire duration of one thousand years Rev. 20:4,6. These who have treated Christ's brethren with kindness and mercy will enjoy the blessedness of that wonderful age in which Christ will be King and the saints, His brethren of all ages, will reign in the glory of their resurrection with Him. Who could possibly be more surprised than these nations, who, though unconverted, have blessed the children of God, when they hear the King say, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: For inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye did it unto Me." And these shall go away into aionian life.

One of the most revealing passages concerning the coming of the Lord, the judgment of the nations and the setting up of the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is found in the last two chapters of the prophecy of Zechariah. Here we find a vivid picture of the momentous events, which take place at the coming of the Lord. The invasion of the land of Israel by the forces of Antichrist and the capture of two-thirds of the city of Jerusalem is set out in Zech. 13:8. The refining of the remaining one third is shown in verse 9. In these chapters a vivid and terrifying picture is drawn of all nations gathering against Jerusalem to battle. Chapter 14:2. Then in verse 4 as in Matt. 25:31,32 we see the coming of the Lord to the Mount of Olives and the great and terrible earthquake foretold in Rev. 16:18. Again in verses 6 and 7 we have a prophetic account of the day of darkness foretold by Jesus Christ when He said, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light."

The careful observer may be aware that the terrible calamities and earthquakes with all their fearful destruction will actually have a part in preparing the earth for the marvelous productivity of the kingdom age. Verses 4, 8, 10, and 11. Thus in these calamities that befall the earth the words of Isaiah the prophet find their blessed fulfillment. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 40:4-5.**

In Zech. 14:9 we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ becomes King over all the earth. With this wonderful coronation and enthronement comes the final glorious answer to the prayer that has burst from saintly lips

times without number since Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven."

In Zech. 14:12 a vivid description is given detailing the manner by which wicked nations will be cut off from the earth to live no more until the thousand years are finished. **Rev. 20:5.** "Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." And a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them and they shall lay hold on each other and kill each other. Verse 13. Thus their aionian cutting off will come. In Verse 16 we are given a clear picture of the nations who will actually enter the kingdom age. Thus the prophet continues: "Everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts and to keep the feast of tabernacles." These, we have a right to assume, will be the nations to whom Jesus will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." In Rev. 12:5 we read of the manchild, who is Christ and His brethren, who will rule with a rod of iron, and in Zech. 14:17-19 we are given a vivid portrait of the manner in which Christ and the saints will carry out that iron rule. "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." Finally, in verses 20 and 21 we have a remarkable display of the holiness and righteousness of the kingdom reign when all will be holiness unto the Lord and there will be no more Canaanite in the house of the Lord forever.

Thus in the following dramatic utterance the prophet Zechariah vividly describes the coming of the Lord, the judgment of the nations and the beginning of the kingdom age: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter it shall be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one upon the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor, and Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain;

there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more Canaanite in the house of the Lord." **Zech. 14.**

So shall be the momentous events accompanying the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him. The trumpet will sound, the righteous of all ages will rise from their graves incorruptible and all living believers will be changed. They will put on incorruption. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power. At the mighty blast of the trumpet of God the elect are gathered from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other. They will ascend to meet the Lord and return triumphantly with the heavenly armies. Rev. 19:11-16.

The nations of the ungodly already have been gathered against Jerusalem to battle and will be there for the beginning of the judgment of the nations we have been considering. That some will be destroyed is taught in Zech. 14:16 and Matt. 25:41-46. That others will be left to inherit the kingdom is as clearly taught in Zech. 14:12 and Matt. 25:34-40.

The writer is well aware that it is impossible to cover every aspect of a subject so infinitely vast as this, and I frankly confess that I could not do so even if I would. There are a few things, however, which may be added here to help us come to a better understanding of the last events of the ages. The final events of the ages are fulfillment of the purpose, which began in embryo in the Garden of Eden. As we approach the end of this age, it is only normal that the Spirit of the Lord would graciously reveal many things, which have been hidden from devout and earnest saints who lived in earlier times. There should never be any aspersions cast on their wisdom or integrity because of that, for the Lord reveals truth only in its proper time. The apostle Peter described the growth that is to be expected in our understanding as we draw near to so great salvation. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you..." **1 Pet. 1:10-12.** Thus we may also expect that in our day the Spirit will reveal all truth particularly applicable to the day in which we live, which truth is "present truth."

The present interpretation of scripture, which shows conclusively that there will be more than one judgment, was not always understood. For centuries the general teaching was that there was only one judgment, which would include in itself all the righteous and all the wicked of all ages and dispensations. Furthermore, it was generally believed that there would be only one great resurrection, commonly known as the general resurrection, in which all mankind, both good and wicked, would be raised from the dead for judgment. This general resurrection and general judgment would be at the end of the world and after it the righteous would enter eternal bliss and the wicked would be damned to eternal torment. The failure to understand that the judgment of the nations taught in Matt. 25 and the judgment of the great white throne disclosed in Rev. 20:11-15 are at least one thousand years apart, has caused endless difficulty in interpreting the scripture. This certainly is one instance where "rightly dividing the word of truth" pays tremendous dividends in understanding.

In a previous chapter we considered the judgment seat of Christ. At this judgment only believers were present. They are not to be judged for sin or anything to do with sin. The sin question was for them forever settled when they first believed on Jesus Christ their Lord. Their judgment is for rewards. As the scripture states, if any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. The conception is of a dais upon which the rewarder sits to award the prizes and to whom the victors come to receive their awards much as the prizes are given in ancient and modern games. This judgment for rewards is at the time of the coming of the Lord, which appears certain from **Rev. 22:12: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be."**

The next great assize is the judgment of the nations, which we have considered in some detail in this chapter. The time of this judgment is stated as being when the Son of man shall come in His glory. Matt. 25:31-32. The people to be judged are the nations then living on the earth. These unregenerate men and women are not being judged for their faith in Christ or even for their acceptance or rejection of Him. Their judgment concerns their attitude toward Christ's brethren. We have already made it clear that Christ's brethren are those who do the will of God and not the Jews, as is generally believed. Those people and nations who have shown favor to Christ's brethren, even though they had not themselves come to a knowledge of His grace, will be addressed by the words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." If on the other hand they have persecuted the saints, as so many nations have done, they will hear the dreadful words, "Depart from Me into aionian destruction (or cutting off)." Some of these will immediately perish in the manner Zechariah has described, but others will have opportunity to enter the kingdom to undergo correction, not as people blessed as the others, but as people under a curse similar to the curse the Jew has endured in this age, though possibly more severe.

With the judgment of the nations the new age, the kingdom age, which will last one thousand years, begins. Rev. 20:1-6. Old conditions will have passed away and the world will continue, not under the rule of carnal man, but under celestial rule with Christ as Lord and King. War will be abolished and universal peace will be established and God's will will be done in all the earth. All things that offend will have been gathered out of the kingdom and cast into the fire. The whiskey traffic will end. The filthy movies will be no more. Tobacco will not be grown for its present use. Red light districts and gambling halls will vanish from the earth. War will be gone. Frost, hail, drought, disease and injustice will be no more. The wild nature will leave the animals, and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain (the mountain refers to the government), for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Satan himself will be bound for the entire thousand years and will no more tempt the inhabitants of the earth until the thousand years are finished.

At the end of the thousand years he is loosed for a little season and will once again go forth to deceive the nations. Because millions will not have accepted Christ even in this glorious millennial age, Satan, being loosed a little season at the end of the kingdom age, will find a following as numberless as the sands of the sea, ready to make one last brief effort to overthrow the King of kings. Rev. 20:7-9. Then will follow the resurrection of all the unrighteous dead of all ages since man has inhabited the earth. These will stand before the great white throne judgment. Their judgment will depend upon whether or not their names are in the book of life, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast in the lake of fire, which is the second death. After this judgment a new age begins, which scripture names the dispensation of the fullness of times. In this final age all things in heaven and earth will be gathered into Christ. These things we will discuss in the final chapter.

In so great a subject as this wherein so much is involved over so great a period of time, it is difficult to know which part of it should be discussed first lest we lose the proper sequence of events. The devout reader in his studies must certainly have been made aware that a mighty, divine plan, stretching from eternity to eternity, has been unfolding before our eyes, a plan through which all mankind, every man in his own order, is coming to know God and be gathered into Christ. Terrible as these great judgments are and fearful as will be the wailing and gnashing of teeth for those who have rebelled against the love of God, it is certain that through the fires of judgment God will reveal Himself to all mankind just as the scripture has stated. "For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favor be shewed to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Isa. 26:9-10.

The greatness of God's plan unfolding before our eyes like a mighty scroll will end at last with that triumphant scene so dramatically described by John wherein "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Rev. 5:13.

CHAPTER SIX THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The purpose of God may be likened to a thousand rivers, all flowing majestically into one vast ocean, and surely that ocean must be the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul, summing up the many things that bring completion to God's plan for these ages, made this all-embracing statement: "Then cometh the end, when He

(Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power For He (Christ) must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, for He (God) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him (Christ), it is manifest that He is excepted (God), which did put all things under Him (Christ). And when all things are subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that did put all things under Him that God may be all in all." **1 Cor. 15:24-28.** Weymouth translates this scripture thus: "After that comes the end, when He is to surrender the kingship to God the Father, when He has abolished all other government and all other authority and power. For He must be King until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that is to be abolished is death; for God has put all things under His feet. And when He says, 'All things are put under,' obviously this does not include Him who has put them all under Him. But when all things have been put under Him, then the Son Himself will also come under Him, in order that God may be all in all."

It is impossible to speak with too much fervor or to be too abundant in our praise of the excellent glories that will be in that millennial reign of Christ, which is even now at our doors. Then He shall reign with the manifested sons of God to bring about an entire dispensation of peace and equity in which man shall learn war no more and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. That wondrous age, described by prophets and apostles who in the Spirit were carried beyond the darkness of this present age into realms celestial, supercedes all the dreams and visions of mankind. Dreams cannot picture a world so fair; sorrow and death may not enter there. There warriors beat their swords into plowshares. No longer will they train in the arts of bloodshed. There they will learn war no more nor ever again in anger lift up a sword. There wolves lie down with lambs and lions eat straw like oxen, and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters now cover the seas.

That glorious kingdom of Christ will be as literal as any kingdom that has ever been on earth, as literal as the kingdoms of David and Solomon, but it will exceed those kingdoms in justice and glory as the glory of the day exceeds the night. The kingdom of God will be as high above the empires of men as heaven is high above the earth. None of the curses of human government will be there to mar that age, and no blessing will be missing.

It would be a most beautiful thing if all the saints of the Lord could have an open vision that would enable them to understand how all those rivers of purpose we spoke of above are harmoniously flowing toward one divine and eternal fulfillment. The problem seems to be that men get hung up on one theme. One sees God's plan of redemption running like a river through the pages of holy writ, but so often he sees nothing more. Another man sees God's purpose for Israel and he tends to spend his life harping on that one theme and that alone. Still another lays hold on the truths of the law and there at Sinai he spends his life, never getting beyond the outward demands of the Law of Moses. Yet another lays hold on prophecy, spending his life trying to unravel its mysteries. Another sees the great truth of the restitution of all things and spends his life hoping to prove this very important theme. But unless we are able to see that all these blessed streams of truth are part of one river, flowing harmoniously into one immense purpose, then surely we have failed to see any purpose at all. We become blind leaders of the blind, staggering toward the ditch of ignorance and misunderstanding.

The more we study the Bible and the more we see its themes unfold, the more we will discover that its many truths are in fact but one truth. They are like the countless threads of a garment that, though they be so many, they fashion but one garment. They are like the stitches of a seamless robe that dare not be divided lest the whole garment disintegrate.

I shall not hesitate to explain to you, my brethren that our omniscient and omnipotent Father has but one eternal purpose. That one purpose is to establish and extend the glory of His heavenly kingdom into the farthest reaches of His universe where God Himself shall be all and in all. In the end (if such a term may be used) His kingdom will have extended itself both over the earth upon which we dwell and over every planet and galaxy in every other universe in all the endless celestial sphere.

Well do I remember listening with awe and wonder as a learned astronomer lectured on the wonders of our own galaxy. He pointed out with eloquence that there were something like two hundred fifty million stars in our own galaxy and then with a breathtaking touch of inspiration he said, "[And there are enough galaxies in the](#)

universe to give one galaxy to every man and woman who has ever been born. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my frail understanding and what can I do but sigh with David, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" The answer to that intriguing question never did find a complete answer until the inspired Paul unfolded its hidden mystery for us in the following words: "Unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of Him (meaning, what hast Thou in mind for man)? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him (man). But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." **Heb. 2:5-9.**

This, I aver, is God's plan for the government of the universe when the time is ripe for it. Man in Christ, man in God's image, is God's government in the kingdom of God. Was not this magnificent purpose burning in the heart of the Most High when on a creative day He proclaimed the mysterious fiat, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness and let Us give him dominion?" Then in shadowy symbols He painted a picture of a universe ruled by man in God's image, saying, "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." **Gen. 1:26,** In this shadowy type we behold a vivid portrait of the purpose of God for man, that when man comes fully into God's image, he shall be, first, the ruler of things beneath; next, the things upon the earth, and lastly, the things of the heavens also. One may not fully embrace so great a truth from so small and insignificant a type, but it was upon this very Edenic type that the prophet David enlarged when by the Spirit he said, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth." **Psa. 8:3-9.** As I have stated above, it was the writer to the Hebrews who finally enlarged this parable of man's God-given dominion that we might see that the worlds to come were not to be governed by angels, but by man who had come into the glorious image of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the express image of the Father.

When the saints who read these things consider the infinite expanse of God's purpose and the exceeding glory He is laying up in store for those who love Him, how readily do we strip for the race that lies before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Jesus also, in like manner beholding the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now at this very moment seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. Already He has taken His place on the throne, where He awaits with joy the preparation of all His younger brothers, who also are sons of God. These, too, have seen the joy set before them, and they, like Him, are running this difficult race with infinite patience and awesome endurance. They would be forced from their arduous course in a moment were it not that they, seeing the prize that is set before them, seek their strength from God and, having received His strength, harder press toward that mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Run the race with patience, my brother, my sister. The prize before us is the image of God, and to all who come into that same image the crown will be given, even the crown of Him who reigns over the things beneath, the things upon, and the things above.

O how I wonder at the folks who care not a straw for such an inheritance as this? How I marvel that they can carelessly say, "Just so long as I am saved, that is all I care." Well, brother, if you want all your works to be burned up in the fires of the judgment seat of Christ, then that is your pitiful decision, but, as for me, I shall seek ever increasing grace that I may have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

God is unchanging, but that does not mean that He is static. Though He is immutable, He is eternally progressive. The acorn contains within its tiny self all the elements of the giant oak that centuries from now will tower upon the spot where it fell into the ground. The infinitesimal protoplasm planted in the womb contains all

the elements of the strong man who will one day walk abroad and govern the earth. Thus our heavenly Father plants the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of feeble men, for "the kingdom of God is within you." From its small beginning of dominion over birds and beasts and fishes it develops and grows until the man in God's image is given dominion over all things everywhere, whether it be beneath the earth, upon it, or in the multiplied billions of worlds in the celestial spheres. He plants the kingdom of God in the human heart, the earth which we are, while we pray in blessed hope, "Thy will be done in this earth which I am. Set up Thy throne, O God, in me and reign supreme in the kingdom of my heart. Rule my flesh. Rule my spirit. Rule my mind. Conquer me and the enemies within me, the world, the flesh, and the devil, the carnal mind and the corruption of the old man. Rule here within me and grant me the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Let His mind be my mind that I may be a son of God. Let His attitudes be my attitudes, His power my power, His grace my grace, His kingdom my kingdom. Thy will be done in me." "Let me not leave thee, nor return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also if aught but death part thee and me."

This is the attitude of true sons of God, my beloved. Nothing less than this will ever suffice. I am appalled at the pride and arrogance that presumes to sonship, imagining that God will walk with proud and scornful men. I am amazed to find thousands of Christians who still imagine they can remain an integral part of the Babylon church system and still attain to sonship in Him. Have you ever heard the Holy Spirit's call to sonship? Then listen while He speaks to you. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17-18.**

It was not I who made that demand. These piercing words of truth are not a concoction of my imagination. These are words of truth and soberness, spoken by the Holy Spirit to men and women who long to be sons and daughters of God Almighty. Men will never attain to sonship while they remain a slave within that system which in arrogance and pride calls itself the church, when it is not the church at all, but a blinding, restricting confusion that holds men's spirits in such bondage to traditions that they can never see the glory of God nor His purpose for their lives. It is only after their feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and their loins girt about with the robe of Christ's righteousness and they rise up to follow Him that their chains fall off. Then the prison doors open on their rusty hinges and they behold a world of freedom and revelation beyond the constricting walls of denominationalism and human tradition. Within those towering walls and massive gates doctors of the law sit, poring over the letter of the word, but never beholding the spirit of truth. Unto them our Lord speaks today as He spoke in the long ago, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." "Entering in" is the key of knowledge, and if we take that key away, we lose all hope of further progress with God.

Many years ago as a young man of twenty-one I joined an evangelical denomination and became one of its ministers. A few years later they ordained me. How well I remember that I was given a questionnaire to fill out and sign. One of the questions asked read like this: "If at some future time you see some light not accepted by this denomination, are you willing to quietly withdraw?" To this I willingly gave my consent, because, thought I, such wonderful people as these would never reject light, but would willingly embrace it that they might progress with God. But after some years went by, I was to learn the sad lesson that such was not the case. The key of knowledge had long ago been laid aside and when light dawned and greater understanding came, it was not only promptly rejected, but evil spoken of as well without even an investigation. With earnestness I speak the truth, my brother. It is not enough that we hear the truth. It is not even enough to investigate the truth. There must be a willingness to search and let the light of Christ shine into the heart. There must be a readiness to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. You see, brother and sister, when a new dimension of light is given, it always demands an adjustment of everything we once knew. The man who all his life has thundered the law from Sinai's mount will have to somewhat lower his tune after he has stood with Christ at Calvary, for there he finds God removing His law from tablets of stone to write them upon fleshly tables of the hearts of new born men, who no longer keep the law because they cringe in fear, but because the law of God has become their nature, being written in their hearts. No longer do they try to love God contrary to nature, but now, because they possess the nature of God, love flows like a river from the heart.

The man who has depended upon his wisdom must, if he would attain to the wisdom of God, admit that he knows nothing. The man who is a power among men must become helpless and weak if he is going to be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost. Did not Paul teach us all these things when he said, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But (but, but) what things were gain for me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." **Phil. 3:4-10.** Then in **verses 13 and 14** he says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We cannot progress with God without increasing truth and we cannot see the ever progressing, ever growing truth without the spirit of revelation. The Lord will not give us great light while we remain within the walls of denominationalism because their doctors and lawyers will crush the egg, destroying the life within before ever it is hatched. You may dispute my point if you wish, my brother, but right at this very moment even a blind man can see that, instead of the denominations pressing on from light to light, they are taking massive strides back into the darkness and bondage of Rome. Into the pit from whence they were once digged, they are now falling again.

The mail has just arrived and among the many letters that have come one dear brother from San Diego writes these words of wisdom, which I take the liberty to quote to you now. "You may learn the whole Bible by heart and speak to any point in divinity according to text or letter and yet know nothing of God or of spiritual life. If you be always handling the letter of the word, always licking the letter, always chewing upon that great thing you have, no marvel you are such starvelings. The letter is the husk; the word, the spirit, is the kernel. The letter is the earthen jar; the spirit is the manna. The letter is the shadow; the spirit is the substance. The letter is the sheath; the spirit is the two-edged sword. The letter is the hard, encasing bone; the spirit is the inward marrow that nourishes the soul. If you once know the truth experimentally after the Spirit, you will no longer make such a stir about forms and externals as if that were the great and only reformation. The true cause of spiritual dryness is that men strive and contend so much for the letter and the external part of God's worship that they neglect the inward and internal altogether." That is an exposition of truth. Everywhere we see billions being spent on outward show, fine buildings, comfortable pews, lettered and famous preachers, programs and schemes of every imaginable description. It is not difficult therefore to understand why the spirits of so many Christians are as wizened as prunes and as dry as toothpicks. All this outward show is but a sepulcher void of spirit and full of dead men's bones.

In the nineteenth chapter of Luke, verse eleven, Jesus sought to correct an erroneous view of His kingdom. Many of them apparently thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. To correct this wrong understanding He spoke a parable, the meaning of which would be readily understood by any Israelite. He spoke of a certain nobleman who journeyed into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Before he departed, he called his ten servants and delivered unto them ten pounds, and said, "Occupy till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent messengers after him, saying, "We will not have this man to rule over us."

It should not be difficult to understand that the ten servants referred to here are the ten tribes of the house of Israel, who had long ago thoroughly rebelled against the Lord. They had refused to have the Lord reign over them and under the wicked king, Jereboam, had worshipped idols and served other gods. I do not propose to explore this subject now except to make clear that the idea of a great kingdom in which God Himself should reign as King was not a thought that began with the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus. The kingdom does not suddenly appear. The seeds of God's kingdom were planted ages ago.

I now venture to propose that the very first mention of the creation of man in the image of God is the Lord's declaration of a kingdom in which man in God's image would rule the world. The heavenly decree, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness and let Us give him dominion," is without doubt the first proclamation of the kingdom of God.

There are four prerequisites to the establishment of a kingdom. First there must be a land. Secondly, there must be citizens. Thirdly, there must be a king and, fourth, there must be laws to govern the kingdom. In Eden the land is a garden, the citizens were Adam and Eve, the King was the Lord, and the law was, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." **Gen. 1:17-18.** From this minute, almost infinitesimal, beginning we should be able to see that God's intention to establish a kingdom was uppermost in His thought. Wonderful as was this garden kingdom, it could not continue for long because man could not be trusted to reign until he had first been proved through temptation and thus come to fully know good and evil experimentally. Our God will never give the reins of His kingdom to untried and imperfect people. When at last the kingdom of God appears on earth in all its magnificent glory, it will be given into the hands of the sons of God, saints who have risen all the way up through the ranks of trial and temptation to the "in Christ" realm of perfection. Jesus Christ Himself will be the head Son, the eldest of the family of brothers, the beginning and first born from the dead. He has already been made perfect through suffering and, by the time the Lord is ready to establish His heavenly kingdom on earth, all the other sons of God, intrinsic members of His mystical body, will likewise have been perfected through suffering. The innocence of Adam and Eve was not sufficient to assure eternal righteousness, for in a moment of trial they fell and the kingdom fell with them.

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of trial, tribulation, and affliction or the value of our perfection and spiritual growth that accrues through grief and suffering. "He who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." It will be the sinless people and they alone who reign with Christ in His kingdom. To place a man in authority who had not been tested under the most tortuous conditions is to make a fatal mistake and it is a mistake our God will never make. He who is to rule must first learn to be ruled. Have you ever noticed how well, meaning politicians, full of excellent intentions for the welfare of the nation, become corrupt during their term of office? Very few indeed ever escape that corruption. They fall prey to bribes, do tricky things, tell lies and corrupt themselves in many ways and then try to justify themselves by pretending they acted in the best interests of the people. A man who is not sinless and in whom the carnal nature has not been fully crucified and eradicated would soon ruin the kingdom of God if he were in authority.

The dreadful story of God's rejection was told in Eden just as it was told in the parable of the ten servants. The inhabitants of Eden rejected their King, disobeyed His laws, and through their deeds proclaimed, "We will not have this man to rule over us."

The next appearance of the kingdom of God was at Sinai, Four hundred and thirty years before Sinai the Lord had called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to make of him a great nation. From Abraham the twelve tribes of Israel descended and now, after much suffering and many trials in Egypt, they stood at Mt. Sinai to again be offered a kingdom in which God would reign. Here, as in Eden, the essential elements of the kingdom appear, the king, the people, the Promised Land, and the laws of God to govern them. When the fiery law of God was given to them at Sinai, Exod. 20, they proclaimed their willingness to walk in obedience, but, even while Moses tarried in the mount, they made a golden calf and worshipped it. Thus in spite of their good intentions they still were carnal, unregenerate men, certain to follow their own lusts, break God's law, and reject Him from being king. Israel at that moment became the world's first and only theocracy, the first great nation to ever have God as their king. For forty years the Lord led them, fought their battles, provided them daily with angels' food, which they ate in the form of manna. Though some three million of them wandered in the wilderness for forty years, there was not a feeble person in all their tribes. Psa. 105:37. No sickness, no madness, no doctors, no hospitals, no pharmacies, no crutches and no ambulances were ever known among them. One thing was lacking and only one, and that was a spiritual entity. Because their hearts were unregenerate and unconverted, they were always prone to lust after evil things and reject the Lord their God. They still went astray continually and in their hearts turned back into Egypt. Even so God remained their king and the theocracy prevailed until the days of Samuel the prophet.

"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.... And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." **1 Sam. 8:1,3-7.**

So here we have it again! God, their King, is rejected and in His stead an earthly monarch chosen so that they would no longer be a theocracy with God as their king, but an earthly monarchy like all the heathen nations around about them. It is interesting, but pitifully sad, to notice that, when Israel demanded a king, Samuel thought they were rejecting him. The people thought they were rejecting Samuel's two dissolute sons, but God alone knew what the truth really was. He knew they were rejecting Him. Therefore He said to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." How deceitful is the heart of man! It is deceitful and desperately wicked, and who can know it? What plausible arguments carnal men produce as excuses for rejecting God's ways and what dire results are certain to follow!

Now notice a most remarkable thing. If you can believe it, you will understand the basic cause of all the distress and turmoil that have followed the Israel nations from the day they rejected the kingdom of God until the tumultuous days in which we live. Though the Israel nations have been peculiarly blessed because of the covenant made to Abraham and his seed and they are beloved for their fathers' sake, yet endless woes and tribulation have beset us in the past and will continue to beset us until the day when the kingdom of God appears on earth, Jesus Christ then being Lord of all and all the world under His control. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." **Dan. 7:13,14.**

After Israel had rejected God as their king, as told in 1 Sam. 8, Samuel was instructed by the Lord to call the people together and show them the manner of the king that should reign over them (1 Sam. 8:10) and thus the manner of the kingdom (1 Sam. 10:25) that would endure from that time on till man's rule would be no more. Let us make no mistake here. These words of Samuel, which we shall now read, comprise a great prophetic utterance, informing the Israel people of the woes they would suffer from that time forward through the ages until that great day of Christ's coming when He shall be crowned King of kings and Lord of Lords and He shall reign upon the throne of His glory over all the earth.

"And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "Nay; but we will have a king to rule over us." **1 Sam. 8:10-19.**

He will take! He will take! He will take! Six times in that brief passage is that obnoxious phrase used. He will take your sons, take your daughters, take your fields, take your seed, take your vineyards, take your menservants, take your maidservants, take your goodliest young men, take your asses, take your sheep and take your servants. Is not this the greedy, devilish attitude of every government on earth today? We are always searching to find the source of the woes in which we find ourselves embroiled, but if we really want to know the source of our trouble, we will find it in these godless governments we have chosen to reign over us and order

our lives. Every government on earth is looking for new ways to "take" by means of taxation, much of which is squandered by fools, wasted on luxury, and given in bribes to pervert justice.

This is the manner of the king that rules over us and this is the manner of the kingdom of heaven at the present time. It is a kingdom in which man rules, a kingdom in which the wheat is well nigh choked to death by the tares and thorns that are everywhere. This manner of kingdom will continue to persist regardless of any government or political party that may arise, and it will continue right down to the very day that the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Then shall He reign upon the throne of David and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.

When Jesus Christ commenced His ministry, He began with the words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Here we have the actual appearance in person of the heavenly king. It was well known to Him that the glorious kingdom reign would not begin at that time. He had not come then to reign, but to give His life a ransom for many. The Jews had long hoped that, when the Messiah came according to the prophecies of scripture, He would come to destroy all their enemies and restore the kingdom of Israel. But, because He came as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many, they could not see how He could possibly be the promised Messiah and, because their hearts were still hard and unregenerate, they promptly rejected Him. Thus the scripture laments, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

You will notice two very distinct scriptures, which prove conclusively that the kingdom of heaven had long ago been the possession of the children of Israel, as I have already demonstrated, though of course it was only in embryo form and by no means complete. Nevertheless, it was among them as we shall see. Jesus spoke a parable concerning a certain householder who had let his vineyard out to husbandmen who in their wicked attempts to possess the vineyard for themselves killed his servants who were sent to them and finally killed his son. **Matt. 21:33-41**. Then He said, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." **Verses 42, 43**. I think we must agree that, if the kingdom was now being taken away from them, then it is certain that up until then they must have in some small manner possessed it.

Again, after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, His disciples enquired of Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" **Acts 1:6**. The word restore recognizes the fact that the kingdom had once been in their possession. These words were spoken to the Jews, who were of the house of Judah. Centuries before this the ten tribes of the house of Israel had rejected their king, but the kingdom of the throne of David had remained with the house of Judah. Long centuries before Christ the Lord had given the house of Israel a bill of divorcement and she was put away as an adulterous wife. Hosea 2:1,2. But the house of Judah never has been divorced or put away. But now Judah also rejected her Messiah King. It was now their turn to cry out in the words of the parable, "We will not have this man to rule over us." **Luke 19:14**. And so it was that when Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" they roared out their rebellious reply, "We have no king but Caesar." Thus, they, too, rejected the King, and the kingdom of God, insignificant as it then was, was taken away from them to be given to a nation who would bring forth the fruits of it. **Matt. 21:43**.

I dare not attempt any detail here, but suffice it to say that that other nation was undoubtedly the repentant house of Israel, for, though they had long ago rejected God, now there was to be at least a partial restoration among them as Simeon clearly indicated in his wonderful prophecy of Luke 2:25-35. He prophesied that Jesus would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel." Verse 32. In the parable of the prodigal son it should be evident to any earnest reader that the oldest son, who remained with his father, represents the house of Judah, but the prodigal son, who strayed away and wasted his living with harlots, is the house of Israel. But it was the prodigal son in his extremity who repented and returned to his father; whereupon the father made a great feast, put the best robe on him, a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and said, "This my son was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found." And they began to make merry. This signifies the repentance of the house of Israel, and I think we may say with some assurance that ever since Pentecost God has been choosing sons from among this people who for two thousand years have honored Christ as the Son of God, glorifying His name as such.

With the coming of Jesus Christ, the King and Messiah, a massive, progressive step was taken toward the formation and development of the kingdom of God. For four thousand years there had been some small semblance of the kingdom of God in the earth, but because the hearts of the people were unregenerate and of the earth earthy, they continually rejected the Lord as their King and time and again willfully and arrogantly refused to submit themselves to his reign. When He gave them laws, though they promised to obey, they broke them, and like an adulterous wife they always sought other lovers and opened their feet to every passer by. Ezek 16:25. Hosea 2:5. It is impossible that the kingdom of God should ever be established in such soil as this.

Centuries before the coming of Jesus, the prophet Jeremiah had spoken the word of the Lord to Israel and Judah, because the Lord knew from the beginning that the basic problem with all mankind lay in their desperately wicked, deceitful and unregenerate hearts. Jer. 17:9. Therefore the prophet Jeremiah, looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ and the new covenant, or the new testament as we know it, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:

After those days, (that is, the days of Jesus), saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Jer. 31:31-33. This wonderful prophecy, which foretold the complete change that would take place in man's nature by God's grace, began to be fulfilled when repentant sinners were born again after the Holy Spirit was outpoured upon the waiting hosts at Pentecost. This was the beginning of the new covenant experience spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet. It entailed a complete change from outward endeavor to inward experience. Henceforth the Lord would transform the inner man, placing the kingdom of God within his heart and mind and shedding upon men the very spirit of the kingdom so that God's laws and God's will would be planted in the believer's heart and God's kingdom would become his inner nature. The will of God would be done in the earth, which the believer is, flowing forth as living water from his transformed heart.

Nicodemus came to Jesus, evidently intending to ask Him some question concerning the kingdom of God, but Jesus, who needed not that any man should ask Him, John 16:30, forestalled his query and, before he could ask, gave him the answer he so desperately needed. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. My friends, Jesus was not telling Nicodemus the way to get to heaven, as the preachers are always declaring. He was telling him of the one and only way by which it would be possible for any man to see the kingdom of God. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. How then would it be possible for a natural man to ever be able to see, comprehend or understand such a spiritual matter as the kingdom of God? The natural man is by nature contrary to God in all that he is and does. This fact man had demonstrated and proved for thousands of years. The ages had proved that it is impossible for the natural man to see or grasp spiritual entities, but the new birth transforms the natural man into a spiritual man. It changes the sinner into a saint. It takes away the stony heart out of his flesh and gives him an heart of flesh. "You hath He made alive," said Paul, "who were dead in trespasses and sins". We are told that the dead know not anything. How then could a man, dead in trespasses and sins, ever be able to see, understand or comprehend the kingdom of God, since it can only be understood in the Spirit? It is impossible. Therefore Jesus forcefully told this man who was dead in trespasses and sins, "Except a man be born again, he cannot, cannot, cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now he that hath the Son hath life. Therefore, if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life (or alive) because of righteousness. The new birth is a new covenant experience. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, "I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." Jer. 31:33. After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ the world entered into an entirely new age, a new dimension of the kingdom of God, an age which Paul calls "the dispensation of the grace of God." Eph. 3:2. No longer was the law of God to remain written on cold tables of stone, but henceforth it would be written in the fleshly tables of men's hearts. When the Spirit was outpoured, men began to be born of the Spirit. They began to be saved! They became washed in the life-giving blood of Jesus Christ. Their sins and iniquities were washed away. Their

hearts were made clean. They were baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. They began to be sanctified and made pure and holy vessels inside and out. They began to receive the mind of Christ and they became a new creation in Christ Jesus. And they began to experience the heavenly wonder of the kingdom of God dwelling within their hearts. His divine power gave unto them all things that pertained to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that had called them to glory and virtue. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Then they began to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Compare 2 Pet. 1:3-7. Now that these God given virtues are all necessary attributes of the kingdom of God Peter leaves absolutely no doubt, for he says, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:8-11.**

Thus now with all conviction and solemnity I tell you that the kingdom of God is not merely among us as it was with Israel of old, but the kingdom of God is within the saints who are the spiritual inhabitants of the kingdom that is now taking place in the hearts of twice born men. Christ is not yet ruling upon His throne over all nations of the world. That is yet to come, but He is ruling now in the sons whom He is preparing to reign with Him when in the very near future He appears gloriously in the clouds of heaven to put down all human rule and authority and power and to visibly be seated upon His resplendent throne. So saith the prophet: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." **Dan. 2:44.**

One day the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Now I think you will agree that we do all need to learn how to pray; and, if we were frank enough to admit it, we would confess that most of our prayers go unanswered simply because we do not know how to pray. If we would learn that the central theme of all God's purpose is the kingdom of God, then we would strive to make our lives revolve around that eternal purpose. Why is God saving men and baptizing them with the Spirit? Is it not to bring them to sonship and thus prepare them for the kingdom of God where they shall reign with Jesus Christ our Lord? Why is the Lord urging the saints on to mature sonship? Is it not that as manifested sons of God they shall take the kingdom and reign with Christ over the earth? My brother, my sister, all God's purposes for the past, the present and the future revolve around that mighty day of His glorious kingdom. Christians get so selfish, silly and inconsiderate in prayer, forgetting the true purposes of God. They pray for this and beg for that without a thought in their empty heads as to what the true will of God really is. Christians who are suffering seldom give a passing thought to their sonship or maturity. It seldom enters their minds to consider that he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. Their main ambition is usually manifest in a mighty scramble to get well at all costs and thus be delivered from any thorn in their flesh that might increase their grace.

So, when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, this is the sample prayer He gave them. "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." **Matt. 6:9-13.** The first request in that prayer concerns the kingdom of God and so also does the second: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." At the present time the will of God is being done only in the earth, which we ourselves are. The kingdom of God is now "within you." The Lord is now preparing His elect sons for the wonderful day when they shall take the kingdom and reign. The day will come when the will of God will be done, not only in the hearts of the saints, but also in the whole earth in which we dwell. Then all nations and all peoples will diligently serve and obey Him in a most glorious reign of righteousness and peace.

Daniel the prophet had a mighty vision of the coming kingdom of God, which will, when all things are ready, fill all the earth with its radiant glory. We must take time here to record some of the wonderful descriptions of the kingdom, given by inspired men, that our hearts may be assured that no power in earth or hell will ever be able to resist or hinder the coming of that marvelous reign which the Lord God almighty has been preparing from

earliest Eden until this very day. The kingdom is nearer than we think. It is as near as the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that, I believe, is even at the doors. Daniel, caught away into the Spirit, wrote these inspired words: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down (that is, the thrones and governments of the world), and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." **Dan. 7:9-10.**

This is without doubt a description of the Lord's throne in glory and of the unspeakable majesty of Him that sitteth upon it. How similar to this is John's description of the fullness of Christ in Revelation, chapter one! There John saw the exalted Christ in the midst of the candlesticks, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the breast with a golden girdle. "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. Rev. 1:13-15.

All the glory of earthly thrones will fade into darkness, insignificance and nothingness when He appears upon the throne of His glory. All the mighty monarchs of the ages will appear trashy, feeble and insipid, yea, imperfect, irresolute and impure. There will be no need for bloody battles for supremacy, for in the light of His majesty and illustrious glory all earthly kingdoms, governments and realms will fade away into insignificance to melt as snow and ice before the radiant power of the sun. And the whole universe will echo and re-echo with the proclamation of the eternal fiat, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever (unto the age of the ages)."

The word of God is by no means lacking in its vivid descriptions of the Lord's coming to set up His throne and reign over the whole earth in a kingdom of magnificent splendor, majesty, justice and equity such as could only endure under the direct rule of Christ Himself. John, who above all men was privileged to see in minute detail the events of the last days of this age, actually saw the unspeakable wonder of the coming of the Lord with all His saints, accompanied by the armies of heaven to take possession of the kingdoms of this world and "put down all rule and authority and power," **1 Cor. 15:24**, "for He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." **Verse 25.**

No words of poet or philosopher could possibly describe the awesome eminence of His coming. Much less then may I, who am so limited in understanding and power of expression. What better, then, can we do than to let the prophetic spirit ravish our hearts in the very words by which scripture itself describes that wondrously awesome event? "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes are as aflame of fire, and on His head are many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies, which were in heaven, followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." **Rev. 19:11-21.**

What we have just read is a description of the coming of the Lord that will herald the final overthrow of all the blighting powers of human government and rule. He that sat upon the horse was not wielding a sword of steel, dripping with the blood of His enemies, but His sword is that same weapon He always uses, the sword of the

word of God, sharper than a two-edged blade, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, discerning even the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is the sword He used so efficiently at Pentecost when men were pricked to the heart and cried out with trembling, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This is the sword that Stephen wielded when the hearers were cut to the heart and in their rage and fury stoned him to death. This is the sharp sword that pricked Saul of Tarsus as a goad in his very soul, to whom Jesus said, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Henceforth it will no longer be used in any kind of weakness, because it is clearly seen that all who do not yield to that dreadful pricking of the two-edged sword of God's word, but rather resist and fight against it, will be slain by it and cast into the lake of brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, there to suffer its torments in a second death until the dawning of the dispensation of the fullness of times.

Jesus Himself vividly described His own second coming, when He shall come to set up His kingdom and reign. That mighty coming will be as unlike His first coming in humility to give His life a ransom as anything could possibly be. His second coming will be in fulfillment of His own words, which He spake before the high priest, saying, "Hereafter thou shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." **Matt. 26:64.** He spoke to His disciples in the following words as He unfolded the mystery of His coming reign of glory: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." **Matt. 25:31-32.** This second coming He definitely stated would occur immediately after the tribulation. **Matt. 24:29.** There can be no mistake as to the time of His coming to set up His throne of glory and reign as king over all the earth. When the great tribulation of those days has run its fearful course, encompassing the whole world in its vice-like grip, inflicting on all mankind a time of trouble such as never was from the foundation of the world, then immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." **Matt. 24:29-31.**

The glory, the majesty and wonder of His coming is described as the lightning that comes out of the east and shineth even unto the west. I am by no means sure that the lightning here refers to a flash of lightning, because such lightning does not always shine from the east to the west, but it may refer rather to the rising sun that always rises in the east and shines unto the west. I may be in error in my suggestion, but His coming will not be a sudden and momentary flash of light. It will be the rising of the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings, to shed the rays of light over all the world in His supernal reign of peace and righteousness forever. Those who believe it to be a flash of lightning hold a most beautiful and expressive thought, but be assured of this: when He comes He will come to rid the world of outer darkness in which mankind has groped for so long and fill it instead with the light that is brighter by far than the shining of ten thousand suns.

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 40:4-5.** "And there shall come forth a rod (Christ) out of the stem of Jesse (Jesse was David's father), and a Branch shall grow out of his roots (Ye are the branches). And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed: their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." **Isa. 11:1-9.**

It is completely impossible to exhaust such a subject as the kingdom of God in these few pages. Indeed it would be impossible to exhaust the subject should we fill the world with our writings. Suffice it now to say that this wondrous reign of righteousness will be the kingdom of God on earth. This is the kingdom foreseen by the holy prophets as they were mightily inspired by the Spirit of God. This is the kingdom for which Jesus taught His disciples to pray, saying, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." This is the kingdom in which those sons of God will reign for whose manifestation the whole creation groaned and travailed from the day of the transgression until now.

This glorious kingdom of righteousness, like all other ages and dispensations before it, has its own particular purpose to fulfill in the greater plan of God. Just as the ages of promise and law produced chosen people through whom the Lord has accomplished His pleasure, and as the dispensation of the grace of God has been used to produce sons in God's image, members in particular of the body of Christ, so the great millennial kingdom reign of Christ will have its special purpose, and that purpose will be to prepare that superlative wonder of the ages, the New Jerusalem bride of Christ.

The judgment of the nations will take a thousand years to complete. During that thousand year day of the kingdom age, Christ will divide the nations as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, and by the end of that age there will be a separation between the sheep nations and the goat nations, even as is evident at this present time. In the kingdom age the bride must be made ready. As the sons of God are the center of the kingdom in the age to come, so the New Jerusalem bride of Christ will be the center of all things in the dispensation of the fullness of times which is to follow. Eph. 1:10. In that age God's purpose will be to gather all things into Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Him. To that end the New Jerusalem bride will open wide her twelve gates that the nations may have access to the tree of life from God's throne in the midst of the city, and they shall bring their glory and honor into her.

The kingdom of God, in which Christ shall reign in a perfect rule of righteousness, will be a thousand years in its duration. Six times in succession the thousand-year reign of Christ is referred to in Revelation, chapter twenty. The exact length of time of no other dispensation was ever given, for though dispensations have a beginning, they do not have an end. But the reign of Christ in righteousness, as we have feebly described, will endure in glory and power for one thousand years after His second coming in the clouds of heaven, as it is written, **"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, ... then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Matt. 25:31.**

Thus John relates the truth of the kingdom in these words of inspiration: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

I am quite aware that some insist that the Bible reference to a period of one thousand years is merely a figurative term that does not actually mean a period of one thousand years. My opinion is that if a thousand years does not mean a thousand years then the English language loses its meaning. It would be just as correct to say that the age of Adam, which was nine hundred thirty years, does not mean that he lived to that age, but that the term is only figurative. There is no doubt that the one thousand years referred to in Rev. 20 has reference to the actual kingdom. By the time the thousand years are fulfilled, all things will be prepared. The bride will have made herself ready. The dispensation of the fullness of times and the restitution of all things will begin.

As the purpose of the church age was to produce the sons of God, so the purpose of the millennial kingdom will be to perfect the New Jerusalem bride of Christ. Thus the purposes of every age are accomplished in God's own time and manner. Nothing can let or hinder the marvelous working of God's aionian purpose. The glory of that one thousand year reign of righteousness is now at hand. Our salvation is much nearer than when we believed.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
To Him shall endless prayer be made
And endless praises crown His head.
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE AND THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding."

In dealing with issues so vast and extensive as those we have considered in these chapters on Eschatology, the significance of this scripture impresses our hearts with overwhelming importance. The fear of the Lord is a heart attitude of deepest reverence and holy respect. If the president of our nation or the king of the realm came into our presence, we would rise to our feet in respect of his office to do him honor, but if Jesus Christ came into our presence, we would kneel before Him to do Him reverence. His name is the greatest authority in all the universe. Before His glory angels mighty in power and strength cover their faces and cherubim glorious in holiness cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."

Reverence is the very first element of pure religion; it cannot but be felt by everyone who has right views of divine greatness and holiness as compared to his own smallness and impurity in the sight of God. "Reverence is an ennobling sentiment; it is felt to be degrading only by the vulgar mind which would escape the sense of its own littleness by elevating itself into an antagonist of what is above it. He who has no pleasure in looking up is not fit so much as to look down." (Allstrom). Reverence is a sign of great strength; irreverence is one of the surest signs of weakness. No man will ever rise to a great height who jeers at sacred things. Fools in one breath make a mockery of sin and in so doing they make a mockery of God.

No mortal man can stand in the presence of immortality without feeling a profound sense of reverence. Neither can he who is impotent stand in the presence of omnipotence without being filled with awe. How can he who knows not what an hour will bring forth refrain from praising Him who knows the end from the beginning? "Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I shall say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." **Psa. 139:2-12.**

I know of nothing anywhere that will so thoroughly awaken the fathomless depths of reverence for the Almighty as will a revelation of His infinite purpose for the ages. It is my considered opinion that the cause of the blatant lack of reverence we find in the nominally Christian world today can be laid in its entirety at the feet of the present day Babylonish, harlot church system together with the multitude of hireling ministers who occupy her pulpits. The vast majority of these preachers are nothing more than well, paid hirelings, twice dead in lifeless

tradition, ceremony and form. Very few of them were ever called by Christ or separated by His Spirit unto the ministry of the Lord. The result is that they know not whereof they speak nor understand whereof they affirm. In their gross ignorance of God and His attributes they have portrayed before the people a deity who is little more than an idol, a God frustrated by the fall of man, an omnipotence who must resort to hasty means that He might salvage some small part of His creation from the quicksand into which they have fallen, an omniscience outwitted and out-smarted by a devilish creature of very inferior wisdom, who has no strength at all except that which is permitted him, not even to lay a finger upon the flesh of Job without permission from the Lord.

Woe to the priests who say not, "Where is the Lord?" Woe to them that handle the law of God but know not God! Woe to the pastors who have transgressed and the prophets who have prophesied by Baal! Woe to the pastors who have become brutish and have not sought the Lord! Therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered. Woe to the pastors who have destroyed God's vineyard, who have trodden down His portion underfoot. Woe to the pastors who have built their own kingdoms, crying, "Give! Give to the work of the Lord," but the kingdom of God has no place in their understanding!

My beloved friends, when we are considering God, we are contemplating Him who is eternal in all He is and does. In Him dwelleth all power, the force and resource of the entire universe. There is nothing too hard for Jesus. There is nothing that He cannot do. All things were made by Him and without Him was nothing made that was made. When we consider Him, we are reflecting upon One, the only One in the universe, in whom dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. There is nothing above or beneath that He does not know. His understanding is unsearchable. From the fragile sparrow that falls to the ground in death to the distant secrets of His limitless universe all is known by Him, for all was designed by Him and for Him.

In pondering Him, we are reflecting upon One who is completely immutable, whose unalterable design is the same today as it was on that wonderful morning when the universe trembled at the declaration of His fiat, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion..." From the perfection of that sacred design His omnipotent steadfastness has never wavered, faltered or turned. It is impossible that it should or could. Therefore take courage and perfect faith, O understanding heart, and with assurance know that everything extant in this world of ours is steadfastly moving toward the goal of purpose infinite and divine. Every distress, every discomfort, every trial and temptation, every victory and triumph, the blighting curse of war and the blessing of peace, the beauty of love and the ugliness of hate, the power of temptation and the weakness of the tempted, the indiscretion of sinners and the judiciousness of saints, Satan the destroyer and Christ the Saviour, dispensations of blessing and ages of judgment - all these, together with all else in creation, are working together to fulfill an infinite purpose, the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

In contemplating God, we are thinking of Him, all whose works are done in truth, who in every act of judgment shows love and kindness to His creatures. Full well we know that He who kills will make alive again, and He who wounds will heal. After we have suffered a while, He will establish, strengthen and settle us forever more.

Learn this, O fallen man, and a great secret thou shall surely know! Glorious was Adam our father in Eden's lovely garden, full of light, abounding wisdom, ethereal as a spirit and shining in the image of God, yet one thing was missing from his glory, without which no man could ever wholly be in the image and likeness of God. Adam for all his wisdom did not know good and evil. For that reason he fell prey to the noisome pestilence of his temptation. Because he did not know evil, he did not know good either, for nothing in this world is either big or small, beautiful or ugly, hot or cold, good or evil, except as it stands in contrast to that which is opposite to it. He who lacks the knowledge of both good and evil will fall an easy prey to the devil and this vital knowledge, alas, can only be gained by the experience of both good and evil. Innocence is beautiful indeed, but innocence, knowing nothing of experience, falls an easy prey to every harm and snare of the fowler. Because of this very thing the beloved Paul in wisdom wrote that, "**strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age. even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**" **Heb. 5:14.** Thus in making man in the image of God, the first great step must be to bring him to the knowledge of both good and evil. For this reason inspiration has recorded the immortal words, "**The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.**" **Rom. 8:19-20.**

My heart is filled with the utmost confidence that the long, long millenniums of trial and testing for man are all part of God's unswerving intention to fulfill completely that which was His original purpose when He said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness." During man's long day of trial every imaginable form of human government has been tested - monarchies, dictatorships, socialism, democracy and as many other as there be - but each one in its turn has by experience proved to be, not only a failure, but a noxious evil besides. These failures are not God's failures. They are man's experience by which he learns the evil and corruption of all inventions of human and carnal minds. Only God can govern in righteousness and truth, and, when at last Jesus shall reign with His saints in the kingdom of God, man will have learned from experience that only the rule of heaven is good.

Even in its fallen state we dwell in a most beautiful place. There is an abundance for all and all could live in harmony and peace and good, but human greed, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life bring to ruin every man who stands in the place of rulership no matter how good his intentions were when he began. Power corrupts. In my opinion the noble men who formed the American constitution when that nation was born did their best to place the republic under the guidance of God and they came as near to establishing a theocracy as it was possible for man to come. "One nation under God" was their praiseworthy creed. They sought the Lord and honored Him in everything they did. But it was not long before those corrupting influences of the world began to raise their ugly heads as they had in Israel of old to circumvent every good intention and rule the country and the people, not for the Lord nor for the benefit of the masses nor for the glory of God, but for the benefit of the mighty money barons. And now that constitution, so well formed and well intentioned, is passed by and evaded in every place where it might have thwarted human greed and ungodliness.

It is very essential that those who study the word of God should always keep the facts of God's eternal purpose uppermost in their minds. If we fail to remember God's first statement regarding the Adamic race, "Let Us make man in Our image," we will undoubtedly lose our way amid the jungle of sin, disobedience, trial, error, ages, judgments, dispensations, resurrections, deaths and second deaths. But if we steadfastly remember that He who has purposed an eternal purpose will in His own way fulfill it and never be turned aside from it, then we will have assurance that the immutable God, who said, "I am the Lord; I change not," is faithfully carrying out His purpose age by age, dispensation by dispensation, judgment by judgment, trial by trial, proving the sons of God in much patience, in afflictions, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and, behold, we live, as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

So often we hear quoted, "God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." Why, then, do God's people so often fail to see that in the carrying out of His eternal purpose the same God continues to move in ways that to mankind are wholly mysterious? Can we not trust Him to know His own business without forever speculating about what He is doing or trying to hasten His steps? Has not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? And does He not have power to remake the vessel that was marred in His hands? Why do men make such a thing about death or dying? Should it be thought a thing impossible that God should raise the dead?

Having settled in our hearts that all God's purposes are immutable, let us next establish our faith in the indubitable fact that the God of the Bible, the Lord in whom we believe, is omniscient. He is all wise. He is perfect in wisdom, perfect in knowledge and full of understanding. In the end we will see that the whole gamut of His eternal purpose from Eden's lovely garden unto the praiseworthy day when Jesus Christ submits a perfected creation to the Father was all planned, day by day, century by century, and dispensation by dispensation by the infallible mind in which abides all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge from every remote part of His limitless universe, for of Him, and through Him, and to Him were all things in their intricate wonder created and made. He is before all things and by Him all things consist. Be assured therefore and firmly established in this faith that such infinite wisdom as His will carry to completeness every edict He pronounced in the beginning when He said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness."

Thirdly, let us settle in our hearts that this same Lord who is immutable and omniscient is also omnipotent. Almighty power is in His hand. He speaks and worlds float out into their orbits. He commands and they stand still. Mighty nations are but dust upon His balances. He breathes upon them and as the morning mists they vanish away. His supreme power, all power in heaven and earth, which is His and His alone, is not straitened nor obstructed by those paltry enemies, which for a moment appear to us as obstacles in the path of His purpose. The real truth is that He Himself created them to aid and assist in the perfecting and purifying of His gold. He has created the waster to destroy, but the waster cannot destroy His purpose. The waster, who to mankind appears to be such an obstacle to faith and progress, is in fact nothing more than a slave, a tool, by which the Almighty carries out His pre-arranged and mysteriously perfect plan. He raises up the basest of men to correct and chastise His people, and, when these base ones have fulfilled His purpose, they vanish from the earth scene as an incubus of the night just as Nero, Hitler, Stalin and thousands of other diabolical beasts have done. All power is at His command. Everything everywhere proves that by His word were the heavens made and all the hosts of them.

"I am the Lord; I change not" is His statement for our faith. He will not fail nor be discouraged until He has set righteousness hi all the earth and in all the great eternal heavens. I find nothing but pity, oft times bordering on disgust, for those preachers who purport to be the ministers of Christ yet possess no more spiritual understanding than to teach that sin, when it appeared in Eden, destroyed God's wonderful plan. If this be so, then God is not omniscient, God is not omnipresent, God is not omnipotent, and God is not love. You lie, Mr. Preacher, when you make such vain statements as these even though you make them in your ignorance. Did not God take all the responsibility for the fall when inspiration wrote the words, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope?" How well I remember listening to a radio preacher as he bemoaned the tragedy of Calvary and the death of the Saviour, who died upon the cross! I can still hear him say, "Calvary needed not to be." "O fools and slow of heart," said Jesus. "Ought not Christ to have suffered and to have entered into His glory?" Of course it needed to be, because it was the Father's good pleasure to give eternal life to the world. In Christ was life and the life was the light of men and that life was His blood. He released His blood, that precious blood wherein abode the life of God. When Jesus shed His better blood, precious blood which was divine, the blood of God wherein was life eternal, He made eternal life available to all His creation, for the life is in the blood, and of His fullness have we all received and grace for grace. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish," He said. This life He gave when it flowed forth to be shed abroad on all who believe.

God makes no mistakes, because He is omniscient. He makes no changes in His program, for He is immutable. He never fails in His purposes, because He is almighty, glorious in power, fearful in praises, doing wonders. Settle, therefore, in your hearts that each age as it passes, each dispensation as it unfolds, reveals some new and important phase of God's eternal plan. He perfects saints in one age, then lays them away in the grave there to wait while he perfects others, all to await a glorious hour when together the perfected "dead in Christ" shall arise in God's image, a temple not made with hands.

Four thousand years passed by before the first manifested Son of God was produced. Jesus Christ is the first Son to appear complete in the image of God. He was made perfect through suffering just as every other son who follows will be. He is the head of all the sons. He is the head of that vast family of sons who, when they are complete, will form the Christ body. When a man is born, the head is born first. Then follows the body and lastly the feet. So it came to pass that in the fullness of time God brought forth His first begotten Son, made of a woman, made under the law. Four thousand years of groaning creation waited for His appearance and then the mighty emancipator came. Glorious was His coming and wonderful His life and ministry, yet He was but the firstborn of many brethren.

During the last two thousand years those many brethren, who would appear in His image at the end of the age, have been coming forth from the Israel woman in the wilderness just as John saw the scene enacted in Rev. 12. The manchild she brought forth over two thousand years of time are the sons of God, the saints in Christ. These are the in-Christed members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. They are the fullness of God's Christ. This marvelous act of God is the wonder of the ages. Throughout the last two millenniums, the church age, the sons of God have been coming to perfection, growing in wisdom and stature and favor with God. As

God's work in them becomes complete, He takes them home. Their bodies lie in graves all over the world, awaiting the sounding of the last trumpet. When that last trumpet sounds, its stirring voice will be heard by the dead in Christ as they lie in the dust just as Lazarus heard the voice of Jesus in the long ago. These in-Christed ones will come forth incorruptible, never to know death any more.

I would like to briefly state here that there is a difference between resurrection and being simply raised from the dead as Lazarus was. Lazarus and Dorcas and the son of the widow of Nain were all raised to resume life in their corruptible bodies just as a man desperately ill is restored to his former strength when he is healed. The resurrection of the dead is a different matter entirely. In resurrection the body that was sown in weakness is raised in power. The body was placed in the grave a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body. It is buried in corruption; it is raised in glory. People whom Jesus raised from the dead were merely restored to their corruptible life and this natural realm. They all died again later on, but those who are resurrected are raised incorruptible and can never again taste death in any form. **"They which are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: ..." Luke 20:35-36.**

The next great event in God's order will be the resurrector of the just. Luke 14:14; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; Rev 20:1-7. It will include all the elect of the church age, the people whom Paul speaks of as the dead in Christ. It will also include all other righteous people who have lived and died in previous age; with the exception of those who already arose with Jesus at the time of His resurrection. The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews made this plain when he wrote, **"These all died in faith, not having received the promises," Heb11:13, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11:40.** These righteous of ages past have been waiting and watching for the day of our perfection. As ministering spirits they have been ministering to the heirs of salvation, and when the trumpet of the Lord sounds for the resurrection of the dead, all the righteous of all ages and dispensations will come forth incorruptible.

God's people would be standing on firmer ground if they would speak less of what they call the rapture, a word which is nowhere found in scripture, and speak rather of the resurrection, a term made very familiar, especially in the New Testament. The resurrection of the dead is an established Biblical fact, prophesied by prophets, preached by Jesus Christ, taught by the apostles, and seen in vision by the apostle John.

It is my long considered opinion that God's people should all be meek enough to admit the great possibility of their being wrong or misinformed about many details that concern the exact order of future events. While we may conclude that our deductions are absolutely impregnable, the overlooking of some very small detail may alter the whole of our understanding. The wise man wrote centuries ago, **"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just: but his neighbor cometh and searcheth Him."** Prov. 18:17. So we may present our seemingly bullet proof theories and feel there is no room left for any other opinion, only to discover that we have overlooked a detail that throws a different light on the whole picture.

That the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible there can be no doubt. Paul taught this great truth in these words: **"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."** 1 Cor. 15:51-52. Enlarging further on this resurrection theme, he wrote to the saints at Thessalonica in these enlightening words: **"But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we, which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."** 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

In interpreting scripture we are so inclined to interpret all things with our human understanding. When the word speaks of the sounding of a trumpet, mankind envisages an instantaneous blast akin to the sound of reveille,

but such is not necessarily the case. For instance, in **Rev. 10:7** we have this significant statement: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished..." The words begin to sound speak volumes to me because the complete sounding of that trumpet may involve a time of several years. I am confident, however, that this seventh trumpet is the last trumpet. It is the trumpet that signals the resurrection of the just. 1 Cor. 15:51-52. If the trumpet of 1 Cor. 15:51-52 is the last trumpet, then the trumpet that sounds in Matt. 25:31 at the coming of the Lord in glory after the tribulation of verse 29 must also be the last trumpet, for after the seventh trump there can be no other. Without more complete understanding of the matter, I do not wish to dogmatically speculate as to how long a time may intervene between the resurrection of the just and the appearing of the Lord in glory when He comes to the judgment of the nations. My whole concern is not that we should be informed as to every minute detail of this mystery, but rather that we should be watching and ready when the trumpet sounds for our glorious change. Whatever God has planned for this mighty occasion of the ages is exactly what will be, and, should some things be different from that which our understanding has taught us, all will be well and beautiful, knowing that His plan is by far the more wonderful.

It is a comfort to find that, when the dearly beloved Daniel sought the Lord that he might know the details of things concerning the end, the Lord spoke and said, "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." **Dan. 12:9**. In like manner also, when John was about to write the things, which the seven thunders uttered, a voice from heaven forbade him, saying, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." **Rev. 10:4**. Thus there remains a veil of mystery surrounding the second coming of the Lord that is by no means easy to penetrate just as there was a mystery surrounding His first coming long ago. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself sustained this element of mystery when He spoke these words: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." **Mark 13:35-37**.

We are living in the Laodicean period of the church age. A great sleepiness and an obnoxious smugness has overtaken the people of God. Christians are actually speaking the very words of **Rev. 3:17**, "We have need of nothing," but they, poor, proud souls, know not that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Therefore the Lord will come in an hour that they look not for Him and in a way they do not expect.

Never in all history have so many signs pointed to the coming of the Lord. These signs will undoubtedly greatly intensify and more and more pressure will beset the saints of God with the advent of the coming of the cashless society. Then a perfect arrangement will exist to enforce the mark of the beast, whatever that mark may be and whatever form it may take. See that your hearts be not troubled because of any of these things. The present is a time when we may look to the Lord in faith for His guidance. It will be much better in that hour to know the mind of the Lord than to institute human plans merely in hope of physical preservation. Perhaps this is the time above all others when the words of Jesus should ring very clearly in our hearts, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" **Matt. 6:25**.

Following the resurrection of the just and the judgment of the nations, a new dispensation will begin to last a thousand years. The throne of David will be established in Jerusalem and upon it Jesus, the son of David, will reign. The in-Christed saints will reign with Him. His blessed kingdom will extend over all the earth and will include in itself all the nations who in time past showed kindness to the brethren of the Lord and all those who are left living of all the nations that came to battle against Jerusalem. Zech. 14:16. This blessed kingdom will last for a period definitely stated to be one thousand years. **Rev. 20:1-7**. During this reign Satan will be confined and all his activities restrained until the thousand years are finished. Because of this the earth will have complete peace. There will be an absence of war and all the curses that now blight the earth. Many details concerning the kingdom should be added here, but had we much more room to write, we could not possibly convey a more concise understanding than divine inspiration has left us in **Rev. 20:1-7**. Here six times in quick succession the length of the kingdom is definitely stated to be one thousand years. Though many expositors have tampered with these figures in an endeavor to explain them to mean something they do not say, they remain the same and mean one thousand years in spite of all their tinkering.

In the following words, then, an enlightening record of the kingdom is given with that refreshing brevity of which only the Spirit of God is capable. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead (that is, the unbelieving, unconverted dead) lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years, And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." **Rev. 20:1-7.**

Reading this passage, we have the definite assurance that, first, the kingdom age will be one thousand years in duration. Secondly, we are assured that the saints will reign with Christ during this blessed age just as Jesus promised in the long ago. Thirdly, we learn that Satan will be bound during the entire period of this reign and the nations will not be deceived by him in all that wonderful age. Fourthly, when the thousand years are finished, Satan will be loosed for a brief period of time that the fidelity of the nations toward Christ and His kingdom may be tested.

Many have wondered about the sentence in verse five, "This is the first resurrection," coming as it does after the statement, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The words, this is the first resurrection, belong to the thought of verse six and should read, "This is the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." Verse five is simply telling us that the unregenerate of past ages will not rise from the dead until after the millennial kingdom is concluded.

Every age and dispensation has its own particular design during which some certain divine intention is carried out and accomplished by the Lord. With God nothing is without a perfect design. Everything is accomplished in its own order. This is the Lord's plan of construction. He does not build a building and afterwards lay the foundation. He lays the foundation and then builds the living temple thereon. He does not produce the body and afterward the head. He produces the head first and afterward the body. He does not make ready the bride and then the sons of God. He brings to perfection the sons of God and then the bride. With Him all is order, all is interdependence, and all is harmony. There is a harmony with the ages that is beyond understanding, and with everything that is done in the ages there is consistency, co-ordination, co-relation and symmetry that beggars description. The universe with all its countless millions of galaxies and its unimaginable myriads of stars and planets is likened in scripture to the sweet humming of a well tuned machine (Job 38:31), so we may expect to find this same sweet compatibility in the working out of the plan of the ages.

From the call of Abraham onward the Lord was concerned with the preparation of a covenant people through whom He would carry out His vast and merciful intentions toward all mankind. By means of this covenant people Christ came. To them pertains the adoption (that is, the sonship), the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and as concerning the flesh Christ came. These definite and meaningful statements Paul declared in Rom. 9:1-5. They are real. They are inseparable parts of aionian purpose. No arguments of men no matter how clever can dislodge or destroy them.

At the end of the age of law our Lord Jesus appeared as God's Christ and first manifested Son. He is the head of that great concourse of sons who are being formed in this dispensation of grace and have now reached their numerical fullness. Jesus, the Head, is the firstborn from the dead, the first to partake of the resurrection. By the shedding of His blood He gave life to all the world, for the life is in the blood. Gen. 9:4. Eternal life could not be given to the world until His blood, in which life abode was shed in sacrifice upon the accursed tree. There He bore the fullness and completeness of the curse that came through man's transgression, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." **Gal. 3:13.** With the shedding of the blood of Christ the life of God was released and that life was eternal. The work of redemption was complete. Therefore He cried, "It is finished." The Spirit of life eternal was poured forth on the penitent hosts and believing men were born again

and became at once, not only new creatures but new creations as well. An entirely new creation, a creation never known before, came into existence after the life blood was shed, a creation of twice born men, born again of life eternal. That new creation is called the sons of God. They are the in-Christed, the mystical body of Christ, the Head.

The intention of God during this church age, which began at Pentecost, was not to convert the world as the preachers so fondly imagine. His object was to "take out a people for His name," a people for the Christ body, a company of saints who would be especially prepared to reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom to come. God is not interested in bringing all the world to the knowledge of salvation in this dispensation. His intention is to call out an elect people, a people in Christ. The message of sonship permeates the New Testament, and this work will be complete just before the Lord comes.

As this age of grace was set aside for the preparation of the sons of God, so the kingdom age, which will continue for one thousand years, will have as its purpose the preparation of the bride of Christ. Blessed as that kingdom of Christ will be, it is not in that age that God will gather all things into Christ and restore all things. The millennial kingdom is the age for the preparation of the bride of Christ. As Adam was first formed, then Eve, so Christ the Head and the body were first formed and afterward the bride. In like manner as the sons of God will be seen descending from heaven with Christ at the end of this age of grace, so the bride will be seen descending from God out of heaven in unimaginable glory at the end of the millennial age. Rev. 21:10.

The sons of God are the Temple of the Lord. 1 Cor. 3:16. The bride of Christ is the city of the Lord. Rev. 21:10-11. That city is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Every stone of that city is a living stone, a glorified Adamic being. Every jewel, every gate, every wall and every street is a living ransomed soul just as every member of the body of Christ, which is the temple of the Lord, is a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. We cannot fully explain nor understand such an awesome mystery as this, for great is the mystery of godliness, yet the eye of the devout soul sees the temple as a living thing, composed of living saints. In that temple redeemed men, the sons of God, are the pillars and foundations, and Christ Himself is the chief capstone, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are builded to become an habitation of God through the Spirit.

At the end of the kingdom age the apostle John was transported in spirit to a great and high mountain from whence he was permitted to see the perfected bride in all her glory. From his lofty vantage point the eyes of John the beloved were ravished with the inerasable sight of the majesty and infinite splendor of the bride adorned for her husband. Not a temple she, as is the body of Christ; not a city of stone or brick as was old Jerusalem, but a New Jerusalem, a living city, a bride beyond compare, a virgin pure and holy, composed of resurrected and immortal saints. Words utterly fail me to describe the intrinsic wonder of such glistening heavenly glory, for ours are but the words of men, but that holy and beautiful city belongs to the perfected state. Now at last the perfection, the image of God, of which Adam and Eve were but a frail and shadowy type, has come, the many membered bridegroom, the last Adam, with the many membered bride, the Holy City, Adam and Eve, the first and the last, in the image and likeness of God.

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal: and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates, on the north three gates; on the south three gates and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal... And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a

chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." **Rev. 21:9-21.**

This living city, which will descend from heaven at the end of the millennial kingdom, will be the new capital of the entire world. The nations of the earth who at the end of the kingdom still remain strangers to God will walk in the light of it and, as they are saved (Rev. 21:24), will bring their glory and honor into it. The tree of life is in the midst of the city and the water of life flows from the throne of God in the midst of it. Rev. 22:1-3. The tree of life will flourish on either side of the river of life and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

One would certainly be inclined to think that a reign of such unequalled splendor, equity and justice as the world will see during the millennial reign of Christ would have satisfied the world and its inhabitants completely and never again would rebellion raise its ugly head nor would men seek another way. But those who are inclined to imagine such godly submission have under-estimated both the depravity of unregenerate men and the tenacity of Satan in his animosity toward the rule of Christ.

Because our Lord knows all that is in the heart of man, at the end of the millennial kingdom there will be a period of trial to try the hearts of all who dwell on the earth. Settle it in your heart that untried and unregenerate man will never willingly serve the Lord. No doubt many of those millions who lived through the glory and blessing of the kingdom age come to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ the Lord. We must never forget that in every age all who are saved must be saved by grace through the life-giving power of His blood. It matters not in which dispensation we live. Only faith in His blood will bring men to the knowledge of sins forgiven, to regeneration and the miracle of the new birth. While vast throngs of the nations that entered the kingdom age will be converted and become true, born again disciples of Christ, the evidence is overwhelmingly clear that there will be a number as the sands of the sea who have neither repented nor believed. It is necessary, therefore, that at the end of the age of blessedness all nations should be tested that their faith or unbelief should be made manifest. They will be given opportunity to prove whether they were serving the Lord from their hearts or submitting unwillingly to His rule.

According to Rev. 20:2-3 Satan will be bound, shut up and chained for the entire duration of the kingdom age. He will be bound a period of one thousand years and cast into the bottomless pit. A seal will be placed upon him that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season. Rev. 20:2-3. After the thousand years are expired, we are told, "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." **Rev. 20:7-10.** Thus the millennial kingdom ends in judgment as all previous ages have done.

We should carefully point out that the end of the kingdom age is not the end of the world nor is it the end of Satan or the false prophet. Neither is it the end of time or ages. The very terms day and night and forever and ever prove beyond question that we are still dealing with the realm of time. The expression forever and ever is misleading and throws us into confusion, for, while on the one hand eternity is indicated, on the other hand time is indicated by the use of the words day and night. In this connection a quotation from The Emphatic Diaglott will give help and enlightenment and show us clearly that the millennial kingdom will be followed by another age in which the residue of all mankind will be gathered into Christ. Eph. 1:10. Here, then, is the rendering of Rev. 20:10 from The Emphatic Diaglott. "And that enemy who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where both the beast and the false prophet were cast, and they will be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages." There is no way of knowing how long a time this will be, but since it unquestionably deals with day and night and ages, it does therefore belong to time and no endeavor must be made to identify it with eternity.

It would not be unreasonable to believe that this most wonderful of all the ages might be at least as long as all the previous ages combined. We read in Deut. 7:9 and Psa. 105:8 that God will keep the covenants unto a thousand generations. When we realize that from Adam until the present day can scarcely be more than one

hundred twenty generations, then there still remains a very long period of time in which God will bring to completeness His merciful purpose for the ages. Unfortunately we have been trained to think that all things mentioned in any one verse of scripture are sure to be fulfilled simultaneously, but a simple analysis of Dan. 12:2 will show that such is not the case. Here he says, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting (age lasting) life, and some to shame and everlasting (age lasting) contempt." You will see that the comma, which follows everlasting life, when compared with Rev. 20:5, represents a period of one thousand years, for there it is clearly stated that the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. The word of God definitely shows that there is a period of one thousand years between the resurrection of the saints in Christ to aionian life and the resurrection of the unregenerate dead after the kingdom age to aionian shame and contempt.

The rebellion under Satan at the end of the kingdom age is followed by the resurrection, or, more correctly, the rising from the dead, of all people who were not raised in the first resurrection. Of these people it is written, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." We can only conclude that the vast preponderance of the subjects of this second resurrection were unbelievers of all former ages of time, though mention is made of the Lamb's book of life and some who may have had their names in it. In any case they are raised from the dead for judgment, which judgment shall be according to their works.

It would not be possible to describe more vividly the completeness of this rising from the dead than we see recorded here in God's word. The time of this resurrection is after the thousand-year kingdom has run its course. This is clearly stated in Rev. 20:5. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." And now, after the thousand years have been finished, there comes a second statement indicating the completeness of this resurrection. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (Hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works." Rev. 20:13. The definite statement, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," suggests that there may be some at this resurrection who, though their names were in the book of life, were not counted worthy to attain to the first resurrection. Those who rise at the first resurrection are the dead in Christ. I have long believed that the term "in Christ" indicates the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." While some have pressed into it as Paul taught us in Phil. 3:10-13, others neglect to do so and never are to be considered true overcomers, and are not, therefore, included in the blessed first resurrection. In any case Rev. 20:15 indicates that there will be some people at the great white throne judgment who have their names in the book of life, but have missed both the first resurrection and the kingdom of God.

The description of the great white throne is found in Rev. 20:11. One cannot read it without a feeling of utmost wonder, apprehension and amazement as the glory of that throne and the presence of Him who sat upon it is revealed in these awe-inspiring words: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." I tremble to comment at all upon a scene, which is so unspeakable in its magnificence and radiant splendor that even the heavens themselves flee away from the face of Him who sits upon the throne. One comment I will, however, venture in reverential fear. This glorious throne is a white throne. It is a throne of absolute justice and perfect righteousness. Those dead, small and great, who stand to be judged before this throne and Him who sits upon it will be judged in perfect righteousness. Here at the white throne men of all past ages will stand to be judged according to their works. Here they will come face to face with those things done during their lives of whatsoever sort they may be. The evil works and dastardly deeds of tyrants long dead will be justly rewarded as every man is judged according to his works. Here no hellish crime will go unnoticed or unpunished. Likewise deeds of mercy and cups of water given in the name of a disciple of Christ will in no wise lose their reward, even though the merciful neighbor had never known the Saviour or heard mention made of His name.

So many writers and preachers love to grasp upon this momentous passage of scripture in hope of proving the awful hopelessness of those who stand at the judgment of the great white throne. O how they love to magnify the thought of endless fire and brimstone, of death and eternal torment! But let me show you that even in this great and terrible judgment there are marvelous evidences of restitution, reconciliation and forgiveness. This is neither the end of time, the end of purpose, nor the end of opportunity as tradition would have us believe. Instead of this being the end of time and the end of mercy, the fact is that it is the beginning of that wonderful age of all ages, which the apostle Paul in his wisdom speaks of as the "dispensation of the fullness of times." It

is of this age that the inspired apostle writes these significant words: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." **Eph. 1:9-10**. The full extent of the mystery of Christ's redemption is to be completely made known in the dispensation of the fullness of times. In all previous ages the Lord had gathered elect people from among the masses of earth for very distinctive purposes. Under law He created Israel. Under grace He called the sons of God out of Israel. During the millennial kingdom He prepared the bride, who is Israel. And now at last in the fullness of times comes the mightiest ingathering of all, a restitution that will never end until every knee shall have bowed and every tongue shall have confessed of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:10-11; Rom. 14:11; Isa. 45:23. This is not popular eschatology, but God's word confirms that it is true.

Now notice the gracious words that proceeded from the great white throne. "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." **Rev. 21:5-6**. What more gracious words than these could ever have been spoken! While preachers are gleefully damning all these people to hell, God is saying, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely, and he that overcometh shall inherit all things!"

But what shall we say of verse eight, which has such an ominous sound and from the terror of which I would not detract, no, not a whit? Here we are told that "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

It is impossible for anyone to rightly understand what the second death is until he understands what the first death is. It naturally follows that, if there be that which is called the second death, then there must of necessity be that which is called the first death. The first death is not the grave, as is almost universally believed, but is this entire expanse of our existence from the cradle to the grave, which we are fond of calling life. Paul made the following enlightening statement to men and women who were born again Christians. Writing to the Ephesians, he clearly taught them that they were dead, not only spiritually, but physically and bodily as well. With this thought in mind we read the following from Rom. 8:10. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness." So, then, the sinner in his sin is dead both physically and spiritually, for that is what the scripture says, but the believer who has believed is now alive in spirit. His body is still dead, for, though his spirit has partaken of the life of Christ, his body has not been made partaker of life. Then the word goes on to show that the day is coming when the body also will partake of life just as the spirit has already done. So Paul continues, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11**. Thus it is very plain from this verse that all of our existence outside of Christ is in the realm of death and God does not consider that existence to be life at all, but only death.

Then again was not Adam distinctly warned, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die?" There can be positively no question that this death actually occurred. Adam died spiritually and physically the moment he sinned. The life of God departed from him. He did not merely "begin to die." He actually died and all his existence from then on was in the realm of death. Adam and Eve were not at first naked in the garden. They were clothed with the life and light of God, but when they transgressed, they were denuded of the life of God that had covered them and now they stood naked, ashamed and uncovered. The life of God had gone from them and all that was left was death. As long as we imagine that we are alive until we go to the cemetery, we will fail to see the true picture. The grave is only the final part of the death experience. Our life in the flesh is in reality naught but death.

David once wrote these instructive words: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." The valley of the shadow of death is not entered just before the tomb. The valley of the shadow of death is entered the moment we come forth from the womb, and in its shadow we walk until we experience the resurrection life of Christ, for our spirits when we are born again, and, secondly, for our bodies at the resurrection of the just.

Furthermore, Paul, writing to Timothy, spoke of "she who liveth in pleasure." One would naturally think that those who enjoy pleasure in all its forms would certainly be living if any one was, but Paul taught that such is not the case. Rather the opposite is true. Those who are enjoying pleasure to its utmost are in reality dead, for he said, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Jesus added this further convincing fact when he admonished the young man who asked to be allowed to go and bury his father before following Him. To this request Jesus answered, "Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou Me." What was He telling the young man but that the men who carried the coffin were as dead as the man who lay inside it? And that, my brethren, is the truth.

From these few statements of scripture, and there are more which we could consider, we must conclude that this whole realm which we now call life is in fact and in truth the first death. Through it we walk and groan in our mortality, and while we do so, we are always subject to fiery trials that are given to try us and separate us from our sin and carnality.

Since, then, this realm through which we walk is the realm of the first death, surely it should not be so difficult for us to understand what is meant by the term, the second death. Since this realm, which we call life, is in reality only death, then the second death must be a realm similar to this realm of the first death. We of this first death walk through fiery trials that are to try and purify us. They of the second death will walk through what is described as the lake of fire, and the scripture plainly states that the lake of fire is the second death. For this reason it is definitely stated that the fearful and the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers and the whoremongers, the sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev. 21:8. Rev. 20:14. Once we see that the lake of fire is the second death, rather than some raging inferno into which God has in frustration and anger cast all people He was powerless to subdue, then things begin to make sense. God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2:4. Who is so foolhardy that he dare say He will not? "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end..." which must mean the end of making all men alive. 1 Cor. 15:22-23.

For our mutual enlightenment I would like to quote here the unanswerable words of C. H. Pridgeon concerning the lake of fire. I am sure you will grasp the wisdom both of his words and of the lake of fire as well. "The lake of fire and brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word brimstone or sulphur defines the character of the fire. The word theion, translated brimstone, is exactly the same word as theion, which means divine. Sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. The verb derived from theion is theioo, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god." "Even the English word which the translators have given us denotes a substance which is healing and purifying in its effects. The use of brimstone with fire in the manufacture of certain fabrics is well known as a destroyer of parasites. It is the last thing to be used to denote torture, which is the usual idea read into it. Everything combines, then, to warrant the claim that what the Holy Spirit means by fire and brimstone is divine purification, or a judgment fire which consumes all that is antagonistic to divine law and love. Judgment to the end of purification is exactly the thought we have already found repeatedly in the scriptures."

It is therefore into this second death, this refiner's fire, this lake of fire that consumes the dross, that these fearful and unbelieving are cast. But we may have strong confidence in God's word that it will be just as He has spoken and that in this final dispensation of the fullness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ.

As I have studied the word of God, many things have become very evident, one of which is that any man at any time under any circumstance who saw the Lord or received a revelation of Him had all resistance broken and no more obstinacy or rebellion left in him. All through the ages it has been the same. The most vicious and derelict characters, coming into contact with Christ as did Saul of Tarsus, immediately fall in repentance before Him, crying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

The final dispensation of the fullness of times has a special, prearranged purpose just as all other ages have had. It will be the most glorious of all times. Throughout that wonderful order when the mystery of God is completed, the government of the world and all things therein will flow like a river from the Holy City, the New Jerusalem that came down from God out of heaven.

This age of grace, through which the world has passed during nineteen hundred years and more, has been a time when saints have walked through incredibly fierce and fiery trials. The apostle Peter, foreseeing the tribulation that would come to God's people in this age of ours, mightily exhorted us in these significant words: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." James further exhorts us, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Terrible as the fires have been, it is through them that the blood-washed sons of God have been brought to perfection.

The fiery trials of the kingdom age may be much less severe, though even in that blessed realm of righteousness there is evidence of chastisement and correction, but when its end came, the bride was found to have made herself ready. As the age of grace is for the preparation of the sons of God, so the kingdom age is for the preparation of the bride of Christ. When this is done, then the mystery of God is finished. The last Adam will be complete, male and female as in the beginning, and now the bride, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, having made herself ready, is seen descending out of the heavenlies down to earth to become the abiding place of God's temple. In all the word of God there is no description of anything that can possibly excel the portrayal and characterization of the Holy City. Not even the glory of the revelation of Christ in Rev. 1 exceeds the wonder of this holy, New Jerusalem bride.

With the coming of the New Jerusalem the work of preparation is finalized and the work of reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth begins in earnest. The tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell among them. They shall be His people and He shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. In Rev. 21:5,6 we hear the voice of Him who sat upon the great white throne, speaking marvelous words of comfort, "Behold, I make all things new... I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." These are wonderful words, spoken to the people who have been raised from the dead in the second resurrection. The same promises are open to them in that age of the fullness of times as are open to us now in this age of grace in which we live. But I must say that in that wonderful age the opportunities of availing oneself of the blessing of God are much greater than now. In this age only a very small number of the people of earth have ever heard of God or His blessed Son, but in that day it will be different. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, will be the capital of all the earth, and her light is likened to a stone most precious. Her twelve gates will be open forever and never close by night, for there is no night there. There the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, will flow out of the throne of God in the midst of the city, and in the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river the tree of life flourishes, bearing her twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations entered into this realm. And there shall be no night there, and no curse there, but they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads.

And in that day there will be a message go out to all nations, a message that never was heard in any other age. It will be this: "The Spirit and bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." In that day when the Lord God sits as a refiner's fire to purge away all the dross and rebellion by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning, the nations that never knew God and never heard of His name will pass through the gates of the city to drink of the water of life and eat of the tree of life. They will bring their glory and honor into it and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Having mused with awe and delight upon the merciful purposes of an all, wise God, begun in ages past, unfolding in the present, to be carried to their ultimate and glorious intention in dispensations yet unborn, with what more fitting words could we bring to a close our brief study of Eschatology than by quoting that blessed epigram of assurance left by that masterful exponent of God's purpose, who, after continually reminding us that

we ourselves were saved by grace, avowed that the same grace would continue to be manifest in all future eons and dispensations? "THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHEW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US THROUGH CHRIST JESUS." **Eph. 2:7.** Amen.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 14

THE EVIL DAY

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE

THE EVIL DAY

The Bible, the word of God, definitely speaks of an evil day that will come at the close of this present dispensation. During the centuries that have passed many evil days have come and gone, but the apostle Paul sets this final day of evil apart from all others by the use of the definite article "the", saying in **Eph. 6:12**, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand in the evil day..."

This is the day that was described by Daniel as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time." **Dan. 12:1**. It is the day which was described by Joel as a day of gloominess, Joel 2:2, and by Zephaniah as "a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet (war) and alarm against the fenced cities and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy:.." **Zeph. 1:15-18**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke of this evil day as a time of abounding iniquity, a time when the love of many should wax cold. He likened it unto the wickedness of the days of Noah before the flood. That day was one of the most evil of all days, for in it all distinction between the godly and the ungodly had disappeared. The sons of God had looked upon the daughters of men and had taken them wives of all they chose. The earth became filled with mighty men, men of renown even as it is today. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth." See **Gen. 6**. Jesus described that day as a day of eating and drinking, of marrying and giving in marriage, or, more literally, marrying and divorcing. Luke 17:27. He likened it unto the days of Sodom when men were consumed with eating and drinking, planting and reaping; a day when morals had fled completely, for even the women changed the natural use into that which is against nature, and the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts toward each other, men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves just recompense of their error. Rom. 1:26-27. A description of the awful degradation of these people is given in Gen. 19:4-11. Not even the angels of God were held sacred to these vile wretches, for they endeavored to break down the door of Lot's house that they might know them. The degrading sin of Sodom was that they were homosexuals. It is from the vileness of the sins of Sodom that our modern English word, sodomy, is derived. No informed person needs to be reminded that this sin is rampant in our day. Truly Jesus said, "As it was in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, so should it be in the day of the Son of man."

The evil day is characterized by the mark of the Beast, a day of false christs, false prophets and false teachers, a day of signs and wonders, a day of great love of money, a day of rich men who have heaped vast sums of money together for the last day. It is a day filled with peril, for men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce

breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

In the final evil day a strange and deceptive lukewarmness will bedevil the entire Christian world. The church system will be rich and increased in goods, having excellent buildings, extensive programs, and wealth galore with spiritual emptiness, darkness, and nakedness. "We are rich and increased with goods," they will say, "and have need of nothing," knowing not that the whole system is wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. Rev. 3:17.

It would be easier to write about any one of a score of subjects than to write about the evil day, for this is not the kind of truth that men love to hear. There are too few people who are willing to face truth with boldness and consecration. Christians love to hear of things that never disturb their spirits, for their cancerous traditions are deep-rooted and deadly and they dread to be told that there is a vile disease eating at their very vitals and sapping away their life and vitality. They hate to be told that, unless they are delivered from their blinding traditions, they will perish, for this disturbs and confuses them. Why is it that men dread the surgical blade of truth that pricks and cuts and probes until we are delivered from self, from flesh, from corrupting tradition, from good works and bad works, and from a thousand chains that bind and enslave us? From time immemorial men have loved to hear nice things, things that appeal to their ego, persuading them that they have a good standing with God and that they are far on their road to becoming manifested sons.

We are living in an evil day when men are full of good works. Priding themselves before God that they are up and doing. They are winning souls for Christ; they are healing the sick; they are spending vast sums of money to send out missionaries and blanket the world with literature. They have vast radio hook-ups; they appear on T.V.; they are working their fingers to the bone for others, and so it goes on endlessly. But, my busy friend, have you paused in your haste long enough to hear God's voice? Have you ever waited long enough to hear God say "No"? Have you died to your own will? Is God's will your delight? Or do you say, "I want God's will", and then go right on with your own? Would you be content to see nothing for a century as Abraham, or for eighty years as Moses, or for seventy years as Jeremiah, or for thirty years as John the Baptist, or for three and a half years as Elijah? Or must you go steaming ahead in your own self-will, determined to carry the gospel to every creature? "Oh," you My, "we have the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel!" But you are misinformed! That commission was not given to you. It was given to the twelve apostles and to them alone. Have you not read this? "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw Him they worshipped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**" **Matt. 28:16-19.** Then again the same statement is repeated in the Gospel of Mark 16:14-15. **Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and He said unto them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."** Seeing then that the Holy Spirit has taken great care on two occasions to tell us that the great commission was given to the eleven disciples, is it not the height of presumption to affirm that that sacred commission was given to every Tom, Dick, and Harry who decided to make preaching a vocation?

There is a widespread tradition among Christians that is freighted with fatal error. How often we have been told that God is looking for volunteers for His service. I wish to inform you that this is one of the biggest lies that ever sprang from the deceptive mind of Satan. God does not want volunteers. God only accepts conscripts. Search the scripture from cover to cover and you will find without one exception that every ministry from Genesis to Revelation was called and chosen of God and conscripted to do God's bidding, and, we may further add, that many of these men were chosen against their own will and in spite of their own protestations and objections. Did Moses volunteer for service? Certainly not! He argued that he was not able to speak, that the people would not listen; but he was conscripted. Did Gideon volunteer for service? No! He was conscripted, too. Can you not hear Jeremiah saying, **Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a child.** **Jer. 1:6.** Did any of the apostles volunteer for service? Not one! They were all especially called and conscripted by Jesus Himself. Did Saul of Tarsus volunteer for service when he was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians? This was the last thing in his mind; but Jesus said. **He is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.** **Acts 9:15-16.**

Perhaps the greatest single curse of the centuries has been the presumptuous tradition that men and women should volunteer for the ministry of the Lord. Nothing could be further from the truth, and nothing can be more detrimental to the true work of God than to have the church cluttered up with men and women who have themselves chosen the ministry as a vocation. They are not tried. They are not tested. They have not God's burden on their hearts. They have no real love for the flock; and worst of all they have no commission from God. Therefore they lack His blessing and anointing. Well did the Holy Ghost say by Jeremiah the prophet, "In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from the evil of their doings." **Jer. 23:20-22**. If you are thinking of entering the ministry, forget it and just go right on picking cotton, or whatever your hand finds to do, until He comes and conscripts you. It will be this volunteer crowd who will come at the last, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works." And it will be to them that the Lord will say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity (rebellion)." God does not know nor accept the ministry of anybody except those whom He calls and commissions Himself. It would seem to me that it is not even possible for a man to volunteer for salvation, for, while God has said, "Whosoever will may come," He has also said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." Not many people come to the Lord for salvation because they want to come. They come because the Holy Spirit moved upon them in their darkness and rebellion, convicting them of sin and righteousness and judgment, filling the soul with repentance and contrition before God. Those who go to the altar because friends or relations went before them will also turn away for similar reasons, for God has not spoken to them. "Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate; whom He did predestinate, them He also called; whom He called, He justified, and whom He justified, He glorified." These are God's elect and nothing can ever be laid to their charge.

Let us now consider some of the things, which pertain to the evil day, for it is of great value to discern the hour in which we live and to recognize all things that are coming upon this age according to the word of God.

For many decades and centuries God's people have been speculating about the strange phenomenon the scripture calls the mark of the beast. If we all knew the truth of the matter, there would be no need to speculate at all, but, as humility and confession of ignorance before God is a precious thing, we should therefore be more ready to admit our lack of understanding than to argue for our beliefs. The Lord never reveals anything to Mr. C. I. Knowitall, nor does He forgive the sins of Madam Righteousness, but "He giveth power to the faint and to those who have no might He increaseth strength. He fainteth not nor is weary, and there is no searching of His understanding. The youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." Granted the mark of the beast may be a tattoo placed on the forehead or the right hand of all who follow Antichrist, but be assured of this: the mark of the beast will be in the heart and mind long before it is tattooed on any head or any hand.

The Jewish priests carried the names of the tribes of Israel on their heart, and they carried the Ten Commandments in a roll on their forehead. As the truth conveyed here is that Israel was to be in their hearts and the commands of God in their minds, so also it is with the mark of the beast. It will be in the mind and in the heart and life long before it ever appears without. Man is always looking on the outward appearance, but God is looking on the heart. Man sees the sanctimonious outward profession of piety and godliness, but God may see a heart full of the world and the spirit of the age. Man admires the garnished tombstone and the whited sepulcher, but God sees the dead man's rotting bones. The mark of the beast has been in the world for a long, long time, but it becomes increasingly open and evident with every passing day.

The mark of the beast made its first appearance in the Garden of Eden. Our eyes behold its presence with the understanding of these words: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." **Gen. 3:1**. The picture here goes beyond the serpent. Even the dullest and most unimaginative mind catches the thought that the true character involved here is that old serpent, the devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole earth. Rev. 12:9. Whatever mouthpiece was used to speak to Eve, Satan himself is the one who beguiled her. The serpent was called a beast and the mind of the serpent is the mind of the beast.

Men have vainly tried to satisfy their minds as to what the sin was that Eve committed when she took of the fruit of the tree and ate and gave of it to her husband. Was it the disobedience of eating something God had

forbidden, as appears on the surface of the story? Was it that in eating natural food she descended from the realm of life where God lives by the Spirit to the realm of the flesh where men live by bread alone and die in consequence? Or was it a sin of sex that made them so ashamed that they covered their organs of procreation with fig leaves? Frankly, I do not know, but if such knowledge had been important, the Holy Spirit would have revealed it to us. Man is forever probing after the details that appeal to his carnal mind, but missing the point that really matters.

The thing of greatest importance here is not the act they did, but the awful fact that, before ever the transgression was committed, that old serpent, the devil, had imparted his mind to them. The mark of the beast, (the serpent), was in their hearts, in their minds, and in their foreheads, and what they did afterward was the mark of the beast in their hands. It is not difficult to see that the things, which men are doing today and have done in ages past are but the out-cropping of that which is in their minds, for out of abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things, Matt. 12:34,35. The mark of the beast that appears in the hand is the direct result of the mark of the beast in the forehead. We may then be sure that if ever a mark is to be tattooed on the forehead of those who worship the beast, it will be there only because the spirit of the world, the flesh, and the devil is the spirit that dominated their minds.

The mind of Satan, which is the mind of the Beast, is the mind that inspires the ever, increasing confusion that today is running rampant among all nations. This also is the master-mind that dominates the religious confusion of this dark hour. This is the mind that with subtlety injects the question, "Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden," and follow the question with the crafty lie, "Ye shall not surely die." Then, after making God to be a liar, he further awakens their curiosity, their doubt, their apprehension, and their ego by convincing them that God is trying to deprive them of some good thing. "For God doth know," saith he, "that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." After this smooth-talking and friendly salesman had thus cast the mind of God aside and placed in its stead the beastly mind of the serpent, with craft and satanic wisdom he took them sightseeing that they might see that the tree was indeed good for food and much desired to make one wise. Sure enough God had hidden something from them, even as the serpent had said, so, reaching forth their eager hands, they took and ate, and immediately their eyes were opened to know good and evil. Good they knew, but it had fled from their presence. Evil they knew, but it possessed their very souls.

From that day forward even unto this hour man has borne the imprint of the satanic mind, the mark of the serpent, the mark of the beast. That mark in his mind has been manifested in everything he has set his hand to do. Politically he has filled the world with wars and rumors of wars, greed, hatred, bloodshed, and oppression. Socially he has rocked the world with every imaginable devilish perversion, and religiously he has displaced the mind of Christ with the carnal mind to bring about a form of godliness devoid of power or reality, but filled with a confusion of human ideas that would stagger the imagination.

We need not be surprised that the increase of his power will be such that at the end of the age none will buy or sell without the mark of the beast or the number of his name. Spiritually this is so even now. The scripture says, "Buy the truth and sell it not." But is the gospel I preach acceptable to those whose minds bear the image of the Beast? Will they "buy" a gospel that spells doom to the carnal mind? Certainly not. If you are trading back and forth with the religious systems of this world, it is because you belong to them. You bear their mark and wear their garments. Otherwise there would be no buying or selling, for they would not deal with you.

The time has come when all who would bear the mark of the Lord and the number of His blessed name must come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. There must be no deals with the mind of the Beast, no dickering or bargaining, but a complete separation unto Christ. The hour has come to cease from the vanity of thinking that unity consists in physical gatherings, for true unity belongs to the realm of the Spirit. It leaps the gaps, spans the miles, and bridges the oceans to sit together in heavenly places in the Spirit. If two or three can gather in His name, that is well, but if they are not gathered in His name and according to His will, all they accomplish is to be further imbued with the mind and spirit of this age. People are forever telling me that they must go somewhere to worship. But the words of Jesus ring loud in my ears in these closing days of the age: **"The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. ...But the hour cometh, and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." John 4:21-23.**

God's people do not seem to realize that we are at the end of the age. They still insist on clinging to all the things, which are to be done away even as the Jews clung to the Levitical system that was passing away. Tradition has taught them that they must assemble even though they are aware they are assembling with Babylon. Christians who insist on trading back and forth with the harlot systems of our day are in a sorry state indeed. Would God that He would reveal to each one that only those who bear the mark of the Beast are permitted to trade with his system, and, if we are buying and selling with it, deriving our nourishment from it, it is because we bear its mark.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation the awesome prophecy is given of two beasts terrible in power and strength that dominate the inhabitants of the earth in the last days. The first beast is the system of Romanism under the domination of the Pope. The second beast is Protestantism under the domination of the World Council of Churches. The first beast has long ruled over the kings of the earth, for, until the time of the great Reformation in the days of Luther, every king in Europe danced to the Pope's tune, and even today the greatest nations on earth send their ambassadors to the Vatican. Romanism is a religious system absorbed in politics and enormously wealthy. It has power over kings, nations, and people. It has made bloody war against true saints for centuries, burning them with fire at the stake, tearing them limb from limb on the rack, and torturing them with unspeakable torments. No wonder John saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. Rev. 17:6. This is the beast that received the deadly wound by the sword and did live. The sword by which the deadly wound came was the sword of the word of God in the mouths of the reformers. The wound dealt to that system was so deadly that for a time it appeared it would not survive. But the deadly wound was healed and it revived and has now become stronger than ever. Even the most ardent Protestant will admit that all the world is wondering after the beast. Rev. 13:3.

But John saw a second beast rise up out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, but his voice could not be disguised. It was clearly the voice of the dragon. This beast is apostate Protestantism as we now see it. The so-called Protestant system as we know it today has become an instrument of Satan, exercising all the power and authority of the first beast over millions of enslaved worshippers. It is filled with a form of godliness, but completely devoid of true power. Revelation 13:12-14 gives an unmistakable description of the events that are transpiring before our very eyes. The second beast is causing the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the first beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live. This fact may not appear on the surface nor be evident to a casual onlooker, but this is the true purpose of the ecumenical movement. Let us make no mistake about that. Again and again the Spirit warns that the time has arrived to come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. Then will God receive us and be a Father to us and we shall be His sons and daughters. Those who thus come out from among them will find by experience that they are able neither to buy nor to sell, trade nor fellowship with them, but it is the only way to become a true disciple of Christ and the only way to escape the fearful judgment that will fall on all who worship the Beast and bear his mark.

But to leave this subject here without a further investigation would be a fatal mistake. There are certain things said about the second beast that are not said of the first beast. Many Christians sit smugly by, insisting that none of these things have a bearing on their position. Millions of people today steadfastly insist that because they belong to a fundamentalist group or a full gospel group these things do not concern them. Do you think the dragon, that old serpent the devil, has suddenly been bereft of his wisdom to deceive? Just as Satan has prepared a deception for the old lifeless forms of religion, so also he has prepared a deception for the people who loudly acclaim their spiritual experience, who claim not only regeneration, but signs and wonders, gifts and miracles, prophecy and speaking with tongues. All these things are true and scriptural, even as Jesus has said: "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Mark 16:17-18. But an evil thing has come in our day, for instead of signs following them that believe we have an evil generation seeking signs, and no sign from God will be given. Make no mistake about it! A man who seeks signs is on the wrong track.

Listen then to the scripture, for this second beast is to be a wonder worker who will produce great and convincing signs for the benefit of all who are sign minded. "And he doeth great wonders so that he maketh fire

come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. And he had power to give life to the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the beast should be killed." **Rev. 13:13-15.**

Perhaps you are looking for the setting up of a great golden image, but I doubt that this will ever be. The image of the first beast, which we have described above, is being endued with life. Its voice speaks more loudly now than at any time in all history. If we do not belong to this harlotish religious system that now dominates the lives of dead and living alike, we will find ourselves more and more ostracized, more and more cut off, considered a fanatic, a fool, in error and under the condemnation of the Lord, But this is the patience and faith of the saints.

But to return to the signs and wonders of the second beast who is now turning the hearts of the people toward the first beast that all who dwell on the earth may worship him, whose names were not in the book of life from the foundation of the world. While the cold, dead, lifeless branches of the church system are meeting to discuss unity and are becoming increasingly entangled in the papal net, there is a movement of signs and wonders, prophecy and speaking with tongues, that is appealing to the Fundamentalist and Pentecostal groups that they, too, might be ensnared in the ecumenical net. You will remember that the second beast had two horns that those who are not deceived by the mere hope of church unity may be deceived by the signs and wonders, the miracles and the much publicized glossalalia (speaking with tongues).

It has never been my policy to deride and condemn, but rather to persuade of life and reality, but all who have ears to hear should take heed, for this move has the marks of deception rather than the marks of God. Its horns are the horns of a lamb, but its voice is the voice of a dragon. Did we not say previously that bishops and ministers, priests and cardinals would soon make profession of miraculous gifts, laying claim to the gifts of the Spirit and the ministries of the Holy Ghost? This is now happening before our eyes and increasing everywhere. People have written, describing the wonders of it, but I am totally unimpressed, for all history and all scripture teach us that reality and truth and Christ Himself are all outside the camp of organized religion. Any move that professes to be of God and still remains within the confines of the organized systems is a deception and a lie, for new wine will burst old bottles. It cannot possibly be avoided.

It is a shocking marvel to see how easily Christians are deceived by the outward appearance of a thing. They tell of the wonderful signs, the outstanding gifts, the prophecy and speaking with tongues, the sweet spirit, the weeping, and all such manifestations. But how quickly people forget the warning spoken by Jesus Christ: "For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show signs and wonders insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, behold He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chamber, believe it not. Matt. 24:24-26. During the last fifteen years the full gospel groups (erroneously so called) have become so miracle-minded that they have laid themselves open to deception. In seeking signs and gifts, miracles and healings, they have forgotten to seek the Lord. From state to state and coast to coast they have run hither and yon to see a miracle worker, a healer, or some great man only to discover a man who is seeking to build up his personal kingdom, buying and selling with the god of this age.

The impressive words of wisdom written by Ray Prinzing of Boise, Idaho, are quoted here for our edification. "We need to keep our eyes open, our hearts right, and our spirits alert, for these are days of separation of the precious from the vile, the real from the unreal, and the truth from the error. They might seem to run ever so parallel, but the sword of the Spirit shall cleave between the two, and we shall be able to see clearly.

"There shall be many who will sit before you, but you need not be disturbed by any, for each one shall be a sign and wonder in himself. They need not give you a sign nor show you a wonder, for they are the wonder, whether they be lying wonders or godly wonders.

"You will also need to look beyond the flow of words to discern what lurks behind the accustomed terminology. Keep still, and, as they begin to talk, their fleshy and bestial desires will begin to peek out from behind the front of familiar words. They will use the phraseology of truths dear to your heart, but, as you hold your peace, you will discover the inner motive of the flesh in its self-kingdom-building. The mark, the desire of the heart, will be revealed. Even the religious desire of seeing souls saved, sick healed, etc., will be discovered as a self-desire to build, to gather around self for the furtherance of their own kingdom and glory.

"There will be those mentally developed but spiritually non-developed who will seem clothed as it were with a garment of light; but it is not light, only that reflection of the light that is in you. May God give us keen discernment, for I fear that because of our own deep desire for God we have imputed the same unto another, and then felt they were of like mind because we wanted them to be.

"Again, others will take the words right out of your mouth and speak them, which would seem like confirmation, but the spirit within you shall discern those very special words to be in them as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal."

The evil day will be characterized by every imaginable form of evil, false christs, false prophets, false teachers, false signs, and false wonders. There will be so much falsehood in the religious world and all of it so cleverly disguised by good works and apparent displays of devotion that all will be deceived by it except those few people who have come into such a personal relationship with Christ and are so familiar with His voice by continual communion with Him that they cannot be deceived by imitators.

The agonizing burden of my heart that never leaves me night or day bids me to tell every man and woman who has ears to hear that our greatest need in this evil day is not our communion with people, however good they may be. Our need is continual communion with Jesus Christ, reading His word, kneeling before Him in prayer in the watches of the day and the watches of the night, maintaining the continual attitude of praying without ceasing while at work, while walking on the street, while riding in the car. But be warned that we will never accomplish this communion while our minds are occupied with television, for it has become Satan's master distractor, holding the minds, the attentions, and the affections of men in its vice-like grip while it washes our brains of all that pertains to the mind of Christ and fills them with all that appeals to the carnal mind. The evil eye of this monster cannot portray the beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ, but its phantom figures fill your eyes and your minds with scenes of murder, sluggings, beatings, adultery, fornications, brawls, thefts, riots, divorce, and every evil that carnality can devise, and then people wonder what is wrong with the world that it is filled with murder, sluggings, beatings, adultery, fornication, brawls, divorce, and every evil that the carnal mind can devise. The apostle Paul said, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and so they always do. If you wish to defend this instrument of evil, my message is not for you, but "let every man who nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

"Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for a tree is known by his fruit. Oh, generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." **Matt. 12:33-35**. What Christians need today is to be genuinely converted, and that includes those who claim to be born again.

Again we repeat, your greatest need is not communion with people. Do not journey thousands of miles to get acquainted with me, for I am but a man. There is another man, the man Christ Jesus, who is much nearer to you and much more wise and powerful, who holds in His omniscient mind all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the answer to every problem of the ages, and the answer to all your problems as well. He knows the secret purpose of your sojourn in the world. He knows the false and the true, the right and the wrong. His unerring hand divides between wheat and tares. He calls His sheep by name and leads them forth. He knows your down-sitting and your uprising. He knows your thoughts afar off. Even the hairs of your head are all numbered, and none of them fall to the ground without His notice.

You do not need to lean upon the arm of man for support. You do not need to sit at his table for substance. You do not need to seek out great or good men, for there is none good but one and there is none great but one. In this, the evil day of abounding iniquity, this day of false prophets, false christs, false teachers, and false miracle workers, every path is beset by danger; therefore, the more time you spend running after men and women to join yourself to them, the more you expose yourself to all that is false and misleading. Oh, that in this evil day God's people would learn the truth of these words:

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul.
He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.
Thou prepares! a table before me in the presence of my enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The man who thus puts his faith in Christ, coming to know Him personally, separate and apart from men or institutions, will never, never be moved or deceived, for his delight is not in preachers and miracle workers, but "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night; and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." **Psa. 1:3.**

Though we might write books without number or spend endless days instructing men how to recognize false christs and false prophets, I know of only one perfect safeguard against all the evils of the evil day, one perfect refuge against the countless deceptions that even now are rampant in all the world and all the professing church. That refuge is Christ Himself for all who take the time, carefully seeking to know Him, will immediately recognize all that is false. They will have learned the meaning of the blessed truth, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me, and a stranger will they not follow, but they will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. "Your only safeguard against false christs is to know Christ. Your only refuge against false teachers is to know the one true Master above all masters, Jesus Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, cease from giving your ear to every man that clamors for attention. In quietness and confidence give your ear to Him that you might know His voice apart from all strangers. Cease from trying to divide between sheep and goats and seek to know the one true shepherd. He will do the dividing for you. Cease from consulting with men about who is right and who is wrong, who is of God and who is of Satan, but seek to know Him who is the only mediator between God and man. He is your only refuge in this time of storm, this evil day, when light is everywhere mingled with gross darkness, this day of wolves in sheep's clothing, and beasts with horns as lambs and voices as dragons.

This is the evil day of false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great wonder if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their work. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. Our Lord warned us that "Many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many, and many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ." **Matt. 24:11, Luke 21:8.** Now when Jesus said many, then there must certainly be many. If, however, you are expecting to see men stand on a platform saying, "I am Christ," you will wait a long time, for few men will ever openly manifest their error in such a way; but yet, if they did, you may be sure they would find plenty of followers.

Now the word Christ means Anointed, and you have only to cast your eyes about you to find many men and many women who are claiming to have a special anointing from God for this particular hour. These are saying, "I am the anointed, or I am Christ." The meaning is the same. The literal translation of Matt. 24:23,24 from the Emphatic Diaglott brings this out with great clarity thus: "Then if any to you should say, Lo, here the anointed, or here, believe not, for many false anointed ones shall be raised... and shall give signs and great wonders, so as to deceive if possible even the chosen." This passage of scripture is of enormous importance, and it should be applied without hesitation, discrimination, or fear to all men and women who make great claims for their ministry. It should also be applied to all sects and denominations, for they all claim to possess the one true way. Every informed person must be aware that at this very moment there are many who claim they are the anointed for this hour. They are God's man or God's woman, or God's prophet or God's denomination. Without difficulty I can think of a dozen such men over the country at the moment. One claims to have a golden altar powerful enough to stop an invading horde of two hundred million Chinese. Another claims he is Elijah the prophet and goes to great lengths to prove it. A dozen men claim to be God's man of the hour. Many women

are claiming to be specially anointed to bring new revelation for this last day. And then there is that arch-deceiver who throughout successive generations has blasphemously claimed to be Christ's representative on earth. All these and many more claim to be anointed of God, and every one of them have hundreds of followers, while some of them count their followers in millions and hundreds of millions. These are false prophets and false christs, deceiving many by their crafty claim to be anointed of God. Full well did Peter say, "There were false prophets also among the people as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction? And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." **Pet. 2:1-3.**

In the above passage the apostle uses the word pernicious to describe the ways of these men. This is a powerful word which means, "Having the power of destroying or injuring; tending to kill or hurt; very injurious, deadly, malicious, and wicked." How terrible are these deceivers whose ambition is to draw away disciples after themselves. Seek them not nor follow them, for all who ever came before Him (Christ) are thieves and robbers.

Notice also that Peter gives a glaring clue that unmistakably identifies a false ministry. "Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Their need of your money is always evident in every meeting they hold, every article or letter they write. They need money for this, money for that, money for missions, money for the destitute, money for their broadcast, money for their new tent, and with a thousand other plausible lies they make merchandise of the gullible people who blindly follow them. You will hear them tell how God revealed to them that a certain number of people in the meeting have a certain amount of money that they are to give, and they usually get it. This is not God's doing, but these are feigned words by which they make merchandise of you. From such turn away.

The warnings we have given here of the evil day that is even now spreading itself like a shadowy spectre over all the earth are not given to scare or frighten, but that God's people should be alert to the marauding dangers that beset them and that they might turn their hearts from all that is vanity and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie, being no longer followers of men or denominations, but of Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, the true Shepherd and the first begotten from the dead, for in Him we shall be more than conquerors in the evil day.

CHAPTER TWO THE VIRGIN AND THE HARLOT

The true church is the most glorious institution in earth. Nothing like it was ever before known, not even in heaven itself. When God almighty instituted the church, He began to display His manifold wisdom in all grace and glory and power by transforming the lives of sinful men from men of the world to men of God, healing all manner of sickness and disease, delivering from the power of Satan, placing the very Person of the resurrection in the hearts of all believers, so that the hope of eternal life was a present experience manifesting itself in the souls of men, giving them a living hope that, though they die, they would live again and that many who live by His faith would never see death. For had not Jesus told them, "**Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die?**" **John 11:25.**

People become members of the church, not by any act of man as the sprinkling of holy waters on the head, the reciting of blessings, the signing of cards, the receiving of certificates, nor yet by the waters of baptism, but by a divine act of God through which the Holy Spirit grants repentance for sin, and faith in the all powerful blood of Jesus Christ for cleansing from all the guilt and sins of the past, the present, and the future. He who thus repented of his sins receives immediately from God the witness of the Spirit that he is purged from all defilement, for he who believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself (1 John 5:10) that he is no longer a child of Satan, but a child of God and an heir to the promises of the Most High. Upon this cleansed vessel the Father pours out the Holy Spirit that he might receive power as God's child, being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. Col. 1:13.

Those blessed men and women who are thus begotten from above and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son find themselves of one heart and one soul. The love of Jesus Christ burns in their hearts and they

want nothing but Him. If indeed believers were to remain in such a happy state, the kingdom of Satan would be thrown into confusion and ruin. No place would be left any more for the power of darkness, and the kingdom of God like rays of dawn would transform all the world with the sunshine of God's love.

There is every reason to believe that in the early church after Pentecost every vestige of the old life had disappeared from the believers. Selfishness was gone as believers with the love and wisdom of God had all things common. As a healthy man has power to cast off sickness and disease from his body, so the glorious infant church had power to throw off every evil device that man or devil could force upon it. There was no hiding place for covetousness, deceit, or trickery. Deceivers like Ananias and Sapphira were uncloaked by the power of discernment and judged by the wisdom of God. Acts 5. There was no room for the cunning trickery of such sleight of hand experts as Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9), and when Elymas withstood Paul, he was brought to his knees by the power of Christ in His church. Acts 13:6-13. The preachers of that holy assembly knew nothing of the wisdom or letters of men, but men took note of them that they had been with Jesus. That was their one recommendation and they needed none other. Their sermons came not from the staleness of a notebook, but, as they opened their mouths, from their innermost beings streams and rivers of life flowed forth, confounding their enemies, convincing the gainsayers, and refreshing the souls of the believers.

Sinners by multitudes were saved. Men coming out of paganism were immediately transformed. Sick in multitudes were healed every one. The dumb spoke; the blind were made to see; the dead were raised up; cripples leaped and ran. When the apostles were beaten, they rejoiced. When they were cast into prison, they prayed and the angel of the Lord opened the doors and led them forth. Thus were believers added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, and of the rest durst no man join himself.

There was such a personal awareness of the wonderful presence of the risen Christ that men and women became followers of God as dear children. They were not disciples of men. No man among them sought to lead away disciples after himself. The light and glory of Christ shone like a sun in every believer whether apostle or prophet or ditch-digger. They sought no glory of man. They sought nothing of man. Their only recourse was in the wisdom and power of a living Christ. Thus were sinners saved. Multitudes of believers were added to the Lord and, by being joined to the Lord, they became at once an integral part of Christ's body, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Thus the word declares, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The wickedness of dividing that living organism which God was building into a harlotish thing full of sects and names never once crossed their pure minds. Christ dwelt in them, and they dwelt in Him. They belonged to Him and He belonged to them. To call them by some other name would have been blasphemy to their pure minds, even as it is blasphemy to the pure now. It was Christ who saved them. It was Christ who healed them. Such a flood of His divine wisdom was imparted unto them that their enemies could neither gainsay nor resist them. When they were beaten, they rejoiced. When they were threatened, they prayed. When they were chained in prison, their bonds fell off and great barred doors on rusty hinges heaved open of their own accord at the miraculous presence of the angel of the Lord. No man said that aught that he possessed was his own, for they were all one body because they were all one spirit with the Father. There was one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and one Father who was above all and over all.

Such was the church then and such is the true church now, for God is separating those who truly bear the name of Christ from those who pride themselves in the names of blasphemy. These are false spirits, false Christs and false churches, compassing land and sea to make proselytes who will bear their banner, proclaim their doctrine, live their life and die their death.

It is doubtful if any who lived in the white heat of the early church ever imagined that sad and terrible days of declension would presently overtake them until the wheat that held such hundred-fold promise would be choked and strangled by tares; that sheep and goats would baa and bleat in the same pasture indistinguishable one from the other; that the way of Cain (hatred among brethren), the error of Balaam (using gifts for reward), and the gainsaying of Core (opposition against the Lord's anointed) would become rife among the believers. Long ago there was a Pharaoh in Egypt who beheld the glory and wisdom of Joseph, but generations later there arose another Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Even so it came to be in the church, for, as the fathers passed on, a second generation was rising up who knew not Christ as the one and only Lord. The error of Balaam was that he would gladly prophesy anything for the sake of promotion or reward, and it

was not long before this sinister error began to work in the hearts of the Christians. A love of power became increasingly evident among the ministering class. Elders and bishops vied with each other for more authority. Preachers, learned in the schools of theology, no longer spoke the word of the Lord, but bound men in doctrinal chains, often rejecting those who were truly sent of God. Cf. 2 John 9-11. Thus the church, once clothed with the glory of Christ until she shone like a radiant star in her righteousness, was now waning as the light of the moon when the shadow of earth passes over it. Forsaking the poor, she embraced the rich and powerful, boasting that she was rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing, but knowing not that she was wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. Rev. 3:17.

It is impossible for a man who has begun his walk with God in the Spirit to finally become perfect through the flesh, yet this is exactly what millions of God's dear people are attempting to do. Regrettable as this may be in the case of an individual believer, it is nothing less than tragic when we realize that the whole church system has wandered into this same delusion. The glorious virgin church of the beginning, without spot or wrinkle, walking in the love and wisdom of God, marching contrary to all the ways of the world and literally turning it upside down, began to find itself settling down in the world, becoming more and more a part of the world-system, until in this very day the so-called church and the world are indistinguishable the one from the other. The nominally Christian world is governed by men who are church goers, and we need not hesitate to say that the graft, its sex and immorality, is carried on by men who take an active part in that harlot system which everyday is falsely called the church. They pay its ministers, sing in its choirs, and donate to its program. But it is not the church. It is a pretentious harlot whose father is an Ammonite and whose mother is a Hittite.

One of the most desolating plagues ever to overtake the church was forced upon her when her ministers began to be a class by themselves. What room is there for class distinction between the hand and the foot? In a human body dare the hand say to the foot, "I have no need of you?" Or can the eyes say to the ear, "I have no need of you?" Or even the head with all its wisdom and understanding, can it say to the other members of the body, "I have no need of you?" It would seem to me that a head without a body is as useless as a body without a head, for if either be absent there is no true body.

Our ascended Lord Jesus Christ twice affirmed that He hated the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. Rev. 2:6 and 2:15. The word Nicolaitane is composed of two Greek words, - nikao, which means "to conquer", and laos, which means "the people". The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes refers to the earliest form of the hateful notion of dividing an equal brotherhood into clergy and laity that one should rule and the other be ruled. That which began as mere deeds in the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:6) and had developed into a doctrine in the church at Pergamos (Rev. 2:15) has in our day become an established tradition so firmly rooted that scarcely anybody in all the church system ever questions its authority or authenticity, and even less is aware that Jesus Christ Himself, the only true head of the church, twice declared that He hated it. And I shall not hesitate to say that every last one of these pompous puppets who have firmly established themselves as lords over God's heritage shall be the first to fall in the great desolation that will soon overtake that city of confusion.

How these aborted hirelings love the praise of men, desiring to be called all manner of titles: - Reverend, Right Reverend, Very Reverend, Most Reverend, Father, Holy Father, The Vicar of Christ, Doctors of Divinity, and all such assumed titles! No wonder John beheld the harlot full of names of blasphemy! Rev. 17:3. Is it not blasphemy for one to call himself Father when Jesus said, "**Call no man your Father, for ye have one Father, even God?**" **Matt. 23:9**. And is it less blasphemous for carnal man to call himself Reverend when that holy term is used only once in all scriptures and that in reference to the holiness and sanctity of God Himself? The moment a man assumes one of these titles, he embraces Nicolaitanism, putting himself into the clergy class, distinguishing himself as something separate, apart from and superior to the other members of the body of Christ.

Behold what conformity to the world we have attained when for the sake of reduced rates on the world's transportation systems or for the sake of deductible income tax receipts we are willing to be incorporated into the world's systems! What a base thing has befallen God's people when men seek ordination to avoid their army draft! Is it any wonder in the face of these things that the church which was once clothed with Jesus Christ, shining with the light of the Sun of Righteousness, should now be found stripped naked to her heavenly garments, or that her purity, holiness, and righteousness should have disappeared and, instead, she should wear the filthy rags of selfishness, pride worldliness, and intolerance? Well did Isaiah prophesy of this evil day,

saying, "How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment: righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross; thy wine is mixed with water, Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards: They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them." **Isa. 1:21-23.**

The world today and the professing church are fast becoming one and the same institution, groveling like slaves under an ever, deepening shadow of delusion. "Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." For the past years I have been writing under enormous pressures. Pressures, which at times are almost unbearable, are greatly increased by awareness of the fact that a large majority of people who continually read these messages do not understand what they are reading. I hesitate not to declare that the moment a man sees by the eye of God's Spirit what Babylon really is he will flee from it with greater haste than Lot fled from Sodom. Far, far too often Christian people love to quaff Babylon's wine from vessels of the Lord as Belshazzar wickedly did. So bound are they by church tradition that they do not know that God has departed from it. Like Samson they lie with their heads in Delilah's lap, then shake themselves and go out to battle as before, but they know that the Spirit of God has fled. They sing their songs, clap their hands, listen to sermons, and claim all manner of spiritual gifts, but God is not in it. He is outside the camp. I have spoken to many people about these truths. With few exceptions men everywhere realize that every religious sect and system is an integral part of mystery Babylon and that all these systems are fast uniting under one diabolical head. Yet, in spite of this knowledge, they continue as part and parcel of it. Now surely it is clear for any man to see that, if God is calling, "Come out of her, My people," then He Himself must be on the outside, for how could he who is within call to us to come without?

Oh, that people would seek the Lord that He might reveal to them what the true virgin church really is! Then they would be convinced that this visible mass of disorder and confusion that has stolen and usurped the name church is not the true church, but the harlot. Then all who have spiritual eyes would clearly see that all over the world today a white-robed, sanctified host is forming, whose only head is Christ, invisible to man but known of God and precious. This is the true virgin church. She has only one head, even Christ. Her holy inhabitants know neither form nor ceremony, but, because they are one spirit with Him, they are one body and one spirit with each other. They have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in all. This is the treasure hid in the field, this is the pearl of great price. This is the virgin church, the true body of Christ.

If you think you are going to reform the harlot system, you are wrong. Over and over again from time immemorial God has decreed that He will destroy it, and verily its destruction is very nigh at hand. From the womb of mystery Babylon shall come forth the very incarnation of the mystery of iniquity, the Antichrist, who will oppose and exalt himself above God Himself and all that is worshipped.

Let us take heed to ourselves, for every day and every hour the stage is being set for the final breaking forth of the mystery of iniquity in a way the world has never deemed possible in all its generations. Events are transpiring in our very midst that appear to be both right and essential, but the end result will be terrible beyond imagination. Try to imagine, if you will, the end result in immorality, social disease, promiscuity, and broken homes that will follow in the wake of what appears to be a very, very necessary birth control pill. The loud-talking, fleshly-minded delinquent crew that has invaded the world like a noisome pestilence will smugly reach forth its eager hand for a pill that will assure safety to indulge to the full every base and carnal appetite. The morality of the husbands and wives of our land has already reached a low that beggars description. Temptation, we freely admit, is common to all mankind. Millions of young women seem to imagine that it is just as legal and right to seek a husband from the ranks of married men as from the unmarried. Husbands and wives who have sworn allegiance to each other till death without hesitation commence to magnify some displeasure or incompatibility that they might cast each other aside, caring neither jot nor tittle for the enormous suffering inflicted upon their innocent children, who must silently suffer the kind of heartache that only a little child knows as he sobs himself to sleep in a vain attempt to analyze to why his father and mother have deserted each other, leaving him to be shuttled back and forth between parent and foster parent while he bears the punishment of their crimes. Cursed be such a generation. It would have been good for them if they have never been born. How much easier will the twin crimes of fornication and adultery become once the fear of conception has been removed from temptation, for fear, standing guard as a stern officer of the law, has always held a restraining power over those who would otherwise defile all that is holy and pure.

The children of our nation have become so mixed up through the curse of divorce as families have been divided and re-divided, some to the father and some to the mother. That would be bad enough, but the tragedy seldom remains there, for both parents usually re-marry, and many separate again to leave still more children the hapless victims of their iniquity. It is necessary to enlarge on this colossal corruption, for its abounding iniquity is as present as the crowd we meet.

The further man departs from God the greater his sin becomes and the deeper his dilemma. Adding still further to his confusion, he puts God further and further out of his life, denying His word, disbelieving His miracles, contradicting the story of creation, scoffing at the virgin birth, seeking evidence that Christ did not die, vainly hoping to thwart the resurrection, and counting the blood that redeemed him an unholy thing. How I detest the God-defying and unproved theories of evolution that are advanced and received on every hand as facts, but which in reality have not an ounce of proof. I rather glory in the answer of the late Mr. Etheridge, a foremost expert of that renowned Institution, The British Museum. The scientific gentleman, Professor Post from Syria, when visiting the British Museum, asked Mr. Etheridge to show him some of the proofs of Darwin's theory of evolution. He was astonished when so great an expert replied, "In all this great museum there is not a particle of evidence of transmutation of species... It is not founded on observation and fact. The talk of the antiquity of man is of the same value. There is no such thing as fossil man. I have read all their books, but they make no impression. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of such views."

Hold fast that thou hast, that no man takes thy crown, for we are living in an age when strong delusion is everywhere abroad. Furthermore, the strong delusion that stalks the world is being permitted by God Himself, for man has not loved the truth, but rejected it. Embracing a lie in his heart, he has brought forth an evil cockatrice that stingeth like a serpent and biteth like an adder. Because he has not loved the truth that he might be saved, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, God has sent him strong delusion that he might believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. See 2 Thess. 2:7-12.

The prophet Isaiah was speaking of such a day as this when he uttered the electrifying words of **Isa. 66:3-4**. See how the prophet shows that the beauty and simplicity of true worship had sunk so low that even the sacrifices commanded by God were now a loathsome abomination to Him. "He that killeth an ox (for sacrifice) is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in the abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer: When I spake they did not hear; but did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."

This is the detestable low to which public worship in our day has descended. There need to be no delusion about that, for the situation is odious beyond words. There was a time in Israel when God Himself commanded the people to offer their sacrifices in purity and dedication before the Lord. All such sacrifices were acceptable to Him. He had ordered the slaying of oxen for sacrifice. He had given explicit direction for the slaying of the sacrificial lamb, and precious in His sight where all who with true and good heart obeyed. Detailed instruction was given for the offering of oblation and the burning of incense unto God. And while their hearts were right with God and their spirits were humble before Him, He rejoiced in their every act of worship. But a dismal change had overtaken them, for the spirit of worship had departed, leaving naught but empty form and ceremony, a thing most hateful in the eyes of God, until the slaying of an ox for sacrifice was as wicked as the slaying of a man, and the spiritless worshipper, coming with his pretended submission to God, slaying his lamb as sacrifice, was as guilty as though he had cut off a dog's neck and offered the blood of an unclean animal on the altar. For, if the heart is unclean, so also is the offering. He who thus offers an oblation unto God is as if he offered swine's blood, and he that offers incense (typical of prayer) is as he that blesses an idol.

Consider carefully how desperate a situation this is. How dreadful beyond words that worship had degenerated to such a degree that it has become actual wickedness and iniquity in God's sight! Christians today have chosen their own ways. They have not regarded the will or the mind of God. Their consuming ambition in life is to propagate their own programs regardless of cost until the whole iniquity has become an enormous snare. Men have long supplanted the will of God by their own will. All that they had determined to do they proclaimed

to be the will of God. The schemes that came forth from their own minds they advanced, saying, "The Lord spoke to me." But the Lord had not spoken at all. The thoughts were their own, fathered by their carnal ambition. Oh, how hateful are all these things in His sight, and what an abomination they are in the mind of the Planner and Designer of all the universe!

Now therefore, because Christians have so wickedly chosen their own way, deluding themselves in hoping that the way they took was God's way, thus saith the Almighty Lord, "I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them; because when I called none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear, but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not." **Isa. 66:5.** As drowning men in their desperation cling to a sinking vessel, so now do men cling to the false christ of a depraved church system from which the Spirit of God has departed. Look no longer to the false christs of form, ceremony, or mighty efforts, nor yet to the false christ of denomination. Look rather to Jesus, the Christ of the living God. All that came before Him are thieves and robbers. John 10:8. Even now in this age of Laodicea He stands without the camp, knocking at the heart's door, saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him." **Rev. 3:20.**

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and bought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know; My people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward... Ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." **Isa. 1:2-6.**

Hearken diligently to the words of the apostle Paul, for his vivid description of the fearful delusion that will overtake the church people of the latter times would cause one's heart to tremble. Speaking of the great deceiver who will shortly appear on the religious scene when the hindering influence of God's elect saints is removed, he says, "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:8-12.**

If, however, it is possible to state the case with greater force than the King James Version has done, then the translator J. B. Phillips has succeeded with these potent words. "Evil is already insidiously at work, but its activities are restricted until what I have called the restraining power is removed. When that happens, the lawless man will be plainly seen - though the truth of the Lord Jesus spells his doom, and the radiance of the coming of the Lord Jesus will be his utter destruction. The lawless man is produced by the spirit of evil and armed with all the force, wonders, and signs that falsehood can devise. To those involved in this dying world he will come with evil's undiluted power to deceive, for they have refused to love the truth which could have saved them. God sends upon them, therefore, the full force of evil's delusion, so that they put their faith in an utter fraud and meet the inevitable judgment of all who have refused to believe the truth and have made evil their play-fellow." **2 Thess. 2:8-12** (Phillips).

Nothing can be clearer than this: The delusion of the last days will be marked by the operation of every imaginable sign and wonder. Real miracles will be seen and of such a caliber that even the very elect will be shaken by them. Physical healings emanating from the power of Satan will abound. Those who perform the miracle -will profess to uplift Christ and believe in His blood. They will greatly advertise their burden for souls, and their feigned compassion for the sick.

The following things are evident in the lives of those who are of the truth. There is no advertising of self, no proclamation of personal prowess or past successes, no smiling pictures, no hand bills, no advertising trumpet or fanfare, no effort to gain money through falsely pretending to be burdened for a program. Christ is seen and not the minister, for when John the Baptist preached, he so upheld Jesus Christ that all the multitudes left him

and went thronging to Jesus. And, when one complained of this, he replied with joy, "He must increase, but I must decrease." **John 3:50.**

With frankness I must tell you that the religious world is full of men who do nothing but seek their own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's. Millions and millions of dollars are gathered in by eloquent talkers who tearfully describe their great vision for Christ. But their great vision for Christ is usually nothing but a 'Judas goat' to lead your money into their pockets. Have we become so stupid and carnal that we can actually believe that the eternal purpose of the most high God is dependent upon man's haste or upon man's money? I tell you, nay! For God knoweth all things and these programs are for the most part self-will and rebellion against Him. If for one moment I should think that my eternal salvation depended upon the ability of some smooth-talking preacher to wheedle the unwilling dollars from an audience that the gospel might be preached to me, then I must confess that all my love and admiration for the Almighty God would disappear in the quicksand of unbelief and disrespect. He who formed the soul of men and gave His Son for their life depends not on gold and silver nor on the cattle of a thousand hills, but on the might of His Spirit. Three things are outstandingly evident in a false ministry and a fourth lies beneath the surface. First, the love of money. Money is always the life-line of their program. Every deceitful device is used to make merchandise of the people while they live on the fat of the land. Second, Christ, though preached, holds no pre-eminence. The preacher himself is the outstanding name in the act. It is around his banner that the people flock. Third, they seek to draw away disciples after themselves, compassing land and sea to make a proselyte. Fourth those who walk in close communion with Christ cannot help but recognize the wrongness of the spirit at work among them.

I only write these distasteful things because I know the hour of great deception and strong delusion is upon us. I write them because many will be deceived, because iniquity shall abound and the love of many wax cold. Jesus Christ Himself gave us this awesome warning, saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in My name saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. Then shall many be offended and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another, and many false prophets shall rise and deceive many, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." **Matt. 24:4,5,9-12.** It was not of publicans and harlots, murderers, thieves, and drunkards that Jesus was speaking when He spoke of abounding iniquity, but of those lawless and wicked men, full of religious program and zeal of their own manufacture, who will come saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? Then the Lord will answer them, depart from Me, all ye that work iniquity."

When will every eye be opened to see that all that is done in the name of the Lord, but without the command of Christ, is iniquity and lawlessness in His sight? For, except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it, and, except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Among the deceptions of the last day will be false prophets. We need to be aware of them because they will come in sheep's clothing. If we imagine for one moment that such deceivers will be easily detected, we have made our first great error. We have let down our first barrier against deception. These deceivers will have all the outward appearance of sheep and true followers of Christ. They will outwardly appear to be humble men, always professing to give Christ the glory. They will appear to be prayerful; they will minister under an apparent anointing; they will point to signs and wonders as proof that God is with them. But, if we follow them, we will be deceived. If today we are casting our eyes about us, scanning the horizon for some great prophet to arise, we are wide open for deception. Make no mistake about that. Neither Elijah nor Moses nor John the Baptist had to write books to advertise themselves as God's prophet of the hour. An excellent scripture to remember in this day of abounding iniquity and deception is this: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." **Heb. 1:12,2.** May God help us all to remember that. I am not looking for mighty prophets. I am looking for the manifestation of the sons of God, and, the moment we get our minds on something else, we are losing contact with our head, which is Jesus Christ Himself.

The great burden of my own heart has been to bring as many as possible into a close and living relationship with Jesus Christ, separate and apart from all sects, systems, denominations, or ministries. Perhaps I have failed to make men see the truth, but, frankly, I am appalled to see how people can read these things, rejoicing in the hope of them, and yet go running after the first fantastic fad that appears on the scene. We have long

been taught that a sheep knows the voice of its shepherd and cannot be deceived by the voice of a stranger. This is true in all cases except one. A sick sheep will follow a stranger. Are God's people sick? Verily they are, for they follow strangers who lead them, not to green pastures, but to the fleecing and to the butcher.

There is a great famine in the land, not of food and drink, but of hearing the word of God. In this dread hour of abounding deception every man and woman should take time to read the Bible, for it is the word of God. Every word of the Bible bears the stamp of holy inspiration. Heaven itself will pass away, but the word of God abides forever. We do not hesitate to say that the best book ever written by man is as much inferior to the Bible as man is inferior to his matchless Creator. It is but a small step from the written word to the Logos, that Living Word, Christ Himself, who was before all things and by whom all things consist. The man or woman who reads the Bible, honoring it as the word of God, abolishing from his mind the theories and traditions learned of men, will find himself coming face to face with Christ, the Son of the blessed Father, and, beholding Him, he will be changed into that same image, from one glory to another, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Follow all the men you wish, however good they may appear to be, but you will find in the end you are still far away from Him. Follow Him and you will learn the meaning of that glorious truth, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." **John 8:12.**

In the end of this age, it is now plain to see, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2 Tim. 3:13. Surely none needs to be persuaded of the truth of this, for deceivers are everywhere. Should we not, then, betake ourselves more earnestly to Christ who is the truth, and the light, and the way? Waste no time trying to decide who is right or who is wrong, who is a false prophet or who is a true, who is of the Lord or who is of the devil, and what is wheat or what is tares. Let Christ be the center of your life. Make Him your Lord, your wisdom, your understanding, your counsel, your might, your knowledge and fear. Look to Him for your guidance and wisdom. Let His mind dwell in you. Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for, when Jesus Christ becomes the first and last in your life, the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, then all these little human idols will fall as the image of Dagon fell before the Ark of the Covenant. 1 Sam. 5:1-5. While Catholics and Protestants are taking steps toward unity, while Evangelicals and Pentecostals are being deceived by a movement with pseudo gifts and much vaunted glossolalia, that all sects might come under the domination of the mother of harlots, let the elect waste no time wondering about the lightness or wrongness of any of these things, for they are all part of the strong delusion of the last days. Flee away to Christ and abide in Him, for, "if ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done." **John 15:7.**

Do not hope that so-called full gospel people will escape the deception of this ecumenical Trojan horse, for strong delusion has already engulfed them. The ecumenical movement has many more arms than an octopus. If it cannot enfold you in one of them, it will grip you in another. The Pentecostal people have already had one observer at the ecumenical council. Now nicknamed Mr. Pentecost, he is spreading the evil net that will capture millions of these people, whose love long ago waxed cold because of the abounding iniquity of our day.

The true church has always been in the world, unrecognized and unidentified by all visible systems. Its true identity has always been concealed beneath the cloak of divine mystery, its presence overshadowed entirely by the visible systems that have usurped its holy name. Thus man, in looking for the true church, never looks beyond the named and visible systems of Babylon's confusion. That bold, strutting, swaggering, unveiled harlot has obscured the comely veiled virgin so that man sees her not nor beholds her purity, but, lusting after the beauty of the lewd woman, they even accept her as the bride of Christ. A great truth was in the heart of Abraham when he said to his servant, Eliezer, "Ye shall not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shall go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." **Gen. 24:3-4.**

The true church is the mystical body of Christ; first, the body of the sons of God, the holy bridegroom company is His image and likeness. These are the called, the chosen, and the faithful. Rev. 17:14. Then comes forth the body of the bride, another company in the image of Christ, for Adam was first formed, then Eve. Afterward shall come the marriage of the Lamb when male and female, divided since Eve was taken from Adam's side, are united in one new Adam, even Christ, that the mystery of God might be complete. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church, for, as a bride takes the name of her husband, so shall the virgin church take the name of Christ that He may be all and in all.

Make certain in this important hour to set your eyes upon Christ alone. Learn to know Him supreme above all others. Seek not to know me. I am only a man. Seek not prophets or healers or miracle workers. Their glory at best is only reflected.

There is a virgin company being prepared today, redeemed from all the ways of earth, singing a new song which none but they can learn. "These are they which are not defiled with women (church systems); for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These are redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Rev. 14:4-5.

CHAPTER THREE THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY

A mystery is something that is unknown and unexplained. It is dark and incomprehensible to the natural mind. Though the fact exists beyond all doubt, it transcends all human wisdom and defies human understanding. It cannot be fathomed and the secret depths of its truths are hidden. Who on earth can doubt the fact of life? Yet what life is human beings have never discovered though earth's cleverest brains have for centuries sought its fountain. We often read of an exciting scientific breakthrough as learned minds hopefully proclaim that they are on the verge of discovering the very secret of life itself, but they never do; and outside of God they never will, for in Him is life, in Him was life, and in Him life shall ever be. If man can discover God with a microscope, a telescope, or an excursion among the planets, then he may also discover life. But both God and the life which He is stand beyond the realm of human senses, defying all their power of analysis and comprehension. It is the wisdom of God that makes manifest and at the same time conceals in inky darkness that which He has made manifest. Omniscient wisdom alone can plainly speak, yet hide the spoken words in such darkness that naught but the illumination of the Holy Spirit can unfold and reveal them. Poor little earthbound man, sweating over his scientific instruments, seems never to comprehend that all his investigations, remarkable as they may be, always begin and always end in the natural realm and beyond this tiny pin-prick of his limitation he cannot go.

Man that is born of woman is hermetically sealed on the natural side, and it is only when he is born of God that light and illumination from the eternal realm of the Spirit penetrate the darkness of his mind. It is when God says, "Let there be light", that there is light. It is when the Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters that the bright waters above the firmament are divided from the dark waters beneath the firmament. It is when the light and revelation from the eternal world breaks like a glad morning o'er our spirits that we become more familiar with the stars of heaven than with the dust of earth. Then these eternal things, which hitherto were all unseen, unheard, untouched, untasted, and unsmelled, become so vivid in their reality that the visible things of a corruptible world grow dim and fade away. Then and then alone we learn that here we have no continuing city, but, being born from above, we look for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Those strange souls who see the eternal seem like fools to those who see it not, for the natural mind has no ability to comprehend or see the things of the Spirit of God.

Six young brothers played in their farmyard one evening after the Lord had watered the earth with a sudden shower. As an invisible hand parted the curtain of the clouds, the smiling sun with miracle fingers cast the mantle of a rainbow about the shoulders of the sky. One of the boys stopped his play to behold with delight the seven magnificent colors of the giant bow. Excitedly he called the attention of the other five, but they saw nothing. The glory he saw was hidden from them, for they all had been born color blind. All natural things have their spiritual counterparts, and this in truth is one, for, while natural men behold natural things, only the few have entered that blessed realm of the open heaven where their spiritual senses are awake to the wonders above to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and touch the untouchable. The men who rode to Damascus with Saul of Tarsus "heard not the voice of Him that spoke to me (Paul)". **Acts 22:9.**

The apostle Paul frequently spoke of the vast mysteries of God and, in speaking of them, he left no shadow of doubt that naught but the revelation of the Lord could unfold those eternal mysteries. In the following words he told how the mystery of the will of God had been made known to him, a mystery that had been kept secret since the foundation of the world: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather

together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will; that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ." **Eph. 1:9-12.** It was in the hope that we, too, might share this marvelous revelation of the mystery of God's will that Paul prayed for us all, saying, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." **Eph. 2:15-20.** "The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew, for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. . . Now have we received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given of God." **1 Cor. 2:6-12.** Thus the mysteries of God are, and thus, and thus alone, are they revealed.

There are three great mysteries, which enfold in themselves all other mysteries:

*The mystery of godliness which is the mystery of God.
The mystery of iniquity which is the mystery of Satan.
Mystery Babylon, which is the mystery of man.*

The *mystery of godliness* embraces the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the mystery of Christ in you, the mystery of Jew and Gentile, the mystery of Christ and the church, the mystery of the reconciliation of all things. Indeed, we need not hesitate to say that the mystery of God embraces all other mysteries, for the unsearchable mysteries of all ages have come forth from His infinite mind. Even the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of Babylon must in their final analysis be included in the eternal mystery of God, for man never comes to know God until the truth dawns upon his heart that before all things stands the infinite wisdom, the immutable purpose, the omniscient knowledge, and the almighty power of God, the designer and creator of the universe and all it contains. **For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends." Rom. 11:36.** (Goodspeed). Or, in the more familiar words of the King James version, "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." Our God is a God of mysteries. His mysteries are not mysterious to Him whose mind is infinite and His knowledge omniscient. They are mysteries to us whose minds are finite and our knowledge limited by the tiny sphere in which we dwell. Who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him? 1 Cor. 2:16. If He should question us, we could not answer Him one in a thousand. Job 9:3. Modern science with all its vaunted human knowledge still cannot answer the forty questions which the Lord demanded of Job and which made that man squirm in the revelation of his own ignorance. Cf. Job chapters 38-41.

*God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform;
He plants His footprints on the sea, and rides upon the storm.*

Man has lost his sense of the majesty of God. Christians do not know that God has an eternal purpose. They do not perceive that back of every design is the designer, back of every building is the architect, back of every creation is the creator. Before every son is the Father and in the perfecting of that son is the divine purpose of God to chasten, scourge, and correct every son whom He receives. So certain is this decree that God the Father plainly states for all His children to understand that, if we receive not chastisement, it is because we are bastards and not sons. Heb. 12:8. God, in bringing many sons to glory, takes no part in the nonsense of self-expression, a curse that has swept the modern world permitting children to do as they please without restraint lest restraint should endanger their genius. If we sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind. For the past thirty years or so, as this foolish doctrine has been taught, children have become ever more disobedient to their parents, but now the whirlwind is upon us, for these same children who were raised in disobedience to parents

now think it is their right to defy all authority. And what is the result? The result is a fearful rise in crime of every kind — street gangs, cruelty, rape, drunkenness, sluggings, divorce, willful destruction of property, vandalism, and sex crimes of every sort, and all this in an age of plenty. This trend will grow increasingly worse until parents re-learn that "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him." **Prov. 22:15.**

Let all who prize the hope of sonship know that God will never permit us to do as we please. He will bring the chastening rod upon us until we howl with the pain. Neither will He spare for our crying. Prov. 19:18 He will chasten us with adversity and scourge us with tribulation. He will make us suffer in the flesh that we might cease from sin. He will leave us forsaken of friends that we might learn to lean on Him. He will strip us of earthly glory that we might seek the glory, which comes from Him. Men we trust will fail us that our only trust may be in the living God. The hopes and dreams of years He will banish in a night that with tears of rejoicing we might say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Do not expect rosy paths when you walk with God. I cannot find one saint in any age who was ever free from the fiery furnaces of tribulation, but to obtain that better resurrection they had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; they were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (of whom the world was not worthy). They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens of the earth; and these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Heb. 11:36-40. No! No! Sonship does not come by doing our own pleasure. It does not come by making a glorious name for ourselves in the earth. It has nothing to do with world renown. It has only to do with the thorny pathway of the will of God and the cup of suffering that all must drink. If we follow our natural inclinations, we will probably spend our life-time running hither and thither, searching for glorious meetings, seeking physical blessings, healings, and gifts, but, if we follow Him and walk in the pathway of His will, we will find ourselves at strange variance with every voice that calls for our attention except the voice of the Good Shepherd who calls, "Follow me".

Iniquity as used in New Testament scripture simply means lawlessness. We are inclined to look upon iniquity as wrongful acts or wicked and unjust deeds. While this is indeed, the modern meaning of the word, the Bible meaning goes beyond the open and overt acts to the very source of all wrong and evil, which is inherent rebellion against God, manifesting itself in all manner of lawlessness.

Because iniquity is one of the mysteries, we can never hope to understand it by merely talking about it. One might discuss the subject forever, yet still be void of understanding. The eternal question, why, would still remain unanswered. Why do people do this? Why do they do that? Why do they murder? Why do they steal? Why is foolishness bound up in the heart of every child? Why do the people who make the laws of our land forever break them? Why do children who love their parents rebel against them? Why do wives rebel against their husbands, and husbands against their wives? Why did Lucifer, the son of the morning, rebel against God? Why did Cain offer a sacrifice that was unacceptable to God, and, though offered forgiveness, rebel still further in that he rose up against his brother and slew him?

The mystery of iniquity, which is the mystery of lawlessness, is in the heart of every man, and there it will remain until the will of man has been crucified and nailed to the cross. It is only when we have passed through our Gethsemane where the will of man is forever crushed and crucified and the will of God exalted that the great mystery of iniquity is forever dead. Then a whole new realm surrounds us and we begin to live in a new domain, even the blessed realm of the mystery of godliness. Great indeed is that precious region where God is manifest in our mortal flesh, God's Spirit, God's will, God's love, God's life, God's truth. There the peaceful spirit is in rebellion against everything everywhere that is in rebellion against the will of God, that all things may be subdued unto Him.

Man in his present state of iniquity is completely incapable of understanding the things of God. In his rebellious pride he vainly imagines that his puny mind can comprehend the most spiritual things. With his scientific instruments he presumptuously delves into anything and everything, even to the vain-glorious point of contradicting the word of God, the story of creation, or the virgin birth. Instead of the simple truth of Genesis he prefers to believe the impossible theory that, though man is superior to a monkey, yet he descended from him. All this vanity rises from the noxious root of the mystery of lawlessness, which is the mystery of iniquity.

Because of man's inability to comprehend even the simplest things of God, the Lord has confined Himself to merely stating facts. Seldom, if ever, does He offer an explanation. If we believe those facts, building on their foundation, we will come to the truth in the end, but if we ignore them, creating a foundation of our own, we will end in a quagmire of confusion as the present world and the professing church have undoubtedly done. The word of God abounds with basic facts that need no explanation. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "The earth was without form and void. Darkness was upon the face of the deep." God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." No explanation is made about who God is or where God came from, what the earth is or where it came from, what caused the darkness or from whence the light appeared four days before the sun was placed to rule the day. These things are facts. They are truths. They are to be believed and not pried into, for God, who cannot lie, has said that they are so.

In like manner also John begins his gospel: "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life. The life was the light of men. The light shineth in darkness. The darkness comprehendeth it not." Foolish, earthbound man, depending on his carnal mind that receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, thinks he has a democratic right to come to his own conclusions, but he does not know that the very right he demands is in itself the mystery of iniquity working in him, questioning the God of truth who cannot lie and rebelling against Him.

Some years ago I was deeply impressed by reading the story of the ex-negro slave, Dr. Carver. This strange man had an over-whelming love for God and all things He had made. One day, when in communion with God, he asked this question; "Lord, why did You make the universe?" To this the Lord in grace replied, "That is far too great a subject for a little mind like yours. Ask Me something more your size." Then the man of God asked, "Lord, why did You make me?" And again the Lord answered him, saying, "That is still far too great for a little mind like yours. Ask Me something smaller." After some consideration the man of God asked this question: "Lord, why did You make a peanut?" The Lord replied, "That is more nearly your size, but it is still almost infinite." Then the Lord showed him how to take a peanut apart and how to put it together again, and during the wonder of that revelation He revealed to him three hundred different uses for the peanut. Some of these were peanut butter, face powder, printers ink, shampoo, creosote, vinegar, dyes, a dandruff cure, instant coffee, rubberoid compound, soap, salad oil, and wood stain. So great was this understanding that the failing peanut industry of the United States was literally revolutionized and reborn. Let us not then be wise in our own conceits, for, if any man thinketh that he knoweth aught, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know, but if any man love God, the same is known of Him. The same is true of the mystery of iniquity. Why it exists and whence it came remains a mystery locked up in the mind of God. Be it known to us all, however, that so great a mystery as this cannot exist without an eternal purpose, nor could the great plan of God for all ages be accomplished without it, for God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

There is a most enlightening story in the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel where a lamentation is taken up against the King of Tyre. Ezek. 28:12. As Jesus indirectly addressed Satan when He said to Peter, **"Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou savorest not the things which be of God" (Matt. 16:23)**, and as He indirectly addressed Satan in the Garden of Eden, saying to the serpent, **"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15)**, so in Ezekiel, chapter 28, by addressing the King of Tyre, the Lord reveals the first manifestation of the mystery of iniquity as it came into the heart of Lucifer, son of the morning, before ever the world or man existed. Men will rush in where angels fear to tread, but with fear and reverence I must confess I know not from what source this strange mystery of rebellion sprang, nor why God permitted it to rise in the heart of Lucifer, son of the morning, the anointed covering cherub, and thence to flow into the heart of all mankind, reaching even the animal creation. But by the faith of God I know that back of it all there is infinite purpose, purpose which none but God understands, purpose too extensive and great for the puny minds of earthborn men, and when that omniscient purpose is unfolded and all things in heaven and earth are reconciled to God, when every knee shall have bowed (Rom. 14:11), and every tongue confessed that He is Lord (Phil. 2:10), when every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth and in the sea is heard saying, **"Blessing and glory and honor to Him that sitteth upon the throne" (Rev. 5:13)**, then and only then will we understand the eternal, immutable purpose, by whose device the mystery of iniquity shall be eliminated from the heart of all creation forever and ever. Amen!

"For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,

for He (God) has put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him (Christ), it is manifest that He (God) is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (God the Father) that put all things under Him that God may be all in all." **1 Cor. 15:25-28.**

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity (rebellion) was found in thee." **Ezek. 28:12-15.** Please read to verse 19.

When he that readeth can grasp the truth that the mystery of iniquity, which is the mystery of rebellion, had its beginning or at least its first manifestation long before Eden in the heart of Lucifer, son of the morning, then he can better understand how rebellion, the mystery of iniquity, has crept like a devastating plague into the hearts and lives of all earthly creatures. If principalities and powers are defiled by it, it is no great wonder that this same plague should darken the hearts and minds of all men, bringing them into rebellion against the will of Him who created us. Consider then how great is our calling, for the apostle Paul by inspiration too sublime for human minds has told us that the church (not the harlot, but the virgin) shall be used of God to display His wisdom to principalities and powers. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord" **Eph. 3:8-12.**

As the mystery of iniquity came with stealth into the Garden of Eden, defiling with rebellion the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam's first son, and filling the whole earth with satanic rebellion, so in like manner rebellion surreptitiously found its way into the beautiful heart of the virgin church. Without hesitation or fear I must declare that God's intention was that Jesus Christ should be the Head of His body, the church. In those few holy years when Christ was the only head of the church, unity and harmony flowed like a river and the body of Christ was one. There was no government but the government of the Spirit. Love and wisdom shone like the sun from the mind of God. When the human body knows no government but the government of its head, all is order and unity. So also it is with the body of Christ. But when the hand begins to say to the foot, "I have no need of you," and the ear says, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body," then confusion begins. The very moment the love of God begins to wane from our spirits and fly out the windows of our soul, then human government with all its disorder stalks boldly through the door. Then men begin to cry for another head in place of Christ, saying, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas." **1 Cor. 1:12.**

The beautiful infant virgin church was not very old before the seeds of rebellion against Christ began to appear. We read of the deception of Ananias and Sapphira and of the murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their wives were neglected in the daily ministrations. We read of hard-bitten old Judaizers who insisted on adding the bondage of their law to the liberating grace of Christ, perceiving not that those who freely partake of the grace of God already have the very spirit of the law written and engraven in their hearts. For many years I imagined that the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), where the subject of circumcision was debated and decided, was God's pattern for the settlement of all future arguments. Today I see it for what it is, for had not the mystery of iniquity been working like leaven in the hearts of some, there would have been no need for any council either then or now, for all knowledge would have freely flowed forth from the mind of Christ, the Head, manifesting itself in wisdom and understanding in every believer. Make no mistake about it! No man is persuaded by a council of any kind, for all who are convinced against their will are of the same opinion still. It is only the revelation of the Head, Christ, that can change the heart or mind that one may see clearly as God sees. Truly did Jesus say, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." And well did John in his epistle write, "Even now there are many antichrists."

The mystery of iniquity (lawlessness) has pervaded the world system and the church system during this entire age of grace. Rebellion against the authority of God is the founding father of the awful confusion of religious denominations. Every flaming revival of the church age began with Christ as its head, but each revival in its turn rebelled against the authority of Christ, setting up its own authority and thereafter parading as a christ, boldly proclaiming that it possessed the one true way of salvation and greater light than all the others. It is to these false rebellious systems that Jesus referred when He said, "Many shall come in My name saying, I am Christ." This they do by setting themselves up as the very last word in God's plan. They have the revelation. They are the true church. And eventually, they think, God will prove to all others that they were right while everyone else was wrong. This is & false christ.

Now Paul taught the Christians at Thessalonica that the mystery of iniquity, already at work in his day, would grow and increase in the professing church until one diabolical head appeared, even antichrist himself, who would oppose and exalt himself above God and all that is worshipped. Earnest heed should be given to all he says in this passage, for it is full of truth for our day. Even as you read these lines, the religious systems of the earth are feverishly hastening to join hands with the drunken, swaggering harlot of Rev. 17, apparently without let or hindrance from any source. We can now well understand how he as God shall sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Thus in our day shall the mystery of iniquity come to its full head and be made ripe for destruction. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let until he is taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all may be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:3-12.**

Those who read these lines can readily accept the undeniable fact that during the last few years an incredible momentum has been given to all the forces of rebellion, lawlessness, and iniquity. A few years ago scarcely anyone in the church system had ever heard the word 'ecumenical'. Interdenominational gatherings among Protestants then were fewer than assemblings of Protestants and Catholics now. In the book, Mystery Babylon, we warned that these things were coming, but now we see their alarming increase every day as Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists, and Mohammedans cast their amorous glances at each other, and even Jews have done obeisance before that pompous king of Babylon. Even today I received the report of a Buddhist priest ministering in a Methodist church in Seattle, Wash. Just as a toboggan gains momentum as it descends the slippery slope, so also has this sordid and blasphemous evil gained incredible momentum, sucking into its evil vortex every Christian who loves the visible more than the invisible.

There is a very definite reason for the heightening momentum of this mystery of iniquity. All this would have happened centuries ago but for one hindering thing. For many years I pondered the meaning of these words: "He who now letteth (hindereth) will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that Wicked be revealed." **2 Thess. 2:7.** What is it that for centuries has hindered the full manifestation of lawlessness? Without hesitation we may boldly affirm that the one thing that has hindered the breaking forth of this mystery of iniquity is the fact that for all these centuries God's true church, God's true believers, God's true sons, have been held in captivity by this Babylonian harlot. They have been the salt of the earth that has kept the whole thing from going to the dunghill and, had it not been for their presence, this mystery of iniquity would have broken out long ago. Our Lord Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth, but, if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it (the earth) be salted?" Salt is an excellent preservative, and it is the true saints in the professing church systems that have hindered all lawlessness until this day. The angel said to Lot at the gates of Sodom, "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou come thither." **Gen. 19:22.**

During the past few years more and more Christians have been hearing the call of the Spirit to come out and no longer touch the unclean thing (the harlot system). More and more people have been obeying the call and,

as they have obeyed God, the influence that restrained the breaking forth of the mystery of iniquity has been taken away until now the great rebellion is in full flood. Thus before our very eyes we see the fulfillment of the prophetic words of Paul, "He who now hindereth will hinder until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that Wicked be revealed." In the translation of this passage by J. B. Phillips, great clearness is added in these words: "You will probably remember how I used to talk about a restraining power which would operate until the time should come for the emergence of this man. Evil is already insidiously at work, but its operations are restricted until what I have called the restraining power is removed. When that happens, the lawless man will be plainly seen." **2 Thess. 2:7-8.** (Phillips).

As the true saints of God continue to have their eyes opened to see that they, like the prodigal son, are devouring their living with Babylon's harlot daughters, that their sheepfolds have become swine pens, and their bread is naught but husks, they will arise and go back to their heavenly Father, and, as they depart, leaving the harlot system behind, the mystery of iniquity will break out more and more until that which was once called the temple of God will be the very seat and throne of that wicked one who opposeth and exalteth himself against God, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Many well-meaning but misguided people imagine that there will be another revival in the old church system, but God has declared that Babylon will not be revived. Babylon is to be destroyed, and great and terrible will be her destruction. There will not be left one stone upon another that will not be thrown down, and she shall be remembered no more forever. Rev. 14:8. Psa. 137:8.

When considering the mystery of iniquity, the natural mind, which is itself an enemy of God, goes wandering off on a tangent of imagination. It considers every evident and open fraud. It contemplates the efforts of atheists who openly defy God, denouncing His very existence. It recounts the multiplied sins of evil men and seducers, and of everything everywhere that is in opposition to the Almighty God and His way of truth. The world with all its sin and rebellion against God is without doubt under the very control of the mystery of iniquity, but that evil which is outward and obvious to all is not the true danger of the spirit of iniquity. Satan, who had his beginning as Lucifer, son of the morning, was 'full of wisdom and perfect in beauty' (Ezek 28:12), and he who would picture him as a clumsy, cloven-hoofed creature with no more intelligence than an ox is not only a fool in understanding, but one who speaks evil of dignities. Let us not forget the words of Jude who said, "Likewise these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." **Jude 8:9.** We must never imagine that the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, has so little cunning or subtlety that all his schemes are so thinly veiled that they are open and obvious to men. Just as Satan entered the Garden of Eden with his diabolical questioning of everything that God had said, so now as an angel of light he surreptitiously enters the very garden of truth itself, standing in church pulpits robed as a minister of light, proclaiming a gospel that is acceptable to the people as truth, but which is in reality rebellion against God because it is man's program, not God's. Thus the mystery of iniquity is continually at work.

After a scathing denunciation of the money-grabbing, self-exalting ministers who gloried in their status after the flesh (cf. 2 Cor. chapters 10 and 11), the apostle Paul tore the subtle sheepskin mask from their wolfish faces. "For such," said he, "are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ; and no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." **2 Cor. 11:13-15.**

I am frankly appalled at the lack of spiritual discernment among the people of God, for they give heed continually to the voice of strangers, but the voice of the Good Shepherd they do not know. Why are the children of God so ready to take at face value every glib-talking, self-styled prophet that comes on the scene proclaiming himself to be God's man of the hour, glorying in gifts which he does not possess, talking of dreams and visions which he has not had, or telling how the Lord appeared to him and commissioned him to some great thing — and may I repeat, always some great thing! Frankly I do not believe these juggling imposters, for while their words sound right, their spirits send forth an evil savor, which grieves the spirit of all who are in touch with Christ. They resemble the soothsaying maiden of Acts 16:16-19 who followed Paul and Silas, crying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God that show unto us the way of salvation." The words she said were perfectly true, but her spirit was false and evil, and Paul was grieved in spirit, knowing that her

commendable words did not come from God, and, when he had cast the evil spirit from her, he was immediately in trouble with her masters, for they had made much gain by her soothsaying.

The mystery of iniquity is often manifest by the unauthorized works of men not truly sent of God. The scriptures abound in warnings, examples, and teachings to make us aware that the whole dispensation of grace would be corrupted by false apostles, false teachers, false shepherds, false pastors, and false miracle workers. It clearly shows that these noxious weeds would thrive side by side with wheat, and that the tares would so resemble the wheat that only the angels of God would know them apart. Matt. 13:24-30 and 36-43. Foremost among those who warned that we should beware of these things was Jesus Christ Himself, who in His sermon on the mount declared, **"Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves."** Matt. 7:15. If only people would seek to walk quietly in the will of God, they would soon learn that not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but **"He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."** Verse 21. When men make great claims of miraculous gifts and miraculous powers, let them produce their goods in the meekness and humility of Christ - not with glaring advertising and fanfare replete with fraudulent claims of healings and miracles to deceive the hearers, for **"Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."** Matt. 7:22-23. Here we are told that these unauthorized works by unauthorized persons, good as they seem on the surface, are in truth the working of the mystery of iniquity.

When the Lord in this passage says, "I never knew you," He means that He had not sent them to do these things that they were doing. On every hand today we are seeing the fulfillment of the words of Jeremiah: **"In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied."** Jer. 23:22. **"How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart."** Verse 26. What an unsavory thing was in Israel when Jeremiah wrote, **"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means: and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof."** Jer. 5:30-31. The last statement is the most amazing of all! My people love to have it so! Why is it that people love this kind of thing? Why is it that, though a healer has ninety-nine failures out of a hundred, people still laud him as some great one? Why is it that, when one prophecy after another fails, people overlook the damning error and still go on trying to believe that a prophet is in the midst? Has not the word of God clearly told us that, if the prophecy fails to come to pass, then the Lord has not spoken? **"If thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."** Deut. 18:20-21. **"Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in My name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them. They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart."** Jer. 14:14. Is it any wonder then that the Lord will say to these people, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." This is the working of the mystery of iniquity.

In these dreadful days of the famine of the word of God people are turning more and more to the spectacular. As people know less and less about the word of God, they fall more and more into the net of deceit, building their hopes on visions and dreams and on self-styled prophets and miracle workers. Any person today who can come up with some fantastic notion can draw away disciples after himself, and the more fantastic the notion the more the people run after it. Acts 20:29-31. How often through the years have earnest but misguided people sold all their possessions to wait for an earth-shaking event which their deluded leader said would occur on a certain day. But the day passed uneventfully, and they were left a gazing stock before an unbelieving world. Recently a preacher prophesied that a three hundred foot tidal wave would sweep over Los Angeles. It never came. On another day in India white-robed crowds waited for the Lord to come. On Feb. 4th, 1965, the whole west side of California was to slide into the ocean, but it didn't happen. President Johnson was to die before Jan. 1, 1965, but the prophesy failed. Even while I write, well-meaning but deluded people are waiting in a coal mine for a catastrophe that is supposed to occur March 16th. Let us flee from all this fantastic nonsense, for it is the working of the mystery of iniquity. Learn rather to live in touch with the Holy Spirit. Heed not the voice of strangers, but seek to be of one mind with the Father. He will warn all His people in plenty of time of all the calamities that are coming upon the earth. Those who are in touch with the Spirit of God have no need whatever to listen to these false predictors, for God has not sent them. Their message is unknown to

Him, and it is to such as these that He will say, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." For this is the working of the mystery of iniquity.

Without question the Lord has ordained that signs and wonders should follow the preaching of the gospel. Nothing could be surer than that. Jesus Himself gave this arresting array of miraculous signs that would follow the preaching of the gospel: "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak in new tongues (languages), they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover." **Mark 16:17-18.** All these things came to pass just as Jesus had said they would, for in the ministry of the apostles that followed neither man nor demon was able to stand before the divine wisdom, knowledge, discernment, and miracle-working power of these men of God. Furthermore, it can be abundantly proved that these signs and wonders were to follow all who believe and would continue to the very end of the age.

It is in the knowledge of this very fact that great danger lies, for, since the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit which began in 1901, every sickness and every disease known to mankind has been healed. Demons have been cast out. By the Spirit men have spoken in all manner of foreign tongues, often understood by men of other races. In fact, we need not hesitate to say that all wonders wrought by the apostles have on occasion been repeated in our day. But a horrible thing is taking place in the earth today, for though the spirit of true revival has waned, many people are trying to continue in the flesh the signs and wonders that once flourished by the Spirit. Prophets are prophesying from the wind of their own lungs, and, because men live so much after the flesh, they have literally gone-a-whoring after healing and miracles. Carnal men are taking advantage of this human craving for health and have advanced themselves as great healers, not because they love the sick and suffering, but to make merchandise of them for filthy lucre's sake. Fantastic and fraudulent claims of the appearance of fire and blood and oil are circulated while curious people flock to the deception like little children to a circus.

All this is the working of the mystery of iniquity and is abundant preparation for the coming of that wicked one, the prince of rebellion, antichrist himself. Pastor, priest, and cardinal, men and women who refused to love the truth when it was poured out among us years ago, are now being overtaken with strong delusion, professing all manner of miraculous things in their midst, but with a frightful absence of the Spirit of God. All this is preparation for the appearing of that great prince of rebellion and iniquity, "even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they might all be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:9-12.** The hour is at hand, for he who now letteth is at this moment being taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:7-8. Wherefore "come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17.**

"In the last days perilous times shall come." **2 Tim. 3:1.** Dearly beloved brethren, we are living in the last days. The morning cometh, but also the night. The morning will be that glad and golden day when our Lord Jesus Christ will set up His kingdom, and this will be done when He has brought the members of the body of Christ into the image of Himself. When they are like Him, when His mind and His Spirit dwell in them so that all their thinking and all their acting is in harmony with His throne, then the kingdom of God will come and nothing can possibly hinder it.

The word of God bears immutable testimony that toward the end of this present age there will be an almost volcanic eruption of every imaginable evil. There will be an outer darkness such as never was from the very foundation of the world. My words may shock you terribly and well meaning people will write to rebuke me for my statements, but after much consideration and with much regret I feel I must state that in all the world today there is not a body of people meeting together on truly scriptural grounds. Everywhere men have turned to their own way, and they of the leavened bread of malice and wickedness sit side by side in the same pew with those who are of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth until in all the world the church system has become the abomination of desolation. When we make such statements as these, some good church members bristle and heatedly deny that their great organization is anything less than the very apex of doctrinal

purity, order, and obedience. Likewise also those little undenominational sects loudly disclaim any connection with the harlots of Babylon, and even more insistent still are the voices of little groups who, having come out of the bigger sects, now conduct their own gatherings. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth! All such gatherings contain the seeds of error and before many days that little group you cherish as the pure unadulterated body of Christ will have drifted off into corruption and impurity just as surely as did the corrupt monstrosity you left a few years or months before.

There was a popular song a few years ago which depicted a thirsty cowboy riding a very thirsty horse across the burning sand of the desert. The blazing sun reflecting on the sand gave the deceptive appearance of cool, clear water, and the cowboy is saying to his horse:

"Keep a-movin', Dan;
Don't you listen to him, Dan!
He's a devil, not a man,
That paints the burning sand
With water, cool, clear water."

It is only a song, founded no doubt on fact, but it illustrates how men and women in their thirst for living water are turning aside today to follow some deceiving mirage that for a moment appears to be the answer to all their problems; but they will not find the water of life by turning aside to join in the song and dance of some crowd of energetic people. They will find it rather when they enter into their closet and shut the door and commune with their Father in secret. There truth will be made real to their hearts. There He will open His mind to them and give them understanding in the deep things of His purpose. In the secret place of the most High they abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Among the crowd they learn the doctrines and traditions of men. In the presence of God they learn the secrets kept hidden from the beginning of the ages.

In the last days perilous times shall come. The times will be perilous for many reasons, one of which is that men will not endure sound doctrine, but will be turned to fables. The end times will be perilous because evil and good will be so lumped together that few will know which is good and which is evil. I recently attended a public meeting where a large crowd had gathered. The event opened with the playing of the national anthem, but, before this was done, the master of ceremonies announced, "While the band is playing the national anthem, let us all bow our heads and in our way pray for peace in this troubled world." I love national anthems no matter what country they honor, but the sweet strains of O, Canada had scarcely died away when the same master of ceremonies was punctuating his speech with profanity and betimes reciting the words of some obscene poem. God does not hear the prayer of the profane. He hates all forms of mixture and forbids that the ox and ass should plow together. A few years ago denominations began to adopt many modernistic trends. No more stressing sin; no more mention of the blood; no more washing of regeneration or baptism of the Spirit; and no more preaching of the resurrection. Along with this demoralizing declension the fallacy of evolution was taught as fact in the professing church and in schools as well until today this most groundless humbug ever foisted upon the human race is received as indisputable fact. All these are perilous evils and their degenerating effect upon the lives of the people is nothing less than incredible. Evolution is "science, falsely so called." It is an opposing force. 1 Tim. 6:20. From it we should turn forever away.

Now I am going to tell you of a far greater evil than either of these that has crept in among the people of God during the last ten years. That evil is the new evangelism that in our day is sweeping over the earth. The old modernistic doctrines that crept in, spreading their seeds of apostasy, were dangerous enough, but they served to stir godly men and women to vigorously contend for the purity of truth. This new evangelism that has sprung like a beast from its lair of darkness is something else altogether and is engulfing in its deceptive maw many thousands of well meaning people. Its great power of deception lies in the fact that, instead of denying the truth as modernism does, it claims to uphold the accuracy of the Bible and every truth it proclaims, but it denies all in action and life. They fulfill the words of Paul: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." **Titus 1:16**. I care not what men profess, but wherever there is lack of dignity and profound irreverence then be assured the people have not met God, neither do they know Him, no matter what they say nor however loud is their shout. These trashy songs about "Jesus is my kind of people" and "Me and Jesus got our own thing going" are not of the Holy Spirit and they are not of God. The people who sing them are deceived and they are worshipping

"another Jesus." 2 Cor. 11:3,4. All such expressions as "Wow! Praise the Lord" are a blasphemous indignity to the Spirit of Him who sits upon the throne, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. Rev. 20:11. When men see God, they abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes. Job. 42:6. They cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isa. 6:5. They cry as Daniel did, "How can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remaineth no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me." Dan. 10:17. Many of the worldly performers, who make themselves rich by daily spewing their demoralizing filth on a gullible public, think all this kind of corrupt religion is just great and they join in with it. Men who are foreigners and strangers to the grace of God sing and popularize such songs as "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me," but these wretches are not saved and their lives continue on just as they were before. One entertainer boldly stated that he made more money in the church than he did in Hollywood, and, of course, money is the reason he is there.

One religious publication contained the testimony of a converted gang leader. The testimony seemed genuine until one reached what was supposed to be the punch line or invitation, the language of which would make the spirit of any true Christian recoil and in my opinion give the lie to his testimony. This is what he said: "I offer Christ to you for your consideration, praying that you, too, will find that Jesus Christ is exciting. He is where its at. He swings and can turn you on!" Make no mistake, dear reader! These words are a blasphemous departure from the very spirit of the New Testament and the very Spirit of Christ Himself. Make no mistake about it! These statements are blasphemous. Christ does not swing with the world. He is the sovereign Lord of eternal life. His throne is high above all principality and power, all might and dominion, both in this age and in the age to come. He came to deliver the souls of men from this untoward swinging generation. He came to lift men above the world and to save them out of the world. "If ye were of the world," He said, "the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15:19. Christ is not a swinger! He is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. He does not swing with the rebellious self-assertiveness of this present untoward generation.

It is an absolute lie that Jesus "turns you on!" The truth of the matter is that Jesus turns you off. The consuming passion in the hearts of the rebellious youth of this perilous day is one of self-assertiveness and love of self. Paul stated distinctly that this turning on of self was one of the great perils of the last times - "For men shall be lovers of their own selves." 2 Tim. 3:2. Christ does not turn you on; He turns you off, saying with the greatest possible clarity, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself," that is, let him turn off self and be forever done with its evil assertiveness. Furthermore, He added these solemn words, "Let him take up His cross and follow Me." Matt. 16:24. I suppose such uncouth words may be excused where ignorance reigns supreme, but it is inexcusable in those who should know better. In my opinion such words and sentences as we have read above are evidence indeed that these people have never met with the Christ of Calvary, nor have they been made partakers of that godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. 2 Cor. 7:10.

Can you imagine Paul, when he was smitten to the ground on the Damascus road, crying out, "Wow! Jesus is a swinger! He really turns you on! He is where its at?" Can you imagine Daniel, who, because of the vision he had seen, fell sick for certain days and could not speak (Dan. 8:27), making such asinine statements as these? Would John have uttered such light-hearted carnal nonsense when in the presence of Christ he fell as one dead, and had to be revived by the Lord Himself? Rev. 1:17. O that God's people would catch a glimpse of the glory of Him who sits upon the throne, from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and there was found no place for them! Rev. 20:11.

Modern evangelism is a peril of unspeakable dimensions because it parades in the garment and reputation of good men of ages past. From whence is this modern evangelism that exploits for personal gain the fame of so-called Christian athletes, whose prowess as athletes is only excelled by their fame for breaking and desecrating the Lord's day? What kind of evangelism is this, which capitalizes on the popularity of young ladies whose physical beauty and charm have made them beauty queens at the price of their own modesty and oftentimes of their virtue as well? What kind of evangelism is this which introduces as a born again believer and a Christian an entertainer who has just arrived by plane from the night clubs of Las Vegas? What kind of evangelism is this which offers Christ as the key to fame and success and wealth and popularity for a self-seeking, self-indulgent twentieth century society?

When Peter cried aloud, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40), he was crying out against all these things and telling his listeners to save themselves from all their corrupting power. Untoward means vexatious, refractory, perverse, uncouth, and ungraceful. But here is modern evangelism joining the two together and seeking to present a Christ who goes swinging along with this untoward, merry-go-round generation! Christ does not go swinging along with this generation. He still commands all men to repent. He still is the fulfillment of that law which cries, "Thou shall not steal; thou shall not commit adultery; thou shall not kill; thou shall not covet." The first work of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, is to save you from your sins, from the world, and above all from yourself. Then, after He has delivered you from the present evil world with all its yokes and hellish bondage, He places His own yoke upon you, saying, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

"If ye love Me," saith Christ, "keep My commandments; and if any man come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Modern evangelism is a peril of the last days. It is an evangelism saturated with the spirit of the world, even the spirit of this untoward generation. It goes hand in hand with the spirit of Hollywood and Las Vegas as is evidenced by the appearance of their prodigies on an ever-increasing number of religious programs. Modern evangelism is bankrupt of truth. The Jesus it preaches is another Jesus, even the one of whom our Saviour spoke, saying, "I have come to you in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." **John 5:43.**

We have seen in our day some of the most phenomenal evangelism of all times as popular evangelists, well spoken of by all men, have instigated their massive campaigns that have brought the applause of the world, the professing church, and the honor and commendation of Rome as they popularize the gospel and preach their swinging Jesus, but, in spite of all their massive effort, we have not seen true revivals that transform cities and nations and whole generations. We have not seen men weeping and howling over their sins and repenting with a godly sorrow that needs not to be repented of. The evidence that proves modern evangelism to be completely phoney is in the fact that year after year, month after month, and day after day the world sinks ever deeper into the slough of sin. This is contrary to the testimony of all past revivals and all true evangelism. The revival in Luther's day not only transformed Europe, but also affected the world as a whole. The revival of Welsey's day saved England from civil war and revolution. The revivals of Finney and Moody had transforming effects on all American society, and the power of Billy Sunday's message almost succeeded in driving King Alcohol and John Barleycorn from the North American continent, bringing in its wake a tremendous uplift in business and the sanctity of the home. This was also true of the mighty Pentecostal revival in the early twentieth century, but the modern thing that parades itself abroad today in the name of evangelism is having the very opposite effect as the world and the church system sink ever lower into increasing darkness and corruption and despair.

If you are conversant with the trends of evangelism during the last three decades, you will remember that since World War II there has been a surge of effort to evangelize the world, and with much misguided emphasis upon youth. The cry has gone forth everywhere, calling upon the church to show that the Gospel is "relevant." It must be presented in an appealing manner. The Gospel must be "geared to the times." Expressions such as beat, pop, folk, contemporary, and even psychedelic and many other senseless expressions have increased ad nauseum. Fun was substituted for joy, food for the meat of the word, and revelry for fellowship. Each new venture that came blazed brightly for a moment and then died out and gave way to some newcomer. And so in succession they came - Youth for Christ with its doctrine of food, fun and fellowship; The Jesus Freaks, the Jesus People, the Charismatic Movement, the Ecumenical Movement, and Key 73 with its abortive attempt to present the claims of Christ to every person in North America in 1973. Along with all this confusion we have the household name preachers with their vast radio and television hook-ups. Yet for all their efforts to make the Gospel "relevant" it becomes abundantly clear that the world and the professing church are sinking deeper and deeper into the morass of evil and sin.

While these movements are purporting to reach the world, it becomes increasingly obvious that the world is reaching them instead. The world's beachhead was established by unsound words, permissive morals, daring dress, and every downright fleshly appeal. The carnal desire to follow the "in" crowd, who were really "with it," produced a shameful breed of mini-skirted temptresses, jerking and swaying to rock music in a carnal attempt

to attract the world, and when they give their idle talk about how "meaningful" Christ is, no one is convinced and few hear a word that is said.

Centuries ago Balak hired the prophet Balaam to curse God's people, Israel. Balaam, for the sake of the money involved, was willing to do it, but, because he was unable to speak anything but the words God gave him, he devised another scheme to destroy them. He taught Balak how to cast a stumbling block before the people, teaching them to sin and commit adultery. His evil trick was a great success. Please read Numbers, chapters 21, 22 and 23. Notice especially chapters 22:5 and 31:16, and Rev. 2:14. Though Balaam could not curse what God had blessed, through his evil advice they stumbled at his stumbling stone and became a curse to themselves.

In these perilous times all clear distinction between evil and good, light and darkness, seems to have been eliminated. How often we observe some creature only to wonder whether we are beholding a man or a woman! It is unscriptural for a woman to wear that, which pertaineth to a man; neither shall a man wear a woman's garment. Deut. 21:5. It is a shame for a man to have long hair. 1 Cor. 11:14. All these things signify the evil spirit of this age of rebellion against God, when light and darkness, good and evil, Israelite and Gentile, black and white, church and world, Christian and sinner, male and female have become so intermingled that God has turned His face away that they may taste the fiery indignation of the great tribulation to purge them for their filth.

Vice is a creature of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
Will first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Do you wonder that God is calling, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins?" This is the evil day, and these are the perilous times of which the faithful apostle spoke. The great and terrible day of the Lord is nigh at hand. Turn to Christ and save yourselves from this untoward generation and the perilous times that beset us on every hand.

CHAPTER FOUR WATCH

As we diligently sought the Lord for His message this month, we felt directed to write in such a manner that reference could be made to a number of subjects whose relation to each other may seem to be somewhat disconnected. We sincerely hope that as this chapter is read our eyes will be enlightened afresh to behold the boundless hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of Christ in His true saints. It is our earnest prayer that those who read these lines may be inspired to lay hold with ever increasing firmness upon the hope that is set before us.

The world as we now know it is sinking ever more quickly into the quicksands of destruction and may we say with utmost assurance that every prophecy given by the ancient prophets or by Jesus Christ or by the apostles is now being fulfilled on every hand. We have but to open our Bibles to 2 Timothy 3:1-5 to find a list of predictions so vital and to the point, so sound and inspired and full of meaning for our day, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not err therein. Bible prophecy is being fulfilled with such amazing speed that some of the things I write today may be out of date by the time you read them.

It is a most significant thing that U Thant, the secretary general of the United Nations, recently questioned the wisdom of his continuing in his present office because he saw the world sinking fast into corruption and every form of government falling to pieces. When men who profess to know nothing of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ are able to see that the end of the present system is at hand, how much more then should we who are of the day eagerly lay aside every weight to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, girded with the whole armor of God? Our struggle is not with mere flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places, against principalities and powers and the rulers of the ever, increasing darkness of this age. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

Time and again throughout the Bible the Holy Spirit has exhorted us to constant watchfulness, as, for example, in this text: "The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch." **Mark 13:34-37.**

Watching is vigilant observation, wakefulness and forbearance of sleep. In the text quoted above Jesus closely associated watching with forbearing to sleep when He said, "Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch." I honestly testify that, though I have great confidence in the purposes of God, knowing that all things will be accomplished according to His plan, my heart is in constant trepidation because of the sleepiness of God's people, the evident lack of true spiritual understanding among them, and the ever present lack of watchfulness. I am not wrong nor beside myself when I tell you with great soberness that the attitude of the vast majority of God's people is "business as usual" and "on with the ball". In this solemn hour when God's people should be watchful, there is far too much feasting and not enough fasting, too much running here and there in pursuit of this and that and too little waiting in His presence, too much noise and too little awesome silence, too much mechanical entertainment and too little meditation and stillness, too much listening to puppeteers and too little listening to the still small voice of God's Spirit speaking to the hushed and longing heart.

With great regret we must now admit that mass production is not confined to the assembly line, but it has invaded the minds of men as well. The multitudes no longer think for themselves but they are told what to think and what to do and believe by the harping voices of the advertisers tempting and teasing their minds from morning to night as they vaunt the pseudo merits of their products; and, lest you should find a moment for thought between one advertisement and the next, the intervening seconds are filled up with crashing cymbals, weird music, and meaningless rackets to keep your brain washed from any thoughts of your own that you may better listen to the ideas and decisions of the people who are thinking for you. In this evil hour of conformity there is scarcely a non-conformist left in the western world! The younger generation pitifully boasts that they are rebelling against the status quo by refusing to follow the way of previous generations. But what is the truth? There is scarcely a non-conformist among them all. They are playing "follow the leader". How many children are there today that can bear to dress differently from the rest of the gang, or to talk differently or act differently? What the crowd does is the thing to do and there is scarcely anyone who will walk his own way. The cry of the hour seems to be "everybody does it", and who among us is willing to give the lie to it all and say, "I am one who does not".

Our Lord Jesus Christ told us to watch lest we be overcharged with eating and drinking and surfeiting. I shall not waste time in condemnation. What I have said above is that we might see that things are not as they ought to be. My message is not written to people who are bound to follow the wicked ways of the age, but rather to those people who are the elect of God. It is unto them that the message of the hour is delivered. The elect of God are the people who will have to stand up and be counted in these last days and deny themselves conformity to the age, even as our beloved brother Paul by the excellent wisdom given unto him wrote, "Be not conformed to this world (age), but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." **Rom. 12:2.** I have no argument with those Christians who think they can dip deeply into the world's pot of flesh and still attain the promises of God. They are blind leaders of the blind. They have already fallen into the ditch, a deceptive rut so deep that they will not emerge from it until the glory of the kingdom of God has passed into history. But if in this trysting hour there are still those who will cast aside every yoke and besetting sin that they might run with patience the race that is set before them, it is unto them that I now write.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians telling of his many afflictions and sufferings, he used this expression: "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often." **2 Cor. 11:27.** What did he mean, "in watchings often"? What was he watching for? Honestly I do not know for certain, but the very obscurity of the thought emphasizes our great need of watchfulness. I may be wrong, but it would seem that there are far more things in the world today that require our watchfulness than existed in the days of Paul. Peter also adds his exhortation to vigilance in these words: "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. 5:8.

Among the besetting perils named especially for the last days is this great evil that men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. What a place for watchfulness is this! Ours is a day when men are pleasure mad, a day when almost every person imagines he should be continually entertained by some artificial means. With all sincerity I attest that those who seriously hope to reign with Christ will do themselves the greatest possible favor if they lay aside all seeking after the momentary joys of earth, giving their fleshly nature to be crucified as they wait for the sound of the voice divine saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." Let those who would seek to be rich in this world and to gather earthly things about them in abundance hear the voice and wisdom of the apostle telling them that godliness with contentment is great gain; that we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out; that having food and raiment we should be content, and that they who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil... but thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. Read 1 Tim. 6:6-12. Be watchful about this pleasure crazed age lest you conform to it and slip into its abominable swing, for she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. We should be watchful about earthly riches, which drown men in perdition and which are in truth the god of this age. "Lay not up treasures on earth", said Jesus, "where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

The question, "when the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth", was a very sobering query, indeed. Our Lord Jesus Christ never did tell us the answer but we can readily see it for ourselves. Even in Noah's day there was faith, but it was found in one man and in one alone who was righteous before God. There is little reason to believe that any but he possessed either faith or righteousness. Even Shem, Ham, and Japheth were no shining examples of spirituality but were preserved in the ark because of the righteousness and faith of their father who himself was saved and his house. Let it be remembered, then, that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall come. There will be faith on the earth, but only in the hearts of a few elect for whose sake the evil days will be shortened. Otherwise, as it was then, so it is now. They ate, they drank, they married and divorced, they planted and builded until the very day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. The same awful sins that beset the world in his day are besetting us now - the same promiscuity between the sexes, the same going after strange flesh, the same general despising of every law that was made by God for the benefit of mankind. As these abnormalities continued until the very day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all, so also shall it be now, for the end of the age is certainly come upon us.

If a man such as Noah should appear on the earth in this evil hour, he would find no favor with the world and even less with the smug believers of the professing church. I am appalled at the unspeakable apathy and worldliness among professed believers. In our day there is scarcely any separation between the church system and the world system. They have become two parts of the one whole. The thing that interests the one interests the other. The pleasures sought by the one are sought by the other. I am sick of the testimonies of supposedly born again movie stars with their power boats and race horses who claim, "You don't have to be a square to be a Christian." If, when I was a boy, the community testified that a certain man was "square", all knew that he was a respected and honest man who was worthy of trust and confidence. Today the word "square" is always used in disrespect and, if a man is a square, he is the object of ridicule and jest. I don't know about you, but I for one am very happy to be a square. I think it will pay good dividends in the end, and it is the end, not the present, that matters, for **"he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke 16:10-11.** Because there are many young men and young women who love God and want to live for Him, I would like to offer a word of encouragement to you. Never be afraid of being different! When people glibly tell you, "It's the fashion" and "Everybody does it", don't be afraid to tell them that you are one that does not conform to the public looseness nor do as others do even though you may stand completely alone.

Now here is a most important thing that worldly Christians seem to have forgotten. It is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. Here is the place where so many people fail. They want to be Christians but they try to find their pleasure in the things that belong to an unregenerate world, the realm of the unredeemed. Let us learn

here and forever that, once a man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is converted and saved by the blood of Christ and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, he no longer belongs to this world but, being bought with a price, he has become a citizen of a higher realm. He is one of God's heirs and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, our Lord. The moment a man is born of the Spirit, his feet tread the threshold of the spirit realm and one of his first discoveries will surely be that in this new realm there are pleasures and joys that simply did not exist in the old realm of the world and the flesh where he dwelt before. Here the believer begins to discover the transcending wonder of the fruit of the Spirit, of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. These simply do not exist in the old realm whence he came. What substitute has the world to offer for love, joy, and peace? The thing the world calls love is usually some sort of lust. The transient and disappointing thing the world calls fun can never be compared in any degree with the eternally abiding joy, which only God's Spirit can give. As for peace, the world knows not the meaning of the word, for there is no peace, saith God, to the wicked. In this Dark Age men learn war, not peace. Since the beginning of the twentieth century there have been five hundred wars with a loss of one hundred million lives. Trillions of dollars have been spent on weapons, and as for the accompanying sorrow, weeping, and endless heartache, only God Himself could number it. And yet all the while men talk of peace, peace, when there is no peace. Only in Christ can peace be found, for peace is not a fruit of man's corruption, but a fruit of God's Spirit. The reason so many people both young and old find it difficult to truly walk with God in this evil day is not because the world is more attractive than before or even that there are more things to occupy one's time. It is because the hireling preachers of the harlot system have descended from the realm of the spirit where heavenly joys abound to seek satisfaction in the realm of the flesh where no lasting satisfaction ever dwells, but only deception and disappointment.

You have probably noticed that the nine fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) are divided into three triads as follows: love, joy, and peace which is the fruit of the Spirit in the personal life of the believer; longsuffering, goodness, and gentleness which is the fruit of the Spirit flowing through the believer to all mankind and to all creation; and, thirdly, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance which is the fruit of the Spirit manifested in our walk and attitude before God. These blessed attributes belong to those watchful saints who live and move and have their being on the higher realm of the spirit, and by no imagination or effort can such blessed joys be dragged down to the weak and beggarly realm where men live their lives after the flesh. The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness and revellings. Gal. 5:19, 21.

Small wonder it is that in the light of these things Paul told us that, if we lived in the Spirit, we would not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The realm of the spirit and the realm of the flesh are two entirely different realms. They are actually two different countries. We seek a better, that is an heavenly, country. See Heb. 11:14-16. To pass from one to the other is a much greater change than to pass from the darkness of heathenism to an enlightened Christian land. I fear there are far too many Christians today who, like Lot, seeing the well-watered plains of the Jordan, pitch their tent toward Sodom only to find in the end that the world has become their dwelling place as they hobnob with the people and with the elders in the gate of that evil city of flesh. There are too few Christians who, like Abraham, care not a straw for the well-watered plains of earth's abundance and look instead for a city, which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It is so easy for people to choose the gay luxury of the present world, knowing not that all its glitter is mere tinsel, all its beauty a fading leaf, all its blessings chaff that the wind driveth away, all its harbors whirlpools, and all its foundations sinking sands.

Though we are called upon to live in this intemperate, inebrious, and befuddled world, we are exhorted time and again by the apostles of the Lord to be sober and watchful. "For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." **1 Thess. 5:6-7.** The aged men should be sober, grave, and temperate. Titus 2:2. The older women should teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands and love their children. Titus 2:4 See also verse 5. We are told by Peter to gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1:13, that we should be sober and watch unto prayer, ch. 4:7, and to be sober and vigilant. Ch. 5:8. There seems no place in these things for the mad, unwatchful, pleasure-loving Christian, for they are not vigilantly watching unto prayer, but vigilantly watching for every opportunity to grasp the fleeting joys of this

present evil age. The recent hit song, "Enjoy yourself; it's later than you think", seems to have gripped the lives of those who profess godliness as well as those who do not. Hence they go about to enjoy themselves in the fleeting things of earth, all the while forgetting that it is later than they think.

In my book, Belshazzar's Feast, 1 pointed out that this pleasure-crazed man dragged the vessels of the Lord into his drunken orgy and how in parallel today every effort is being made by the world and by the professing church to drag the holy things of God down to the common level of earth's corruption. There are far too many people talking about the kingdom of God who do not possess the spirit of the kingdom. They belong to this present evil age and their minds are of the earth earthy. Too many people are talking about sonship who do not have the spirit of God's Son, but there will be no sonship apart from Him. Many thousands will come on that blessed kingdom morning, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works", who will hear the Lord say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." **Matt. 7:22-23**. It is not, you see, the things we claim to have done in God's name that will commend us on that day, but whether or not we have done His will. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." **Matt. 7:21**. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. In my brief life I have found a thousand times twice told the truth of the scripture, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." Many there are who confuse their own ambitions and desires with the will of God.

When the prophet Isaiah was speaking of things concerning the kingdom of God and the preparation for it, he made this strange and remarkable statement, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach." **Isa. 4:1**.

The scripture has a remarkable way of interpreting itself, it is therefore evident that the seven women referred to by the prophet Isaiah are actually the seven churches named in the book of Revelation - Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. See Rev. 1:20. Whatever else may be implied by these seven churches (women), they do without doubt portray the history of the church from Pentecost until the end of this age in which we live. Discard all superficial understanding of the words of Isaiah and we will see that these are very evil words and that they represent the whole church system with particular emphasis upon the days in which we now live. It is most amazing, even staggering and appalling, to see the vast array of corrupt organizations that want to wear their own clothes, eat their own food, and in general go their own way, yet dare to call themselves Christians - "be called by Thy name". Their only excuse for existing is their pretense that Christ is their head. "Let us be called by Thy name to take away our reproach." Their burning desire is to vastly increase their numbers and enormously increase their wealth under the false pretense of belonging to Christ. They are like odious women whose only desire for an husband is that they might be called Mrs. instead of Miss lest they should bear some reproach. If you are a member of one or any of these denominations, then I have the unpleasant task of telling you that you have thrown in your lot with the seven women who wear their own apparel, eat their own bread, but wish to be called Christians to take away their reproach. As I have repeatedly and without ceasing warned God's people of the evils of Babylon, that system which has ensnared the entire Christian world and which even now awaits a fearful destruction, it has been amazing to find that only a tiny handful, a mere remnant of God's people, have been awakened to see its destroying, desolating evil and flee from it.

From an August, 1967 issue of the Vancouver Province we have the following amazing article, "A Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Richard Grider, has written in a widely quoted Wall Street Journal article - "The Roman Catholic Church must be the biggest corporation in the United States. Our assets and real estate holdings must exceed those of the Standard Oil, American Telephone and Telegraph, and the U.S. Steel combined. The Baptist Foundation of Texas, according to reports cited by Anglican Bishop James Pike, increased its assets to \$53,000,000 from \$20,000,000 in ten years by encouraging tax exempt capital to multiply. Protestant, Orthodox, Mormon, and Jewish church groups, like Catholic, can be found as owners of hotels, textile mills, factories, department stores, and so on down to car washes and second hand stores. The visible wealth of the real estate of churches in the United States is estimated at \$44,500,000,000 for the Roman Catholics, \$28,000,000 for the Protestants, and \$7,000,000 for the Jewish, which adds up to about three-fifths of all the tax exempt privately owned real estate in the country. The warning that churches might be able to control the

whole United States economy within the predictable future was sounded this spring by Episcopal Anglican Bishop James A. Pike. The world wide wealth of the Roman Catholic Church is estimated to be \$500,000,000,000 (five hundred billion) of tax exempt wealth."

I quote the above article as a clear demonstration of the truth of the words of Isaiah, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by Thy Name to take away our reproach." Is it any wonder that in the awful hour of Babylon's irretrievable destruction the merchants and rich men of the earth, standing afar off for fear of her torment, will mourn and cry, "Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought... And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness, for in one hour she is made desolate". Please read Rev. 18 where the whole story is told in dreadful detail. Babylon and the seven women that take hold of one man are identical. They are in truth the denominational harlot system of the twentieth century. It is from the entangling tentacles of this dreadful system that God, His angels, and His true servants are warning you to flee, for the time of her destruction is very near at hand.

You will tell me that your little undenominational denomination is not part of this wicked system, but you are deceived. The leaven that was put in the meal long ago has worked on and on until the whole loaf is leavened, and there is nothing left for you to do but come out. Even Christ Himself was found locked outside the door of the church of Laodicea, which represents the final state of the church in this age. From His position without He is knocking and saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him."

Over the past six years the Spirit of God has granted me much help as I have written without ceasing to warn men and women in many parts of the world of the impending destruction of the whole Babylon system. As I have fasted and prayed, waiting on God both night and day, I have been conscious that the days of warning are almost over. It is time for Noah and his family to flee into the ark. It is time for Lot to flee out of Sodom. The day of God's wrath and fearful judgment is at hand. Therefore the Spirit speaks again, saying, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues, for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her." **"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."** **Rev. 18:20-21.**

It would be impossible for one to try to put on paper even a condensed list of the ever increasing signs of the end of the age. Those who read this message are already sick to death of hearing about the abounding violence in the homes, on the streets, among the nations, on the highways as murder, insurrection, rebellion, rape, arson, torture and every fiendish thing the human mind can devise is daily filling the country all around us. And the earth itself, seeming to echo the violence of man, convulses with an epilepsy of earthquakes, tornadoes, typhoons, hurricanes and volcanoes. It is estimated that since the year 1900 five hundred wars have been fought and at least one hundred million people killed. The money spent on war would buy a three-bedroom brick house for every family on the face of the earth. Man never learns by his lessons, but goes right on repeating over and over the same atrocities and crimes generation after generation. At this very moment the world is a powder keg with sufficient nuclear energy equaling 30,000 pounds of T.N.T. for every man, woman and child on the globe. With these dreadful forces in existence, increasing in quantity every day as more and more nations are added to the nuclear club, is it any wonder that two thousand years ago the Bible predicted that two thirds of the earth's population would be destroyed before the end of this present age, and that, except those days where shortened, there would no flesh be saved?

In the book of Jeremiah there is a strange prophecy that speaks of a nation being raised up from the sides of the earth. For centuries this scripture has been passed by with little or no meaning attached to it, but prophecy however obscure is always brought to light as the day of its fulfillment draws nigh. When the prophet Jeremiah said that a nation would be raised up from the sides of the earth, he was saying, as we do now, that a nation would be raised up on all sides. When we continue to read the description of this new nation, we find it fits perfectly with the dreadful phenomenon that is taking place in practically every nation on earth as tens of thousands of delinquent young men and women, wearing ridiculous clothes and weird hairdos, adopting all manner of devilish names as Mods and Rockers, Hell's Angels, and Banshees ride their motorcycles, burn, loot, rape, and carry on every imaginable and unreasonable crime in their senseless orgies of so-called

rebellion against society, until it is literally unsafe for any one to be on the street. This wicked phenomenon is not happening in America alone. It is happening all over the world among democratic and communist nations alike. The earth is filled with violence and spoil just as the word of God said it would be.

With this in mind then let us quote at least parts of the prophecy given by the faithful Jeremiah that we may see how true it is. "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, a people cometh from the North Country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear (weapons); they are cruel and have no mercy; Their voice roareth like the sea (people); and they ride upon horses (motorcycles), set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion. We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble. (Laws are weak against them). Anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Go not forth into the field nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side ... They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron (bold and brazen); they are all corrupters. The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed in the fire; the founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them." **Jer. 6:22-25 and 28-30.**

These people are being raised up from all sides of the earth. They are springing up as weeds among all people, and though they represent all languages and all colors of skin, they are one nation, for their doctrine and creeds, their violence and filth are the same. In truth they are a nation from the sides of the earth, coming from nowhere and everywhere at the same time.

No disorderly society has ever survived. It is impossible for morals to collapse, God's word to be abandoned, and every imaginable sin to be exalted, and at the same time to see the world grow better and more enduring. All these evils give rise to the coming of that man of sin who opposeth and exalteth himself against everything that is of God or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.

Seeing then that all things as we have known them are to be destroyed, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

Paul in the epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking of the coming of the Lord, made this remarkable statement: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let (hinder) until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed..." **2 Thess. 2:7-8.** Two thousand years ago Paul was aware that the mysterious spirit of iniquity (rebellion) was at work in the church. But he told us of a tremendous force that was hindering that wicked spirit, saying, "He who now hindereth will hinder until he be taken out of the way. Then shall that Wicked be revealed." That which has always hindered the working of the spirit of iniquity is the elect of God, that chosen company walking in the fear of the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit. It was of these that Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Amid the confusion of Babylon God has been forming an elect company of sons. This company has for two thousand years been scattered among all the Babylonish church system just as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Nehemiah and Ezra were found among the hosts of Babylon long ago or as the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal existed in obscurity in the days of Elijah. These people were often unknown to each other, but they were nevertheless the elect of God, the salt of the earth that kept the whole thing from going completely rotten. These elect persons, scattered throughout every system, have for two thousand years or more hindered the full working of the spirit of iniquity and the revelation of anti-christ.

We have now come to the end of the age and the word of God is very clear that at the end of the age the Lord will gather His elect out of Babylon, saying, "Come out of her, My people." He will gather His elect from the four winds. He will gather them out of the fields and separate them from the tares. He is dividing them as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. That great day of separation has surely come and he that hinders (the elect) is being taken out of the way. This long awaited event is happening before our very eyes and to it may be ascribed the reason for the ever increasing moral corruption in the world which has already reached indescribable proportions. It is also the reason for the unbelievable breaking down of truth and all godliness in the church systems until they are no longer separate and apart from the world, but completely one with it and a part of it.

Now please don't write and tell me that your little group is different and that they are the elect of God. I receive letters like that all the time. All such thinking is humbug and idolatrous nonsense. The elect sons of God do not

exist in groups. They are scattered as the eagles. In all the world there is not a group without leaven, there is not a field without weeds, there is not a pasture without goats, and there is not a group without its pretenders and hypocrites. I have come to see that groupism is equally as bad as denominationalism, for it is sectarianism in the extreme. They all imagine that "they are the people" and "wisdom will die with them". Such groups exist all over the world and they are just as deceived as they can be. The true elect of God are the people who are one spirit with the Father, and, because they are one spirit with Him, they are one spirit with all people who are one spirit with the Father. This is in truth the true body of Christ and all who are in that Christ Spirit are sons of God and will respond when the trumpet sounds. In "one Spirit are we all baptized into one body".

What does it mean to you, my friend, to realize that the true elect are being taken out of the church systems to stand in preparation and waiting for the moment when the dead in Christ will rise first and the living in Christ will rise with them to meet the Lord in the air that they might descend with Him on the Mount of Olives for the beginning of the marvelous kingdom age? Is this the time to seek out little groups or large groups that we may cast in our lot with them? Is this not rather the time to seek the Lord and come into unity of spirit with Him?

Some time ago I was intrigued by a little incident that will illustrate this thought of the readiness of the elect. In Canada our five cent pieces are made of nickel. We call them nickels for that reason. One day lying upon my desk was a handful of change consisting of dimes, quarters, Canadian nickels, and American five cent pieces. I happened to have a little magnet in my hand and for some unknown reason I passed the magnet over the money on the desk. To my surprise every Canadian nickel in the pile immediately sprang up and clung to the magnet, leaving the rest of the money (silver) still on the table. Intrigued, I repeated the experiment several times until I realized that the reason the Canadian five cent pieces responded to the magnet was because they were made of nickel while the rest of the money was made of silver and could not respond. The lesson is this: There is an elect company among all people and Christians who are living and moving in the Spirit while other Christians around them are walking in the flesh and following the natural mind. These in Christ people are the ones who will hear the voice of God and respond to it when the trumpet sounds, even though they are lying in their graves. These are the firstfruits unto Christ and the firstfruits of the resurrection. They will respond to the magnetic voice of the archangel and the trump of God. They will be caught up whether living or dead to meet the Lord in the air and to descend with Him upon the Mount of Olives for the beginning of a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, a kingdom that shall spread itself over the whole earth, embracing all men within its government of peace until the rejoicing choirs of earth join with the majestic hosts of heaven in the glorious anthem:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more,

During our holidays we had the opportunity to visit the World Fair at Montreal. Amid the remarkable displays from many nations one thing, to me, stood out above all else to make an indelible impression upon my mind. In the Israel Pavilion, emblazoned in twenty-four languages upon a large and specially prepared wall in letters like gold for all the world to read, were the words of **Psalm 126:1-3**. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

In the light of the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land since 1917 and the unforgettable events of eternal significance that have taken place in this year of 1967, our hearts cannot but be overwhelmed by the significance of it all, and especially so when the Jews, returning from ages of wandering, sense in their spirits that this is indeed the hand of God delivering them from their captivity, fulfilling the ancient prophecies, and restoring them to their land. Though still in darkness and unbelief, the hour is at hand for the revelation of Christ to His brethren even as Joseph long ago revealed himself to his brothers who had rejected and hated him, saying, "I am Joseph, thy brother, whom ye sold into the land of Egypt". **Gen. 45:4**.

Wonderful things are even now at hand. Let us watch and be sober, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. Fear not the tribulation nor the things that shall come upon the earth, but look with patience and anticipation to the glory that shall follow.

CHAPTER FIVE BEWARE

Our pathway through this world is marked by many a pitfall and almost endless dangers. Ever since the fall of man our way has been beset with perils - perils by land and perils by sea, terrors by night, arrows that fly by day, pestilence that walketh in darkness, and destruction that wasteth at noonday. From the moment we draw our first breath until our breathless bodies return to the dust, the specter of danger and death hovers about us like an evil spirit ever ready to strike the body with disease or snuff out the breath of life by accidents so varied that no human mind can conceive their number. Though we are prone to feel safe within the four walls of our home, insurance companies have found that more accidents happen in the home than in any other one place. No part of the physical body is beyond the reach of this stalking peril. From the toe-nails of our feet to the precious brain in our heads every organ within or without is a target for the deadly arrows that seek our life to take it away.

Many times through life have we been thankful for the warning signs erected by thoughtful people in the hope of delivering our feet from some snare, our minds from corruption, or our souls from death. "Beware of the dog!" reads one sign. "Beware of pick-pockets," reads another. "Danger! Thin ice." "Danger! Soft shoulder." "Long hill. Use your gears." "Dangerous curve." "Pavement slippery when wet." The oceans of the world are dotted with light-houses flashing out their warnings to mariners at sea lest they fall on the rocks and be lost. There are warning notices in factories, warning notices on farm machines, poison labels on bottles, flammable signs on gas tanks, explosive labels on munitions trucks and high voltage warnings on power lines. There is no end of warnings because all our earthly existence is beset by danger from the cradle to the grave. Yet in spite of all the warnings, every day of the year people die by thousands who could have been saved by taking heed, while others are injured or maimed for life. "I forgot," "I wasn't thinking," "I was in a hurry", we hear on every side, but what does our excuse suffice when it is too late? We are never past the time in life when we can cease to take heed, for ever present peril walks with us in the morning, stalks our way at noon, and wastes us in darkness.

If our physical lives only were in such constant jeopardy, we might have cause to rejoice, but an even greater danger besets us, even the ever, present danger to our spirits. The realization and reality of this danger inspired the apostle Peter to say, "**Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith...**" **1 Pet. 5: 8-9**. This evil one of many faces, who appeared to Eve as a wise and clever serpent to beguile her mind with his subtlety, has as a roaring lion sought to terrify Christians in all ages, bringing them into all manner of fear and bondage to wicked systems, that their lives might be devoured by their evil ritual and become unfruitful. Terrifying as his roaring may be, nothing he has ever done has been so deceptive and deceitful as his continual appearance in the pulpits of the land as an angel of light. And I shall not hesitate to tell you that in this dread hour of darkness and confusion in which we live Satan as an angel of light stands in millions of pulpits, transforming himself into the minister of Christ. "**They are false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness: whose end shall be according to their works.**" **2 Cor. 11:13-15**.

Even the possibility that such a one as this may now be preaching the sermons that hold you spellbound from week to week should be a warning, red letter sign, halting your heedless step and shouting, "Take heed! Beware!" Satan in his deceptive wisdom has blinded the minds of men that they might think of him as an ugly, easily recognized monstrosity with a mouth so full of falsehood that even a child could recognize his lying. But herein lies one of his greatest deceptions, for he seldom comes in recognizable form. He whose nature is ravaging as a wolf appears in the clothing of a sheep, gentle and harmless as a lamb, or as an angel of light he walks as an apostle of Christ and a minister of the church. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. As an anointed prophet of God he speaks forth words of prophecy, beguiling the minds of people to make them disciples of men.

It was for this very reason that our Lord Jesus Christ flashed out the warning signal: "**Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.**" **Matt 7:15**. Our Lord then said that we should know them by their fruits, and well we may thus know them! But I greatly fear that almost all of

God's children have mistaken works for fruits; therefore, pointing to the many good works fervently undertaken by these men and observing many ambitious programs to evangelize the world and heal the sick, they think of a certainty that such must surely be the angels of God and ministers of light, and thus they are deceived. Surely our Lord demonstrated this subtle truth when He said in this same sermon, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, Have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." **Matt 7:21-23**. In scripture the word iniquity always conveys the thought of rebellion.

Thus from the lips of Christ, who is the truth and cannot lie, we have this dread warning that many - not few, but many - shall come preaching and prophesying and performing miracles who were never sent of God at all, and who in reality seek their own glory. They propagate every imaginable plan to convert the world, to evangelize this and Christianize that, but their plans are all out of their own heads, springing from that fertile field of the carnal mind. Thus they appeal to the carnal minds of the believers who find it easier to associate themselves with grandiose schemes which give them that comfortable feeling of having done some great thing for Christ rather than having associated themselves with Him, that through unity and fellowship with Him they might be delivered from their own flesh to flow like a river into the ocean of God's divine mind.

We are living in the Laodicean period of the church age. This is the age when our Lord Jesus Christ is completely outside the church system. Rev. 3:14-22. We are not living in the age of great revival, but in the hour when Christ is speaking to individuals at whose door He knocks, saying, "If any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him." Rev. 3:20. This is the work God is doing and, because this is the foreordained plan of God, it cannot be changed. We may talk all we like about great revivals in the earth. There are none. We may point to this city-wide campaign, and that healing campaign, this great man and that great man. They are pseudo revivals and by their fruits we can know them. If the thousands were being saved that they claim are being saved, there would be a brake slammed on sin and iniquity such as would transform the whole country, for even unbelievers are mightily affected when God's Spirit is moving with revival in the earth. Instead of the fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance appearing in the religious systems of earth, we find an appalling increase in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. As a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; wherefore by their fruits shall ye know them. Let none try to convince himself that these evils exist among the worldly only, for such is not the truth. They abound among the professing congregations and stand unabashed in the pulpits, transforming themselves into angels of light and ministers of righteousness.

There is only one sure path in this dread hour of the world's final iniquity. There is only one way that is ever right and never wrong. Even now as in the long ago, our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, standeth, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" There is one voice that all true saints must know. It is the voice of Jesus Christ. There is one shepherd that all true sheep must follow. He is the good shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. There is one door by which all true saints must enter the fold. It is the door Christ Jesus. John 10: 1-15. Centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world..." (**Cor. 14:10**), and, if I may add a comment, I would say there are many more voices in the world today than there were in his day, many more deceivers walking after their own lusts, many more seeking to draw away disciples after themselves, many more seeking to make themselves rich by robbing widows' houses and seeking gifts from the poor. Rich and increased in goods, they have need of nothing without, but within they are wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Rev. 3: 17. But there is one gentle voice still ringing clear to those few who have ears to hear it, still calling above all this abominable religious turmoil, "Follow Me! Follow Me!" He continues, "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand, for My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man can pluck them out of My Father's hand.

Never in a lifetime, though it should abide a thousand years, will we ever learn to know the voice of Christ by listening to the many voices of preachers, for no man can lead us higher than he himself is. For this very reason we have often found that the same man who once led us to Christ or taught us of the Baptism of the

Holy Spirit now persistently hinders us from any further progress in God, refusing to partake of the new wine of the kingdom lest it will burst his organizational bottle. He justifies himself by saying, **"The old is better."** **Luke 5: 39.**

I believe the professing church is full of false prophets and full of false christs. The organized religious system itself from Rome, the mother of harlots, to the youngest and most glamorous of her Protestant daughters has become a false christ to millions, offering a false security and a false anointing. The prophets of this vast denominational system are more numerous by far than the prophets of Baal, for they are legion, and they have completely captured the minds of the people, leading them to revel in the confusion of Babylon rather than the knowledge of the Son of God. Therefore beware of false prophets.

"Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, "Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers..." **Luke 20: 45-47.**

While the false prophets and the miracle workers are the glamour boys of religion, binding millions of captive souls in slavery to their every whim, they are by no means in the majority nor do they have the largest following. "Beware of the scribes," Jesus said in the audience of the people, for the scribes, who were men of great reputation for wisdom and honor and constant students of the Law of God, were generally the bitter enemies both of Christ and His marvelous gospel. Proud and haughty they loved to parade in long robes that all men should know their status. They loved to be greeted in the market place and receive the obeisance of the people, who addressed them as Reverend or Father or Teacher, and to be admired of men for their learning and apparent spiritual stature.

Fine feathers make fine birds, but they are as likely to adorn a vulture as a dove. Unhappy, indeed, will be the man who looks only on this outward show, for they, like sepulchers, appear beautiful and expensive without, but within they are full of dead men's bones. Beautiful without but covetous and oppressive within they make the robes of their religion the cloak of their covetousness. Entering into the houses of widows, they persuade them to give up their means or mortgage their property to finance some ambitious scheme and this they often do without written guarantee of repayment, but with only the unfaithful and crafty word of these fine-feathered deceivers, who, having obtained their purpose, become distant and evasive. By the use of long prayers in public they leave the impression of nothing but pious concern for God and His Kingdom. Thus people are charmed into thinking that surely such devout men may be trusted with untold amounts of gold, and they by sleight of men and cunning craftiness, having obtained their purpose, roll in costly coaches and live on the fat of the land.

Never trust a man who parades in robes, for his religion is in his skirt and not his heart. It was of this class that Jesus said, **"The same shall receive greater damnation."** **Luke 20: 47.** Beware of scribes.

Leaven as used in scripture is a symbol of corruption. Our Lord likened leaven to the corrupting doctrines of the Pharisees, saying, **"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."** **Matt. 16:11.** From this statement His disciples understood that He bade them beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Verse 12. Likewise also the apostle Paul likened leaven to malice and wickedness, saying, **"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."** **1 Cor. 5:8.**

The corrupting influence of false doctrine is ever with us and has continued from the beginning of the Christian era. Jesus in His seven great parables of the kingdom of heaven illustrated the working of evil as a leaven in the kingdom of heaven continuing its work of corruption unto the very end of the age when **"the whole would be leavened."** **Matt. 13:33.** By this convincing parable He teaches us that corrupting and false doctrine would permeate the whole of Christendom until there was nothing left in all its system that was not corrupted by it. Is it any wonder then that God is calling to you, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins?" The wheat and the tares have grown together until now; the sheep and the goats have roamed together in the same pasture. The leaven has worked in the meal until the whole is leavened. The good fish and the bad have been caught in the same net. Now at the end of the age the separation is beginning. The good are being gathered into vessels and the bad are being cast away.

Though we might instruct forever, endlessly trying to discern between false doctrines and true, we would still never come to any conclusion, for the carnal man sees through carnal eyes, the dog returns to his vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire. Thus men, having eyes, see not and, having ears, they hear not, neither do they understand, for, their hearts having grown gross by the love of this age, they believe only what suits them and hear nothing of the rest. There is, therefore, only one word of advice that I can give. Beware of all teachings and doctrines and strivings and concentrate on Christ. He is truth and beside Him there is no truth. If you believe only what I say, sooner or later you will find yourself on a side track, but if you know Him and know His voice, you will never be turned aside by the voice of strangers.

Like a choir of wary voices, ascending in pitiful prayer to God, so the weary pilgrims cry, "Lord, how can we know the way? Which among this confusion of voices can we believe? Which among this conglomeration of doctrines is right?" There is, thank God, one answer and one only. It is the answer given by Jesus centuries ago. **"I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:5-6.** Oh, that men would turn aside from the voices that clamor all about them, and let their troubling cease in Him. Seek not the way. Seek Christ, for He is the way. Seek not truth from the learnings of men. Seek Christ, for He is truth. Neither shall you seek after life, for those who believe into Him shall never die. "For if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth; for ye are dead (have died), and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Keep your eyes upon Jesus and not on the waves;
Keep your eyes upon Jesus, He so sweetly saves;
Keep your eyes upon Jesus and not on the gale;
Keep your eyes upon Jesus and you'll never fail.
Beware of leaven.

One of the outstanding marks of the end of the age is an abounding and almost universal covetousness. 2 Tim. 3:2. We have entered a period when little or nothing matters except the dollar. Pride of workmanship, devotion to duty, the honor and love of friends, and even devotion to that precious heritage, the family, is vanishing from the earth. To millions of fathers and mothers the possession of things takes pre-eminence over the home life. Infants in their formative years are left to spend most of their waking hours with professional baby sitters while their parents, weary in their search for gold, become virtual strangers to their offspring, who in turn come to think of mother and dad as people who take them to the sitter in the morning and pick them up in the evening, but who are too tired to do much more than put them to bed. Then, of course, with wide-eyed wonder we express astonishment that the world is full of delinquents.

The apostle James foretold that at the end of the age there would be many rich men who had heaped together enormous treasure for the last days. They in their covetousness had robbed the laborers who had reaped their fields, keeping back their wages by fraud. Jas. 5:1-4. If a man could have lived and earned \$10,000.00 a year since Adam's day, his fortune would be small compared to the vast aggregate some men have amassed in the last ten years. Covetousness in one form or another lies at the bottom of all strikes, for the laborer, not content with his wages, demands more of the employer's profits, and the employer, not content with his profit, seeks to rob the laborer of his hire. Well did Paul say, **"The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."** 1 Tim. 6:10. Have you ever wondered why the love of money is the root of all evil? It is simply because money has power to buy only things for the body of flesh to use - things to see, things to taste, things to touch, things to smell, and things to hear. Things, things, things to lavish luxuriously upon the flesh and the natural man. Money can buy nothing for the spirit nor for the spiritual man, neither is it of any great value to evangelization, all the protestations of Babylon's covetous preachers notwithstanding.

The word of God is very clear in its teaching that all the accumulated wealth of the world will suddenly be destroyed or become completely valueless. Surely that must be the meaning of the inspired words of James: **"Your riches are corrupted: your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as with fire."** Jas. 5:3-4. An even more vivid description of this dire destruction was given by the apostle John, who in unerring vision beheld the downfall

and dreadful overthrow of both spiritual and political Babylon, together with her accumulated wealth, in one hour of calamity. He saw the merchants of the earth weeping and mourning as they saw the smoke of her burning. Standing afar off they cried, "Alas! Alas! For that great city! For in one hour her destruction has come, and she shall be no more! The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." Read **Rev. 18:1-24**. No wonder they wept at such a destruction, for all the fruits that their souls lusted after were departed, together with all dainty things and goodly. All those, too, who traded by sea stood afar off crying and casting dust on their heads because in one hour all the wealth of this world system had been destroyed.

The awful calamity that shall come to the world's system of confusion will be the cause of rejoicing for those precious saints of God who have trusted, not in these things, but in the living God, who having food and raiment have been content. The heaven itself rejoiced together with the apostles and prophets of God, and a mighty angel, joining in the celebration, heaved a great millstone into the sea, saying "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down." Please read the account in Rev. 18:1-24.

This great destruction is the end of Babylon both spiritual and political and the end of all covetousness as well. It is a warning much too great for elaboration, teaching us that we should never set our hearts on the abundance of this age, nor lust after any evil thing. Covetousness is a thing of deceit. It lives not only in the hearts of sharp-eyed crooks, but surreptitiously parades in clerical robes. Piously sobbing out its tale of woe with pretentious devotion, it suggests the sale of the precious ointment for three hundred pence that alms may be given to the poor, not because it cares for the poor, but because it is a covetous thief and has the bag, clandestinely stealing that which is placed therein. It counts the number of the heathen and proclaims their eternal loss if we withhold our money until one would certainly think that God's eternal plan depended on the dollars and cents of American capitalism. Let us never be deceived by these covetous men, and, more important still, let us never stoop to the practice of such things. Let us rather beware of covetousness.

A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things, which he possesseth. Therefore Jesus gave double warning regarding the evil of covetousness in these words: Take heed and beware. Luke 12:15. Well do I know that every man who reads these lines will quickly deny any suggestion that his labors are motivated by covetousness, but a week of fasting and prayer might uncover the deceitfulness of his heart, for covetousness is a deep-rooted evil that hides itself in the most unusual places, never revealing its presence unless it is rooted out by the Spirit of God.

My heart is made heavy when I see Christians so busy that they have no time to pray, too filled with earth's trash to enjoy conversation about eternal things, too pressed to read the Bible, too much in demand to hold family worship, fathers and mothers too involved with the petty things of house, meals, and children to sit at Jesus' feet as Mary did to hear the only story in the universe that really matters. Ah, let us beware of covetousness, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16:14-15. Covetous men and women will have no part in the kingdom of God, for they are all one with fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. 1 Cor. 6:9-10. If the people of God would make a diligent practice of reading the Bible, they would not be easily deceived either by false teaching or by covetous men with their crafty schemes to obtain their money. My own observations over the past years have led me to believe that most Christians know practically nothing of what the Bible really says. They have read snatches of it here and there - enough to fortify themselves in some man-made doctrine - but they have never read it as a love-letter from God that its truth might sink into their hearts and become vital to their life and experience. Christians have made the Bible fit their experience rather than make their experience fit the truth. People would not get into all the dreadful tangles they do if they knew the word of God and read it as it is written. Christians have become so muddled in a multitude of human doctrines, so tangled by divorces and remarriages, so deceived by every spiritual quack who proclaims a new revelation, so blown about with every wind of doctrine, so hood-winked and sucked-in by the grandiose schemes of covetous preachers who demand money galore for tents and trucks, literature and clothing and a hundred other feasible sounding notions that they have lost communion with Christ altogether. I frankly confess that I have no confidence whatsoever in any scheme that ends with an appeal for our money, whether that appeal be made

from a pulpit or by an urgent letter through the mail. Avoid any person who sends you a self-addressed envelope for your offering for his work. We punish men for vagrancy who openly beg on our streets, but we honor these spiritual mendicants who openly operate their crafty business from a pulpit or defraud the people through the mail.

Let us then conclude with the burning exhortation of Peter, who with weighty words of wisdom warns of these covetous deceivers and of the gullible multitude who blindly follow them. "But there were false teachers among you, who privately shall bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of; and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not." **2 Pet. 2:1-4**. Please read the whole chapter.

In the light of all these things let us then search our hearts. Let us rob neither God nor man. Let us covet neither the money, the prominence, nor the gifts of another, but having food and raiment, let us be content; and should riches by the will of God increase, let us not set our hearts upon them. Psa. 62:10. "For why shouldst thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." **Prov. 23:4-5**. Beware of covetousness.

Our Lord had just warned His disciples in these words, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," verse 16, and followed the warning with this statement: Beware of men. Matt. 10:16-17. The ancient Latin expression, Homo homini lupus - man is a wolf to man - reveals the very thought Christ had in mind when He likened our presence among men to the presence of sheep among wolves. And what, indeed, may sheep expect of wolves? The wolf cometh not but for to kill and destroy. Cursed is the man who putteth confidence in man and maketh flesh his arm, for the nature of unsanctified man is the worst nature in all the world next to devils. Even the savage lions and bears agree among themselves and seldom prey on their own kind, but not so with man, whose barbarism and hate to his fellow man makes him devoid of the thing called humanity, persecuting to the death all that oppose, and that in the name of righteousness. Crafty and politic as a man, but cruel and barbarous as a beast, his rage and enmity, especially against the seed of Christ, will turn him into a devil.

Sheep who are to live in the presence of wolves must expect to be hated; therefore our Lord said, "Ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake." We have never been promised flower strewn pathways, but rather this: "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." **2 Tim. 3:12**. And again: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." **John 16:33**.

It is not my desire to scare those who read this message, neither do we desire to lull any to sleep or to give a false sense of security. But the day is surely at hand when God will divide between the false, and the true and separate him that serveth God from him that serveth him not. Several years ago we warned that the day was at hand when Rome, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, would unite with her harlot daughters of Protestantism. Many people scoffed at the thought then and said it could never be. Protestant people, and especially those with fundamentalist background, would never submit nor succumb to such a thing as this. But today few people are hardy enough to deny it, for they see the awful reality of this truth right before their eyes. I have on my desk at this moment a lengthy advertisement advertising the restaurant banquetings and religious gatherings of this lewd harlot and her daughters, and lo! the fundamentalist groups, the Nazarenes, Pentecostals, and Friends are all there among them. The thing is not only coming! It is here! Furthermore, this brazen woman of spiritual Babylon is even now preparing to climb aboard the beast of political Babylon. What other interpretation can be drawn or what other reason can be given to explain the visit of the Pope to the United Nations? Read the whole story as it was pre-written 1900 years ago in Revelation 17.

The joining together of the harlot and her daughters and the final uniting of spiritual and political Babylon poses an ominous threat to the true people of God. Remember this: The harlot is drunken with the blood of saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Rev. 17:16. The hour is certainly coming when no man can buy or sell unless he bears the mark or image of this abominable spiritual-political alliance, the mark of the beast that ariseth out of the earth.

Therefore Jesus said, "Beware of man," for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. **Matt. 10:17**. You will be counted as the filth and off-scouring of the earth. 1 Cor. 4:13. You will be

hated of all nations for Christ's sake. Matt. 10:22. Neither shall your own kindred defend you, for the brother shall deliver the brother to death, and the father the child, and children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. Matt. 10:21. The rage of man against Christ breaks asunder family ties and desolates the bonds of friendship even as it broke the golden link between David and Ahithophel. See Psa. 54:12. The precious things that are chosen of God are the same things that are disallowed of men. 2 Pet. 2:4.

Now the Lord did not say fear men; He said beware of men. In all our dealing with man we must never forget that he is nothing but man. His breath is in his nostrils. He is soon coming to judgment; therefore fear not him who can destroy the body, but never trust him, for there is not an ounce of stability in him. Beware of man!

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men." **Col. 2:8.** The word, word spoil here simply means rob, and Paul is saying, "Beware lest any man rob you through philosophy and vain deceit," that is, through intellectualism and the world's crude way of looking at things, for such stuff is only man's idea and of the nature of the world, disregarding Christ and the purpose of God.

Centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote these words to the Christians of Galatia: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" **Gal. 5:7.** As long as the world endures, Satan will always be using someone to rob you of the simplicity that there is in Christ. It is so deplorably easy to get involved with a hundred things outside of Christ, for God's people seem to forget so soon that it is in Him that all the fullness of the God-head dwells embodied, and that we are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power. Voices call from all directions and from within as well as from without, seeking to add this to our faith in Christ and that to our faith in Christ - a little philosophy here, a fact of science there, a bit of tradition, the regarding of a day, the observing of a month, the keeping of a feast, the ritual of circumcision, or the regulations of Lent. The time we spend concentrating on these things is time lost in concentrating on Jesus Christ, and the time we spend trying to add something to our faith by the use of such things we lose in the enjoyment of the fullest grace of God, knowing not at all that these things are fulfilled in Him.

Our blessed Lord did not do away with the law because men could not keep it, as so many vain talkers with their human learning would have us believe, for the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Jesus Christ came to fulfill every jot and tittle of it in all its holiness, righteousness, and purity that by the grace of God all who receive him might be fully justified because they believe into Him. Thus all who receive Him become transformed by Him that the law of God may no longer make impossible demands upon carnal men from a table of cold stone, but, being by God's grace written in the hearts of believing men, it becomes part and parcel of their new nature in Christ that they might show forth all the righteousness of the law, not by being enslaved by an outward command, but from the wellspring of Christ's righteousness written within. Those deluded souls who would have us believe that all who receive the grace of Christ are free to break the law of God will find at last that they have never believed at all, for those who have truly believed into Him are not only justified but empowered to live as sons of God that, as He is, so should we also be in this present world. 1 John 4:17.

See to it then that you do not spend your years trying to concentrate on the law of God, for you have no power to meet its demands. Concentrate rather on Christ, for he fulfilled its demands to the letter, both by His righteous life and by His death as a sacrifice and atonement for all the world. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh (when they were offered under the law), how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" **Heb. 9:13-14.** God's people should steadfastly resist the efforts of men, however good the men may be, who seek to make you concentrate on anything but Christ. On every hand we find people who are devoutly religious, but who have no true knowledge of Christ. They are something like the good Martha, always busy serving, but always missing that vital union with Him which is of such eternal importance and without which true sonship cannot be attained.

Let us see then what great encouragement God has given us to concentrate on Christ that we might know Him, and live and move and have our being in Him. The apostle Paul had great conflict about this very issue, for men are always prone to concentrate on things rather than on Christ. Therefore he wrote, "For I would have you know what great conflict I have for you, and for them of Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full

assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge... As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith... abounding therein with thanksgiving." **Col 2:1-3, 6-7.**

Now if all the fullness of wisdom and knowledge is in Him, then it is in union with Him that all the fullness of wisdom and knowledge dwells in us. It is thus and thus alone that we begin to understand what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of God that passeth knowledge. It is in union with Him that understanding of the eternal purposes begins to unfold. It is here that our understanding departs from the hodge-podge of human reason, which robs God of the attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability to make all creation a victim of chance. In union with Him understanding unfolds as a flower until all things, yes, all things, become a part of an eternal purpose, omniscient, immutable, and divine, where all things so work together for the eternal good that even evil men are made God's servants (Rom. 9:17), and good men are made His sons.

Personally I am convinced that if God's people who are afflicted and sick in body would learn to sit at Jesus feet as Mary did, they might hear the instruction that drops as dew from His lips. They would either find health and healing as Hezekiah did or discover the benefits of a thorn in the flesh as Paul did. But instead of making our physical infirmity a grand occasion for the triumph of our spirit in union with Him, we endlessly run in search of a man who, we hope, can pray the prayer of faith for us, only to go away still sick in body, depressed in mind, and undone in confidence. See to it that you are not robbed of your vital union with Christ by putting your confidence in a highly advertised healing ministry, for they allure you through great swelling words of vanity to make merchandise of you. Eloquently they affirm that many are healed, but secretly they hide from your notice the tens of thousands who were never touched at all. Beholding as I have for many years their grandiose schemes filled with covetousness and feigned words with which they bewitch people who have never learned to hold to Christ, the Head, I have lost all confidence in them. Furthermore, I think it can be truthfully said that such meetings find no sound base in scripture, for while both Jesus and the apostles did in truth heal the sick, never once do we read of a healing campaign or even a special meeting for such a purpose. The healings of Jesus appear to be purely incidental as He passed along in His duty or was besought by some needy one.

Now, while some men are robbed of their union with Christ through philosophy and vain deceit, others are robbed by the human tradition of church meetings. To belong to a church has become the important thing to almost all the people, yet few have ever considered that that which man calls the church is not the church at all. The church is not a building that stands on the corner of the street; neither is it the congregation that fills the building each night of the week. The church is that mystical body who, having heard the voice of Christ, have followed Him. They are a people chosen of God, known to God, and called of God. They are His chosen treasure who live and move and have their being in Him.

Why are God's people so easily turned aside from their abiding place in Him to become the amused spectators of a pompous and pretentious show and the attentive listeners to the balderdash of these mouthy puppeteers who with feigned words and psychology make merchandise of the gullible people? Such people display little love for God and know nothing of His ways, but will always be found to chatter endlessly about the things they have seen in the meetings and of the vast programs of so great a man of God. Thus they become spoiled and robbed of their heritage in Christ, because they have chosen a thing that offers glamour, momentary satisfaction, and excitement to the outward man. Labor not for the meat, which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.

There is yet another way in which God's people are being robbed and spoiled. As we come closer to the end of the age and as some honest people see the dreadful lack in the existing system erroneously called the church, they begin to seek after visionary people who put all manner of stock in visions and dreams, which they claim to have seen. On this important subject Paul wrote, "Let no one defraud you of your prize, priding himself on his humility and on his worship of angels, and taking his stand on visions he has seen, and idly puffed up by his unspiritual thoughts. Such an one does not keep his hold on the head, from whom the body in all its parts, nourished and strengthened by its points of contact and its connections, grows with a divine growth." **Col. 2:18-19.** (Weymouth).

This very thing is rampant in our day. Good people leave their abiding place in Christ to put their confidence in visionary people who seem to be able to have a vision about anything any time they so desire. They deceive people to believe and do all manner of foolish, spectacular things, leading them to hide in caves, holes, and deserts. They make predictions of judgments that never come to pass, give out vain hopes of immortality, and even claim the immaculate birth of a child. When will God's people awake and cease to be robbed of Christ's blessedness by these vain people? When will they believe God's word, which says that, if the thing the prophet spoke does not come to pass, then God has not spoken. Some people, I am sure, love to be deceived. I am amazed and almost frightened to find Christians putting confidence in Mrs. Jean Dixon as though she were a prophet of the Lord.

There was a day when King Saul became so out of touch with God that he sought the help of a notable witch that lived at Endor. Men out of touch with God are often prone to seek after witches, astrologers, star-gazers, and monthly prognosticators, wizards, and them that have familiar spirits. Isa. 8:19; 47:13. The harlot system will be full of this evil at the end of the age. Nahum 3:4. Should not a people rather seek after their God? I do not understand the weird séance of the witch of Endor, but suffice it to say that King Saul received his answer and the result was death. Sam. 28:7-2,5. The more devoid of the Spirit the church becomes, the more they will seek those who have familiar spirits. Therefore, beware of this evil, and let no man rob you through vain deceit. Finally, "beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." **2 Pet. 3:17**. With this warning the apostle Peter ended the fervent instruction of his second epistle, and, because of the abounding peril of our day, I can use no better words than his to conclude the exhortation of these pages.

Many centuries ago John wrote, saying, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time." **1 John 2:18**. His use of the term "the last time" indicates to me that he was speaking of the sixth day, the last day of man's week of misrule and sore travail. The seventh day will be the Lord's day. In it the sons of God will reign with Jesus Christ their Lord. If John, dwelling in the morning of the last day, could say in truth, "It is the last time," how much more may we, who live almost two thousand years later, believe that we are now in the evening of that same "last day"! And if John, beholding the bright rising of the Sun of righteousness, was moved to say, "Even now there are many antichrists," how much more shall we, who dwell in the gathering darkness of that day, be aware of their presence among us.

The spirit of antichrist is the error of the wicked (the wicked one), who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Listen with care to this exhortation because great importance should be attached to it. As surely as there is one Christ there is also one Anti-christ. Of this we may be certain. But, as surely as the Spirit of Christ is dwelling in God's people, motivating them in every good, so also there is a spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3) dwelling in and motivating other people in every evil and opposition to the truth. This antichrist spirit will make its appearance in all manner of places. We will find it preaching in the pulpits. We will find it adorned in the clerical cloth of church leaders. We will discern it among those who with their mouths confess that Jesus is Christ, but with their lives deny it. We will discover that spirit among the miracle minded and the miracle workers. We will hear its voice among that ministry which Paul describes as false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 2 Cor. 11:13. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed into ministers of righteousness. 2 Cor. 11:14-15. We will find it flourishing in the great ecumenical movement and among the boisterous banner-waving street marchers who display more of the spirit of the mob than the Spirit of Christ. Our only safety in this hour is in obedience to God's command, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:4-5**.

We will find the antichrist spirit not only in the church system, but in the world system as well. With great heaviness of heart we confess that at the present time it is difficult to tell where the former ends and the latter begins. The church system of our day is neither separate nor removed from the world. Christians, alas, are deeply engrossed in the world; each with open arms embraces the other because they are of the same spirit. The sins of the world are rampant in the church system, and, with but few exceptions, the one is as deeply

engrossed in worldliness as the other. Both are lovers of wealth. Both are lovers of pleasure. Both are bent on laying up store for this present evil age, taking delight in the abundance of the things they possess. Divorce and remarriage are rampant among both. Professing Christians in slavish homage sit before the speaking image of the beast in their parlor as do the people of the world. The spirit displayed at Belshazzar's ungodly feast when the vessels of the Lord were dragged into the drunken orgy of the king (Dan. 5:1-4) is the exact spirit of this present evil hour, when light is mixed with darkness, flesh is mingled with Spirit, evil walks hand in hand with good, judgment smiles on error and disobedience, and lips that take God's name in vain shamelessly lift their voices with those who praise the Lord. This is not the Spirit of God! This is none else than "the error of the wicked." Have no part with them nor lift up your voice in blessing upon them; neither bid them God-speed, for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deed. 2 John 10,11.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." **1 John 2:15**. Seldom, indeed, will it be that a Christian will admit that he is a lover of the world; yet our Saviour said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." **Matt. 6:21**. Prayerful consideration of this text might be a disconcerting revelation to many a soul. Where do our thoughts remain the longest? What do we talk of most? What do we do in our spare time? Why do God's people love the world so fondly that they must be told, "Love not the world?" Do we not know that the world is passing away? Have we not learned that things capable of passing away are not real? Did not Paul speak the word of truth when he said, "The things that are seen are temporal (belonging to time and sense), but the things which are not seen are eternal" and belong to the ages to come? Faith, hope, charity, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance all belong to the unseen, but they are the things that are aionian, the product of life eternal. "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time. For the whole world-system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all that they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die." **John 2:15-17**. Phillips Translation.

The error of the wicked is manifest and propagated in the schools and universities of the world. Many who read this book are better informed than the writer concerning the degrading trend in modern education. It is a most disconcerting thing to find in so-called Christian countries that the Bible, which is truth, is barred from the class rooms on the pretext that religion must not be taught in the schools; yet the professors are permitted to freely teach every flagrant error while they unhesitatingly consign the infallible word of truth to the realm of myth, fable, and falsehood, their statements all too often couched in the obscene and filthy language of the gutter. For many decades parents have sacrificed to give their children the best in education. Young people, too, have sacrificed and diligently labored to put themselves through college or university; but in this, the end of the age, these schools of learning have so degraded themselves that they have overwhelmed the faith of many, who, being led away by the error of the wicked, have fallen from their own steadfastness. If young men and women upon graduation from college possess only a certificate of degree but are robbed of faith, devoid of morals, and strangers to truth and even good manners, then in my opinion they would have been immeasurably better off if they had not attended at all, for they have been robbed of the gold of things eternal and been given the worthless clay of things that are temporal. We do not need more psychologists; we need more faith in God. We do not need more counselors; we need more truth. We do not need more policemen; we need the commandment of God written on our hearts. It is a strange paradox to now discover that, in spite of all the education and higher learning, employers still prefer hard-working, faithful and honest men and women who can be trusted rather than the hireling who looks only for his wages and the coffee break. If I were a parent today with young adolescent children, I would not hesitate to advise them to face life without the dubious blessing of a college degree.

There is yet another error of the wicked which we must speak of here. During the last century the world has been blessed by the appearance of several excellent translations of the Holy Scripture. The help that may be received from the masterful translations of Moffatt, Weymouth, Young, Rotherham, and a good number of others is beyond estimation. There are, however, some translations appearing at present that are more the product of man's wishful thinking than they are the product of scholarly endeavor.

Thrice in the Bible we are warned of the consequences of adding anything to it or of taking anything away from it. Like a flaming sword keeping the way of the tree of life comes the word: "Ye shall not add unto the word

which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." **Deut. 4:2.** Again, at the close of the Old Testament, Malachi wrote: "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." **Mal. 4:4.** Finally for the sake of the whole Bible it is written: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." **Rev. 22:18-19.** The translation known as Good News for Modern Man, Today's English Version, has omitted the word "blood" from at least ten passages in the New Testament. The word "reconcile" is omitted from several important passages. The word "girl" is substituted for the word "virgin". We may readily see that these three errors strike as daggers at the very heart of Christian faith. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth is by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20), and the deity of Jesus Christ stands or falls on the fact of the virgin birth.

Beware lest ye be led away with the error of the wicked and fall from your own steadfastness. Seek no longer to run after things! Let us rather run after Christ, for in Him we are circumcised, in Him we are baptized, in Him we are raised from the dead, and in Him we are forgiven. Col. 2:9-13. All the wisdom and knowledge of the universe is in Him (Col. 2:3), and we are complete in Him. Therefore live and act in vital union with Him, and "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him; rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." **Col 2:7.**

CHAPTER SIX

SEE THAT YE BE NOT TROUBLED

There are secrets known to the elect of God which are of necessity hidden from all worldly people and all carnal Christians. Those who are the elect of God for this age manifest an abounding and ever increasing love for the Father. This love is disclosed by their fervently laying hold on all things that concern His wise and eternal purpose. Such love is not in word only, but in deed and in truth. These people display a quiet abandonment toward their Lord and a gracious and happy submission toward everything that concerns his will. These elect people are more than mere believers; they have become obsessed with the very spirit of sonship. To be led by God's Spirit is their meat and drink. They are a people chosen by the infinite wisdom and foreknowledge of God before the ages were formed. Their body, soul, and spirit have become sanctified by the cleansing of the blood of Jesus and the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. They lovingly cooperate with the Father in their own sanctification, thus identifying themselves as the elect sons of God. They do not swank concerning their standing with God nor boast of their prowess in signs and wonders of mighty works. Content they are in heart to know God and be known of Him.

The elect of God are to be found everywhere, though in any age they are very few in number. Like flying eagles, soaring heavenward on motionless wings, they are seldom found in crowds or flocks. Jeremiah saw them coming to Zion one of a city and two of a family. Jer. 3:14. The elect are a peculiar, lonely, and a wayfaring people. Day in and day out they prove by their consistent lives of sanctification and devotion that they "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In their blood-washed hearts the knowledge is ever alive that the moment this earthly tabernacle is dissolved a building of God, an house not made with hands, awaits them, eternal in the heavens.

Within the vast world of Christendom there is a company of saints who are chosen to be conformed to His likeness. The Christ image and likeness will manifest itself even in this present evil world. It will probably not be a likeness, which men can gaze upon or admire, but a likeness seen of God and seen as well by those who know Him. All during our earthly pilgrimage the elect will be found following closely in the steps of the Lord. Jesus had no form or comeliness and, when men saw Him, there was no beauty that they should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and from him men hid their faces. Can it be otherwise with us? Can we expect to be the darlings of the world when our Lord was despised and rejected by the world? "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of this household?" **Matt. 10:24-25.**

My heart rejoices in this blessed assurance of God's foreknowledge and election because it explains so many things that otherwise we could not understand. Election alone explains the riddle and gives the reason why from the vast reservoir of mankind a small few are converted while the mass of humanity remains outside the camp, still strangers to the saving grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Election explains why from the ranks of large and godless families one solitary brother or sister is found who is different; who never fixes his hopes in this world nor allows the evil ways of his brethren to deter him. Without looking back, he presses forward to glory with cheerful heart and glad, expressive face to find, when he unfolds life's finished story, grace more abundant and an honored place. Election shows as nothing else can why there are Christians and Christians. It shows why the large majority of believers dwells in the shallows of experience. Content are they to know only that they are justified by faith. They desire nothing more than this. But there are those other few who have found the wonders of their justification to be merely the birthplace of and stepping stone to a whole life of experience and spiritual growth with God. Before their keen spiritual sight glorious mountain peaks of understanding continually appear, and, because that mountain is there, the spirit within urges them forth to scale its heights and taste the fruit of its promises.

There is a tremendous difference between election and fatalism. The fatalist is possessed of a careless, hohum attitude. Says he, "What is going to be will be and nothing can be done about it." But the man who understands God's glorious election gives diligence "to make his calling and election sure." **2 Pet. 1:10.** He lays hold upon that divine power which gives unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue. He knows that by these promises he may attain much more than justification, for by them he may become partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through its lusts. He gives all diligence to add to his experience in Christ. To his faith he adds virtue. To virtue he adds knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; and to godliness, charity. Deep in the inner recesses of his heart he knows that by doing these things he will never fail, but so an entrance will be ministered to him abundantly into the aionian kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let the reader diligently study 2 Peter 1:1-14. There is a world of difference between that careless, lethargic fatalism that folds its hands and says, "Whatever will be will be", and that living spirit of election which, having seen the promise afar off, was persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that he was a stranger and pilgrim in the earth, thus plainly declaring that he seeks an heavenly country as he wanders through the wilderness of this world.

Election, though a glorious fact that fills the pages of scripture, is not the subject of our present discussion, but reference is made to it here because it is the elect of God, wherever they are and whosoever they may be, who are of greatest importance in this hour that has come upon all the world to try every man to reveal what sort he is. We are now living in times of extreme peril. These are days when the whole creation is feeling the dreadful pangs of travail, which must precede the birth of a new age. Every age or dispensation since, and including, Eden has ended in calamity of enormous proportions, earth-shaking in their power and universal in their scope. Think of the momentous events that saw the end of the age of innocence, when that first blessed pair, made in the image of God, commissioned to rule the world and have dominion over all creation, entered into transgression at the forbidden tree and consequently into the realm of death, thus losing their brightness, their glory, and their life, together with their endless wisdom, knowledge and power. Through their transgression they became the progenitors of a fallen race, reduced in wisdom to less than five percent of their original intellect. The fall that ended the age of innocence filled the world with evil then and has blighted every succeeding age with the wickedness and carnality of fallen man, filling the jails with criminals, the hospitals with the insane, the sick, the diseased, the maimed, the halt and the blind; cursing the homes with hatred and disunity, filling peaceful lands with the blood and fire and smoke of war, cursing earth's inhabitants with the sting of death, and enlarging the borders of every cemetery that man might return to the dust from whence he came.

And what shall we say of the dispensation of conscience? During this age the God-given conscience of man became so defiled with evil that the sons of God, the Adamic race, without fear or conviction chose them wives from the daughters of men (Gen. 6:4), who were, in my opinion, pre-Adamic races, mixing kind with other kind. So intent were they upon crossing forbidden borders that the earth became wholly corrupt and the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts were only evil continually. While mankind married and divorced and intermarried with strange flesh even as they do today, the earth became filled with every imaginable violence

until the stench of it all filled the nostrils of God, and in grief (Gen. 6:5-6) He sent forth a flood to cleanse the earth and slay the wicked, reserving only His elect for a future age.

The dispensation of human government was no exception to the rule. That dispensation continued from the time God made a new covenant with Noah (Gen. 9) to the great confusion of tongues and dispersion of the seventy families mentioned in Gen. 10. It is reasonable to believe that each of these seventy families received a language of its own. All evidence, both from scripture and secular history, leads to the conclusion that the inhabitants of the earth at the time of Babel were extremely wicked. According to the book of Jasher, a book twice mentioned in the Bible (Josh. 10:13 and 2 Sam. 1:18), their religion was wicked. They were idolaters, delighting in corrupt forms of worship. Thus destruction inevitably followed. Not only was the tower of Babel itself destroyed, but confusion of tongues followed, and as no one family could understand another, all the families of the earth were scattered abroad to some place of their own. Confusion of languages has been an almost impenetrable barrier between the peoples and a great deterrent to progress. Personally I am convinced that not only was the language confounded, but the personalities of the people were changed accordingly so that they did not think or react in a similar way. An Englishman cannot become a Frenchman by learning the language. There is also a psychological barrier. Even in our day, when language barriers are greatly lessened, we are forced to admit that there is a vast difference in the thought patterns of the races. The Englishman does not think like a Frenchman. The Norwegian does not think like the Russian. And when it comes to men of different color, there is an insurmountable barrier in their mannerisms and thought patterns. The white man born in Africa never fits into their pattern and a Negro born in America continually manifests the tendencies of Africa. These differences, together with the language barrier, were parts of the calamity of Babel, which wrote finis to the dispensation of human government.

The dispensation of promise began with the calling of Abraham, but this, too, ended in calamity with the seed of Abraham and the heirs of God's promise in cruel bondage and slavery in Egypt and then the destruction of all Egypt itself by the hand of Moses as the heirs of the promise were led forth with a high and mighty hand.

Then followed the law. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law, though it continues ever, ended dispensationally at Calvary. So vast and important was Calvary in God's plan that the earth was shaken with a fearful earthquake, while the sun withdrew his shining, hiding his face in darkness that could be felt, and the Son of God, when He had cried with a loud voice, gave up the ghost, and the earth shook, the rocks rent, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and darkness cloaked the earth from high noon until Jesus died. All creation held its breath as fearful sights filled the earth with dismay till amid the breathtaking confusion a grief-stricken Roman centurion cried aloud, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

The dispensation of grace, which began with such ineffable glories as the resurrection of Christ and the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is now about to come to its end. It has been a trouble filled age, suffering the frowns of fortune, an iron age of ups and downs, often suffering the ill winds of misfortune and the gathering clouds of evil and tribulation. This age, that has now lasted nearly two thousand years, is growing old and even now the pains of death and hell have seized upon it. Now I must tell you a strange and terrible thing — a truth, which I believe you have not heard said before. Great and terrible as were the calamities, which ushered in the death of other ages, none of them, to my knowledge, except the crucifixion of Christ, was important enough to be prophesied aforetime in the scripture. Scripture did not foretell the fall of Adam, nor did it predict, except to Noah, the destruction of the earth by flood nor mention the desolation of Egypt through the signs and wonders of Moses. It did, indeed, speak of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, but the point I want to make is this: All scripture, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, bears witness to the painful depredations that are to come upon all the world and all mankind as this age of grace, in which we now live, draws to its dispensational end.

So great and terrible is to be the sin of the last days that Jesus likened it to Sodom and Gomorrah, history's two blackest epitomes of wickedness. Furthermore the final years of this age are likened to the days of Noah, in which the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts were only evil and that continually. The violence we see all about us was distinctly foretold as an evil to accompany the end of this age. The marrying and divorcing of the present evil hour is vividly described in scripture. Wars and rumors of wars are spoken of in great detail. The fact that wars were to become world wide and of universal scope is laid out plainly in the words of the

Master, "Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." Then we are told of famine and pestilence, a thing which we now see in ever increasing starkness and awfulness, so much so that at the present moment (1974) the world never has more than a twenty-eight days supply of food on hand and this small margin between mankind and starvation is continually decreasing. Millions die of famine and starvation every year, and the so-called developing nations are in worse straits now than they were even ten years ago. The heathen nations of India and Africa, in spite of their vast wealth, never learn to feed themselves and they never will until their minds are enlightened by Christ.

Paul summed up the world-wide confusion and disorder of this age when he said, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." **2**

Tim. 3:1-5.

Our Lord, the greatest witness of all witnesses and prophet of all prophets, was foremost in His warnings of those earthshaking calamities that will prevail universally as this age moves to its conclusion. Listen to His positiveness as He answers the threefold question of His disciples concerning the end of the age. "Tell us," said they, "when shall these things be? What shall be the sign of Thy coming? And of the end of the age?" **Matt. 24:3.** "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Then, turning His attention significantly to our particular hour, He continued: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity (rebellion) shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." **Matt 24:3-13.** Then, after speaking of the abomination of desolation, He said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." **Matt. 24:21-22.**

In the midst of all the dire prophetic warnings concerning the end of the age, our blessed Lord interpolated these remarkable, soothing words: See that ye be not troubled. **Matt. 24:6.** Upon hearing all the distressing description of things as they are to be in the end of the age, it is easy for even the most devout saint to become greatly troubled in heart, and as our eyes are opened to see how these predictions are being fulfilled on every hand and in every country on earth, our hearts are inclined to become even more troubled. Only this week I was reading of the incredible increase in the rate of suicides in the world. Not only was this increase evident in destitute countries, but it was predominate in affluent countries like the United States and Canada. The principal cause of the alarming increase is believed to be the racing inflation which is evident everywhere. Inflation at its present rate will eat up the entire life savings of any individual in a period of ten years. People in despair and hopelessness are ending their lives as a means of escape from the calamities coming upon the earth. It is my own considered opinion that the present reckless inflation is deliberately planned by our national leaders to bring about a one world government and the rule of the Beast of Revelation 13, and the present rulers have one mind to give their power and authority to the Beast. **Rev. 17:13.**

If these are not the days of tribulation spoken of by Jesus and the inspired prophets and apostles, then I know not what manner of fulfillment would be necessary to satisfactorily fulfill the predictions. Do we have wars and rumors of wars? Yes, there have been over three hundred wars since 1914, including two world wars. Do we have famines? Yes, indeed, we do, and their stark horror is increasing with every passing month and will yet be much more devastating and cruel. Do we see violence? Why, the word is as common on the newscasts as the weather report. Are there false christs? Yes! They are almost as numerous as the pulpits, and besides this staggering aggregate individuals are increasing, both men and women, who publicly state, "I am Christ." The number of their followers has become legion, and there will be an ever increasing number of them performing lying signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Are we seeing perilous times? Why, friend, you

know as well as I do that millions of people in the land of the free and the home of the brave dare not venture to cross a street at night. The law-abiding people live in consternation behind their locked doors while thugs, rapists, and jailbirds roam the streets, looting, raping, and killing at will. The judges and enforcers of the law have become so corrupt that it is now a common thing to see the offender molycoddled while the offended is accused and persecuted. The hateful part of all this racketeering is that it could be stopped in a week if laws were swift and rigidly enforced without fear or favor to anyone. When the meek and lowly Jesus comes to reign, the rod of iron will be applied without favor until He has put down all evil rule and authority. Under His rule lambs will safely lie down with wolves, and calves and bears will feed together. The child will safely put his hand into the nest of the asp, and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

Perilous times are not confined only to the violence that lurks on every hand. The world's financial system is in imminent peril. It is without doubt collapsing and, though divinely decreed, it is taking place through the intrigue of evil men who themselves have corrupt ambitions of selfish power, once they have rendered the multitudes helpless. The imminent collapse of the present financial system and the fall of the governments of this world, together with those religious systems of Babylon that have held the people in bondage for centuries, is a process of divine appointment in preparation for the coming of the man of sin, the son of perdition, Antichrist, who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

These are perilous times, because the antichrist spirit is developing all over the world. Be not deceived! The present, much vaunted ecumenical move is designed, not to present a united front to the world, but to bring about a world church over which the Beast and the false prophet shall preside. Rev. 13:11-12. The World Council of Churches is part and parcel of the same evil system. The Charismatic Movement is, in my opinion, a great deception, possibly the greatest deception in the long series of deceptions of the church age. It is deceiving born again believers into bowing down to the idolatry of Rome. Christians by the tens of thousands are making the phenomenon of speaking with tongues the basis of fellowship. Vainly they imagine that anyone who professes to speak with tongues is a born again believer. Is not this one of the lying wonders of which Paul warned us in 2 Thess. 2:11-12 and by which many thousands will be deceived? Certainly it is. Do not be surprised to find in it the spirit of devils working miracles. Rev. 16:14. I am a believer in speaking in tongues, but it is not and never was a basis for Christian fellowship. Furthermore, I do not believe that all these people are genuine. Some may be, but there are many deceivers among them who are leading the people into the Beast's world church. Neither do I believe they are all speaking by the Spirit of God. No man can speak by the Holy Spirit and still be a worshipper of idols or continue to pray to the Virgin Mary, count beads, love money, and exercise false gifts. True speaking in tongues must be preceded by bitter repentance of sin, and complete turning away from the world and the filth of the religious systems.

In my opinion, the Charismatic movement is a perilous thing. It is of necessity basically wrong, because God has called His people to "come out and be separate." The very call, come out, signifies as nothing else can that Christ Jesus Himself is on the outside of the systems and not on the inside. If therefore he is calling men to come out, then He Himself cannot be within. I shall not accuse my Lord of the hypocrisy of remaining within the system after He has called His saints to come without. We are now seeing the greatest spiritual deception of history and the multiplication of every lying wonder and every deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they love not the truth.

Let it be known to every reader that when Paul wrote, "He who now letteth (hindereth) will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that Wicked be revealed," he was referring to the elect saints. He who hinders the progress of the wicked one is the company of the elect saints of God, and once they are called out, then their former restraint and savoring influence is taken away, and wickedness and lawlessness, together with every Satanic and lying wonder, will have free and unhindered course to work every imaginable wickedness in the religious systems. If the so-called revivals we see today were genuine, then they would have a corresponding savoring influence upon the world. Every true revival in the history of any age has had a tremendous impact on society, deterring wickedness and lawlessness of every sort. But the so-called revival we are witnessing now is not a revival at all, but a pretense. Thus in consequence evil men and seducers, both in the world and in the church system, are "waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." We are indeed beset by perilous times. The spiritual perils are even more dangerous and deadly than the perils that lurk about us in the streets, the lanes, the highways, and in the warlike nations of the world. The latter may

indeed kill the body or rob man of the trash in his purse, but the former are spiritual perils which will kill the soul and destroy its hope for the kingdom age to come.

We need not ask if children are rebellious against their parents or if people are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Neither need we ask if men are unthankful and unholy, trucebreakers, traitors, heady or high-minded; nor need we inquire if they are incontinent and fierce, or despisers of all that is good; or if they have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it. All these signs of the times are so evident to any understanding mind that they require no more than the briefest mention.

Our message to the saints of God in this amazing hour of turmoil, sin, and tribulation is this: See that ye be not troubled. A saint who permits himself to worry cannot possibly trust. If we are worrying, then we are not trusting, and there can be no exception to the rule. There is, I believe, a difference between worry and concern. When Jesus spoke the significant words, "Let not your heart be troubled," He did not mean that we should be unconcerned, flippant, light-hearted, or careless. Lack of concern for the things of God is a tragedy, but worrying about them is an even greater tragedy. The untroubled attitude of heart of which Jesus spoke had its sure foundation in this: "Ye believe in God; believe also in Me." Well may they be troubled who believe not in God and who have no confidence in His Son, Jesus Christ. He who believes says within his heart, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." **Psa. 46:1-3.** The heathen may rage and the kingdoms of earth be moved. The earth itself may melt at the voice of the Lord, yet, to those who believe, "the God of Jacob is our refuge." They who find this kind of rest in God speak from the midst of the fire, saying with joy, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." **Psa. 46:8-11.**

See that ye be not troubled about your welfare. People are continually writing me, asking whether or not they should join some group who are going to a wilderness hideout. My answer is to stay clear of all such human schemes. The idea of gathering up a group of people and fleeing away to a wilderness hideout is a childish notion that can end only in confusion, disappointment, and disillusionment. Time and again people ask me if they should join a group who has bought an acreage in some "safe" place where they intend to establish a community and weather out the storm of coming tribulation in safety. I discourage all such childish notions. If you feel led to go farming, then go farming, by all means. That is your prerogative. But God has nowhere indicated that His people are to establish such communities in the wilderness. When tribulation comes in all its fury, your little hideout will not be hidden. My brethren, there is only one true hiding place and that is wide open to us all. There is but one place where God's people may flee for refuge, and that safe hiding place is in God. Not long ago a well-meaning Christian wrote me to enquire if we had a refuge up here in Canada where people could go when the tribulation comes. In my reply I said, "Yes, indeed! We do have a refuge, and its location may be found in **Psa. 91:1-4.**" "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shall thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

The Bible gives revealing record of a certain saint who lived in a time of great tribulation. Elijah was a prophet to the house of Israel. Some of the Old Testament prophets were prophets to the house of Judah, but Elijah and Elisha were prophets sent to the ten tribes of the ungodly and rebellious house of Israel. At that time the house of Israel was ruled by a reprobate character by the name of Ahab, who himself was ruled by his idolatrous and wicked wife Jezebel. The nation itself had abandoned the worship of the God of heaven and in place of the one true God the idols of Baal with their blind eyes, deaf ears, silent lips and helpless hands stood in the temple and in the groves. There were four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, besides the four hundred prophets of the groves, who proclaimed the merits of this worthless, heathen, idolatrous religion. In all Israel Elijah alone was the prophet of the Lord. The whole scene is typical of the coming tribulation, since all these things happened to them for ensamples and are written for our admonition. 1 Cor. 10:11. Wickedness reigned in high places. False prophets lifted their deluding voices everywhere and great danger stalked the life of any man who faithfully followed the most High. In the midst of this reign of falsehood, delusion, and danger the

Lord God instructed His servant Elijah to go to the house of a widow who dwelt at Zarephath. 1 Kings 17:9. There he was sustained for the space of about three years. Though Ahab sent search parties into all parts of the country to find Elijah, he could not be found, though he was near at hand, dwelling with the widow of Sarepta on the Mediterranean coast not far from the city of Sidon. The searchers could not find him because God had hidden him. But when the day came for the Lord to reveal him, He spoke to Elijah, saying, "Go show thyself to Ahab," and he went and stood before him. 1 Kings 18:1-2.

It is neither right nor necessary for groups of people to sell their belongings and go away into some desert place where they hope to escape the tribulation. Such schemes are usually the product of some deluded man who himself desires to be an exalted leader. The whole scheme is man-made, man-planned, and man-organized and is doomed to be a dismal failure and a great disappointment. When the time of trouble comes in its fury, I am inclined to believe that such places will probably be among the first to be molested. Wherever these wilderness refuges appear, there is always some persuasive and clever leader engineering the scheme. He has always had a "revelation." He must have people for followers, because he needs their money to put his plan over. Some of these men may be sincere in their own minds and their followers may be, too, but they are deceived and, after their leaders have stripped them of their earthly goods, they will discover their error. You will remember how very recently a company of people stored food in a coal mine and went there to hide themselves because the Lord, they thought, had revealed to them that He was coming on such and such a day. The day passed uneventfully, as was to be expected, and they emerged, shamefaced and chagrined, from their hiding place, witnesses to their own deception. O that God's people would recognize that false prophets are to abound in the last days, and O that they could see that false prophets are men who lead people astray, both by their words and by their actions. They profess to speak from God, but God has not spoken to them. Many follow their pernicious ways and by reason of their error the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. Compare 2 Pet. 2:3.

The end of this age is to be a time of trouble. Jesus told us it would be. Matt, chapter 24. The apostles testify with great plainness that the world will be full of trouble. 2 Tim. 3:1-5. Jeremiah speaks of these days as the day of Jacob's trouble. Jer. 30:1. Daniel vividly describes the end of the age as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book." **Dan. 12:1.** Jesus saw it as a time of trouble so great that He described the end times in these words: "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world (earth) to this time, no, or ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Jesus described the end times as a time of war and distress of nations, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear of the things coming upon the earth, because even the power of heaven would be shaken. Jesus spoke of these days as days of famine, pestilence, unbridled sin accompanied by a breakdown of morals comparable to Sodom itself. He spoke of the end of the age as a time of religious persecution, of parents betraying children and children betraying parents. He saw it as a day of great deception with false prophets, false teachers, and false christs abounding on every hand.

"Where are the false prophets?" asks one. My brother, we have become so accustomed to them through the years that we can no longer recognize them, yet they are in many cases as numerous as the church buildings and pulpits of the land. A preacher not called of God is a false prophet, yet we embrace these assembly-line ministers as prophets of God. As Israel accepted the prophets of Baal as the prophets of the true God, so Christian and sinner alike today listen to the childish twaddle proclaimed and broadcast all over the land and swallow it as the truth, and its teachers as the teachers of the Lord. By long association we become accustomed to error, evil, false prophets, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness and, having become accustomed to their presence, we first endure them, then pity them, then embrace them.

Paul described the end of the age as a time of peril. The word peril is a very forceful word. Certainly it will be a time of physical peril, but physical peril, my brethren, is not a thing of great concern. Our Lord exhorted His people concerning the very present dangers that would threaten them, saying, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28. Our greatest peril then is not physical but spiritual - false prophets, false teachers, false christs, and the false doctrines emanating from all such false people.

Many thousands of believers are completely sold out to the miraculous, or what they deem to be supernatural. We should never go awhoring after miracles or men who claim to be miracle workers, or run from coast to

coast to see healings of healing ministries. Certainly miracles do occur, but those who seek this sort of thing are inadvertently building themselves up for a great deception, because they form the habit of thinking that everything, which appears to be supernatural is of God. Let us pay earnest heed to the warning in this scripture: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that all might be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:7-12.** Set not your heart on miracles or signs or wonders. You will be deceived if you do. Refuse to fellowship with the harlot system on the basis that some of her priests or cardinals or bishops speak in tongues. Such things may be lying wonders. Many thousands are being deceived by this and are already falling into the clutches of a world church system, which is the Antichrist system. I myself have spoken with tongues by the Spirit, but this manifestation never was and is not now the basis of Christian fellowship.

The apostle John gave us the one and only true basis for Christian fellowship when he wrote these enlightening words: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." **1 John 1:2-4.** Fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ is the only true fellowship in earth or in heaven, and all fellowship with other human beings must stand upon this foundation or fall short of true fellowship in every sense.

Personally I am extremely skeptical about all the movements of the present hour - the World Council of Churches, the Ecumenical Movement, the Charismatic Movement, the Jesus Movement, and the mass meetings of world, renowned evangelists. They are all heading in one direction. They are moving with increasing momentum toward a world church - a super body that will dictate to and completely dominate everyone on earth. This is definitely what John saw in **Rev. 13:11-12.** "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The Ecumenical Movement, the Charismatic Movement, the Jesus Movement, and big evangelism are merely different arms of the Babylon octopus. If they do not grasp you in one arm, they will grasp you in another. It is all a very deceitful and false thing, and the only safety for a Christian in our day is to be obedient to the voice of Christ and come out from among them, abandon every phase and form of them, and be separate unto Christ, refusing to touch the unclean thing. Neither worry about it nor make it a matter of concern. "Come out of her, My people," saith God, "that ye be not partaker of her sins; for strong is the Lord who judgeth her."

In the midst of the abounding trouble and confusion, which was prophesied for the end of the age and by which we are now encompassed on every hand, living as we do in the perilous hours so graphically described in God's word, our natural inclination is to become greatly distressed and troubled. We are troubled about ourselves and how we will be affected. We are troubled about friends and relatives and how they will be affected. We are even troubled about our nation and how the gospel itself will survive. It is in the midst of all this tribulation that the voice of our Lord comes sounding clear as evening bells: "See that ye be not troubled." In times like these there is nothing greater than that a saint of God should know that God holds the universe in His hands. The things that are unfolding before our eyes are the things He Himself has designed. The Lord of heaven and earth is bringing these things to pass that the kingdoms of this world will fall from their own weight of corruption. God now in the end of the age is sending forth His angels with the explicit purpose of dividing the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, and the righteous from the unrighteous. He is gathering the good into vessels and casting the bad away. His eye is running to and fro through the whole earth to search out those people whose hearts are one with Him. He is beholding that unseen company who, amid a world of Mammon worshippers and false gods of every kind, stand clothed in fine linen pure and white, refusing steadfastly to bow the knee to the sordid religious systems of this age.

See that ye be not troubled by the confusion around you. Today you are a kernel of wheat in the chaos of the threshing machine. The weeds, the chaff, and the straw are being cast out upon the ground, but you are being gathered into the garner. See that ye be not troubled about the present disorder, deception, violence, hate, war, disease, famine, pestilence, and even persecution. Do not run away and hide. Let God hide you in the secret of His pavilion. Let Him cover you with His feathers and shelter you beneath His wings.

It is necessary that offences come. It is necessary that saints be tried. It is the fierce heat of the furnace that separates the gold from the dross. It is the sevenfold heat that purifies the gold, and we must not be amazed or troubled by it. The fiery trial that is to try us is for our own purification and eternal good. I find it difficult to believe that the saints will be raptured out of the tribulation. Noah was not saved from the flood, but in the midst of its awful torrents. Daniel was not saved from the lions' den, but in it. Neither were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saved from the furnace, but walking in the midst of it with the Son of God. Paul says he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. We are not saved/row the cross, but by it. And I think we could cite many other illustrations that seem to confirm this truth.

When Paul wrote to the saints in Thessalonica, he told them of many dreadful things that would come upon the earth. He warned them not to be shaken in mind or be troubled by letters or words saying that the day of Christ was at hand. 2 Thess. 2:2. Writing to this troubled and persecuted people, he made this statement: "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." **2 Thess. 1:4-5**. This is a most remarkable statement, and certainly deserves our prayerful thought. Then in **verses 7-10** he gives us this beautiful assurance, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels ... when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe."

A few hours before our Saviour departed out of this world, He told His disciples many distressing things. He warned them of the trouble-filled days to come. He frightened them by telling them of His own death and crucifixion. He astonished them by warning them that one of them would betray Him, and disheartened them by telling Peter, the most outspoken in his declaration of fidelity, that he would deny Him, and that they all would forsake Him and leave Him alone. Then amid their overwhelming distress and consternation He comforted them with these wonderful words: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And that, my friend, is the secret of a trouble free, worry free life. "Ye believe in God; believe also in Me." Thus it must be at the end of the age when sorrows like sea billows roll over the earth, bringing all kingdoms to ruin and tribulation and desolation. See that ye be not troubled. Behind the gloomy clouds of this hour the hand of the Almighty is moving to make dust of the kingdoms and sovereignties of this world that the stone, which Daniel saw may become a mountain and fill the whole earth. God is ordering all these things according to His infinite wisdom and immutable will. Therefore, see that ye be not troubled.

CHAPTER SEVEN AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING

I am writing this final chapter as a personal letter to the many dear people, chosen of God and precious, who earnestly desire a fuller understanding of the sacred purpose of the Lord for the closing hours of this age and for the ages which are to follow. I frankly admit that my own understanding is pitifully small, but let us remember that by the loving kindness of our heavenly Father His chosen people are continually supplied with present truth that they may walk in the light, which He is and not in the darkness that now fills the world with gloom. Our Lord Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." **John 11:9-10**.

If we understand how a machine works, then the most intricate mechanism in the world is simple, but if we lack this understanding, even the simplest contrivance can baffle us. Well do I remember my amazement as I listened to a learned mathematician explain the almost incredible deductions of a large computer. When I expressed my bewildered admiration, he smiled and said, "Well, really it is quite simple once you understand the principle of it." Difficult as it was to grasp this statement, I do not doubt the truth of it. I once watched with

amusement the angry frustration of a school teacher as he tried to loose his cow from the stall. The snap on the halter shank, though very simple, was of a type he had never seen. The harder he tried to unfasten it the more difficulty he was in. Since I was a farm boy, the gadget was nothing new to me, and when with a simple twist of the wrist I unsnapped it for him, he could scarcely believe his eyes. So, whether it be a million dollar computer or a ten cent snap, both are quite simple when you know how they work. The way of the eagle in the air is amazing to man, but to the eagle it is merely his way of life. The same thought of understanding was in the heart of Solomon when he wrote, "Then shall thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity: yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." **Prov. 2:9-11.**

Without doubt we are now at the end of this dispensation of grace. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and when He appears, the resurrection will take place and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Following this long awaited resurrection of the saints in Christ, all the governments and kingdoms of this world of whatsoever sort they be, together with all the works of men, will be cast down and completely cleared out of the way. The kingdom of Christ will then be set up and the blessed one thousand year Sabbath will begin. Rev. 20:6. In it there will be none of the works of man, but a millennial Sabbath of God's rest - rest, happy rest, from all the idle and frustrating works of man that for six thousand years have cursed the whole earth with greed, war, injustice, inequity, sickness, and death. "Vanity of vanity," said Solomon. "All is vanity." And so throughout all man's six days of labor it has been. But the seventh day is the Lord's day! In it will be no vanity, for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Who can better tell the story than the prophet Isaiah, who with prophetic wisdom and the eloquence of the Spirit of God within him spoke of the millennial kingdom of rest in these words: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall there be, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: and they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." **Isa. 35.** With these and many other eloquent words of hope the Holy Spirit has brightened the pages of scripture - pages that all too often seem filled with gloom because of the blindness and thick darkness of the carnal mind during these six thousand years of travail.

But now let him that readeth understand that all things, from the beginning or ever the world was, were planned with infinite care by the omniscient mind of our kind heavenly Father, and the "all things" are all working together to fulfill the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His divine will. Whom He did foreknow He did predestinate. Whom He did predestinate, them He called. Whom He called He justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified. Who then can possibly lay any charge against God's elect, since it is God who has justified them, and since it is Christ who has died for them? Yea, in all things we are much more than conquerors through Him that loved us; for I am convinced that neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, nor principality nor power, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If we desire to enter into the peace and understanding of the Lord, we will certainly find it necessary to shake off many traditions that we have held in such high esteem that they seem to have become almost sacred, for often, though they knew it not, tradition has blinded men to truth, turning their feet out of the way and drowning them in perdition. Without one hint of sarcasm I testify that for perhaps the last sixteen hundred years the harlot church system has propagated the childish tradition that has made men believe that God in the

beginning made man in His image and placed him in the glory of the Garden of Eden, but that, alas, the devil sneaked in and tempted the man and the woman whom God had made in His image. They ate the forbidden fruit and fell into sin, and thus by this unforeseen tragedy the whole lovely plan of God was utterly ruined. Then the ridiculous story goes on to show that God in His frustration was obliged to find a Saviour through whom He would salvage some small part of mankind from the fearful dilemma into which he was fallen. And, whether you enjoy my bluntness or whether you despise it, the end of the matter, according to the incoherent madness of their church tradition, is simply this: Those few, who in this age come under the influence of the gospel and are saved, will be transported to a far off heaven, there to enjoy eternal bliss while those billions who never once heard that God had a Son on whom they could believe will be tortured eternally in the literal, raging fires of hell with no hope of either remission or cessation of judgment. From this kind of instruction it naturally follows that mankind must work his fingers to the bone and drive himself to exhaustion in hope of saving as many as possible before it is eternally too late.

Perhaps it is unnecessary for me to state that I believe all such tradition to be heresy and a complete distortion of truth. Such crude notions are not the teaching of the Old Testament and certainly not the teaching of the New Testament. Such twisted distortions as these had their beginning in that Romish harlot who maintains at her head that evil seducer who for seventeen hundred years (more or less) has as God sat in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. If you find this difficult to believe, then consider well the words of the late Pope Pius 10th, who when Archbishop of Venice said, "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks." The Catholique Nationale, July 13, 1895. This then is he who with all others of that succession have usurped the place of Jesus Christ. It was of these popes that Paul wrote, saying, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:3,4. About the year 235 A.D. Hippolitus in his treatise on Christ and Antichrist wrote, "The seducer will seek to appear in all things like the Son of God. As Christ a lion, so he a lion; as Christ a king, so he a king; as Christ a lamb, so he a lamb (though inwardly a wolf). As Christ sent out apostles, so will he similarly send out false apostles." Let all who read assuredly know that the Antichrist of the future will be of the same succession as those of the past. Let no man deceive himself, thinking Rome has changed her attitude or that her king has changed his mind. Let none imagine that her pretended interest in the so-called Charismatic Movement is evidence of her change of heart. This movement is not founded on Christ, but upon the phenomenon of speaking with tongues, and in its fold before many days will be found not only Protestants and Catholics but Moslems and Buddhists and Mohammedans as well. The Charismatic Movement, together with the Ecumenical Movement, is in my opinion a deception of enormous proportions, calculated to break down those barriers that hinder Christians from taking part with the apostate system known as The World Council of Churches and from thence to the Romish system that all the world may worship the Beast that was and is not and yet is. What a tremendous description of the arch deceiver is contained in the words of inspiration quoted above! **"The Beast that was, and is not, and yet is!" Rev. 17:8.** He was there in the past. Now it appears that he is not; yet he is!

Shall we return to what we were saying about the fall of man. The first statement concerning man is contained in these inspired words: **"Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1:26.** From earthly things that creep on the ground to heavenly creatures that inhabit the air - all was to be placed under the dominion of man in God's image. Let it be understood by all that the words of Gen. 1:26, quoted above, are in reality a prophecy from the immutable lips of the Father, outlining in detail that none but deity can devise the infinite purpose God had ordained for man. I am certain of the truth of this because other men inspired of God greatly enlarged the scope of the picture presented in Gen. 1:26, showing that God's word includes all things on earth and all things in the heavens, thus making man in God's image to be the lord of the universe under God and committing to him the word of its reconciliation. David, meditating on the purpose of God for man, said by the Holy Ghost, **"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet." Psa. 8:3-6.** Then Paul, warning the Hebrews that

they must not neglect so great a salvation, reminded them of God's purpose for man in these words: "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." **Heb. 2:5-10.**

The words "but we see Jesus" are of tremendous importance because He, who, like ourselves, was once made lower than the angels, is now perfected, resurrected, glorified, and made higher than the heavens, and all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him. He must reign until every enemy is under His feet, even death itself—the first death, which we are now in, and the second death, which unbelievers shall endure, and all death wheresoever it may be found. The fact that we now see this first Son of man perfected is God's positive guarantee that we, who are as yet unperfected, shall be both like Him and with Him where He is. The words "we see Jesus" are the Lord's perfect assurance that the purpose He had in mind in the beginning when He said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," is now in the process of being fulfilled, and in Jesus we now see the first man made perfect. He is the firstfruit of a vast harvest to follow. He is the guarantee that mankind in his totality will eventually be in the same image which God ordained for him in the beginning.

The thing all Christians seem to have forgotten, if indeed they ever knew it, is simply this: The almighty Lord of the universe said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." The initial step in the plan, which would take ages to complete, was to make a man in God's likeness, but not wholly so, for the man He made was to begin in innocence. Intelligent as he was, he was woefully ignorant of good and evil, sin and death and vanity. Because of this lack he was incapable of assuming the authority that God intends to give Him when the work of creation is finally complete. Have you ever heard people affirm that it is wrong to spank a child? You should reason with him, they try to tell you. The real truth is that you cannot reason with a child because a child has neither experience nor basis from which to reason. In his innocence he must learn to obey or suffer the pain of correction, and later on he will understand the reason for your demand. The foolish restraint of parents in sparing the rod is the one basic cause above all others for the dreadful wave of disobedience, hate, and rebellion among the young people of our day. A child does not know good from evil, neither does he understand right from wrong any more than Adam understood it. Don't waste your time reasoning with children who as yet have no basis from which to reason. All they will do is "pull away the shoulder" and purposely break your heart. Catherine Booth, the mother of a large family of godly children, declared, "If you do not break a child's will, that child will break your heart."

The first thing, then, the Lord did in making man in His image was to make him innocent and without experience. The second thing He did was to let him fall. We may also notice that the Lord did first reason with Adam, saying, "In the day you eat thereof you will surely die." But man, poor creature, knew not what death was, so just like a child who thinks he knows all but in reality knows nothing he had to find out for himself; and find out he has through six thousand years of unspeakable evil, vanity, and death. We stated above that the fall of man was part of the plan of creating man in the image of God. Our great misunderstanding lies in our thinking that innocent Adam in the Garden of Eden was God's finished product. Oh no, he wasn't! Jesus Christ is the finished product. He is man made perfect in the image of God through suffering, and His perfection is our assurance that all men will at last be in the same image. 2 Cor. 3:18.

All the prophets from the beginning of the world have spoken of the restitution of all things. Acts 3:21. Paul wrote of Christ, saying, "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." **Col. 1:20.** Would that all men might see that the Lord, who purposed to make man in His image and after His likeness, willingly bears responsibility for the vanity in which mankind now finds himself. What else could Paul have meant when he spoke forth the tradition shattering truth of **Rom. 8:20?** "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." And what was this mysterious hope that so inspired the Father's mind? It was the same hope He had in the beginning when He decreed that man

should be made in the image and likeness of God. Thus Paul in wisdom continues to unravel the secrets of this mystery, "For," says he, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18-19.** In **verse 21** he continues: "For the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

When the understanding grips our spiritual minds that all things, absolutely all things, are operating according to the Father's original blue print and all things are working according to the intention of Him who does all things after the counsel of His own will, and that all plans and purposes are on schedule, then all things, great and small, known and unknown, understood and not understood, begin to make excellent spiritual sense and divine wisdom. But, if we still permit ourselves to gaze through the distorted crystal of the Babylonish church tradition, which still nourishes the spirit of antichrist in its holy place, nothing will ever make for wisdom and the sacred mysteries of God will seem meaningless and empty. When we come out from among them and be separate unto God, and touch no more the unclean thing of man's making, then God becomes a Father to us and we become His sons and daughters. We open the door in response to His knocking and He enters in to sup with us and break the bread of life and truth to our famished soul. Mark this statement well, for in truth I warn you that no man can enter into the wisdom of God while he remains in the harlot system. The reason for this is very simple. The Lord Himself stands outside the church system. Therefore, to know Him we must go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Heb. 13:13.

The third step taken by the Lord in making man in His image was man's redemption. I must make as clear as possible, even at the expense of much repetition, the truth that redemption is part of the work of creation. No one reading these words will discredit for a moment the fact that creation itself is the work of God', but, lest some should doubt that redemption also is both part and parcel of the original plan of creation, let us be reminded that Jesus Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8. He was slain for our redemption. He was not slain before the worlds were formed as some sort of precautionary measure in case man should sin. He was slain for man's redemption before ever man was formed of the dust of the ground, because man's fall was part of the divine process of creating man in the image of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the first man finished and completed in the image of God, and Paul teaches us with no uncertain voice that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us unto adoption (sonship) by Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will. Eph. 1:4-5. It is with great significance that Paul in verse 10 of the same chapter reveals this still greater mystery of His will: In the dispensation of the fullness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Him. Consider well, then, the tremendous force of the truth we now contemplate - that redemption is part and parcel of God's work of creation, gathering up in its mighty arms everything in heaven and in earth and under the earth, bringing man, yea, all mankind, into the image and likeness of God according to the original intention of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

The apostle Peter revealed his great understanding of God's intention when he said that we were redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation (manner of living), but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." **1 Pet. 1:18-20.** Both the old creation in Adam and the new creation in Christ are God's work of creation and our redemption is part of the wonderful creative plan. Redemption is all inclusive. It is beyond me to remotely portray the limitless extent of its all inclusive scope. Redemption embraces our justification by faith, our sanctification, and our resurrection, in which the redemption of the body is complete. Sonship in fullness will never be reached until the redemption of the body.

The redemption of the body, which is complete and perfect in the resurrection, is the very next thing in order. Let us stop speaking of the "rapture." The word rapture is not in the scripture and is at best very misleading. If instead of the rapture we speak of the resurrection, which is scriptural, we will rid ourselves of much confusion, and we will have a much better understanding of the immediate program of God. The resurrection of the in-Christed ones (I Thess. 4:16) completes the perfection of the body of Christ, which is the firstfruit company. The physical rising from the dead of the body of Christ in full perfection heralds the manifestation of the sons of

God. It will signal both the end of the reign of carnal man and the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth. The resurrection will clearly show that the first elect company of mankind has come into the image of Christ.

The kingdom of God with all its glory is by no means the end of God's plan of creation. During that triumphant millennial reign of the Bridegroom (that is, Jesus and all the sons of God) the bride makes herself ready. This wonder, too, is part of the great redemption. At the end of the millennial kingdom the bride is seen descending as the Holy City from heaven to open wide her twelve gates that never will be closed and to lift her charming voice with that of the Holy Spirit to say to mankind in the fullness of times, "The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'."

My brother, my sister, hear well the words of the apostle which he spake from an overflowing heart: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath given unto us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." **2 Cor. 5:18-20.** How plain it is to see that even now in our present lowly estate the Lord God, who said, "Let us make man in our image," has already advanced us far enough into His image to begin to commit to us the word of reconciliation for our brethren who are still in the world! When our spiritual minds begin to grasp the Father's infinite purpose, and we understand that His immutable purpose was neither spoiled nor defiled by the cunning of Satan, but that rather all things are working together for good according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will so that we should be to the praise of His glory who were the first to fix our hope and trust in Christ, then our hearts are filled with confidence, knowing that we are part of His plan and always have been. We know, too, that at this very moment we are special objects of His care and that all things are working together for our good because we love Him. We know now as Job knew in the long ago that "when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." We know also that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us. We are living in days of extreme peril. The feverish activity of all the religious systems of earth is immense, but it is not motivated by the Spirit of God. "In the last days," the Holy Spirit said, "perilous times shall come." If we will carefully compare the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the day in which we live with the prophecy given by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:1-5, our eyes will be opened to see that we are not only in the last days of this age, but in the last hours as well. Every word and every prediction of that prophecy is both fulfilled and being fulfilled before our eyes every day and every hour of the day. These are perilous days for many, many reasons. Our lives are in peril within the four walls of our own homes. Every passing day men, women, and children are being robbed, bludgeoned, raped, and murdered, not only by gangs on the street, but by molesters who enter their houses. In many cities it is unsafe to be on the street even in the day, and in most cities it is unsafe to be on the street at night. Mobs and gangs roam the streets and highways, burning, looting, rioting, and senselessly destroying.

Bad as these things are in the natural realm, the greater perils of our day are the spiritual perils. This is a day of every imaginable spiritual deception. There was a day not long ago when the things of God were considered sacred, and all who had entered their spiritual realm were considered separate and apart from the world. But now, alas and alack, the new birth, the baptism of the Spirit, and every sacred, sanctified truth and pious theme is bandied about in the mouths of the obscene, discussed by the impious on T.V., demonstrated and mimicked on radio, made the plaything of religious movements and the discourse of men and women who have neither part nor lot in this inheritance, whose hearts are not right in the sight of God. If you would question why such conditions exist, I will answer plainly. These are the deceptions of the last days. These are the spirits of devils, working miracles. This is that spirit of antichrist of which we are warned, calling down fire in the sight of men. The hour is at hand when all the world will wonder after the beast. It is the spirit of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause (because they do not love the truth) God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all may be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thess. 2:8-12. Who are these people who now revel in speaking with tongues and who make this phenomenon their point of contact and unity? They are the same people, the denominations and sects, who did not love the truth, but rejected it, when God was pouring out the Holy Spirit in the first half of the twentieth century. They were the ones who mocked and reviled and scoffed, and they were the ones who

rejected and ejected the baptized saints as fanatics and heretics, putting them away from their midst as the blind man was thrust from the synagogue. "Away with such fellows from the earth," was their cry. But now, without a thought of repentance or sorrow for their deeds of unbelief, they make a playfellow of the experience they rejected, and in so doing they fulfill the words of Jesus, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." **John 5:43**. Remember the words of Paul: "From such turn away." **2 Thess. 8:5**.

I am unable to believe that the Charismatic Movement is the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh, spoken of by Joel the prophet. Peter claimed that prophecy for his day when at Pentecost he said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." **Acts 2:16**. Jesus was not telling us to look for a last day revival when He said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" In my opinion the so-called Charismatic renewal is a very cunning deception, designed to bring the harlot daughters of Babylon back to the mother of harlots and under Rome. It seems to be most significant that we now see two of the foremost Protestant evangelists in North America exerting their great influence to unite the many Protestant denominations with Rome under one great head, and that head will be of that succession of popes who for some 1260 years have "sat in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Let everyone know of a certainty that the terrifying vision John beheld of the swaggering power and filth of Mystery Babylon is even now coming to pass in all its fullness. When the angel of the Lord carried John away in the Spirit into the wilderness to show him Babylon and her final judgment, this is what he saw: "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." **Rev. 17:3-6**.

Many years ago I stated that we would soon see bishops and ministers, priests and cardinals, making profession of miraculous gifts, laying claim to the gifts of the Spirit and ministries of the Holy Ghost; and now this is daily before our eyes. I also said at that time that we would see pagan religions such as Mohammedanism and Buddhism coming into the picture; this we are also seeing. Babylon was always a mystery, but in our day it is Mystery, Babylon the great. **Rev. 17:5**. In our day Mystery Babylon is greater in stature and more drunken and confused than at any time since she was founded by Nimrod, the mighty rebel, in the far distant past. Paul continued his prophecy concerning the last days thus: "In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of themselves." This love of self is manifest in all circles, whether religious or secular, from the laborer to the magnate and from the thumb-bum on the highway to kings and presidents. Men have become selfish lovers of themselves as never before in all history. Upon the spiraling branches of the tree of love of self the fruit of evil grows as naturally as apples grow on apple trees. From that hateful quality - love of self - come the covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of them that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, and the lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. From such turn away.

"From such turn away," is the word of the Lord. Those who try to make order out of this confusion will fall a prey to its evil power. If Jesus were here today, He would say as He said before, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." **Matt. 15:14**. "From such turn away," said Paul. "Come out of her, My people," shouted the voice from heaven, "lest ye be partaker of her sins." **Rev. 18:4**. Our only safety in this hour of confusion is in obedience to the divine command, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." **2 Cor. 6:17**. With this command comes the promise of God, "And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **Verse. 18**.

We have considered Babylon and God's command to the saints concerning her. Let us now speak a few words about the true church, which is His body. The church, which is the body of the Lord, has been a divine mystery in the earth ever since the day of Pentecost. Its elect members consist of men and women "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." **Eph. 1:4**.

These people were predestined unto sonship, foreordained to be God's sons according to the good pleasure of His will. Eph. 1:5. These people have been redeemed. They have redemption through the blood of Christ and forgiveness of sins. God hath abounded toward them in all wisdom and prudence. See Eph. 1:7-8. God is opening the eyes and the understanding of these elect saints, whom He has chosen for Himself that they might "know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saint." Eph. 1:18. These people have been made alive with the life of Christ (Eph. 2:1), and God has raised them from the realm of spiritual death to reign with Christ in heavenly realms of the Spirit, Eph. 2:6. It is God's intention that these elect people, this church of the living God, shall in ages to come demonstrate and manifest the exceeding riches of His grace, and show God's great kindness toward us through Jesus Christ. See verse 7. The people who have been brought nigh to Him through the blood of our dear Lord Jesus are no longer to be considered strangers and foreigners to God, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. So truly are they the household of God that, in the descriptive words of Weymouth's translation, it is written: "You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:20-22.**

In these days of confusion (Babel means confusion), when multitudes are being sucked into the whirlpool of Babylon's vain and worthless striving, how good it would be if God's dear children would get off the system's merry-go-round and get alone with Jesus Christ their Lord, shut out all the din and noisy commotion of Babel's activity and the bondage it brings, and there in the light of His cross and with an open heart request that he would grant to their searching spirits the knowledge of what the true church really is, and what eternal hope He had in mind when He foreknew and chose them as a special habitation for Himself! If God's dear people would do this, I think it would not be long before they would lose their love for this antichrist system, now rising to new heights in the earth. Oh, that God's people would quickly learn that the greatest deception of all time is now at work in the earth and rising to its deceptive power - Mystery Babylon the great, an unholy mixture of the iron of Rome and the clay of Protestantism in the realm of religion with the iron of Communism and the clay of Democracy in the realm of politics! These developments do not belong to the distant future. If we will open our eyes, we will plainly see that they are already here.

There is good news for the saints of God, though worn out they may be through weary days of waiting. Long ago the prophet Daniel, speaking of these last days, left us this blessed hope: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." **Dan. 2:44.** And John on lonely Patmos, listening to the trumpet blasts of the seven angels, heard, when the seventh and last trumpet sounded, "great voices in heaven, saying," The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign forever and ever." This seventh trumpet is the same trumpet Paul speaks of as "the last trump," saying, "Behold, I show you a mystery, We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (trumpet); for the trumpet shall sound, (see Rev. 11:15), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." **1 Cor. 15:51, 52.** The resurrection of the elect in Christ is even now at the doors. While Babylon is rising to her dizziest height, the mysterious stone cut out without hands is being prepared in secret to strike the feet of iron and clay, and the whole image of this world's system shall come crashing down, never to rise again; but the stone shall become a mountain that will fill all the earth with God's kingdom.

In writing these tremendous truths, no personal gain accrues to me. I seek not yours, but you; for "what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing?" It will be the joy of seeing you standing in Christ's presence when He comes. It cannot be far hence.

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**TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 15
ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE**

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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**CHAPTER ONE
ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE**

Long before there was a world or any man, God, almighty and all wise, planned every detail of the whole creation from start to finish. He not only planned each detail of the earth itself but with infinite wisdom He planned your life and mine before the foundations of the earth were laid. 2 Tim. 1:9. He planned the moment and place of our birth, the circumstances that were to prevail throughout our life, our down-sittings and up-risings, the trials and tribulations, the joys and sorrows that were to have their part in shaping us according to His purpose. He knows the appointed times and how many ages He will spend to bring us to the perfection He planned for us before the world began. I am perfectly aware that this is not church tradition. This is not what we were taught from our youth nor is this commonly accepted doctrine, but I affirm that this is truth according to the word of God, and it is also according to the true longing of our own spirit within us.

Did not Paul teach us that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world when he said to Timothy, "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." **2 Tim. 1:8-9.** And then again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world..." **Eph. 1:3-4.**

There will come an unbelievable transformation to your understanding, together with a fresh and vivid relationship with God, when the revelation of this truth dawns upon your soul, teaching you that God is the author and finisher of all things. He is the First and the Last. He is the Alpha and the Omega. Not only is it true that God was there at the beginning and will be there at the end, but also that God is the beginning and God is the end. He is the Alpha and He is the Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) and consequently He is all the letters in between. "I am He that is and was and is to come." All things, all things had their beginning in Him and all things, all things will have their end in Him.

It is sad to say the least that for centuries Christians have taught that God is omniscient (all wise) and yet they accuse Him of the grossest foolishness. Preachers have proclaimed that God is omnipotent (all powerful) and in the next breath accuse Him of helplessness. They preach a God of love and in the next breath accuse Him of a grotesque sadism that would make the tortures of Buchenwald look insignificant. The greatest need of God's people today is to have a complete change of heart in their attitude and relationship to God. It is time for all men to see that God is God, all wise, all powerful, unchanging, eternal, glorious in power, fearful in praises, doing wonders.

If God is all wise (omniscient), then there is no possibility of anything's happening in all the universe without His knowledge. A God who numbers every hair of every head among the billions of earth's inhabitants (Matt. 10:30) is certainly a God of infinite knowledge. A God who sees every sparrow that falls in death cannot be accused of inattention. And are ye not of more value than many sparrows? He has declared His knowledge of the thoughts and intents of men's hearts, that He knows their thoughts afar off. Nothing is hidden from His eyes, nothing is beyond His knowledge, nothing is out of His presence. The light and the dark are both alike to Him. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Should we make our bed in hell, He is there. Psa. 139:8.

We have long believed, and with abundant scriptural backing, that God knows not only the present but every minute detail of the future. He knows the end of every matter from its beginning. The fact that well over half of the entire Bible deals with prophecy, telling in intricate detail the vast array of events still to come, should convince any man that the future is not kept secret from the mind of God. But it is not enough for us to believe that God knows the future in all its intricate detail; we must thoroughly know that every minute detail of the future was planned and purposed by God and that nothing can possibly change or alter the plan, for God is immutable (unchanging) as well as omniscient and almighty.

There is a wonderful prayer found in Acts 4:23-28 that portrays the wisdom and foreknowledge of God and shows perfectly that everything that happens is ordained of God and is part of the eternal purpose. The disciples of Christ were under great persecution and in danger of death when they assembled for prayer to God. The following is the prayer they prayed: "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and sea and all that in them is; Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou has anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Can anything be plainer than that? The crucifixion of Christ, the opposition to the apostles, the persecution of the church was appointed, ordained, and determined by the counsel and the hand of God long before it happened. Verse 28.

I do not think it is necessary here to multiply scripture to prove that God not only knows the future, but that He plans the future and that the thing that He plans is part of an eternal purpose that He purposed before the ages began. Everything is planned of God before it starts. Everything is before ordained. The blueprint is complete in minutest detail before the program begins. Eternal wisdom forbids the need of making changes, alterations, or additions. The finite architects of earth sometimes are forced to do such things, but the architect of the universe, who is omniscient, never has such need. The beginning is certain and the end sure, for God is the beginning and God is the end.

There is one more thought that should be mentioned here. It is the truth of God's omnipotence. God is almighty. God is all powerful. I do not need to tell stories or refer to acts of omnipotence to prove this point, for the whole Bible and the whole creation in heaven and earth and the universe breathe, proclaim, shout and sing of the omnipotence of God. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them." He speaks and myriads of worlds appear. He commands and they whirl away forever in their orbits. He says to oceans, "Thus far and no further: here shall thy proud waves be stayed," and mighty billows can but lash the shores and fall away at His command. "Praise ye Him, all His angels! Praise ye Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars of light! Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever; He hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps: fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word: mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl; kings of earth and all people; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens, old men and children; Let them praise the name of the Lord; for His name alone is excellent. His glory is above the earth and heaven." **Psa. 148.** By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the hosts of them. Angels and principalities and powers obey His wise immutable plans. He raiseth up kings and putteth them down. He sends forth His word and living things are created from things that are not. He speaks, and the whole face of the earth is renewed. He commands, and the sun hides its face at noon or retraces its steps in the sky. The stormy winds and the raging seas obey His word. He hangeth the earth upon nothing. Not only were all things made by Him but all things were made for Him. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, man, angels, principality and power all come from Him, were made for Him, and end in Him. Each existing thing, animate or inanimate, was designed for a purpose, and has a part in the great universal purpose of God. Nothing in heaven or earth was made without purpose. Nothing was made to exist without being part and parcel of the great eternal plan. Everything everywhere is a link in the eternal chain, everything a part of the purpose, everything a part of the plan, everything a cog in the intricate machine, every drop of water a part of the mighty ocean, every sunrise a part of eternal day.

One day during the Christmas rush I crowded along with the multitudes of shoppers on a Chicago street. People by the tens of thousands thronged about, all intent on their own little plan. Very few, I imagine, had any thoughts of God. Still fewer knew anything of His purpose. Perhaps not one in a hundred had that day read God's word or lifted their hearts to Him in prayer. As I grew weary of being jostled about by so great a throng, I said within myself, "Lord, why did You ever make all these people?" And as though the Lord was speaking to me, He replied, I have a purpose for every one of them." Ah, what a revelation of truth that was to my heart and what an infinite change it has made!

Can you not see what a vital, transforming difference is made to your understanding when you see purpose, purpose, purpose written in flaming letters over everything created and made in all heaven and earth? Can you not see what a vital difference it makes in your attitude toward all things and all people whether good or bad when you understand that purpose is ever present, partly for their sake, partly for your sake, partly for the sake of creation, but above all things for God's sake? My attitude toward the rebellious and wicked King Pharaoh was for years an attitude of scorn and distaste for such a hard-hearted, rebellious enemy of God until one day I read these words in **Exod. 9:15**: "For now will I stretch out mine hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shall be cut from the earth. And in very deed/or this cause I raised thee up, for to show My power and that My name may be declared throughout the whole earth." Listen to the enlightened revelation of Paul as he speaks of Pharaoh and says "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture says of Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show My power in thee and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." **Rom. 9:16-18**.

When I saw from this passage that Pharaoh was raised by God for a definite purpose just as Moses was raised up for a definite purpose, my whole attitude toward him had to change, for anything that is a part of God's purpose must be treated with respect even though we do not understand it. Undoubtedly it was for this reason that Paul declared by the wisdom of the Spirit, "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God." **1 Cor. 4:5**. Just meditate on that statement and see how it transforms your thinking toward all men. We are so inclined to be full of bombastic judgment because we see things only through our narrow slit and thus we miss the greater wisdom that God has ordained it thus to bring some part of His plan to perfection. Truly in this we see through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face.

Because Michael, the strong and glorious archangel, understood God's purpose and knew that even Satan had a part in that purpose, he would not bring a railing accusation against him but committed him to the Lord's rebuke. How significant and terrible is the statement of Jude when he, speaking of men and their foolish judgments, says, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation; but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally as brute beasts in those things they corrupt themselves." **Jude 8-10**. Oh what a difference it makes in our attitude to and understanding of all creatures and all things when we see that divine purpose is ever present. Did not Peter say that men who walk after the flesh despise governments, are self-willed and not afraid to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels which are greater in power and might bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord... but these... speak evil of things they understand not and shall utterly perish in their own corruption? 2 Pet. 2:10-12. Paul adds his testimony to this truth by saying in Romans 13, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God." Whenever men speak against Satan, demons, or Babylon in railing, reviling, or flippant terms, they shout aloud their lack of understanding of God's purpose.

How my heart rejoices in all these things. The knowledge of them completely transforms my attitude toward all men, for God has concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all. Rom. 11:32. It transforms my attitude toward governments, for I see they are raised up to fulfill some design in the purpose of God. The fact that my puny mind does not understand the purpose means nothing at all. It changes our attitude toward principalities, powers, and dignities, and even towards Satan himself, for we can clearly see that there is no power but of God and the powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13:1. But best and greatest of all our

entire attitude is changed toward God Himself, for we see His divine mind of wisdom, omniscience, and purpose back all things. Here and here alone do our triumphant souls proclaim, "All things are working together for good to them that love God and to them who are called according to His purpose," **Rom. 8:28**, and all creation echoes and re-echoes the refrain, "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first born among many brethren." **Rom. 8:28-29**. Oh, the depth of the riches and goodness of God! How inscrutable are His purposes and His ways past finding out! Let me testify against that I never really began to love or appreciate God until I began to see that God's divine infinite purpose lay hidden behind all things and that all things in the universe, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, creatures of flesh or angels of light - all are moving by the power and wonder of the purpose of Him who created all things according to the counsel of His will. Undoubtedly there is a day coming when every intricate detail of His fathomless purpose shall be revealed to our wondering eyes. Then and then alone shall we see the reason behind the storms that beset us. Then we shall understand the reason for pain and suffering and see what purpose it had in our molding and making. Then we shall understand the purpose of death and sorrow, and why it was that war darkened our horizons and disappointment deferred our hopes and dashed our ambitions. And though we cannot understand it all now, how it lightens our load and fills our hearts with love and understanding when we know that back of it all is one great revealing truth - God's purpose.

Divine infinite purpose lies behind all things and the moment this wonderful truth dawns upon our spiritual understanding, all things begin to make sense and our love for God springs from a new foundation, even the foundation of wisdom and understanding. We may not yet understand the purpose of any of the things that have puzzled us or the reason for the doubts and fears, the pains and woes that often come upon us, but our hearts rejoice that in the process of our making God is using the proper methods to make us according to His purpose.

It is completely impossible for any man to truly love God until his spirit has been taught that before all things, through all things, in all things, and after all things is God, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, filled with goodness, righteousness, love, kindness, forgiveness, and truth, that in Him and Him alone is light and in Him alone is life. He was before all things and by Him all things consist. There is no angel, principality, or power that does not hold his authority by direct permission and appointment of God. In Him all men and angels live and move and have their being. By Him and for Him and to Him are all things. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends bringing glory to God forever and forever. Amen and Amen! The imagination that a thing can have its beginning in God and have its end in destruction and a flaming fire in separation from God is an imagination that comes from the mind of man and not a truth that comes from mind of God, for of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Him be glory forever and ever! Amen! Rom. 11-36. Even more enlightening is the translation from Goodspeed, which says, "Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? or who has advanced anything to Him for which he will have to be repaid? For from Him everything comes: through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him forever! Amen." **Rom. 11:34-36**. Or as Moffat's translation bluntly and beautifully words **verses 34-36**, "Who ever understood the thoughts of the Lord? Who has ever been His counselor? Who has first given to Him and has had to be repaid? All comes from Him, all lives by Him, and all ends in Him. Glory to Him forever, Amen."

The words of this beautiful passage of scripture, even if left to stand completely alone, cast a ray of eternal hope across the gloomy pages of human tradition that for centuries has confused men's minds and made their feet to stumble and lose the way and caused their faith in the omniscience, immutability, and omnipotence of the Lord to falter and die. I have positively no hesitation in saying that no man on earth can truly come to love God as he ought until he sees that back of all things and before all things is a wise designing mind that is filled with an eternal purpose, and with that eternal purpose is omnipotent power, all power in heaven and earth, to carry to completion the design of His omniscient mind. If then God is both all wise and all powerful, we must conclude that He has the infinite wisdom to plan from the beginning to the end and the almighty power to carry out His purposes without let or hindrance from any source in all the universe. Nothing can stand before His wisdom and nothing can resist His power. Man in his present state of bondage and ignorance knows nothing yet as he ought to know, but love and trust must teach us that in the hands of Him who is omniscient, immutable, omnipotent, gracious, loving, and true all is planned and all is well.

It should be abundantly evident that creation in all its forms must be one of the chief delights of Almighty God. The work of His creation goes millions of light years beyond the power of the mightiest telescopes ever devised by man, embracing worlds and galaxies and universes unheard of and undreamed of. A galaxy is a luminous band of light encircling the heavens and consisting of numberless stars. As astronomers have swept the heavens with their mighty telescopes, they have estimated that there are enough galaxies in the heavens that one could be given to every man and woman that was ever born. In speaking of galaxies and worlds we are only speaking of dust, but God's principal creation consists of glorious living things. It embraces the unknown wonders of the cherubim and seraphim and heavenly hosts glorious and innumerable of which the mind of man has never dreamed. When we speak of creation, we like to dwell upon the great, the universal, and the mighty, but God's power to create things both animate and inanimate goes not only beyond the power of the telescope but beyond the power of the microscope as well, where even drops of water swarm with living things and God giveth life and breath to them all.

Time will not allow us to dwell on the glories of God's creations, but the Creator looked upon it all and saw that it was good, and by His Holy Spirit He inspired Isaiah to write, "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord and there is none else." **Isa. 45:18**. We dare not endeavor to explore such vastness, and indeed our ability to even begin does not exist. The knowledge that must impress our minds just now is this: none of these things was created without a definite purpose. God does not create things for a pastime. God creates all things for a purpose. It may be now that we see no connection between many things of His creation, but eventually, when all is complete, they will fit together as the parts of an intricate machine.

Let us then bear these thoughts continually in mind as we read through the remainder of this story, for until we can see God's purpose we can see nothing. If God's purpose does not stand out clearly and distinctly as the motivating factor in all He is and does, then we have nothing but a Hodge podge of unrelated, meaningless creations with no more purpose than the shavings that fall from a whittler's jack-knife or the logs that drift meaninglessly on the tides of the ocean. By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him. **Col. 1:16**.

Not the least of the creations of God is the one we will now consider, that great and wonderful creation of God, which is known as man. Great as is the creation of the earth, yet it was made to be inhabited by man. All the things put in it and on it are there for man's sake. Man therefore is the most important creature on the earth and He has been created and made as part of the plan and purpose of the all wise God. None of us will fully understand that purpose now, but we do not need to understand it fully. All we need is to know that the purpose exists. It will then be easy to align our lives, our spirits, and our souls with the mind and will of God for this present dispensation.

It seems to me that if any man should announce his intention of making or doing anything, he should also be ready with a reason for his intention. If we announce some task that will take a life-time to complete and can give no reason for undertaking such a task, then I think we would be classed among the unwise and the fools. But if any man has a purpose and a reason for devoting his life to anything, be it ever so small, we must commend his vision and devotion and class him among the wise of the earth. Now surely what would be wise in man would be wise in God also, for there is no wisdom but of God. Therefore when the all wise and almighty God makes announcement that He will create a man and put him upon the earth, we may well expect that He will also have a definite purpose for doing so, and, though He is under no obligation, we may expect that He will announce His purpose to His creatures that they may better know His mind and do His will. This then is what we may expect, and it is certainly what God has done for all who have a mind to see.

During my brief life I have seldom heard any man even attempt to give a reason for man's creation or a purpose for his existence. If you will think back upon your past, you will also agree that, while preachers talk glibly of "heavens to gain" and "hells to shun" and the awfulness of the fall and the punishment of sin, you could count on a fingerless hand the number of times these same preachers have even tried to explain why an omniscient God would have let His creation slip beyond the power of His Almighty hand, or what was His

purpose in making man in the first place. It is small wonder that this negative nonsense has caused men to drift on seas of infidelity and wander in the deserts of agnosticism. No man on earth can have faith in that which has no purpose and it is a miracle that any man could trust such negative thought. God never intended that we should drift along without a knowledge of His will, and I say of a truth that, the moment God announced His intention to make man and put him on the earth, He also announced His reason and purpose for so doing. These are the words spoken by the almighty and all wise God: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over everything that creepeth upon the earth." **Gen. 1:26.**

This then is the first announcement of God's intention regarding man and the first announcement of His purpose, but locked up in that glorious fiat is a universe of meaning that does not reach the eye and that the mind has never understood. When God announces that man should be in His image, we try to visualize Adam as the final and finished product of God's image, but it never enters our unenlightened minds that God was announcing His intention of taking ages and dispensations that would consume thousands of years to bring man into the image of God. And when I say man, I mean all men, great and small, black and white, yellow and brown, ignorant and intelligent, vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor - that they should all eventually come into His image.

Furthermore, after God had announced that He would make man in His image, He next announced that this man in His image should be given dominion over all the earth. We are never told how long Adam lived in that wonderful garden where he enjoyed complete dominion over everything God had made, where every animal and bird and creeping thing obeyed his will, and where even plant life bowed in obedience to his godly mind, but that glorious reign of wonder and peace under the direction of a son in the image of God was but a type and a shadow of the day when a whole first fruit company of sons in God's image would reign over all the earth and everything everywhere would be in submission to their godly minds and will. Ah! What an Eden of God's glory it will be when the judgment is upon His shoulder, to order and establish it in justice and righteousness, when saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the house of Esau (flesh) and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. Obadiah 21. Then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Heb. 2:14.

But let us not pause here. Wonderful and glorious as was the Edenic reign, we must look beyond the book of Genesis to find the full purpose God had in mind when He created man and planned to take thousands of years to bring the entire human race into God's image. David, speaking by the Holy Spirit, asked, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Then in answer to his own question he continues: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet." **Psa. 8:4, 6** This then was God's purpose in making man - that man should be in the image of God and have dominion over all the works of God's hands. We may reverently expect then that a creature who is being groomed and prepared for such a glory and majesty must be a special object of God's attention. We must expect that God will take both ages and dispensations to bring him through every imaginable test that he may be perfect and entire in the complete image of God.

When David, with the pen of inspiration, wrote the eighth Psalm, he must have been overwhelmed by the knowledge that God's intentions and purposes for man go far beyond the realm of this little earth on which we dwell; therefore his inspired tongue said, "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou has ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" What David was really asking is the same question we are asking now. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Or as we would say, "What have you in mind for man?" I think the answer from God's own lips is this: man in God's image, filled with God's mind, is eventually to govern all things, for that is the purpose of sonship. Let us read a little further on this same subject as the Apostle develops the theme in the book of Hebrews. "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, but one in a certain place testified saying, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." **Heb. 2:5-8.** We see not yet all things under man because man is not yet ready. He is now in the process

of coming into the image of God. He is in the process of coming into sonship, and when that process is complete, he will take his place of lordship and dominion to carry the will of God into all the universe.

Though the Apostle says, "We see not yet all things put under him," it is beautiful to note that in verse 9 he says, "but we see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor" - Jesus who said, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto Me," Jesus the first manifested Son, Jesus the son in God's image, Jesus the first born of many brethren, Jesus who is bringing many sons to glory, Jesus who said, "Behold I and the children which God has given Me," Jesus who said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given to them." No wonder he said, "We see Jesus," for He is so are we in the world." We are on our way to His glory, not to strum harps and sit on clouds and walk golden streets shouting hallelujah, but in God's image and likeness to take our place as lords of God's creation, carrying His almighty will into the uttermost universe and fulfilling His mighty purpose. "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness and let Us give him dominion."

It will be a help and a blessing to us here to read Weymouth's translation of this passage, of which we have been speaking. "It was not to angels that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of which we speak, but as we know, a psalmist has exclaimed, "How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him and a son of man and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou has crowned him, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting the universe to man implies leaving nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him." **Heb. 2:5-9.** (Weymouth).

These passages stagger the imagination with their wonder. Such things are too wonderful for me. In our fallen state while yet our eyes are dim through the ravages of sin and death, we can but see through a glass darkly. Though the centuries of sin's awful night have hidden His face from our eyes, yet we shall stand in the latter days upon the earth and in our own flesh we shall see God. Though the centuries have made us deaf to the voice of the Eternal, still His inspiration rings in our spirits. "Let Us make man in Our image." Glorious as are these great truths, they are almost terrifying in their reality. Any man who can read these things and feel proud and boastful in heart has never really seen them at all. Such a man has heard only with the carnal mind, which always caters to his pride, but the holy sobering truth he has never seen. When my own soul thrills with this message, my lips seem to be sealed, for the wonder of it all is too great for me. Such merciful purpose fills me with repentance and such kindness for so poor a creature lays me in the dust of desolation. Those who see God's purpose for man will fall in love with Him afresh and breathe their holy adoration to His name. Gone will be self-seeking and pride, vanquished the human will. The hopes of earth for gain and glamour will vanish in the hopes and purposes of God and our will shall be one with His. "Such things are too wonderful for me; they are high; I cannot attain unto it."

As we are about to discuss the important subject of God's purpose in the fall of man, there are a few things I should like to mention in preparation. As soon as any one begins to see the design of God in a thing, he is bound to have to depart from his human ways of looking at things. When he begins to see the infinite wonders of God's eternal purpose, his heart immediately begins to flow with infinite love for his wonderful Lord. Earthly desires and earthly wills begin to lose their grip upon him. He will be bound to find his life and will slipping into harmony with the eternal purpose. That which is bound up in God's heart will become bound up in his. The purpose hidden in the mind of God through dispensations to be revealed in the last days will be the joy and wisdom of his own mind. The plans and purposes of his life will be forgotten and like water vanish into the sands as he joyfully exchanges his plans for time for His purposes for eternity.

The Lord Jesus Christ brought a dreadful indictment against the Pharisees and religious leaders of His day when He said, "You make the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." **Matt. 15:6.** This is a hateful thing indeed, but throughout all the ages of religious history it has been pitifully true. The great truths and revelations of the Spirit of God have been flung aside as heresies because they did not conform to establish tradition. Jesus was always at odds with the Pharisees and doctors of the law because they rejected the counsel of God rather than cast aside their tradition. They had come to the place where it was useless to quote scripture to them, for their established ideas had become their true doctrine and mainstay. They were the people and wisdom would die with them, and all teachings conflicting with their long established creeds must of necessity be of the devil.

Now it would be folly to examine them and find them guilty, yet pass lightly over our sad plight, for like the Jews the church in all its existing forms has established its traditions and doctrines and will rise up and cast out anyone who does not conform to them. We may quote all the scripture we wish, but few are moved by it and few have a mind to change the traditions of the past for the unfolding revelation of the days to come. Be assured therefore that every man on earth who is going to follow the revelation of God as it is revealed by His word and by His Spirit will have to lay aside tradition after tradition and be willing to be branded as an heretic that he may walk in the glory of the light that falls from God's presence.

Many people will be willing to follow me to this point. They rejoice in the truth that God is almighty, all wise, ever present, full of love, everlasting. They rejoice to hear that He is full of purpose and that nothing can come into the world or into existence without His divine permission. But it is right here that their established tradition comes into conflict with the truth they profess to believe. If God is omniscient, then nothing can happen without His knowledge. If God is omnipotent (almighty), then He has the power to permit or stop anything that is not His will. If He is omnipresent (everywhere present), then He is always present to know and see even the sparrow that falls. How much more, then, did He notice the fall of Adam!

The story of the fall of man in Eden through the temptation of the devil is commonly looked upon as something that happened when God was not looking. True God walked and talked with Adam in the evening, but the idea is always foremost that, when Satan came to tempt the woman, God was not present. The fall of man is always represented as something that slipped unnoticed and unwanted into the plan of God. The pitiful story is preached of the lovely pair whom God had placed in His garden to dress it, and how Satan came and ruined the whole lovely plan. God forbid that I should stoop to cynicism, but if we know anything at all about the church's tradition, we also know that what I have stated above is the general idea that has been foisted upon the gullible ears of the people for hundreds of years. All this is enlarged upon and sermon pictures are always being painted of God's holding a hasty conference in heaven to devise a scheme by which He could redeem the man that had fallen and the world that had fallen with him. Now do not assert that this is not so, for dozens of times in my life I have heard this stated both by pulpit and radio, and in my younger days I followed the same nonsensical tradition and stated the very same things.

To go into further detail in this regard would be a waste of time, but it is abundantly evident that any man who dares to say that the fall of man was not an accident brought about by the cunning wisdom of Satan, but a designed purpose of an all wise, almighty, ever-present God, will immediately find himself in conflict with the tradition of the age and will be cast out as an heretic. Notwithstanding I do affirm with every ounce of emphasis at my command that the fall of man was not an accident nor a chance, but was part of the plan of an all wise, omnipotent, and immutable God and that through the plan of the fall and redemption of man the whole creation would be brought into the image of God, and when I say the image of God, I refer to the image that God had in mind when He said, Let Us make man in Our image." It is true that Adam was made in the image of God, but Adam was in the precarious position of being innocent, not knowing good or evil. Blessed as his condition must have been, I know of no condition more dangerous than complete innocence, and, left in this condition, he could have fallen into sin at any time throughout all eternity.

God was not planning a race of weaklings when He created man. He was preparing a whole race, which He would bring to sonship and to whom He would give dominion over all the works of His mighty hands. God was looking into the ages yet unborn, purposing and planning a righteous government by His sons. Time means nothing to God, for He takes endless ages in preparation for his eternal purposes.

Now let us see what the inspired apostle Paul had to say about the purpose of the fall. Let us throw away our childish tradition about the harps and mansions in the skies while we listen with bated breath to the word of inspiration as it flows from the heart of God. Read in Romans 8:20. Paul emphatically declares that the fall was not the plan of the creature, but the plan and hope of the Creator. These are his words: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who hath subjected the same in hope." Can any statement in the world be plainer than this, in which it is plainly stated that God had a hope in mind when He subjected the creature (man and the whole creation) to the vanity of the fall?

The inspired apostle does not leave us in doubt as to what that hope and purpose was, for the following verses, 21-23, clearly show that God's plan and purpose was to bring us to sonship, which he here calls adoption. Notice carefully as we read it. "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children (sons) of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they but ourselves also groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, (sonship), to wit (which means) the redemption of our bodies." **Rom. 8:20-23**. Paul is still on the same theme of sonship when he continues in verse 28 with these words: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He (Jesus) might be the first born among many brethren."

Can you not see the tremendous value of the desperate vanity and night of the fall as you read these truths? Can you not see that by the travail, darkness, pain, and temptation of this dismal night of sin God is building something into the entire creation that will shine and blaze in transcending splendor in the glory of the ages yet unborn? Now listen further while we read the introduction to the above passage. In **Rom. 8:18-19** Paul says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed, for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." There is purpose in the suffering of this present time. There is glorious unequalled design, for it is the suffering and night the world is enduring now that will bring forth unequalled and unexcelled glory, even the glory of sonship in the image of God. There is definite purpose in all suffering. It is producing the very image that God desires. He cannot make the kind of sons He wants without the blazing furnaces of suffering and affliction. Do not forget this truth and do not forget that this kind of fiery trial that is to try us could not have existed without the fall of man. Oh, how much we miss by adhering to our jejune and stupid traditions, which make the fall to be an accident brought about by the cunning of Satan and the inattention of the Lord!

Christians of all ages have diligently enquired, "Why do the righteous suffer?" The answer is very, very simple in the light and understanding of His infinite purpose. Few subjects in scripture receive more attention than suffering and affliction and the Holy Spirit has constantly pointed out that suffering and affliction that come as a result of the fall of man are for our eternal benefit in bringing us to perfection and sonship. Even of the blessed Christ Himself it is clearly stated, "Though He were a son yet learned He obedience through the things He suffered, and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation." Heb. 5:8. Listen to James as he exhorts us. "Take, my brethren, the prophets as an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." **Jas. 5:10-11**. Listen to Peter as he declares, "For as much then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind: For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." **1 Pet. 4:1-2**. And again, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after you have suffered a while make you perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you." **1 Pet. 5:10**. Listen to Paul again, as he declares, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment is working in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." **1 Cor. 4:17**.

I cannot go on with the scriptures that show the vast benefits derived from suffering, affliction, sorrow, heartache, pain, deferred hopes, loss, disappointment, and the thousand other things men endure. You may study them all for yourselves. Let me assure you, however, of this: the anguish and sorrow of all these things are the furnace that refines the gold and brings us to sonship and the image of the Lord. When God proclaimed, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness," little did any creature know the eternal methods and fires He would use to perfect that image beyond the power of destruction. None of these things could have been accomplished without the fall of man, for without the fall none of them would have existed at all.

When we realize that even some of the angels of heaven sinned and were cast down, we are brought to understand as never before why it was necessary for God to bring into being a race of sons who knew experimentally the dire results of sin, and so, being wise through knowledge and experience and not innocent, they would know both good and evil and could choose the good and refuse the evil. Never again will sin darken the universe, for a race of sons of God who have been redeemed and cleansed from sin shall reign in righteousness eternal.

Suffering and affliction, the results of the fall, are even carrying their eternal benefits to those who are still in the world of sin. This is clearly indicated by Peter when he says, "Whom resist in faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." **1 Pet. 5:9**. I have long believed that God saves some first and teaches them after, but others He teaches first and saves them after. But every day God reaps an enormous harvest from mankind.

Now that we have seen that it was impossible for sin to surreptitiously slip into God's plan and spoil His eternal purpose and that the fall of man was part of the eternal purpose, we immediately find ourselves at variance with established tradition. The established visible church has preached its multiplied sermons seeking to prove its tradition that the vast majority of God's human creation will be lost, finally, irrevocably, and eternally, and not only will they be lost to God forever and ever, but they will be given up to the most sadistic, inhuman, ungodly torments that could be devised only by the vilest fiends. According to the tradition of the church this hellish torment is to fall upon all who do not believe. It matters not a whit whether they had opportunity to believe or not. It matters not at all if they were born in the darkest jungles of Africa, the swamps of Borneo, or the deserts of India or China. The fact that they never heard there was a God will be no excuse whatever. The fact that they never heard that God had a Son will not impede their dreadful destruction. Heathen who never heard that God had a Son are, according to this teaching, faced with the same dreadful doom as men who heard the gospel from their birth and yet rejected it. To add to the stupidity of their teaching they make pitiful attempts to prove that this is the justice of God and that God is manifesting His love in the punishment of sin.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is based on a literal interpretation of some of the metaphors of scripture (to the complete neglect of many other scriptures, which I shall presently show). No doctrine has ever been propounded with more confidence and greater bitterness nor with a grossness and coarseness more hideous and repugnant, and, in the face of the love and kindness of God, more inconceivable and incredible.

One of the theologians of the Church of England (Jeremy Taylor) speaks of the fate of the wicked in the following terms: "In hell every sense and organ shall be assailed forever with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings. We are amazed at the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men in his brazen bull, but that was a joy in comparison with hell." And here is what the renowned evangelist, C. H. Spurgeon, said on the same subject. "There is real fire in hell. Thy body shall be suffused with agony; thy head tormented with racking pains; thine eyes starting from their sockets, thine ears tortured with horrid sounds; thy pulse rattling with anguish; thy limbs crackling in the flame; every vein a pathway for the fire to tread; every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play the diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament."

Is it any wonder that in the face of such sadistic humbug there has been a wholesale manufacture of infidels? All these statements may be a show of oratorical eloquence, but they are nothing more. They hold no part of truth. They deny every attribute of God. They make wisdom foolishness, turn eternal love into exasperated hate, make omnipotence helplessness, and make the justice of God the grossest injustice in the universe. To say that I believe in such repugnance would be a lie of the first order. I do not believe it because it is contrary to the nature of God. It is contrary to the love of God. It is contrary to the power of God. It is contrary to the scriptures and it puts God in the ridiculous position of being the almighty King of kings and Lord of lords yet having in His dominion a pocket of hate and resistance that even He cannot overcome. Further than this it makes the mighty sacrifice of Christ that was made for all the world to be almost impotent in its power and scope. Worst of all it frustrates the purpose of God laid down in the beginning when He said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness and let Us give him dominion."

Some will immediately ask me whether I do not believe in hell. My answer is very definite on this point. I most certainly do believe in hell, but the hell of the Bible and the hell of human tradition are not the same thing at all. The hell of tradition is punitive, hopeless, and eternal, while the hell of the scripture, like every judgment of God, is corrective, remedial, and restorative. I do not understand enough of this great truth to make broad claims about it, but I do want to say that the whole doctrine of eternal punishment stands on the shaky foundation of a misunderstanding of the Greek word *aion*. This word, which means age, has been translated into English in the New Testament by seven different English words. It is translated as age (twice), course (once), world (thirty-two times), eternal (twice). The adjective form of the word, *aionios*, appears as eternal

(forty-two times), everlasting (twenty-five times) and forever (once). By translating the word aion, which means age and has a time limit, by such words as eternal, everlasting, and forever, etc., it is small wonder that confusion arises as to what the true meaning really is. I do not profess to be a student of either Hebrew or Greek, but any good Greek-English New Testament or any good concordance such as Young's or Strong's will give the exact meaning of all these words. If you will take time to study this thought through, you will find, as I have done, that there is not one instance in the New Testament where any condemnation is final, irrevocable, or unending. In such passages as this, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," the true meaning is "Depart from me, ye cursed, into age lasting fire," which is a very different thing, for it shows that the condemnation is for a period of time and is not timeless. You have often heard people speak of the unpardonable sin, but, if you read it in the light I have mentioned, you will see that Jesus did not say it was unpardonable, but that it hath no forgiveness unto the age. The following is from the Emphatic Diaglott. "Indeed I say to you that all sins will be forgiven the sons of men and the blasphemies with which they may revile; but whoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness to the age, but is exposed to aionian (age-lasting) judgment." **Mark 3:28, 29.** The same is true in each case where the word occurs. This truth may come as a shock to you as it did to me when I first discovered it. Indeed, you may reject it and continue on with the hopeless old traditions of unending torment, but all who cling to this pagan teaching of a Babylonish church will be hard put to it to explain the scriptures which plainly declare that God has ordained a time for the restitution of all things. I have positively no hesitation in saying that I thoroughly believe that, as surely as everything began in God, everything will also end in God, for "from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends." **Rom. 11:36.** (Goodspeed and Moffatt). Nothing but this could satisfy almighty power, omniscient wisdom, eternal justice, and fathomless love. Any other teaching than this makes God to be the loser of His own plan, His own purpose, and His own creation. It makes Satan to be wiser and stronger than God while the Lord almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, has to content Himself with a tiny handful that He has plucked in desperation from the devouring fire that He had not anticipated.

There is far more to coming out of Babylon than just leaving off some of their meetings. If we were going to leave Babylon, we are going to have to leave those doctrines taught by her that cause men to lose sight of God's glory and power, and spend their lives in the shallows groveling in fear and subject to bondage. The subject here is God's purpose in redemption, and with that we intend to deal. We have dealt with the doctrine of eternal punishment only briefly, for as long as that sticks in the minds of people, they are blinded completely to the meaning of all the scriptures which speak of the complete restoration of the entire universe of God. With that obstacle out of the way, we can now deal more freely with the marvelous plans of God for the restoration of all things to Himself.

The following scripture taken from Ephesians is one of the most all-embracing declarations to be found anywhere in the Bible. It plainly declares that in the dispensation of the fullness of times God is going to gather all things in heaven and all things in earth into Christ. I will quote it from two or three different translators so that the full meaning may be impressed upon our minds. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." **Eph. 1:9-10.** (Authorized).

The dispensation of the fullness of times is the dispensation that follows the kingdom. We are now in the dispensation of grace, the next is the dispensation of the kingdom of God, and the age following is the fullness of times. It is the eighth day when all things are made new. It is the age when everything that came out from God will return to Him again. It is the day when every planet shall have completed its given orbit, when every sun that has set in the west will rise in the eternal day, when all the rivers that ran into the sea of humanity will return to the place from whence they came. It is the year of jubilee when all debts are cancelled and all things return to their original owner, for from Him everything comes and in Him everything ends.

We will now read the thrilling translation of **Eph. 1:7-10** by Weymouth. "It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will, and this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the time is ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole

creation to find its one head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things in earth to find their one head in Him." How I rejoice and how I exult in such a glorious hope of universal reconciliation! What a day it will be when the fires of God have devoured the adversary that has existed in every man, when every evil work has been burned up and every man presented purified and faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

If you have the translation of Moffatt, Goodspeed, Rotherham, and others, you will see they are all plain and emphatic on this final restoration of all things. Well do I know that such teaching is contrary to the traditions of Babylon, but we are not interested in Babylon's traditions. We are interested in the revelation of the Lord.

Every reader should notice especially how Paul prays that God would give us all the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened as to what is the hope of our calling. See Eph. 1:17-18.

How often we have heard preachers warn people that "the day of grace will soon be over forever." Now nothing can be further from the truth, for as long as God exists the grace of God will be with us. Please notice that Paul shows that the grace of God is going to be made known in the ages to come through those who have received it here and now in this dispensation. **Eph. 2:7-8.** "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Not only does this passage tell us of the great purpose of restoration in the ages to come, but it also shows us that it is for this very reason that God is saving a first fruit company now. The displaying of the grace of God in the coming ages, i.e., the kingdom and the fullness of times, is the true reason for the manifestation of the sons of God. God has no intention of bringing all the world into the fold now. The whole purpose of this age is to gather out a people to display His grace in the coming ages. Eph. 2:7. James also declared this truth when at Jerusalem he said, "Simon hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for His name"... "that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called... Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." **Acts 15:14,17-18.**

The universal greatness of God's purpose in calling out a people to display His glory in coming ages is seen in Paul's reference to principalities and powers in **Eph. 3:10.** "To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." This passage is too mighty for my feeble comment, so we shall leave it for the Holy Spirit to reveal to your heart. Surely, however, anyone can see that our calling is not merely to escape hell and spend our eternal lives in heaven, but rather that "He has saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began." **2 Tim. 1:8.** It reaches far beyond the redemption of man to the restoration of all things in the universe. In one grand sweeping statement the apostle Paul includes everything in heaven and earth and under the earth in the great redemption and sees them all confessing to the glory of God and the Father that Jesus Christ is Lord. **Phil. 2:9-11.** "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Notice the universal magnitude of the statement of **Col. 1:15-22.** "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist... For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

It was this same theme that Peter had in mind when in **Acts 3:20, 21** he declared that the restitution of all things had been spoken of by every prophet since the foundation of the world. "And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His Holy prophets since the world began." Some have tried to interpret this scripture to say that Peter meant that only the things spoken by the prophets would be restored, but in **verse 24** he says, "All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after ... have likewise foretold of these days." Weymouth adds a weight of understanding when he words it thus: "Heaven must receive Him until those times of which God has spoken from the earliest ages through the lips of His holy prophets... the times of the reconstitution of all things." **Verses 22-23.**

It is not at all fair to the subject at hand to deal with it thus so briefly, for the truth of final and universal reconciliation actually fills the theme of Scripture. Why do we pass so lightly over the great statements of Paul with reference to the fall and redemption of man? He points out continually that, as sin with all its dire results passed upon us all because of the disobedience of one man, so righteousness passes upon us all through the righteousness of one man, Jesus Christ. Notice the convincing terms used in **Romans 5:15-21**. "Adam prefigured Him who was to come, but the gift is very different from the trespass. For while the rest of men died by the trespass of one man, the grace of God and the free gift which comes by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed far more richly upon the rest of men. Nor is the free gift like the effect of one man's sin; for while the sentence ensuing on a single sin resulted in doom, the free gift ensuing on many trespasses issues in acquittal. For if the trespass of one man allowed death to reign through that one man, much more shall those who receive the overflowing grace and free gift of righteousness reign in life through one, through Jesus Christ. When then, as one man's trespass issued in doom for all, so one man's act of redress issued in acquittal and life for all. Just as one man's disobedience made all the rest sinners, so one man's obedience will make all the rest righteous. Law slipped in to aggravate the trespass; sin increased, but grace surpassed it far, so that while sin had reigned the reign of death, grace might also reign with a righteousness that ends in life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Moffat).

It should not be necessary to enlarge on this all-inclusive statement. Nothing could be more reasonable and just than that which Paul has explained in the passage above - that since death passed upon all men because of Adam's disobedience, so life and righteousness will eventually pass upon all men because of Christ's obedience. For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. The multitudes of earth who have never heard of Adam are none the less affected by his disobedience. It is equally true that those who have not heard of Christ are affected by His righteousness. Christ is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who have the privilege of hearing and believing, for they are able to partake of the benefits of His redemption here and now.

The subject of redemption is so vast that no book can cover it, let alone the few pages at our disposal, but it should be very clear to all that, since there is a definite purpose in the fall of man, there is every reason to hope for his universal redemption. The glorious Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) was not slain because of a possibility that man might fall, but because both the fall and the redemption were fore-ordained of God.

Let us, then, conclude by noticing a few other scriptures that include all men in the wonderful redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." **1 Tim. 2:3-4**. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest." **Heb. 8:11**. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Tit. 2:11. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever." **Rev. 5:13**.

There are always those people who object to this truth on the grounds that the preaching of universal reconciliation will make Christians and unsaved careless. People who want to be careless will always find an excuse to be careless and they will have to suffer the result of their carelessness in the judgment. The knowledge of God's purpose does not make true men careless. It makes them long to become a part of His will and part of His eternal purpose. We can embrace every travail in understanding, grace and love, when we clearly see it is working for eternal good according to His purpose, which He purposed in Christ before the ages began.

Some have declared that if they believed that all men would eventually be saved, they would just throw up everything and have a good time. Such people might well ask themselves for what purpose they are serving God now. If they are only serving God because they live in dread of eternal torment, then they are serving as slaves in fear of a tyrant, but those who see God's purpose serve God because they love Him and long to partake of His glorious plan.

CHAPTER TWO THE RICHES OF GOD'S INHERITANCE IN HIS SAINTS

Cold blows the blast across the moor;
The sleet drives hissing in the wind.
Yon toilsome mountain lies before,
A dreary, treeless waste behind.
So faint I am these tottering feet
No more my feeble frame can bear;
My sinking heart forgets to beat,

And drifting snows my tomb prepare. This world in which we dwell is a waterless, foodless, purposeless wilderness until men find Jesus Christ, who is Himself the living water, the bread of life, and the beginning and the end of the purpose of God. In the book called Pilgrim's Progress, which in its time had the honor of gracing almost every home in the English speaking world as well as being translated into dozens of foreign tongues, the author begins his inspired narrative with these significant words: "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and, behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back." I see no purpose for this world, or for this life, or for any of the things in this life if no eternal purpose is to be found in God. If there is nothing in eternity past save the vain strivings of men, and nothing in eternity future save the vanity that has always been, if man's only hope is to enjoy the fleeting interval which we call life, then certainly we are most miserable. If the fleeting vanities of this present life are the only ends in view, then what profit would there be of all man's labor under the sun? What value would there be in labor or travail, joy or delight, much less in pain and sorrow? Would not a man rather curse the day in which his parents were glad that a man child was born? And would not he bless the day when the enemy, death, would at last relieve him of his labor and travail, his groaning and his pain, his hunger and his thirst that he might go to that lifeless place where the dead know not anything, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest?

To the young and uninitiated the fleeting joys of this present world appear to be permanent blessings. Before his inexperienced mind lies a whole world rich with lasting prospect and satisfaction. He dreams of shiny automobiles, a home full of furniture and every modern convenience, a summer cabin by the lake with power boats and gear galore, an ideal wife or husband, a perfect family replete with just so many healthy children. On and on his fertile mind wanders through the green fields of temporal blessings until one day he awakes to find himself a toil-weary man who has scarcely had time to even enjoy his youth. These are the words of Solomon, the son of David, the king in Jerusalem: Eccles. 1:2-11. (Goodspeed).

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!
What does a man gain from all his toil
At which he toils beneath the sun?
One generation goes, and another comes,
While the earth endures forever,
The sun rises and the sun sets,
And hastens to the place where he rose.
The wind blows toward the south,
And returns to the north.
Turning, turning, the wind blows,
And returns upon its circuit.
All rivers run into the sea,
But the sea is never full;
To the place where the rivers flow,
There they continue to flow.
All things are wearisome;
One cannot recount them;

The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor is the ear filled with hearing.
Whatsoever has been is that which will be;
And whatsoever has been done is that which will be done;
Is there a thing of which it is said, 'Lo, this is new'?
It was already in existence in the ages
Which were before us.
There is no memory of earlier people;
And likewise of later people who shall be,
There will be no memory with those who are later still."

The man who, during his pilgrimage in this world, fills his life with mirth and pleasure will undoubtedly testify in the end of his days that these are all vanity. He will say of laughter, "It is mad," and of mirth he will say, "What good is it?" If about himself he gathers great works, building houses and planting vineyards, gardens, trees, and fruitful orchards amid fountains of water and murmuring streams, he will say in the end as they pass from his grasp, "Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." If he gathers servants to serve him, filling his pastures with cattle, possessing both silver and gold and delighting himself with peculiar treasures from many parts of the world, and for his pleasure he is entertained with musicians and minstrels so that his heart rejoices in his labor and delights in his possessions, when at last he stands to gaze with pride upon it all, he will yet accede to that which millions before him have already confessed: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

The favorite hymn of His Majesty, King George V of England, was this:

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; their glories fade away.
Change and decay in all around I see.
Oh, Thou who changeth not, abide with me!

Kings, presidents and millionaires must in the end give the same doleful testimony. Their glories fade as a leaf. Their iniquities like the wind take them away. For what is our life? It is even a vapor, which appeareth for a little time and then vanishes away. James 4:14. It is like the grass which today is and tomorrow is withered in the heat; for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place where it stood shall know it no more.

Many years have come and gone since that November evening when the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, cleansed my heart from sin. There 'neath His cross Jesus gave me His pardon and bade me take up my cross and follow Him. It was there that the purposelessness of life began to vanish and before my believing heart the goodness of the Lord began to unfold. My spiritual eyes, so long accustomed to darkness, began to behold the distant horizons of God's eternal purpose. He began to teach me that "nothing useless is, or vain," but that everything is part and parcel of a purpose so infinite that none in the universe could have conceived it save He whose wisdom is inscrutable, whose knowledge is higher than the heavens, whose love cannot be measured by heights or depths or lengths or breadths, and whose power is so completely omnipotent that nothing can halt or let or hinder for even a moment the irresistible moving of His purpose.

One of the greatest crimes ever perpetrated against the human family is that dastardly crime committed by a man-made clergy who, having rejected God's eternal purposes, have substituted in their stead the traditions and doctrines of men. They have not told the people of God's eternal purpose, which never for one moment strayed from the control of its almighty Author and Architect. I do not mean to be disrespectful when I say that the kind of gospel preached by this man-made ministry amounts to little more than this: Trust in our system and tradition and you will "fly up high and eat pie," but refuse to believe it and your soul will writhe in the unutterable torments of the damned forever and ever. And while these misguided men are harping such diabolical and purposeless discord, they have the audacity to declare that this is the program of Him whose mind is omniscient, whose power is limitless, and whose love is eternal. Had they sat in God's counsel to listen to the sweet harmony of eternal wisdom, they would have heard the Creator speak such words as these: "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God Almighty) who has subjected the same (the creature) in hope. Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." **Rom. 8:20-21.**

If the above words be true, and God, who cannot lie, inspired the apostle's heart to write them, then it can be clearly seen that the omniscient God is taking upon Himself the responsibility for the fall of man. He is trying to tell us, if we will but pause to listen, that Adam's fall was not Adam's idea. It was part and parcel of a purpose that lay hidden in the mind of God to bring men into the image of their Creator, that mankind by actual experience should know both good and evil and that of every kind. Those who by experience know evil in all the vile horrors of its multiplied ramifications, being by the blood of Christ delivered from it, will never in a billion years again fall victim to its power; for they, being redeemed from it, will not be as Adam, who, though good, was innocent and easily deceived, but having been redeemed by the blood of Christ and made spotless, they will stand in the holiness of God Himself, knowing, and that by experience, both good and evil. Shall he who knows evil experimentally fall prey thereto a second time? Is not he who has known evil the only one who truly knows good? No man can fully appreciate his health until he has known the despair of sickness and pain. Who can appreciate the presence of friends as he who has long been encompassed by foes? The man born with a silver spoon in his mouth can never appreciate good and prosperous times as can he who has known famine and evil days. Neither can any know good save him who has known evil.

The mind of God was filled with hope and purpose when He subjected the creature He had made to the vanity and futility of his fallen state. Nor does He leave us in doubt as to what His hope and purpose was! Having said, "The creature was made subject to vanity ... by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope," He straightway declares in **verse 21**, "Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Oh, that God's people would meditate with prayer and thoughtfulness concerning these wonderful mysteries! Then would they see that the pathway of evil, of bondage and corruption from which Christ has now redeemed us through His blood is in reality the valley of the shadow of death through which we must pass to receive our sonship in Him. As we pass through the valley of evil and death, we groan within ourselves, waiting for full redemption, even the redemption of our bodies, which will signify that at last we have attained full sonship. Rom. 8:22-23.

Not only do we pray with hope and faith for the fullness of our sonship, but the animals and birds, the forests and hills, and the heathen in their dismal darkness groan out of their longings with us that our sonship may be speedily accomplished to the end that this body of God's sons, fully acquainted with both good and evil, may be prepared to take the reins of government with Jesus Christ, their elder brother, that they forever may administer good, and evil shall be no more forever. The day is at hand for the manifestation of God's sons and the long day of preparation is almost over. Their first act will be to restore righteousness and righteous government to the whole earth in that heaven blessed dispensation of the kingdom of God. Then will follow the great dispensation of the fullness of times when God will gather everything in heaven and earth into His Son. Eph. 1:10. Then will begin the restoration of the universe when new heavens and new earths are spoken into being by the eternal Logos.

When the astronauts returned from their journey to the moon, they brought back colored pictures of the earth taken from outer space. One picture showed the beautiful planet earth sparkling with colorful magnificence while in the foreground lay the forbidding plain of the moon, desolate, barren, and rock-strewn. Far off in the limitless expanse of space hung the planet earth, brilliant in her radiant splendor. Clearly visible was the azure blue of the oceans, the ravishing spectacle of green forests and grass-carpeted fields, while draped about her shoulders hung a protecting mantle of cloud, assurance of an invisible atmosphere, the life breath of mankind and all living things, an eternal testimony that earth alone of all the celestial bodies was prepared by God to be inhabited. Isa. 45:18. But there in the foreground lay the lifeless, waterless, treeless, airless, rock-strewn desolation of the moon. No words written or spoken could better describe its hopeless wastes than the inspired words once spoken of the earth, "The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." **Gen. 1:2**. The brave men who for a few fleeting hours stood in the depressing gloom of its desolate wilderness wanted above all else to leave the dejection of its unpopulated wastes and return to that place prepared by God for man.

Man is seeking and hoping to find life on some other planet in the vastness of the heavens, but he will not find it. All planets and stars of the universe are as desolate as the moon. There is one exception and one only and that one exception is the planet where humans dwell. There was a time when the earth, too, like all the other

planets, was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. There was no air. There was no water, no forests, no grass nor flowers nor any beautiful thing. No animals roamed its surface. No strange bright birds on their starry wings bore the rich hues of all glorious things. Nor was man created in the image of God or given lordship over the work of God's hand. The earth was without form, lifeless, void, and desolate as the moon or Mars or any other planet or star. The mailed hand of impenetrable darkness held it in its vice-like grip until that matchless hour when God began to unfold His perfect plan for the restoration of the entire universe.

Out of the glories of which we know nothing at present came the creative command of the eternal Logos, each command in itself being instantly obeyed. "Let there be light," said the Lord, and there was light. **Gen. 1:3.** And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." **Gen. 1:6.** And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear." **Verse 9.** And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit..." **Verse 11.** And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night..." **Verses 14-19.** And God said, "Let the water bring forth abundantly..." **Verses 20-23.** And God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after his kind..." **Verses 24-25.** And God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them." **Verses 26-27.**

Let us remember when we hear these things that the earth upon which we dwell, the earth which shines as a gem among all the planets and stars of the firmament, was once a lifeless wilderness as desolate as the moon, and thus it would have remained unto this day had not the Lord in wisdom purposed to make this tiny world the genesis and starting place for the restoration and habitation of the limitless universe.

Let me tell you a remarkable truth with which God has filled my heart, and after we have thought about it, we will show that the scripture bears record of its accuracy.

God has planned the restoration of all things. It is estimated that our galaxy may contain as many as five hundred billion stars, and astronomers say that there are enough galaxies in the vastness of the heavens to give one to every man and woman that was ever born. Is it any wonder that God Himself likened the stars of heaven to the sands of the sea in number or that astronomers reckon that the stars of the heaven and the sands of the seashores of earth are about equal in number? Is not this the more remarkable when we remember that the same God who created these said to Abraham as he gazed upon them, "So shall thy seed be"? **Gen. 15:4-5.** May our spiritual eyes be enlightened to see and our hearts to understand that earth alone among all the vast array of heavenly bodies has been prepared for man. "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else." **Isa. 45:18.** And that the earth was to be inhabited by man David, the prophet of God, made exceedingly clear when he declared by the Spirit, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth He hath given to the children of men." **Psa. 115:16.**

The burning question that has betimes beset the minds of thoughtful men is this: What purpose lay in that mind of infinite wisdom when from the innumerable multitude of heavenly bodies He chose one of the smallest of all planets and prepared it with infinite care for the habitation of mankind? And what purpose had He in His mind of infinite wisdom when all heaven echoed to the eternal fiat, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth"? **Gen. 1:26-27.**

Let us pause here long enough to affirm that the scriptures clearly show that God's purpose in placing man here on this earth, which He so carefully prepared for our use, was that He might through the dispensations of time prepare a creation in His own likeness who under God in the ages to come would reign with Christ as governors, lords, and restorers of the entire universe. The billions of planets and stars, which today lie as desolate as the surface of the moon, are waiting and groaning with all creation for that vast family of God's sons to be fully prepared and manifested as lords and governors of the universe. **Rom. 8:22-23.** When they are

grown to maturity in God's image and they as Christ Jesus are one spirit and one mind with the Father, they will first restore the earth to the perfection of Eden and then will begin the restoration of the universe. Though men in the blindness of tradition have failed to see it, eternal wisdom has declared it, saying, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." **Isa. 65:17**. Peter the apostle spoke of the day when the heavens, being on fire, should be dissolved and the elements melt with fervent heat, Pet. 3:12, but he spoke also of the promise of God by which we should look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Pet. 3:13. And John the beloved in his vision on the Isle of Patmos saw before his wondering eyes the excellent glory of the new heavens and a new earth in their recreated perfection, for he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." **Rev. 21:1**.

Now, when the Lord desires to plant truth in the heart of man, He first must sow the seed. Then, after seed is sown, it springs forth from its tiny germ, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. See Mark 4:28. It is after this same order that revelation grows. The seed of truth is planted in the heart. There it flourishes more and more until the tree of truth becomes so large and all-embracing that man can no more comprehend its lengths and depths, its breadths and heights. When our heavenly Father placed man in Eden and proclaimed that he should have dominion over cattle and fishes, birds and creeping things, and over all the earth, Gen. 1:26, He was planting in infinitesimal form a seed that was destined to grow far beyond the confines of the earth until its branches filled the universe as well, until the sacred word had been fulfilled, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." **Psa. 8:6**.

King David, seeming to tremble in the shadow of his own insignificance, realized what a babe he was to dare to mention the vastness of God's purpose; therefore, he prefaced his mighty edict with this statement of his utter humility: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Then he continues, "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of Him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou modest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." **Psa. 8:2-8**. The seed of the truth of man's dominion was planted in Gen. 1:26, but the blade soon appeared above the earth and David saw that man would be given dominion over all the works of God's hands. Then the writer of the book of Hebrews saw the "full corn in the ear" when he proclaimed the things we now repeat. "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him (man), He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus ..." **Heb. 2:5-9**.

This statement, "we see Jesus," is of tremendous significance, for Jesus is the first begotten Son. He is the head and the firstborn of God's whole family of sons. Rom. 8:29. He is the head of the body, Col. 1:18, and the body of Christ is composed of nothing but sons in Christ's image. Therefore the significance of the statement "but we see Jesus" is simply this: Though at present we do not see all things in the universe placed under the dominion of redeemed man, yet that head Man, Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, has already been crowned with such glory and honor and has already become higher than the heavens. All things are already under His feet and under His command. Even now He is only waiting and expecting until the entire sonship company is complete. Then shall we also with Him be ready to begin our reign, first to reign over all the earth and finally as God wills through the eternities over every planet and star in the universe until all has been redeemed, all reconciled, and all restored. See Col. 1:20.

Marvelous as this wonderful truth is, it grows even greater and more emphatic as we read the translation of this text by the scholarly Weymouth, who freely implies that man in Christ Jesus is lord of the universe. His translation of **Hebrews 1:1-4** reads thus: "God, who of old spoke to our forefathers in many fragments and by various methods through the prophets, has at the end of these days spoken to us through a Son, who is the

predestined Lord of the universe, and through whom He made the world. He brightly reflects God's glory and is the exact representation of His being, and upholds the universe by His all-powerful word. After securing man's purification from sin, He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as far superior to the angels as the Name He possesses by inheritance is more excellent than theirs." The statement above is definitely spoken of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, but, if you will remember that through Him we also are sons and members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, Eph. 5:30, and that those who have suffered with Him will reign with Him, 2 Tim. 2:12, then you will fully understand the next statement which we quote from Hebrews 2:5-9. (Weymouth). "It is not to angels that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of which we speak. But, as we know, a psalmist, **Psa. 8:2-8**, has exclaimed, *How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him! And a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to Him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him and hast set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him ...*"

God has planned to reconcile to Himself all things both in heaven and earth. Even at this very moment the full price of the reconciliation of the universe and everything in it has been paid. Dare any man say that this is not what Paul was teaching when he wrote this all-embracing truth, *"And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself: by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you who were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight."* **Col. 1:20-22**. The reconciliation purchased by the precious lifeblood of the Son of God, even Jesus Christ our Lord, will be carried out in every remote corner of the universe until the vision of John will be complete as he said, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

There is no desire or ambition anywhere in me to convince or persuade men of unwilling heart or mind concerning God's great plan of restoring all things to Himself. Proving great spiritual truth to unbelieving men and displaying the glory of eternal purposes before Christians of stubborn and contrary minds constitutes the fullness of that blighting evil which Jesus Christ described as *"casting pearls before swine."* **Matt. 7:6**. Those who would wantonly cast God's pearls before swine will learn the bitter lesson that they will be torn to pieces for telling the truth and the truth itself will be despised, belittled, and trampled in the mire. It is recorded in the gospels that vast multitudes gathered by the sea of Galilee to hear the preaching of Jesus Christ. So great was the crowd that our Lord took the unusual step of getting into a little boat and pushing away from the shore. Then, using the boat for a platform and a pulpit, He preached a most remarkable sermon to the people, but every word He spoke was spoken in parables. When the restless crowds were gone their way, the disciples came to Him with this very important question: *"Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?"* **Matt. 13:10**. To this Jesus gave the strange but remarkable reply: *"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (the multitude) it is not given."* **Verse 11**.

Perhaps you are loath to admit it and perhaps your soul may be filled with wrath to hear it, but the truth is simply this: In a crowd of twelve thousand people there may be fewer than twelve who see the truth and whose lives bring forth fruit. In our day ever increasing emphasis is being placed on crowds. Nothing is described as small or little, but like the boxes of soap in the supermarket all must be large, giant, or super. Full well did our Saviour know that multitudes mean nothing at all and great crowds of listeners mean less than nothing. He knew the infinite difference between those who listen and those who hear, and as it was then, so also it is today. Among the multitude who read this book only a handful will hear the message, and fewer still there will be who will cast off their chains of tradition, sectarianism, form and ceremony to follow yonder shining light through the gates into the eternal city.

It is not to the fearful and unbelieving that I now write, but this I declare: God has named a day for the restitution of all things, and that wonderful day has been spoken of by all the prophets from Moses until Christ. Acts 3:19-20. We do not write these things to carnal minds who love to use the word of God deceitfully that they might turn the grace of God and the wonders of His plan into an occasion for the flesh. There are always

many evil men with carnal minds among professing Christians who dare to think and say that if God will eventually reconcile all things, let us eat and drink and be merry. Let us live for the world and freely partake of the lusts of the flesh. Does rhyme or reason exist in such a thought as this? Do not such men clearly show that their service to God is a service fraught with impure motive? They do not serve God because of the burning love of their hearts but from some secret dread of punishment, which dread, if removed, would prove them to be open rebels against God and not disciples at all as they feigned to be. The man who is serving or professing to serve God because he is tormented by fear of what may happen to him if he fails to serve is neither a servant nor a disciple but a dispirited vassal, held captive by a tormenting fear. It is not to such as these that we now write, but to those slaves of Christ whose ears have been bored through with the awl of love, Deut. 15:16-17, that they might serve Him forever, whose eyes are single and not double, Matt. 6:22, whose minds are one with the eternal, whose purposes are God's purposes, and whose lives are hid with Christ in God.

Since then it is through the saints and members of the mystical body of Christ that God has purposed to restore all things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Oh, that God would open the eyes and the minds of those who read these eternal truths to see that the redemption which Christ Jesus purchased with His lifeblood will be carried into the uttermost parts of the earth and the vastness of the universe by those sons who have been redeemed by His blood. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has crowned us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ; even as, in His love, He chose us as His own in Christ before the creation of the world, that we might be holy and without blemish in His presence. For He predestined us to be adopted by Himself as sons through Jesus Christ - such being His gracious will and pleasure - to the praise of the splendor of His grace with which He has enriched us in the beloved One. It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him." **Eph. 1:9-12.** (Weymouth).

We have been chosen now and we are being prepared for the extolling of His glory. God has sealed us to Himself by the Holy Spirit, which is but a pledge and foretaste of our full inheritance as sons of God. We are being prepared of Him and by Him as the body of Christ, the sonship company of which Jesus is the Head and elder Brother, that we might extol His glory throughout the universe and restore all things in heaven and earth and in the whole creation. V : have obtained this inheritance in Him and through His grace. Please read Eph. 1:9-12.

Since, then, such an inheritance and spiritual birthright is ours, what manner of persons ought we to be? And how shall we escape if we neglect a salvation and a redemption so great as that now offered to us by the Lord? It is in Him and in Him alone that this great salvation is ours. Apart from Him no salvation can be found for ourselves and neither could it be our lot to carry its message of reconciliation into all the universe. Therefore let us consider with utmost care, praying that God will give us understanding and great light, our place in Him that we might see that He is all things in heaven and earth unto us.

If we should for a moment trust in ourselves or imagine that by some goodness or power or holiness we could inherit even the least of these things, then we would find ourselves in utter loss. I have no way of salvation. Christ Himself is my salvation. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved Acts 4:12. Death worketh in all men, but it is in our association with Jesus Christ that life is found. He alone hath eternal life. Corruption and mortality are mine by birth. He alone hath immortality, dwelling in the light unto which mortal man cannot approach. 1 Tim. 6:16. "There is no peace," saith my God, "to the wicked," yet "He is our peace," having abolished all enmity in Himself. No rest can be found for the wicked or the sinner, but those who come to Him find rest for their souls. Matt. 11:28. How truly the apostle wrote: "But Christ is all and in all!" **Col. 3:11.**

The heart of any Christian should thrill in anticipation of the great hope that is the heritage of God's beloved sons, the hope of bringing restoration and reconciliation to the entire universe. It will be their joy in the ages to

come to stand in His name amid the desolations of the moon or any one of the countless celestial bodies and there with God's commission in their hearts speak the word of restoration, "Let there be light," and there will be light. And the light that shall dispel the darkness will not be the light of the sun, for the Lord God Himself shall be the light thereof. And they shall say, "Let there be life," and life shall spring forth in abundance until the universe is filled with light and life and beauty and holiness and righteousness forever. Say not in your heart, oh believer, that these things are impossible, for the Lord created not these wonderful works for vanity, neither made He them hi vain. He created them to be part of God's great eternal purpose in that day when He fills the universe with Himself.

Some man will ask, "How am I to prepare myself for such a gladsome, glorious hour as that of which we speak?" And well may we ask this question and diligently consider lest, a promise being left us, any of us should come short of it. The more I read God's word and the more I meditate before Him the more I am convinced that our sonship, our wisdom, our gifts, our graces and our knowledge depend one hundred percent upon the relationship we bear to our blessed and wonderful Christ, the first born Son of the almighty God Himself. Time and again we have reiterated that our association with men means nothing. Our membership among sects or groups or denominations is of less value than the chaff which the wind drives away. Titles before our name or letters after our name mean nothing, but our relationship to Jesus Christ means absolutely everything.

I doubt that any passage in the New Testament has been the text for more sermons than Eph. 6:11. "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." But is it not true that most of those sermons left the listeners hanging in mid-air? Though we listened to the sermon a hundred times twice told, did we not stand naked and divested of that spiritual armor which is so essential to our warfare and success as sons of God? Our minds still questioned, "How can I put on the breastplate of righteousness? How can the sword of the Spirit gleam in my hand? How may I always walk in peace, wearing the helmet of salvation on my head?" Surely it is true that we are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It was only recently, as I re-read this passage, Eph. 6:11-18, that God's Spirit pointed up with clearest emphasis that Jesus Christ is Himself the spiritual armor of which Paul spoke, and those who have "put on Christ" have put on the whole armor of God. Those who consume their lives in sects and denominations can never be clad with that bright armor of the Spirit, but men who live and move and have their being in Him are clad already with God's armor. Christ must become everything to everybody. He is all and in all and without Him we have nothing and are nothing.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." Need I hesitate for even a moment to remind you that Jesus Christ Himself is the girdle of truth? Pilate in his perplexity once asked, "What is truth?" **John 18:38**. Had he lingered long enough to hear the answer, he would have heard the Saviour say, "I am the truth." Harken, oh man of God! He is the truth - all the truth of earth and heaven and the universe as well finds its source, its being, and its end in Him. There is no lie in Him. Truth is the light and falsehood the night; falsehood is death, but truth is life. If we leave out the parenthesis, **John 1:14** reads thus: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." When men walk in Christ, they walk in truth. Though a man be a walking Bible, yet if he abides not in the truth, he may be a walking liar as well. You may listen to a sermon from a Bible text, yet the sermon may fill your mind with error; but if you sit at the feet of Jesus Christ as Mary did, you will not only be hearing truth but communicating with truth Himself because He is the truth.

And what shall we say of the breastplate of righteousness? Is there any righteousness to be attained anywhere other than the righteousness which He is"? Paul by divine wisdom said of Christ, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." **1 Cor. 1:30**. This wonderful passage declares that the righteousness, which He is is the righteousness which God offers to us and which alone satisfies Him and justifies man. "For He (God) hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." **2 Cor. 5:21**. Thus we must conclude that no other righteousness that we could devise would be acceptable to God. Isaiah said, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rages," **Isa. 64:6**, but he who puts on the breastplate of righteousness has put on Christ and his life is being motivated by the Son of God. He lives and moves in God, manifesting the

righteousness of Christ before men and angels and our heavenly Father as well. He thinks God's thoughts, for he has the mind of Christ. He shows forth purity and holiness, not by human effort or subjection to laws or codes of ethics, but from that everlasting well-spring of righteousness which is Christ within. He is our breastplate against which all the fiery darts of the enemy fall, blunted, broken, and harmless, to the ground. "He that toucheth you toucheth Me," said God, "for I am thy righteousness."

What we have found to be true concerning the girdle of truth and the breastplate of righteousness we will also find to be true of the preparation of the gospel of peace with which our feet are shod, Eph. 6:15, the shield of faith, verse 16, and the helmet of salvation, verse 17.

Of peace Paul has written, "For He is our peace." At His birth the angels of God in heavenly anthem chanted in chorus, "Peace on earth; goodwill to men." **Luke 2:14**. Before He ascended to heaven, He left this will: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." **John 14:27**. In Gal. 5:22 Paul has taught us that peace is one of the abounding fruits of the Spirit in our lives. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Faith likewise, that shield of defense capable of protecting the head, the feet, and the whole man is Jesus Christ our Lord. He shields the whole man, spirit, soul and body, against every fiery dart of evil from wheresoever, whatsoever or whomsoever it may come. Faith is not only a gift of God's Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:9. Faith or faithfulness is also named among the fruits that blossom and grow upon the tree of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22. When the lame man of forty years was healed at the temple gate, Acts 3:1-11, Peter and John spoke thus to the wondering and excited crowd: "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly upon us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? ... His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know. Yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." **Acts 3:12, 16**. The faith, which is by Him! This is the shield! This is the victory! It has nothing in common with the frothy, worked-up thing that men try to exercise as faith. We will learn some day that faith is a living thing more real than electricity and far more powerful. It was by the use of this strange power of God that the Creator Himself formed the visible earth out of things invisible. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, the Logos, so that things which are seen were made of things which are not seen." Compare **Heb. 11:1**.

Of the helmet of salvation we shall also say that it, too, is Christ our Lord. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." **Acts 4:12**, When the aged Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple at the dedication of the child Jesus, "then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." **Luke 2:28-32**. Mohammed, Confucius, and Buddha were men capable of establishing systems of religion, but none of them had salvation to offer; and to this very day the teeming multitudes of their followers grovel in the thick darkness of superstition, ignorance and filth. None but Jesus Christ ever offered the gift of eternal life to men, and the greatest proof that His offer was genuine is clearly manifested by the almost incredible transformation that takes place in the life of the vilest sinner who repents of his sin and accepts Christ as his personal Saviour.

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

Not only do they lose their guilty stains, but they go forth into a world of unregenerate men with salvation on their heads, a new kind of people with a new kind of life and a new kind of hope, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." **Heb. 6:19**. "That within the veil is Christ.

Nor does the man redeemed by the blood of Christ walk unarmed through the perilous wilderness of this world. He who has the helmet of salvation upon his head grips the shining sword of the Spirit in his hand! And the sword of God's Spirit is the word of God. Eph. 6:17. Perhaps you will say that the sword of the Spirit is the

Bible, which is the word of God, and I agree that it is. Never can we over-estimate the superlative value of that blessed word of written truth, which God has put in our hands. Wonderful, however, as is the written word of God, it is in reality only a love letter, an epistle of truth, written from Him who dwells in heaven to us who dwell on earth. The written word is a revelation of Him who Himself is the living of Word, and of that living Word, which is Jesus Christ, the written word has clearly said, "In the beginning was the Word, (the Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth" **John 1:1-3, 14.**

My heart is often sad when I have to end a writing, because I know that the world itself could not contain the things that should be written of Him who fills the vast expanses of the universe with Himself, for whom and by whom all things are made, of Him who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. The time has come when the children of God must concentrate on Christ. Oh, that saints might understand that, as certainly as they were once in Adam, so now the power and wisdom of God has placed them in His Son, Jesus Christ! God has made our identification with Him complete and it is our faith, which makes it a reality in us. It is in this identification with Christ that we now stand. God no longer beholds or accepts the filthy rags of our own righteousness; He sees only the righteousness of Christ. By His divine power He has placed us in His Son. His holiness is our holiness; His peace is our peace; His victory is our victory.

Evil thoughts may not in themselves be sin, but lust, which begins as a seed thought in the mind, when it has conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Therefore he that soweth to the flesh in his thoughts shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Therefore Paul wrote, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. 4:8. And in thinking on these virtues, we think on Christ, for Christ Himself is truth, justice, purity, virtue. All virtue and loveliness wheresoever they are found flow from Him. This is how to fellowship with Him. This is how God's sons must meditate and think.

Would God that men could see that a lifetime lived in association with paltry, anemic little groups who lay claim to gifts and ministries, or sects who vainly imagine that to belong to their circle is a sure ticket to sonship and the kingdom, produces only barrenness, nakedness and narrowness in their lives. They will find in the end that their association with these little groups has yielded nothing but emptiness, "for they are proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." **1 Tim. 6:4,5.** The Son of God in the loneliness of His earthly ministry invited all men to partake of His goodness, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." **Matt. 11:28-30.** But now He speaks from heaven with a voice as the sound of many waters, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man will hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." **Rev. 3:20.** Is not this the communion our hearts have craved all these years? Is not this the association of which we speak and the fellowship which we so desire? This is, indeed, the secret place of the Most High where men abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Here He becomes all and in all, and in Him and Him alone lies the fullness and consummation of every hope and every promise of which in these pages we have spoken.

CHAPTER THREE CONCLUSION

In consideration of the blessed truths we have perused in these chapters, it is plain to see that the purpose of God shines as a radiant sun in the glory of God's eternal dominion. The ways of man may wax and wane and vary as the moon, but the purposes of God are as constant as the stars. Millenniums before the world began our all-wise heavenly Father chose us in Christ Jesus. He brought us into the world in His appointed time and under circumstances completely suitable to our growth and development as sons of God.

In searching out the ways of God, what greater lesson can be learned than that set forth in Paul's word of inspiration? "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20**. What a breathtaking, heart stopping statement that is! How wonderfully it explains God's purpose in the fall of man with all its attendant and devastating results of death, pain, war, disease, sorrow, separation and a million other calamities that can be summed up in that one awesome word — suffering. Of this word the Bible has very much to say and teach, the benefits of which can be summed up for our Christian understanding in these inspired words of Peter: "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." **1 Pet. 4:1-2**. To this Paul adds: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." **2 Tim. 2:12**. Therefore let us not despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Heb. 12:5-6.

The purposes of God are written in letters of gold in all His splendid creation.

Nothing useless is or low;
Each thing in its place is best,
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

There is purpose in God's creation, design in the making of man, object in his fall, a method in man's redemption, intention in the desolation of the universe and a marvelous plan in its restoration. The whole creation is alive with vivid purpose and, when at last these feeble eyes of ours are opened, these dull ears unstopped and these dim wits enlightened, our beings will throb and thrill as we gasp in wonder at the unfolding of such infinite purpose. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me! It is high; I cannot attain unto it, but it is true.

Poor, benighted, little man writhes and squirms under his load of affliction, often in his dwarfed understanding charging God foolishly, self-righteously grumbling at his Creator as he unashamedly complains that if God is a God of love, why does He allow war, and pain, and suffering, and crime and death? Why does He not destroy Satan? These and many other implications he indulges in all because of his ignorance of God's merciful purpose. Many pastors, God's word declares, have destroyed God's vineyard. Jer. 12:10. And there certainly are many of them who, being themselves ignorant of God's eternal purposes, hold the people in the same ignorance. As the scripture so aptly says, "Like people, like priest." **Hos. 4:8-9**. For this very reason the great Jeremiah spoke, saying, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." Jer. 23:21-22. When men, ignorant of God's merciful purpose for the restoration of the universe, teach the people, then the blind lead the blind and both fall into the ditch. Platforms and pulpits are filled today with men and women teaching things they ought not for filthy lucre's sake.

I exult in the words of the apostle Paul to the Philippians as he names the encumbering traditions that bound him in the chains of ignorance lest he see the truth as it is in Christ Jesus - his circumcision, in which he trusted; his tribal ancestry; his meticulous observation of laws and ordinances; his tremendous religious zeal to the extent of persecuting the true saints of God. Then, having stated his bondage to the traditions of religion, he theoretically loaded them all on the dung wagon and trundled them off to the nuisance ground. **Phil. 3:4-8**. "What things were gain to me," he said, "those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." A marvelous revelation of truth stands ready to ravish the soul of him who will obey God and come out of the Babylon system, bidding it farewell forever, that God may be His Father and he His son. There at His table he will feast upon the fatness of heaven as he grows up into the maturity of Christ.

Often times my spirit has been carried away to the realm of enchantment as I have basked in the beautiful inspiration of certain of the poets. Even Paul seemed to credit them with inspiration when quoting their words to certain Greeks. Acts 17:28. See now how beautifully the purpose of God shines forth in these inspiring lines.

O, my Father, Thou who dwellest
In a high and holy place,
When shall I regain Thy presence
And again behold Thy face?
In Thy holy habitation
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood
Was I nurtured by Thy side?

For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast placed us here on earth,
And withheld the recollection
Of our former place and birth.
But at times that inward something
Whispers, "You're a stranger here,"
And I feel that I have wandered
From a more exalted sphere.

O, my Father, Thou who dwellest In a high and holy place,
Yet shall I regain Thy presence
And again behold Thy face.
Day by day Thy Spirit leadeth
Ever onward unto Thee,
Till at last I find perfection
In Thy pure reality.

Another poet, giving in the first person God's kind reason for calling a young girl to Himself through death, shows God's purpose in these plaintive words:

I cannot promise that she'll stay,
Since all from earth return,
But there are lessons taught down there
That I want this child to learn.

Ah, how fascinating it is to know that every day of our life here below is a learning experience, polishing us uncut jewels to the glistening finish He has planned as we are being prepared for a temple not made with hands. Here the haughty lose their arrogance, the scornful their disdain. The lordly lose their snobbishness, the conceited their condescension. The tyrants lose their villainy and the wicked are freed from sin. O that God's people were delivered from the bondage of their traditions that they might bask in the wisdom of God's merciful purpose!

In the light and revelation of all His glorious purpose, how can we help but exult in this triumphant strain? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has crowned us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ; even as, in His love, He chose us as His own in Christ before the creation of the world, that we might be holy and without blemish in His presence. For He predestinated us to be adopted by Himself as sons through Jesus Christ - such being His gracious will and pleasure - to the praise of the splendor of His grace with which He has enriched us in the beloved One.

"It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him.

"In Him, too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ. And in Him you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having believed in Him - were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit; that Spirit being a pledge and foretaste of our inheritance, in anticipation of its full redemption - the inheritance which He has purchased to be specially His for the extolling of His glory." **Eph. 1:2-14.** (Weymouth).

Thus and thus shall it be according to His glorious purpose.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 16
BEHOLDING THE MORE EXCELLENT GLORY
BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-7

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CHAPTER ONE
BEHOLDING THE MORE EXCELLENT GLORY

PART ONE

The scriptures contain much teaching concerning the glory of the Lord and the wonder working power contained in the glory of its transforming light to transfigure the fledgling saint from glory to glory as he earnestly beholds it. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." **2 Cor. 4:6.**

One day in spring I watched my wife planting gladiola bulbs in the dark, cold earth just outside my study window. They were dirty little bulbs, ugly, unattractive and apparently as lifeless as Pharaoh's tomb, but the glory of the sun shone down upon them and the rain fell from heaven to water the earth, making it to bring forth and bud, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater. As the sun warmed the earth with its glory and the dew of heaven fell upon those ugly, lifeless bulbs, tiny blades began to appear above the ground. The sun smiled down from heaven upon them and, as the growing plants looked up into his shining face, change after wonderful change took place. Magnificent spikes began to appear, more delicate than any power on earth could grace them, and in an array of glory and color that beggars the power of description. Big bumblebees came to caress them and gather their honey. Humming-birds on their invisible wings hung suspended in mid-air to praise the glory and sip the sweetness of their nectar. Humans, too, paused to admire them and touch the fragile glory of their flowers, and no one troubled to remember those ugly bulbs of yesterday; nor did any consider that all that magnificent color, sweetness and beauty had been wrapped up in grubby little tubes that months before had been planted as roots in a dry ground. But God knew its beauty, for He had placed it there, and well did His mind understand the transformations that would take place as the miracle working glory of the sun looked down upon them.

A traveler on the dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lee;
And one took root and sprouted up
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at eventide
To breathe its early vows;
And age was pleased at height of noon
To rest beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs;
The birds sweet music bore.
It grew a glory in itself,
A blessing evermore.

All nature everywhere radiantly manifests the ever, progressing work of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth

knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." **Psa. 19:1-3.** For many years I have been thoroughly convinced that everything in nature is a magnificent portrayal of gospel truth. Is it then any wonder that Jesus, teaching men to trust in God, mused as He admired the flowers that grew about Him, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." **Matt. 6:28-29.** And again: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." **Matt. 10:29.** And again, making known to Nicodemus the hidden mystery of the new birth, which can only be accomplished by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, He likened its mystery to the strange and awesome motion of the wind, saying, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou nearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." **John 3:8.**

The more the glory of God shines into the human heart the more His Spirit reveals that His very nature is manifest in all His wonderful works, whether they be works that we call natural or works that we know to be spiritual. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." **Rom. 1:20.**

The truth that I will try to unfold in this message, though exceedingly glorious, could never in a million years be grasped by the natural mind and, because it concerns God's glory, is of necessity very sobering. I know that people can become happy and blessed as the Spirit falls upon them, but no human hilarity is ever manifest when saints behold the glory of the Lord. If it is true that no man can see God and live, then it must be that seeing God is a very sobering experience. It must have been a glorious thing in the life of Jacob when in the dead of night a ladder appeared before him, reaching from earth to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, Gen. 28:11-22, but it provoked no light-hearted hand clapping, shouting or frivolity in the careworn patriarch. Rather with trembling and reverential fear he murmured, "How dreadful is this place! God is here and I knew it not." Could anyone imagine Moses jumping and jitter-bugging before the burning bush? Do we not rather see him standing in dreadful awe as the glory light of God's presence began to transform him into the image of Christ and to wash him clean of all his earthly desires, filling him with terrible awe, reverence and godly fear as God prepared him for a momentous life that would manifest the glory of God's presence as none before had ever done? Nor was there any light-heartedness on the memorable day when Jesus miraculously filled the boats of His disciples with fishes. Rather we hear the distressed cry of Simon Peter as he pleads, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke 5-8. In this miraculous act, performed by Christ to pay these men for the use of their boat, His glory was manifested and shone upon them, bringing the knowledge of the glory of God from the face of Jesus Christ. Whenever the glory of God is truly manifested, there is fresh repentance, not of old sins, but of sins we never knew existed. A revelation of Christ's glory is as a light, shining into a dark place, bringing the knowledge of the glory of God from the radiant face of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The last book in the Bible begins with these five simple but wonderful words: The revelation of Jesus Christ. And what effect do we see upon John that blessed saint of God, as the revelation of the glory and fullness of Christ begins to unfold? Do we see him leaping up and down, dancing and swaying and shouting praises? No! That is not what we see, but this John, who had lived near to the heart of Christ while they walked together on earth, this man, who once was awed by the transfiguration and struck dumb by the glory of Christ's resurrection, this man, who had experienced the burning, cleansing flame of Pentecost, now falls as one dead as the transforming vision of the Christ unfolds. If any man had ever been changed from glory to more excellent glory by beholding the face of Christ, it was John.

Oh, if only I could make men see that in beholding His glory the old you shrinks into insignificance and dies away and the new man, the Christ man in the image of God matures and grows in His likeness. As the glory light of His revelation shines into our hearts, things that belong to the old creation pass away like the fading of a leaf and, behold, new things are born. Have you ever wondered why these experiences come to so few people? Well, the burning truth is that as long as Christians maintain any connection with the old church system, which today is Babylon and her harlot daughters, they need never hope for any deep experience with God. These sects and denominations of the Babylon system have taken away the key of knowledge. They enter not in and those who are entering they hinder. Once the key is lost, then the doors remain locked and the Christian is barred from the distant peaks sublime.

For over twenty years I have earnestly sought to show God's people that the modern church system, whether Protestant or Catholic, which daily becomes more closely allied to the world, the flesh and the devil, is MYSTERY BABYLON. She is drunken with the blood of the saints. She saps and sucks their life away. While she grows richer in silver and gold, plush seats and lavish buildings, she robs the saints of their progress with God. She denies and contradicts all true revelation and so shuts out the transforming light of God's glory. Her preachers preach and prophesy, but tell their people nothing they have not heard a thousand times as they rehash the philosophies of bygone years. They have taken away the key of knowledge. They enter not in and those who would enter they hinder. It is the bright shining of the face of Christ that brings the knowledge of the glory of God.

Are we so blind that we cannot see that the whole church system is drifting back into Rome? The mother of harlots is waiting with drooling lips to welcome us back into her fold of darkness and death. Are we so blind that we cannot see that the great radio preachers of our day are extolling the Roman pope and opening wide the gates for a world religion based, not on the unity of the Spirit of Christ, but upon the hard and fast rules of that domineering mother of harlots and abominations of the earth?

What does it mean to you, my brethren, when the Spirit of Christ in His holy word commands you, saying, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins?" Does He who says, "Come out," really mean, "Stay in?" Does He mean, "Remain where you are?" Do you think that God does not know what He is talking about? Are you wiser than He is? Do you really want to be partaker of the dreadful plagues that are coming upon Babylon's world and Babylon's church?

What does it mean to you when Paul commands, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"? What does it mean to you when Paul says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"? Can you not see from this mighty appeal that the only way to the sonship you cherish is by obedience to the Spirit's call, "Come out from among them"? Does He promise sonship to those who remain in the system? He does not! Is He not promising sonship to those who come out? But you say, "I am staying in to help those who are there." Did God instruct you in His word to do such a foolish thing as that or did He tell you to come out? What do you think would have happened to Noah had he delayed outside the ark, hoping to help the unbelievers, after the Lord had said, "**Come thou and all they house into the ark**"? **Gen. 7:1**. What would have happened to Lot had he remained in the city of Sodom after the angel told him to flee? Obedience, my friend, is better than sacrifice and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. The first lesson a child should learn in life is obedience. After that he can learn whatsoever the parent wills. So also it is with God and His children. Learn first to obey Him and do His bidding, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

If, then, we are going to consider the revelation concerning the glory of God, we shall be obliged to cast off every relationship we have with the harlot church system, for God will not cast His pearls before swine, knowing full well that the pearls will be trampled underfoot and those who cast them there will be rent asunder. Our Lord Jesus Christ always hid His transforming revelations behind the darkling veils of parables that, seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand, because the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and be converted, and Christ should heal them. It is not sufficient to remove ourselves physically from Sodom, but her spirit was not removed. It remained there among the fornicators of the world. She, too, physically from Sodom, but her spirit was not removed. It remained there among the fornicators of the world. She too, looked back and became a monument of witness against all those who cast amorous, longing glances toward the system of bondage. For thus saith the Lord, "He that putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God."

I write these things because I know it is not possible for any Christian to proceed to the realm of the more excellent glory while he remains associated with the harlots of Babylon. "Give not your strength to women," was the exhortation of the wise man of Israel. It should not be difficult in the least to grasp the spiritual application of that statement, because the women here referred to are the ecclesiastical harlots of our

generation, the entire Church system, mystery Babylon, the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

It is doubtful that in all the Bible any subject is more prominent and yet surrounded with such mystery as the truth concerning the glory of God. It has always been the policy of our Father in heaven to hide His deep and transforming truth just beyond the prying eyes and grasping fingers of nose, unsanctified children who roughly walk with muddy feet where angels fear to tread. For this reason Jesus hid the full knowledge of His truth behind the darkling veils of parables that "seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand." Thus He hid these things from the wise and prudent of this world and revealed them unto babes. The more we are beset with church tradition the less of God's glory we see. The less the glory of God's revelation shines upon us the less we understand, and the less we understand the more we are inclined to make the word of God of no effect by our tradition. However veiled in mystery the glory of God may be, I am convinced that God's glory is always involved with spiritual revelation, spiritual light and spiritual understanding. Whenever the light of the glory of God shines into the human soul, there is revelation and with the glory light of that revelation comes transformation of spirit, soul and body, when **"we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."** **2 Cor. 3:18.**

The first appearance of the term the glory of the Lord, is found in Exod. 16:7. Strangely enough it was at the time when the children of Israel were murmuring against Moses and Aaron for bringing them forth from Egypt into the wilderness. In answer to their murmuring and fear Moses promised them that the Lord would give them bread in the morning and flesh in the evening and that the glory of the Lord would appear to them as assurance of His presence and that He was leading them. Thus it was that on the morrow, as Aaron spake unto the people, the whole congregation looked toward the wilderness and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud. Exod. 16:10. This cloud of glory was not a thunderhead or a rain cloud, but the glory of God's presence. It appeared, not as they looked toward Egypt, but as they looked toward the wilderness. This cloud of glory, the manifestation of God's presence, was the glory that was to cover them by day as a cloud and as a pillar of fire by night. This was the glory that was to lead them all through the forty trial filled years of their wilderness journey. That glory was God's presence given to lead them by day and guide them by night. In the daytime it hovered over the congregation as a blessed shadow, protecting them from the suffocating heat of a wilderness. This cloud of God's presence indicated their every move and went before them on every journey. **"In the daytime also He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire."** **Psa. 78:14.** God Himself dwelt in that cloud by day and in the fiery pillar by night. That strange pillar of cloud and fire was the visible manifestation of His glory and presence. While Israel walked in the light of His fiery presence, no malevolence could harm them, no enemy could beset them, no evil could befall them nor plague come near their dwelling. God was with them in all their marches. **"Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."** **Deut. 8:4.** **"There was not one feeble person among their tribes."** **Psa. 105:37.** It was only when they grieved the Lord by murmuring or by some stubbornness or self-will that the glory departed from off the tabernacle and judgment fell upon them.

On that momentous occasion when the Lord called Moses into the mount to receive the pattern for the building of the tabernacle, we read these remarkably descriptive words: **"And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."** **Exod. 24:15-18.** It was there amid the radiant cloud and flaming fire of God's glory that Moses received specific instruction for the building of the wilderness tabernacle, that wonderful, typical habitation of God from which the kingdom of Israel was to be directed and governed by the glory of God's presence.

Many years ago the Lord laid upon me an intense desire to search out the mysteries hidden beneath the glory cloud of the tabernacle in the wilderness. I searched out every material and color in it, together with all its measurements and ministrations. I came to know by heart all important scripture connected with it. I did not then understand the reason for my interest or concern with it, but as the years passed by I discovered that the wilderness tabernacle with its fabulous treasures of silver and gold, its precious stones, its exotic acacia wood,

its magnificent coverings of blue and purple, scarlet and fine twined linen, its goat hair and rams' skins dyed red, the ministrations of its priests, its brazen altars and its golden altar, its outer courts, its vail and its holy places, and all this glory covered over and almost hidden by a lowly covering of badger skins was the grandest and noblest and most sublime picture of the mystical body of Christ that the Lord had ever devised. Here over God's tabernacle, the prophetic revelation of the mystical body of Christ, the cloud of God's glory abode in the day and in the night His fiery glory was ever their guiding light. There was never anything like it before that time, but, blessed be God, there will be something like it in the future.

For the past two thousand years the anti-type of that wilderness tabernacle has been in the process of formation. That blessed anti-type is the true church and the true church is the mystical body of Christ. Over against it in outer darkness stands that great, fraudulent deceiver and interloper, Mystery Babylon the great, mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. No glory cloud overshadows her and no fiery pillar enlightens her. Her plans and purposes are the schemes and ambitions of men of this world, who like Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire upon their altars and erect calves of gold to be their gods. From such turn away! There is a glory that excelleth. There is a "more excellent glory." It is a "treasure in earthen vessels." It is the glory of God's presence. It is not manifest among enormous crowds, fine furnishings and international programs. It is manifest only by the presence of the Holy Spirit in God's blessed saints. They and they alone are the habitation of God through the Spirit. Paul so wisely said, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord: in whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22.**

From the beautiful phrases of Weymouth's translation of this passage, we have these illuminating words of glory and beauty. "You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Jesus Christ Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord: in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." It was this living tabernacle, this dwelling place of God, this spiritual habitation, the body of Christ, which was so magnificently portrayed in every minute detail of the typical tabernacle in the wilderness. Over that tabernacle abode the cloud and fire of God's glory and within the holy of holies was the shekinah, which was the glory of God's presence. In these blessed days so long ago God walked among his people. The glory of God hovered continually over a figurative tabernacle. When Jesus came, He walked with them. As John once said, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But the time came when that heavenly glory, which is Jesus Christ Himself, came to dwell, not merely with them, but in them, for thus has the Spirit spoken, saying, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:16.**

To separate or disassociate God from His glory is an impossibility, for said Christ, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one." **John 17:22.** Hours of prayer, study and meditation could be spent on the seventeenth chapter of John just receiving instruction from the things Jesus said about the glory of God. One manifestation of Christ's glory is seen in this statement: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." **John 17:6-8.** It should not be difficult for a spiritual mind to see how the glory of God is manifested here in spiritual revelation and understanding. It was the glory of the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Saviour that made men see that Jesus was indeed God's Christ and that the words He spoke were the words of God. These words they received of Him and believed that He came forth from the Father.

What revealing light of revelation was it that made Philip say to his brother Nathaniel, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph?" **John 1:45.** It was the glory of God. Why did Andrew go seeking his brother Peter and upon finding him say with confident assurance, "We have found the Messiah"! Why did Nathaniel, upon hearing the simplest statement from the lips of Jesus, say with evident amazement, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel"? **Verse 49.**

Surely it was no persuasive arguments from Jesus, for He has simply inferred that He knew who Nathaniel was. No, it was something far more convincing than that. It was the glory of God's presence that revealed Him as Lord and King. And what shall we say of the disciples of Emmaus, whose hearts burned within them as Jesus opened the scripture to them? Was it not that same glory that unveiled Him and made them know Him? And what of the sorrowing Thomas, who like a bruised reed and smoking flax, was bowed down with his doubts and fears? Why did he suddenly cry out in amazement, "My Lord and My God?" It was nothing less than the revealing glory that manifested Christ to them all. And shall we not say the same of Paul, who in the bitterness and hate of his deluded heart desired nothing so much as to exterminate the very name of Jesus Christ from the earth? It was when the light of glory shone upon him that he fell helplessly to the earth even as the mob with lanterns and torches had done in Gethsemane. Lying impotent upon the ground, he heard a voice speaking to him and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul, trembling and afraid before the glory of the light (Acts 22:11), dared not ask, "Who are you," but cried instead, "Who art Thou, Lord?" He knew beyond any doubt that the voice he heard was not the voice of a man but of the Lord. In later years, when Paul stood in Jerusalem before that unruly multitude who lusted for his blood, he gave testimony of his dramatic conversion and rehearsed the story of his meeting with Christ on the Damascus road in these words: "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? and I answered, Who art Thou, Lord? and He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus," **Acts 22:6-11.**

It was the glory of God that shone into the darkened mind of Saul, revealing to him that Jesus was the Christ. This was the man who had been brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel. Well did Saul know what it was to pore for hours over ancient manuscripts. He knew the scriptures as few men have known them, but, alas, the letter of the word alone could not reveal that Jesus was the Christ who was to come. But, when the glory light shone into the dark recesses of his heart, then he knew that it was of Christ the scriptures had spoken, "and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God... And Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ." **Acts 9:20, 22.**

It is not education that men need today. It is not more Bible Schools and religious training that is required; neither need we more preachers or more preaching to enlighten the mind. The burning need for all mankind is a manifestation of the glory of God. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal and will do more in one second to snap the chains of doubt and unbelief than all the preaching and learning of a lifetime. It is the revelation of the Spirit that opens the eyes of the blind. It is the glory of God that unfolds the mystery, "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." **2 Cor. 4:6.**

The light that shone in the holiest of all behind the tabernacle curtains of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, laced with threads of gold and faces of cherubim, was not the light of a penny candle nor the rays of the sevenfold candlestick, nor even the radiance of the sun. It was the shekinah, the light of the Son, the glory light of God's majesty and presence. When our blessed Lord died on the cross and His flesh was rent in death, in that awful moment in which He cried, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost, the typical veil in the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. For centuries the veil of the flesh had hidden God's glory, the shekinah, from mankind, but henceforth by the blood of Jesus, through the veil of His own flesh, the holiest of all stands open wide that all who believe may enter in. By the rending of His own flesh on Calvary every veil and hindering influence has been removed. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh... let us draw near..." **Heb. 10:19-22.**

Once the blessed Christ of glory
Was veiled off from human view;

But through suffering death and sorrow
He has rent the veil in two.
O, behold the Man of sorrows!
O, behold Him in plain view!
There He stands, the mighty conqueror,
Since He rent the veil in two.

Now, lest in our investigation of truth we should seem to miss the reality itself, we shall state clearly here that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the glory of God and the glory of the Father. I do not think that any clearer statement could be made than that which the Holy Spirit Himself has made in these words: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." **John 1:14**. All the wonderful manifestations of the glory of God, portrayed throughout the Old Testament and the New, find their eternal satisfaction in Jesus Christ our Lord. All the heavenly voices, the mighty thunderings, the vivid lightnings, the glowing pillars of fire and the luminous clouds of glory find their fulfillment in Him. The voice heard in the Garden of Eden was nothing less than Christ, the Word of God. The thunderings, the lightnings, the flame and smoke of Mt. Sinai were the same voice that said, "Peace, be still," and "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The fire of the pillar was the light of the world, the glory light that emanated from His presence. It was the radiant aura that is identical with the nature of that from which it emanates.

The glory of the cloud that overshadowed the tabernacle is the glory that overshadows us. The shekinah, that once filled the Holy of Holies in the long ago, is the light of Christ that now fills the holy of holies which we are. I know we can neither see nor understand as we often feel we should, but there is a great truth which we must all learn and the sooner we grasp it the sooner we will cease from our fleshy strivings and enter into the rest of our Lord. We must learn that God no longer dwells in a wilderness tabernacle or in temples made with hands. Glorious as were those types and shadows, they were merely frail reflections of a more glorious "house not made with hands" which was to come. Our Father no longer dwells in a temple in Jerusalem made by the art and Wisdom of Solomon or the cunning workmanship of skilled artisans. His temple henceforth is the living temple of His body, which temple are we. The burning truth the Holy Spirit would now reveal is that "ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." To the elect saints of the church age Paul dared to say, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." The saints are the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavenlies. They are the Father's house of many mansions. The body of Christ is made of living stones, which stones they are. This is the true temple. This is "My Father's house". From the radiant glory of its many mansions He will govern the world in ages to come, restoring and reconciling all things unto Himself.

Now let us learn a lesson from the types and shadows of old. We read of no glory cloud that overshadowed the tabernacle while Moses was in the process of building it. It was not until the tabernacle was complete in every detail and every item of furniture was secure in its place that the glory of God came to rest upon it. That wilderness tabernacle, built so long ago according to the exact pattern of God, was a typical tabernacle. Its intricate workmanship was in every detail symbolic of the true body of Christ, which the Holy Spirit has been forming as a living temple to become the fullness of God's Christ.

We have stated that it was not until the tabernacle was complete in every detail that the cloud of God's glory moved over it and filled it with such glory and power that even Moses, the man who had experienced the awesome glory of Sinai, was not able to enter into it. So also it will be with the mystical body of Christ. It will not be filled with the fullness of the glory of the Lord until it is complete in every detail. It was little more than thirty years ago that the truth concerning the body of Christ began to be revealed and God's people commenced to be seriously concerned about it. Then true to his Satanic cunning and as we might have expected when this truth began to be revealed, every Tom, Dick and Harry started jumping on what they imagined was a Hallelujah band wagon and, without revelation of the truth, started preaching about the body, the body. Everywhere, it seemed, little groups could be found who imagined that they were the body; they were sons of God; they had all the gifts and ministries, but for the most part scarcely any of them had even the remotest idea of what the body of Christ really is or what the term expresses. Just as the phrase born again has been horribly mutilated, and its meaning debased since tens of thousands of unregenerates have falsely claimed to be born again, so also the glorious message of the body of Christ has been dragged in the mire of misunderstanding and its

meaning defiled by unenlightened men who eagerly seize upon any message that seems to be exciting and will gather a crowd. Whether or not the Spirit has revealed the truth to their hearts is of no concern. Because so many are preaching this truth without any understanding at all, they vainly imagine that right now the body of Christ should be fully functional with every ministry fully manifest, but let me tell you this: The body of Christ is as yet little more than an embryo. It has not yet come forth from the womb. Even Jesus needed to grow in wisdom and stature and/over with God and man before the day of His manifestation. The hour of the manifestation of the Head of the body of Christ came at the marriage feast at Cana where, after the water was turned to wine, this statement is plainly made: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." **John 2:11.**

When Jehovah gave Moses instructions for the building of the tabernacle, with those instructions He also gave him a man, Bezaleel by name, the son of Uri of the tribe of Judah, a man gifted and endowed by God to carry out the intricate work. Reading about this man Bezaleel, I have often marveled. Take heed to what the Lord said about him. "And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee." **Exod. 31:1-6.** If you read the next five verses of this chapter, you will read about the ark of the testimony, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense and the altar of burnt offering. You will read about the garments of beauty and glory to be worn by the priests, every item of which has its antitype in the body of Christ. If you will study Exodus, chapters 35 and 36, you will read of the bountiful gifts of the people in gold and silver and brass and stones and linen, goat's hair and oil, until Moses had more than enough for all the building and found it necessary to restrain their cheerful giving.

Finally, when every item in the tabernacle was complete, every board covered with gold, every silver socket in its place, the altars ready, the curtains made, the ram skins dyed red and the bars covered with gold, the ark of the covenant completed and the mercy seat placed on its top, the golden candlestick gleaming and filled with oil for the lighting, the altar of incense with the incense prepared, the holy vessels filled with the holy anointing oil and the priestly garments of glory and beauty at hand — then the Lord said unto Moses: "On the first day of the first month shall thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation." **Exod. 40:1-2.** "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he. And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month that the tabernacle was reared up. And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof and reared up his pillars. And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark: and he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil: and he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. And he put the altar of burnt-offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and he offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meat-offering; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: when they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work." **Verses 16-33.**

And now at last, after months of building and devoutly following the intricate instructions of the Almighty, when every furnishing is finished and every feature is complete in the minutest detail, we have these satisfying and wonder filled words: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode

thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." **Verse 34-38.** Note: How good and wise it would have been if God's people had pulled up stakes and moved on when the glory lifted instead of trying to "get back where they once were" or to resort to human efforts as all the harlot denominations are doing!

I know and am sure that this wilderness tabernacle, of which the Bible speaks in such intricate detail, is a typical representation of the mystical body of Christ, of which we are a living part. Nothing else in all scripture so adequately and marvelously displays the ministries, the gifts, the graces, the fruits, the door, the sacrifices, the communion and the glory of the body of Christ as does the tabernacle. Every detail the apostles taught concerning the mystical body of Christ is clearly displayed in the tabernacle in the wilderness.

Let the fact be imprinted indelibly on our minds that it was not until the tabernacle was complete in every detail and set up according to the command of God that the pillar of cloud and fire moved over it and the glory of the Lord filled it so that even Moses could not enter it. Up to that day wise master builders and gifted men had been diligently preparing its mysterious furnishings. Bezaleel and Aholiab had been separated and filled with wisdom for the task and other skilled craftsmen, deft and ingenious, had worked with them, but when all was complete, the glory of God moved in and filled it. Thenceforth this tabernacle became the very seat of God's government and reign in Israel. There is coming a day, and that right soon, when every last detail of the body of Christ will be complete. Every son will be prepared for manifestation. A special gift will be in every saint. Garments of glory and beauty will adorn every member. Wisdom and understanding, counsel and might will fill every mind, and, when all is in readiness, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." **Mal. 3:1.**

That will be the day of the "latter rain." Christ first coming was the "former rain." Glorious as it was, it was given only moderately. When Jesus of Nazareth appeared, Christ the Head of the body was manifested. He came as the rain, the early rain, and the former rain. Marvelous was His ministry and the anointed ministry of His apostles, but said He, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto My Father." And why was it important that He should go to the Father? He went that He might send the Holy Spirit upon them, but He also said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." The place He is preparing is in the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit. The body is a body of sons. He is the first born of many brothers, the oldest of His household. The Christ body is undoubtedly the Father's house.

In the same breath in which He says, "I go," He also says, "I will come again." His second coming will be the time of the latter rain. It will be when the tabernacle of His body is complete. Then shall the glory of the Lord fill the house. Then there will be an outpouring of the Holy Ghost such as never was. The glory of the former rain at Pentecost was marvelous beyond human description, but the manifestation of God's glory that will appear when "My Father's house", the body of Christ, the tabernacle of God, the temple of the Lord, the house not made with hands is complete will pale the light of the noonday sun and make to seem insignificant the greatest and most glorious things of the past. Truly the prophet Haggai said in the long ago, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts." **Hag. 2:9.**

I am not predicting that a world wide revival will take place before the coming of Christ. I could be wrong, but I do not believe we will see any such revival in this age. I am not speaking of a latter rain, which will take place before the coming of Christ. I believe the latter rain is the coming of Christ. Just as the former rain was given moderately following the coming of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead, so the latter rain will be given abundantly at the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of His in-Christed saints. Just as the glory filled the typical tabernacle in the long ago when all was complete, so will the glory fill the completed tabernacle, the body of Christ resurrected from the dead, when He comes.

What do the words of Jesus mean to you, saint of God, which He spoke concerning His glory, saying, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of

His glory"? **Matt. 25:31.** Was not the tabernacle, filled with His glory, the seat of His government in Israel? Dare we not believe that the throne of His glory will be this glory filled temple of His body, the house of living stones not made with hands? Listen to Jesus as He describes this coming to His temple. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." **Luke 21:27.** "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." **Matt. 24:31.** These elect are they of whom Peter spoke, saying, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:2. These are the elect of all ages, members in particular of the "house not made with hands." God's glory shall fill that living temple which they are. The outpouring of His Spirit that will follow will be the latter rain in which millions - perhaps billions - will come to the knowledge of Christ, for thus it is written: "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee." **Isa. 55:5.** Hallelujah! There is a sound of abundance of rain! "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month." **Joel 2:23.** It is the second coming of Christ. It is the resurrection of the in-Christed. It is the glory of the Lord. "The floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil." **Joel 2:24.**

Hear further the blessed words of Jesus as He speaks of the throne of His glory. "Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration (the kingdom) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." **Matt 19:27-28.** Now I know that someone will wonder why Jesus said, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel." I know of only one answer to that question. Almost four thousand years ago the Lord selected Abraham from among the hosts of mankind. With Abraham an everlasting covenant was made in which God, who cannot lie, swore, saying, "I will make of thee a great nation." And again, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 12:2-3.** Certainly it is possible for any man of any race upon the face of the earth to come to Christ by faith and to become a son of God. John 1:12. We need not doubt that in the least. But the truth appears indisputable that the divine intention in calling Abraham was first, that Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, was to come through his seed. That fact is definite and absolute. Secondly, it is evident, as we shall show, that the vast majority of the sons of God would also come of the seed of Israel according to the flesh, and, finally, the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, is in every sense of the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is not at all my intention to investigate this matter in detail here, but at times I feel a spirit of kinship with the apostle Paul when in an agony of earnestness, which seemed almost to reach the point of despair, he uttered these terribly painful but enlightening words of revelation concerning Israel after the flesh. I beg you to meditate sincerely on what he says and share with him some of the ache and pain he felt in his heart when he wrote these words: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites:" (Please notice every single word that follows.) "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." **Rom. 9:1-5.**

This in my opinion is one of the most profound and awe-inspiring statements of all scripture, and yet Christians are saying, "If we are Israelites, what difference does it make?" Well, if we are to understand from this passage what Paul intended us to understand, then what he said was this: To them pertaineth the adoption. Adoption means mature sonship. Since sonship is the hope of all creation and the whole creation groans for it and we also ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, which means not only full sonship but full redemption, even the redemption of our bodies, is it not understandable that Paul was greatly burdened for the people to whom adoption pertained? He was in such an agony that they might see the truth of it that he declared in desperation, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Let us heed further as Paul continues. To them pertains the glory. This is the glory of which we have been speaking. Wonderful as is this promised glory, no one realizes better than I that we have learned practically nothing as yet when we consider the vast array of scriptures dealing with this wonderful truth that lie untouched and uninvestigated. When Jesus came to the manger of Bethlehem, even the angels sang with heavenly harmony, "Glory to God in the highest!" When Jesus comes again, He will come with power and great glory. He will rule from a throne of glory. Matt. 25:31. Yet Paul says, "To them (Israel) pertains the glory," first the glory of Christ; second, the glory of the body of Christ, and lastly, the glory of the New Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ, the fullness and completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.

It is not for us to question why it was that God in His eternal wisdom chose the seed of Abraham to this glory. See Isa. 44:1-3. Has not the potter power over the clay? Did not God choose Pharaoh for an ignoble task as the scripture says: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth?" **Rom. 9:17**. Has He not power to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor as it pleases Him? Has He not said the first shall be last and the last shall be first? Thus has God said, "To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Dare we dispute His wisdom in these things? Had He chosen the seed of Pharaoh to bring the Christ into the world, it would have been for us to accept it, and had God made His covenant with Pharaoh, who could dispute or gainsay His wisdom?

We have already stated that the first coming of Jesus Christ to the earth and the marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that followed His ascension into heaven was the former rain, spoken of by Joel the prophet as his spirit rejoiced in these prophetic words: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." **Joel 2:23**. Palestine has its rainy season and its dry season. During the dry season the brooks dry up and the first rains are always welcome. The early rain meant the autumn rain. Deut. 11:14. The latter rain was the spring rain and was for the maturing of the crops. Prov. 16:15.

When John the Baptist began to introduce the people to Jesus Christ, he made this tremendous assertion: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." **Matt. 3:11**. Jesus Himself uttered profound statements concerning the coming outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the glory of His ministry both in the saints and in the world. On the very day in which He was taken up into heaven He gave this important message to the assembled disciples, who watched Him ascend: "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." **Luke 24:49-51**.

It is of great significance that Luke, when writing to Theophilus concerning the ascension of Jesus, gives witness with these enlightening words: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up: and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." **Acts 1:6-11**.

Many outstanding things are noticeable in this wonderful account of Christ's ascension into heaven. First was the definite promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, glorious as it proved to be, was the former rain moderately. Secondly, it is of special importance that, as He ascended, a cloud received Him out of their sight. That cloud was no ordinary cloud. It was a cloud of glory. Thirdly, when Jesus returns to the earth, it is promised that He will come as He went away - in a cloud of glory. Thus the scriptures have said, "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." **Rev. 1:7**. The first coming of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that followed was the moderate former rain, but the second coming of Christ with power and

great glory will be the latter rain, yea, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month as the prophet has clearly stated. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." **Hosea 6:3.**

It is beyond the ability of any man to fully comprehend the far-reaching results of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. I have no doctrinal point to prove nor theological axe to grind, but surely the blindest man must be aware of the unspeakable glory of the former rain that fell upon the waiting hosts at Pentecost. This mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost was not only a real experience to those who received it, but a heavenly visitation that shook the entire earth as nothing either before it or since has ever done.

It is the custom of all mankind to give their friends and loved ones their most important messages just before they depart from them. Thus did our Lord Jesus as He departed from His disciples, saying, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." This instruction the disciples followed, the number of the names of them being about one hundred and twenty. **Acts 1:15.** These all continued in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. **Verse 14.** "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues (languages), as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our tongue (language), wherein we were born?" **Acts 2:1-8.** Luke then made mention of many of the foreign languages which were spoken in the Spirit by these Galileans and were clearly understood by the Jews who had come from these far off countries to attend the Feast of Pentecost. Among the assembled multitude were "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." All these, being amazed at the phenomena, said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues (languages) the wonderful works of God."

Let there be no doubt in the mind of any man that the tongues spoken at Pentecost were real languages of real nations and that those languages, spoken as the Spirit gave utterance, were spoken by Galileans, who understood only that language spoken in Galilee. These Galileans were understood by men who had gathered from other nations all over the then known world. The speaking with tongues, or languages, at Pentecost was a miracle in the truest sense of the word. It was a miracle such as had never appeared before. It was a miracle of such caliber that no one could gainsay to deny it. It was the beginning of the restitution of all things, a restitution that will be complete when the former rain and the latter rain are outpoured together when Jesus comes again. At the tower of Babel the language was confounded so that no family understood what the other was saying, but at Pentecost, when the former rain was poured out moderately, this situation began to be reversed that all assembled understood clearly what was being spoken.

I do not in the least depreciate the worldwide outpouring of the Spirit which began in the year 1901, in which millions came to Christ and were transformed. Neither do I speak in derogatory terms of the speaking in tongues and mighty baptisms that accompanied it. I myself have been a glad partaker of its glory. I would not deny it in life or in death. Since the day the Spirit fell on me in a little shack on the Saskatchewan prairies when only my two brothers were present, I have seen hundreds, perhaps thousands, receive that blessed experience. Yet in my heart I know for certain that the glory we have seen is only a flickering shadow of that which fell on the saints at Pentecost when men, filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke in real languages and with mighty signs and wonders gave witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So great was that outpouring that by the end of the century one twentieth of the entire Roman Empire had been converted to Christ, and by the year 300 A.D. Christianity far exceeded paganism. Following Peter's sermon at Pentecost, three thousand souls were saved and the day following another five thousand were saved. In the days following multitudes both of men and women turned to the Lord. Mighty signs and wonders were done by all the apostles. By Paul's hand God wrought special miracles. The sick were brought and laid in the street that the shadow of Peter falling upon them might bring healing to their bodies. The glory of that former rain beggars

description. Truly they had been baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost and the heavenly "wind" was blowing whithersoever it listed. This was a mighty manifestation of the glory of God. This was God's glory falling as rain among the people and filling their hearts with joy and gladness, transforming their lives and making them sons of God.

Something happened to those saints at Pentecost that needs much more investigation than we have ability to give in this brief article, but let it be known that these people had been baptized with fire. Tongues of fire had rested upon them, burning up every trace of sin and carnal nature. I may be wrong, but I am persuaded that the Lord did for them at Pentecost in a moment of time that which other men must take a life time to attain. Their words were burning, flaming words of truth. Their miracles were on a par with the miracles of Jesus Christ. Their lives were radiant, shining suns, manifesting forth the glory of the Lord everywhere they went. Evil men killed them, but they could not resist the power and glory with which they spoke. The delinquent, bastard thing that in our day presumes to be Pentecost with its hippy music, its hard rock, its unsanctified lives, its love of money and pleasure, its worldly dress and careless talk is not even a shadow of that Pentecost of long ago; neither does this modern throng with its "food, fun and fellowship" bear any resemblance to the Pentecost that fell in 1901 and continued with diminishing glory for forty years.

Indescribable as was the glory of that first Pentecostal outpouring about the year 33 A.D., it was not the fullness of God's glory. It was the former rain, coming moderately upon the earth. It was the fulfillment of the type set forth in 2 Chronicles at the dedication of the temple when one hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trumpets, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and "it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." **2 Chron. 5:13-14**. The one hundred and twenty priests then were typical of the one hundred and twenty disciples of Acts 2:15. The praying and praising then was the praying and praising in the upper room. The glory that filled the typical temple of Solomon's day was the same glory that filled the living temple at Pentecost. Pentecost was the early rain given moderately, but it was glorious beyond description. In centuries past the Lord had filled temples made by human hands, but at Pentecost He was putting His Spirit in the hearts of men to form a temple not made with hands, a temple from which He will govern the world in the ages of glory yet to come.

Many preachers, alas, have spoken all manner of evil of that great former rain and Pentecostal outpouring of God's ineffable glory, but the things they say - may God forgive them - are said because they know not of what they speak. They are like unto men who, having never experienced regeneration, speak slightly of the new birth. Natural men whose eyes are blind to natural things do not deny the existence of things they cannot see, but sadly and strangely those whose eyes are blind to spiritual things seem bent upon denying that such things exist. At the baptism of Jesus God in thunderous tones proclaimed for all mankind to hear, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Some hearing those words of life and truth believed, but others, whose ears were closed to heavenly things, said, "It thundered." The late Dr. Charles Price, having seen the fire when he was filled with the Holy Spirit, said, "Only those who have been in the upper room know what really happened there." And that is true. All advice or criticism from the lips of those who without an experience have only a theory is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

Glorious beyond description was that mighty outpouring of God's glory at Pentecost. No words of impassioned preacher or phrases of an eloquent orator can begin to describe its more excellent glory, but as highly as we may esteem the wonders of that heavenly visitation, it was only the former rain moderately. The latter rain is coming and compared to it the former rain was a flickering candle before the rays of a burning, shining light. It was a twinkling star in the night compared to the rays of the sun in his strength. The coming of Jesus Christ and the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit that followed His resurrection and ascension was the former rain, but never let the truth grow dim that this same Jesus, which was taken up from us into heaven, shall so come in like manner as they saw Him go. He will come with power and great glory. That will be the latter rain. At His coming the resurrection of the just, the in-Christed saints, will take place. Then will come the manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation has groaned for six thousand years. Then the glory of the Lord will fill

the living, completed temple of His body. His glory shall fill the earth. Then shall be fulfilled the words of the Saviour, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do." Oh, that men could see that He who spoke among the smoke and flames of Mt. Sinai is the same one who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, that men might understand that the flaming, two-edged sword that proceeds out of His mouth at His second coming (Rev. 19:11-16) is the very same two-edged sword that pricked and cut to the heart at Pentecost, causing them to cry aloud, "Men and brethren, what must I do to be saved?"

Between the early and latter rain, there was a period of great dryness and dearth. The pools dried up and the brooks ceased to flow. It was the time when the grain was maturing. It is in that time of great dryness we now find ourselves. The brook has dried up as it did in the days of Elijah. The thousands of false prophets that fill the land are prophesying falsely. They are bound up in church tradition. They know not the purpose of God nor do they know the way of the Spirit. They leap on the altar and call on God to consume the sacrifice. They imagine there is strength in numbers and in much excitement, but while all their vain prophesying and activity is going on, God has His man in preparation in the house of the desolate widow. Somewhere among the worldly throng with its substitute religion He has His symbolic seven thousand unknowns who have not bowed the knee to the systems of Baal.

It was after Elijah was called out of the wilderness and after he had slain the prophets of Baal that he sent a message to Ahab, saying, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain... And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

The wilderness journey is almost past. The dearth is almost over. The coming of the Lord in power and great glory is at hand. He shall come unto us as the early and the latter rain together. In that day the lame man shall leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped. The desert and the solitary place shall blossom as the rose. Men will learn war no more. It will be the time of the manifestation of the resurrected sons of God when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Hab. 2:14.

CHAPTER TWO BEHOLDING THE MORE EXCELLENT GLORY

PART TWO

"If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him." **1 Cor. 8:2-3**. This profound truth Paul imparted to the saints at Corinth that believers in ages to come might know that the open secret of spiritual understanding is a burning, fervent, and devout love for God.

Pitiful is the state of him who imagines himself to have reached some pinnacled apex of spiritual understanding, thinking himself to be an instructor with a thorough knowledge of the doctrines of God. How crippled is the mind and dead the spirit of those who think they have "attained" and need go no further! Did Paul not thrust the pin of truth into the balloon of human pride when he said, "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know"? And into what low esteem does he cast all human understanding when we hear him say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10**. If, then, it is given to man to know only the things of man, it follows with certainty that the "things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" For this reason the Spirit of God has been given to the humble and the poor that they, having "been with Jesus", might a thousand times excel the human understanding of scribes and doctors of the law.

Far away in the depths of the inner man the Spirit of Jesus Christ is saying, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23**. When, therefore, "the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: ...for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16:13-14. Here, and here alone, lies the open secret of all spiritual

understanding, and yet that secret, precious jewel that it is, glittering in the radiance of God's light, is hidden from the blind eyes and darkened perception of natural men with carnal minds, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

We should always be fervently aware that those who are called to be partakers of His great salvation are not to be regarded as natural men and women, living purely on natural planes. They are not heirs apparent, but God's heirs of those things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which God hath revealed to them by His Spirit. The natural man "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them." They are always foolishness unto him because they are spiritually discerned. That innumerable host of Christians who are always ready to dismiss things they cannot understand as the ravings of some dreaming mystic may be well advised to wonder if perchance it is they who are far too close to the realm of the natural to be able to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and comprehend the incomprehensible. Our natural minds are brought to wonder why a man as wealthy as Abraham, who could have well afforded to build himself a palace, preferred rather to live out his whole life in tents, because he desired a better country, that is, an heavenly. Heb. 11:16. Far away in the depths of his spirit this blessed man could see the more excellent glory, the New Jerusalem, a city that hath foundations, and toward the glory of that celestial city he pressed, living all his lifetime in the moving tents of his earthly pilgrimage. In like manner also Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter", choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had "respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:23-29.

Have you considered the truth that lies hidden in this inspired sentence: "He taketh away the first that He many establish the second"? Heb. 10:9. Those who walk with God are sure to discover that many things, which were once a glory to them eventually begin to fade away, and, as they fade and sink into the horizon of the past, the heart begins to long for something that as yet eye hath not seen. So very often well-meaning Christians sigh, "O for the good old days!" Foolish soul, do you not know that our wise Father in heaven has removed the former glory that we may become partakers of the excellent glory and, beyond that, the more excellent glory? The first man Adam was made a living soul. That was glorious. The last man Adam was made a life-giving Spirit. What a universe of difference lies between the glory of the first and the excellent glory of the last! The first was made a living soul - himself the recipient of life; the last, a life-giving Spirit, abundantly able to say, "I give unto them eternal life." It is always possible for us to be wrong in our understanding, but, as I have shown in my book, Creation, Redemption, and the Restitution of All Things, many infallible statements of scripture lead us to conclude that the first Adam and the last Adam were the same person. Have our ears been so dull to the voice of His Spirit that we have failed to hear Him say, "I am the First, and I am the Last - "the beginning of the creation of God?"

Church tradition, restrictive as it is, blinding men to truth and binding them in its prison cells, has forbidden us to see that we, who were the servants of sin, have through the marvelous grace of God become partakers of a heavenly calling and members in particular of Christ. Are we so irrational that we could affirm that he who is a member of the body of Christ is not a member of Christ? Ah, that blessed and holy truth, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, is now finding entrance into the heart of man. To be in Christ is not merely to be saved from sin. To be in Christ is to be a part of Him, a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and partakers of the Spirit of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:13. What unfathomed depths are contained in this prayer of the Saviour just before His passion! "That they all might be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:21-23. These sublime statements of glory and unity are our holy inheritance as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and in hope of them saints of all ages, including our own, are "forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before", pressing without weariness toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus! Ah, that is the highest calling God has made known to the children of men.

Long centuries ago the God of Israel led His chosen people forth from the bondage of Egypt, away from the fleshpots of Pharaoh, into a new realm - a realm which to the natural man was the burning sand of a wild,

waste land, a desolate, hopeless wilderness, a waste of waterless, burning sand, devoid of the most rudimentary sustenance for the natural man. But "there is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen", for the eye of the vulture is trained to spot only the dying and perishing things that will satisfy the ravaging hunger of his skinny body. He is like the natural man who sees only natural things. The vulture nature of the carnal man does not know that beyond the borders of Egypt, looking toward the wilderness, the glory of God has appeared to be a shadow in a burning land, a pillar of fire to protect them by night, and such a glory that their feet would never swell, nor their garments wax old, nor should one feeble person be in all their tribes. The glory of God would be to them

"A shelter in the wilderness,
A rest upon the way
From the burning of the noon tide heat
And the burden of the day."

The vulture's eye, which represents the eye of the carnal man, does not know that Christ opens the rock and the waters gush out to run in dry places like a river. Listen to the rejoicing of David as he recites the blessings of their wilderness journey. "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for fear of them fell upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering; and a fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and He brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread (manna) of heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river." **Psa. 105:37-41.**

The book of Deuteronomy is a brief history, given by Moses, of all God's kind and loving dealings with His people, a people stiff-necked and rebellious above all the peoples of the earth, but a people especially chosen of God to carry out the divine intention through the boundless ages to come. Through this people Jesus Christ, the Saviour, would be born. From them would come the principal body of the sons of God, for unto them "pertaineth the adoption." **Rom. 9:4.** Unto them was given the law, the promises and the covenants. Paul, seeing the vastness and importance of their calling, prayed for them in such an agony that he said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites." **Rom. 9:3,4.**

Those days in the wilderness were days of God's abiding presence, following the cloud of glory by day and the pillar of fire by night. In the words that follow Moses recorded how the Spirit of God directed them through all their journey. "On the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony; and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses." **Num. 9:15-23.**

Blessed and wonderful as were all these things - the fire, the glory cloud, the angels' food, the rivers of water flowing from Christ, the rock that followed them, all the tribes in perfect physical health insomuch that no feeble person was among their hosts numbering over two million - yet for all this illustrious glory sadly they remained spiritually dull, carnal men and women, often lusting after evil things. The perfect and holy law, which they vowed to keep, was not written upon their hearts, but upon tables of stone, symbolic, I think, of the true

condition of their hearts so shamelessly given to committing fornication with the nations about them, always lusting after the vanity of the outward man. Familiar as they were with the works of God, they were totally ignorant of His purposes and ways. They were not unlike the vast multitude of professing Christendom today, shouting praises when some glory appears - perhaps a miracle or a healing - running hither and thither to see this or hear that, chasing after self-styled miracle workers who tell of the wonderful things God is doing, but who never know God nor His ways, and look askance at those mystics who see God's merciful purpose for the government of the world by saints who know His ways and are acquainted with those purposes which were ordained in Christ our Lord before the world began and before the Spirit of life was breathed into the clay we call Adam.

I care not how many wonderful acts of God you see or bear witness to, you will always remain a spiritual baby, living for and lusting after outward things, until your spirit is awakened to grasp the eternal, immutable purposes of God. When your spiritual mind by revelation sees that "all things are of God", all things are working according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that nothing is controlled by Satan, that it is God who raises up good men and it is God who raises up evil, rebellious men and puts them down when His purpose is accomplished in them, when you come to grips with the indisputable fact that all things - absolutely all things - are working together for good to them that love God, then you, like Moses, will be one who is acquainted with God's ways and not merely one who knows His acts. Sadly we confess that the church system is filled today, as in the centuries past, with those shallow souls who praise the excitement, the revival meetings, physical healings, baptisms, seminars, building programs and acts without number, but who know not God's ways. Tell such super-spirituals that God had a purpose in the fall of mankind and they will brand you as a fanatic or a false prophet from the pit. Tell them that it is God's intention to reconcile all things unto Himself and they will begin their name calling and put the worst possible interpretation upon all you say. If you preach that ninety-and nine out of every hundred of God's creation will burn in torment eternally, they will admire you as a man of truth and understanding, but if you say that every knee shall, bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, they will gaze upon your ignorance with the sympathetic understanding generally reserved for lunatics. Like Israel of old they have seen God's acts, but have known none of His ways. Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, they pride themselves in being hell fire preachers and love to try to dangle people over the flame, hoping to scare them into becoming believers. Well did the Lord say, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." **Jer. 23:21.**

O that all mankind might come to know "the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of Usefulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." **Eph. 1:9,10.**

In the endless procession of God's will it has always been His mind and purpose to take away first things that He might establish the second. As a babe nursing at his mother's breast is a thing absolutely necessary at a specified time, so to be later weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts is necessary that the infant may partake of more substantial food for his health and growth. Thus our Father in heaven feeds with the milk of the word for a brief moment. Then He takes away the first that He may establish the second. To this end the prophet by inspiration wrote, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." **Isa. 28:9.** Paul was building upon this truth when he said to the Corinthians, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal..." **1 Cor. 3:2,3.** Pay particular attention to those last four words. "Ye are yet carnal!" It is for our good to know that all who have not advanced beyond the milk are still carnal. These are they who remain among the denominational harlots, for only there do we find envy, strife and divisions. There men walk as babes and not as men. There and there alone do believers say, "I am of Paul. I am of Cephas. I am of Apollos." There they follow big name evangelists and renowned preachers as they tried to follow men in the days of Paul. These Christians take pride in being members of one of the thousand divided denominations and sects, but they are babes, walking as men and not as sons of God led by the Spirit of Christ. If we, like Israel, are lusting after outward things, we will never grow to maturity or come to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

It is not difficult to identify a Christian who clings to a sect or denomination. Not only does his schismaticalness betray him, but the dullness of his understanding speaks more eloquently than his words. He may speak of the acts of God, but know nothing of His ways. We may talk as we wish, but the first step a Christian must take to become a son of God is clearly stated in these inspired words: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17,18.** To all who yet remain among the harlots of Babylon, which without doubt refers to the Protestant denominations, the Spirit calls in these last days, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:4,5.** This harlot system, so full of iniquity, prides herself as a queen, saying, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," but that she is "miserable and wretched and poor and blind and naked" is the word of the Lord. This deceived and destitute crowd, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, is strong in its belief that they will escape all tribulation and be raptured, but the Lord has said of this harlot system, "Her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities." "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird." **Rev. 18:2.** Come out, therefore, and learn to lean on the wisdom of God.

"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, what no eye has seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." **1 Cor. 2:6-10.** (Revised Standard Version.) It is today with the church as it was with Israel in the wilderness. Though they had seen so many of the mighty works of God, yet they knew not God nor did they ever become acquainted with His ways. As long as they were dandled upon their father's knee and were fed at their mother's breast, they followed the Lord. But the people of God who desire mature sonship must learn, and that right early that the Lord is not satisfied that we remain forever children. We must be "weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts." We must grow out of the realm of "little children" whose sins are forgiven for His name's sake (1 John 2:12) and mature to the realm where we become sons and fathers in that we have known Him who is from the beginning. 1 John 2:13. To make certain this growth is accomplished and not hindered by our determination to cling to childish and immature things "He taken away the first that He may establish the second." **Heb. 10:9.** That the Lord takes away good things to establish better things is proven by the fact that the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land. Neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. Josh. 5:12. Knowing humanity as we do, we may be sure some pined for the good old days when they had manna, but if maturity is to be gained and sonship is to be reached, the blessings of infancy must be removed and the realities of manhood introduced. Therefore our Father in grace and love "taketh away the first that He may establish the second."

Multitudes of Christians who have seen the workings of God over the past forty or fifty years must surely be aware that many of the glories of yesteryear have now faded into insignificance. That is the way God intended it should be. Though I was not saved until 1926 and the great Pentecostal outpouring, that had swept the world like a fire, was even then beginning to fade as the clammy arms of the denominational octopus slowly but steadily crushed its vitality and sucked the life blood from it, yet how well I remember the glowing faces, the transformed lives, the burning, spontaneous testimonies, the weeping, repenting sinners, the mighty baptisms and the powerful healings! In those days almost none of the saints knew any doctor but Jesus and every disease known to mankind was being healed.

We do not have space to recount the glory that was with us then, nor do we wish to dwell upon the fact that the glory has faded away. Some, I know, will make a feeble effort to deny this fact, but the real truth is that God has taken away the first that He might establish the second. Even those professed healers who are the loudest in their proclamation of divine healing deny their own testimony by depending on pills and medicines, submitting to operations, transfusions and respirators, all of which proves that the day has come for the removal of those things which once were fiery clouds of glory, rushing steams in the desert and manna to the

hungry soul. Once again in the ever, progressing history of mankind we have come to the place where God Himself is taking away the first that He might establish the second. Once again the voice of the mighty apostle is speaking to say, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." **1 Cor. 13:10.**

Though my statements may appear to defame and belittle, my intention is not to disparage what some are honestly trying to accomplish, but rather to acquaint the saints with the indisputable hope that a much greater glory awaits us in the days which are at hand. We have made special mention of divine healing only to show one instance where the former glory and power, once so freely manifested, has faded away. Yet if it has pleased the Lord to take it away, what then does He purpose to put in its place? Did He not say, "He taketh away the first that He might establish the second"? Though so much of Christendom has gone awhoring after healing, running hither and yon to be prayed over by men who claim to be healers, miracle workers and "God's man of the hour", for all this there are more sick people in the world than ever before, more Christians admitting to failure, and more dependence on doctors and every human aid. Certainly there are still some healings, but I am sad to find that healing is being used, not for the love of the sick and afflicted, but as an advertising gimmick by men who claim great gifts, but whose main ability proves to be the gathering of vast sums of money to carry out what they imagine to be their earth-shaking programs. God, I fear, is not in any of their wind, their earthquakes or their fire. So often these men are strangers to the still small voice of Him that speaketh from heaven. They have never wrapped their faces in their mantles and closed their mouths while they listened in awe and trembling to the voice of the Holy One of Israel. The angels they speak of as frequent visitors are nothing more than flights of fancy. We who live in this, the end of the age, live in an abominable hour of false prophets and false ministries who through pride and love of self teach the Christians to look to them and honor them. They are those seven women who take hold of the skirt of one man.

The seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4) represent the church system throughout the entire dispensation of grace. These are the seven women of whom Isaiah spoke, saying, "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." **Isa. 4:1.** The seven women are the seven churches; the one man is Christ. They do not want His bread of life nor His apparel of righteousness. They want their own, but they know that, if they do not use His name and call themselves Christian, they will get nowhere. See how wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked these denominational women are. Now, if our Father has taken away healing from our midst, what may we hope will be established in its place? Certainly the Holy Spirit never intended that His people should return to the wilderness or go back to Egypt again. Does He want us to try to bring back the fiery pillar or travail for the return of the manna? Does He want us to go back to doctors and hospitals? No! A thousand times No! He wants us to grasp the vital truth that He has taken away the first that he might reveal and establish the second. We must walk in the constant assurance that never, never, never does the Spirit of the Lord want us to re-dig the old wells. He intends to lead us on to where rivers of living water flow from out our hearts. Many thousands of weary folk in old Samaria had slaked their thirst at Jacob's well before the day that Jesus came and asked drink of a woman who had nothing more than questions and arguments to offer Him, but to her the Saviour said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: (yes, and we may add again and yet again) but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him... (it) shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." **John 4:13-14.**

Beloved soul, we have rightly rejoiced that our bodies were once healed, but however great our healing was, it was nothing more than the restoration of physical health to a mortal, corruptible body - a return to the health we previously enjoyed before some illness overtook us. However miraculous our healing may have been, it is true that those who were healed may sicken again and in the natural course of time they will weaken and die. Yea, it is possible that they may sicken of the very disease from whose clutches they were delivered and so pass away to the grave. Healing was never intended to be a permanent thing; nor was it ever intended to be God's best for His people. Therefore, if now we see it being taken away, may we not look with hope to see what Christ intends to establish in its place? Our Father never intends to leave us destitute, but He takes away the imperfect first that He may establish the perfect second.

The living water Jesus gives comes not from the well of Samaria. "From whence then hast Thou that living water?" the woman asked. Had not this old cistern from which Jacob watered his cattle served them well? Must we abandon it now? How could any well be more serviceable than this? But, O, the truth is that we may

drink of its water the rest of our lives and finally die, but whoso drinketh the living water Jesus gives shall never die. May we not in these moments before the resurrection come unto Him and drink that from the innermost being of him who drinks may flow "rivers of living water"? This, beloved, is what He will "establish" in the end of the days, which is today.

We need not engage in a dissertation to prove that divine healing has been God's will for the church age. That our Lord Jesus Christ healed the sick and raised the dead to life there can be no doubt. Nor is there doubt that the apostles continued to heal the sick in the name of Jesus Christ. So manifest were their healings that on occasion the sick were laid in the streets that the shadow of Peter, falling on them, might heal them, and it is written, "**They were healed every one.**" **Acts 5:16.**

The Lord left no room for doubt that it was His intention to continue these wonders throughout the church age when He said, "**These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**" **Mark. 16:17-18.** Surely no one can dispute the inspired instruction of the apostle James. "**Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.**" **James 5:13-15.**

These are wonderful promises that show physical healing to be as much a part of faith and grace as the forgiveness of sin. I am aware that orthodoxy has denied that healing was a part of the atonement made by Jesus, but we do not need proof beyond the statement of Isaiah, who, seeing aforetime the sacrifice of Christ, said, "By His stripes we are healed." If healing is not part of the atonement Christ made for fallen man, then, pray tell me, where does it belong? No believer can disbelieve that both Jesus and His apostles healed the sick and gave witness to the entire church age that healings would follow whenever believing men prayed the prayer of faith. I shall now affirm that our Father in heaven has included all things in the atonement of Christ - everything in heaven, everything on earth, and everything in hell. Nothing is excluded or beyond the reach of Christ's atonement.

Glorious as it is to see the lame walk, the lepers cleansed, the cancers vanish, and the dead restored to life, with the utmost confidence in His promise and heartfelt appreciation for the wonders I have seen I know that healing, wonderful as it is, is not God's best plan for man. Blessed though it is, it is "the first" that must be taken away to make room for "the second" that will be established for the kingdom age to come. Once we see the incorruption God intends to establish, then healing and restoration of the corruptible becomes a retrogression.

When Jesus raised Lazarus, presenting him alive to his rejoicing sisters and happy friends, that was a miracle, indeed. But Lazarus was raised to mortality and later died and was probably buried in the very same tomb. The life Lazarus had when Jesus raised him from the dead was a restoration of his former health and mortality. It was not resurrection to incorruption. Jesus must be the "first fruits of the resurrection". One can be raised from the dead without being a partaker of the resurrection. The life Jesus had when He rose from the dead was resurrection life. It was not corruptible, but incorruptible. There is a natural body, which is of the earth earthy. There is a spiritual body, which is from heaven. Thus Paul says, "**There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**" **1 Cor. 15:44.** The spiritual body is the resurrection body. It can never die again. It ever liveth. It is the body of the change, the body of the transformation, the body of the transfiguration. 1 Cor. 15:40-50. We consider these facts here because, since it is true that He taketh away the first that He might establish the second, the first in this case must refer to the temporary restoration of the corruptible body by divine healing while the second would refer to the partaking of the life that raised Jesus from the dead. The partaking of this life establishes a permanent change, a transformation, yea, a transfiguration. The believer becomes a partaker of the resurrection — the life that brought Jesus from the dead.

For many years I have loved the beautiful scripture found in Rom. 8:10-11, yet I was puzzled as to what the apostle was really teaching and what he wanted believers to understand. We should remember that even such eminent saints as Paul often taught truth which they themselves had not yet attained, yet they knew beyond

the shadow of a doubt that the blessed revelation they saw in the Spirit, though afar off, was our inheritance at the time appointed. Good Abraham, who lived so long ago, is seen pressing toward the New Jerusalem, the city that hath foundations, which even in our day is still in the future. We should never deny truth just because we cannot point to any who have attained it. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:" said Paul, "but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." **Phil. 3:12.**

Let us now take special heed to Paul's teaching in Rom. 8:10-11. Every word spoken is of great significance. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness." This statement is a perfect and accurate description of every person who has accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Man's spirit is the first to be made alive. The moment a sinner believes, he receives eternal life and he is alive and a possessor of that eternal life which Jesus Christ is. Of such a one the scripture says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1.** The spirit of the unbeliever is dead in sins, but the moment he believes on Christ, eternal life - the breath of God - enters his soul and he is made alive. I emphatically declare that to be born again is for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be born within man's spirit. That Christ image lost in Adam has been restored in Christ. Since all natural things have spiritual counterparts, it will be helpful to make the following comparison: When Christ was to be literally born of Mary, the angel enlightened her understanding in these words: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The new birth is a work of the Holy Spirit. He it is who places the incorruptible Christ seed, once lost in Adam, within the womb of the spirit and at that moment we are begotten of God. That spirit of sonship, long lost in Adam, has now returned through the power of the risen Christ, crying, "Abba, Father!" It is the Christ Spirit. It is the Spirit of God's Son, and, being nourished by all the good word of God, it will increase more and more until it is "not I, but Christ, that liveth in me." We will not sound such fathomless depths as this with the natural mind. If we try, we will find ourselves in a fog of doubt and unbelief. The family of God is composed of the sons of God and our Lord Jesus Christ is the eldest of that vast family of sons, which in itself composes the fullness of Christ. All who are begotten of the Spirit of Christ will mature in a spiritual gestation to be born of God and grow up unto the "measure of the stature of Jesus Christ." This is beyond human conception, I know, but it is true and it is the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Let us consider the remainder of the text. Though the apostle clearly states, "The spirit is alive because of righteousness," he just as clearly states, "The body is dead because of sin." Therefore, though the believer's spirit is alive and regenerated, his body has not yet been touched by the life of God. It still has only animal life completely subject to the ravages of sickness and often in need of healing to deliver it from endless diseases that fasten themselves upon it. Because the body is yet corrupt, it breeds corruption, and, if it never advances beyond its present stage of death to partake of that more excellent glory, it will soon grow decrepit and sick and perish. The scripture we are considering gives definite promise that those who have believed for the quickening of the spirit may now also receive the same quickening for their physical bodies. I may be wrong, but it is my opinion that this blessed quickening is reserved for those who live in the last days just preceding the resurrection. To re-quote the text we read this: "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness." (The conjunction but here is very important). "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." You will notice now that Paul, in promising the quickening of our dead bodies, is not speaking of simple healing, but he introduces a new kind of life - not the reviving of animal life by healing, but the giving of resurrection life, that same life that raised Jesus from the dead. He does not say that the life that raised Jesus from the dead will heal you, but it will do the same for your body as it did for your spirit. It will quicken your body with the life that raised Jesus from the dead, and the life that raised Jesus from the dead is resurrection life. The adverb also as used in this sentence is of great significance, for Paul, having stated that the spirit is alive but the body is dead, next speaks of the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead. Jesus was raised in incorruption. His mortal body, in which He tabernacled for thirty-three years, had now been transformed to the body of His resurrection. He had literally experienced that of which the Spirit said: "This corruptible must put on incorruption." This was resurrection life. It has nothing whatever to do with healing or the restoration of the mortal being. It is a body changed, a body transformed, a body transfigured. That which was corruptible has taken a new form, a resurrection form. It has passed from the realm of death to the realm of life. That which was corruptible has been made partaker of incorruption, the

resurrection life Jesus had when the Spirit of God raised Him from the dead. Here, then, the word "also" is of great significance. Also means in addition, besides, or likewise. Thus Paul, speaking of the quickening of Jesus by resurrection and the quickening of our dead spirits, now clearly states that this same Spirit, dwelling in us, will "also quicken" OUR mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us.

Just so long as Christians can come to God for the healing and restoration of the mortal flesh, they will remain satisfied with just that; but, when it comes time to advance to a higher realm, the Lord begins to "take away the first that He might establish the second." When healing begins to be taken away from our midst, we will be certain to do one of two things. Either we will return to Egypt to seek the physicians or we will know that the time has come for the Lord to wean us from the milk, take away the first, and bring in the second. The second in this case can be nothing less than receiving in our bodies the life that raised Jesus' body from the dead. He that raised up Christ shall also (likewise and in addition) quicken our mortal bodies as His was quickened.

Let us examine the passage further, because the thought does not end here. Having been taught that, His Spirit dwelling in us, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, the next statement is: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

It is distasteful to have to admit it, but the plain truth is that the vast majority of Christians live after the flesh. They spend far more time fussing over the mortal body than devoting themselves to the Spirit. "All man's labor is for his mouth, yet the appetite is not filled." Eccl. 6:7. We are not content to live humbly in the Spirit, but seek instead the best of everything for the flesh. Husbands urge their wives to leave their babies to the care of sitters, to join the labor force to raise more money to buy more things to satisfy the physical man and make the mortal flesh more comfortable. In my book, *Two Realms*, I have demonstrated beyond dispute that every industry in the world functions for the sole benefit of the five senses of our mortal flesh. Every industry, whether it be food for the body, furniture for comfort, perfumes to delight the sense of smell, sights to please the eye, sounds to enchant the ear - all is for the sake and satisfaction of the five senses of the mortal flesh. This sore travail was given to the sons of men when our first parents lusted after the outward things instead of cherishing the Christ life within. All that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is included in that one statement, "They saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." In their lust after outward things that concern the body, their inner life in the image of God faded and its glory disappeared until all that was left was a spirit dead in sin and a dead body of clay, capable of being sustained only by those corruptible foods that grow out of the earth.

In the light of such truth can we wonder that the apostle warns, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"? There is no question about it. It could not be otherwise, yet at this point of misery and death Paul once again introduces that wonderful conjunction "but", which always indicates some important contrast such as is found in **Eph. 2:3,4** where, after being shown our hopelessness, we receive the assurance "but God!" "But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ." So also here in Rom. 8:13, after saying, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," Paul introduces a better prospect, namely this: "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. Therefore it is not surprising that those who "reckon themselves dead" with him discover that they, too, are being quickened by that self same Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead.

You have probably noticed that Paul, speaking of the grace of God that will reach and save all creation in ages to come, twice reminds the Ephesians, "By grace are ye saved." **Eph. 2:58**. If such as the Ephesians, dead in sins, hateful and hating one another, could be saved by grace, why then should men think it strange that God's grace will reach men in the ages to come? Is it not completely reasonable? Let us then apply this same understanding of grace to the subject of which we speak. If God raised Christ from the dead, is He not able to quicken our mortal bodies with that same resurrection life both here and now? If Christ gave eternal life to a spirit that was dead in trespasses and sins, cannot the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead give the same life to our mortal flesh?

This morning I awoke with the beautiful words of Jesus bringing life and understanding to my mind. These wonderful words of light, spoken to the darkened hearts of unbelieving and critical men, must not be met with stony unbelief in us as it was in them. May our spirits leap in response as we hear Him say, "**The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth; and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.**" **John 5:20,21.** God grant that we may not read such sublime truth lightly and pass over it. May it sink down deep and find lodging in our hearts that we may partake of this broken bread and live forever.

These words of life were spoken to prepare our hearts for the truth to follow, which is this: "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.**" **Verses 25,26.** Why should we marvel at such a truth as this when Jesus in the face of man's unbelief earnestly said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth...?"

This last statement - "marvel not at this" - seems to prove that there is a difference between the time when all that are in the graves hear the voice of God and the time spoken of in **verse 21**, where it is said, "**The Son quickeneth whom He will.**" Surely there is indication here to show that some will receive the quickening in their mortal bodies before the day when all who are in the graves hear His voice and come forth. Amid the unbelief about us we may seem as Noah, who builded an ark to save his household from the rain when hitherto there had been no rain; or as Moses, who endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Yet some will believe and receive the promise of life.

When Jesus led three disciples into the holy mountain of transfiguration, they knew not that their eyes, accustomed only to seeing natural things, needed only a shadow removed and they would behold the more excellent vision of the Son of man in His glory. Matt. 17:1-8. They were amazed at the vision, for what they saw that day was a Son of God as He really is when the shades of our mortality are fled away.

The last man, Adam, standing upon the mount of transfiguration, was the very signature and reflection of the first man Adam as he was before he began to desire to be like the creatures about him and so lost the image of God within. The angels in heaven neither marry nor are given in marriage, because they are male and female in one as was Adam before Eve was taken from him. On that glorious sixth day of creation God pronounced that all He had made was "very good". Gen. 1:31. But many days, perhaps years, later the Lord said, "It is not good that man should be alone." If it was good in the first place that male and female united were one son of God, then some falling away must have beset them between the first pronouncement and the second. When Eve was separated or divided from Adam, he lost much of his angelic nature and glory and was only one step away from the final transgression. The deep sleep that came upon him on the day Eve was separated from him was a sleep from which he has not awakened. We cannot comprehend what fearful loss befell the man when all the beautiful female qualities were taken from him. Qualities such as tenderness, patience, longsuffering, intuition, nurture, gentleness, submissiveness, preservation and understanding were to a large degree taken from him. But consider also what woman lost in strength, wisdom, durability and courage, and much more, yet Adam was all this in one as angels are and as sons of God will be. Nature, hating a vacuum as it does, has filled all these vacancies in both man and woman with their opposites - strength with weakness, wisdom with foolishness, patience with impatience, intuition with stupidity, intelligence with imbecility, generosity with frugality and so on without end.

There is to be a complete restoration in Christ, the last Adam, of all that was lost in the first Adam. Jesus on the mount of transfiguration was drawing aside the veil that men might behold the Son of man in His kingdom, the mountain of angelic government, lost by the first Adam in Eden. In lovely Eden the thief came to steal, to kill and to destroy. He stole their wisdom, their brightness and their glory until the image of the heavenly had departed from them and the image of the earthy remained, leaving them dead in trespasses and sins. Thus was fulfilled the dreadful edict, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The waster had brought them to desolation and all creation with them was reduced to sweat and tears. With pain would they bring forth children in their own likeness to be ever at war with their surroundings and return at last to the dust from whence they came. Though paradise was lost in Adam, the blessed assurance abounds that Jesus, the

second Adam, came to regain all that was lost in the first. Through His cruel passion and bloody sweat, the stripes He bore, the thorns He wore and the shedding of the blood of eternal life He delivered the whole creation from the curse, and, rising triumphant from the dead, a victor over wrath and fire and death, He offers life and the image of God to all mankind. In the beginning the thief came to kill and destroy, but "I am come," saith Jesus, "that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." **John 10:10.**

On two notable occasions in God's word we read that the eyes of certain ones were opened, first amid the effulgent glory of the Garden of Eden and second, in a humble home by the Emmaus road following the glory and power of the resurrection. In both of these scriptures the act of eating or partaking is involved. I shall not attempt, as many have done, to explain what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was, for I do not know. Our first parents, now divided, the male from the female, were no longer beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord. The inner light was growing dim since they began to admire and desire outward things. Even today the first signs of backsliding become evident when God's people begin to build again the things they once destroyed, for "if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." **Gal. 2:18.** As Adam and Eve began to admire and lust after the things about them, Satan as an angel of light was present to make the forbidden things appear attractive and the things that pertained to life and glory appear tedious and tasteless. Thus the father of lies through some vessel he had chosen, through half-truths and innuendo, persuaded our first parents to partake of that which God had forbidden. "Hath God said?" the enemy questioned. "Ye shall not surely die," he soothingly lied, "but God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." **Gen. 3:1-5.**

We here perceive how the eyes of one who hitherto had been satisfied with the image of God, living by His Spirit and walking in His fellowship, now begins to look outward and lust after things that do not pertain to the Spirit. Eve, who had lived by "every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God", which was to her the "bread of life", now gazes upon another tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whose fruit yields, not the glory of life, but the bitterness of death. She saw it was good for food — yea, to partake of it would make one wise, but in her desire for outward things she did not know that the wisdom it gave was from beneath, earthly, sensual and devilish and more deadly than the poison of asps. Thus, reaching forth her eager hand, she partook of the tree and gave it also to her husband, and their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

What was this shameful nakedness that made them run to hide among the trees of the garden? Was it merely that they wore no clothes? Ah, no! It was that the radiant brightness of their inner shining was gone. It was as though the sun had gone black and had lost his radiance. This was their nakedness that made them ashamed. The glory of God had departed. He who once had shone as the Saviour at His transfiguration, now hiding in dread, muttered his "Ichabod," for the glory had departed. The luminous, glistening aurora had vanished. The angelic nature of a son of God was gone and there they stood naked, uncovered and exposed in the image of the creatures about them. Their eyes were opened - eyes that could not see God, eyes that could not see angels or any heavenly thing. Their only remaining ability was to gaze earthward toward all that was unspiritual, natural and dying. The glory of the celestial realm was shut out. The sweet strains of angels harping with their harps no longer sounded in their dull ears. Even spiritual sense and understanding had vanished from their hearts. Their eyes were opened - yes, indeed - opened to sorrow, pain and death and to every curse that from that day until now has blighted and bedeviled the earth and all who dwell upon it, but closed to the brightness, the glory and the eternal life. Harmony and peace had fled the earth for ages and ages to come and in their place war and desolation are determined, where all is vanity and vexation of spirit till that which came naked from its mother's womb naked should return from whence it came.

Four millenniums with heartache and travail had elapsed since Eden, and even the agonies of Calvary were passed when two heart-broken disciples plodded wearily homeward on the dusty road to Emmaus. As they with uneasy apprehension discussed the tragic events of the past few days, a stranger drew near and walked with them. "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" He asked. And they responded, "Art Thou a stranger and knowest not the things that have happened?" "What things?" He questioned. "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth," they answered, "a prophet mighty in word and deed, and how our rulers crucified Him. And certain women made us astonished when they said they had seen Him alive." The beautiful story, recorded in Luke 24, tells how Jesus, beginning with Moses and the prophets,

expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. No sermon ever preached could have equaled that one. What a feast from the Tree of life it must have been! And when our Lord had blessed and broken the bread, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight.

When Adam and Eve ate the bread, which God had forbidden their eyes were closed to the celestial world. The dark veil of spiritual blindness, misunderstanding and unbelief descended, to imprison the world in the realms of death; but these two, eating the bread which Christ had blessed, found their eyes were opened - the veil removed. Henceforth they would see the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

For centuries now Christians have been "taking communion" believing they were eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. They were seeing the type, but not the anti-type. The flesh of Christ is the bread of God, the Tree of Life, the living Word that came down from heaven, of which if a man partake he shall live forever; not that his animal life is to be extended forever, but because he has partaken of a new kind of life, even the eternal life which Jesus Christ is, for if we by faith eat His flesh, which is Jesus Christ the Word of God, and drink His blood, which is eternal life, we have life. He has said, "I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly," and how can one possibly partake of the life that raised Jesus from the dead and still be sick or remain in death?

As the Father unfolds these truths to the inner man, we become convinced that Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians described in some detail the things which hinder us from beholding Christ and thus being transformed in body as well as in spirit. At the same time he clearly demonstrates how we may behold His glory and be transformed from glory to more excellent glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. O that we Christians, long tormented by sickness and compassed about with many infirmities, who have sought healing and been denied, would see that there is a new life awaiting us - not that life which is of the earth earthy, but that life which is from heaven; not health in the animal realm, but transformation by partaking of that life that raised Jesus from the dead.

Many passages of scripture remain locked up to man and cannot be understood with the natural mind. One such passage is found in **Isaiah 28:15**, which says, "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement..." To what could this statement refer but to the covenant Israel had with the law? When corrupt and carnal man hopes to be saved by keeping a spiritual law, which he has broken at every point, he is in truth making a covenant with death. The entrance of God's law into the heart brings cleansing and life, but the law on a table of stone, glaring at carnal men, is as terrifying as the words, "Adam, where art thou," spoken to the transgressor in Eden.

The covenant of the saint in Christ is not a covenant with death and our agreement is not with hell (the grave). Our covenant is with Christ, the giver of life, and our agreement is not with the grave, but with the resurrection. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." **2 Cor. 3:3**, "for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." **Verse 6**. Therefore any covenant with the letter of the law is a covenant with death and an agreement with the grave. Our covenant with Christ not only gives life, but fulfills the law as well.

Now when Moses, having received the law, came down from the mountain, he held in his hands a covenant of death, yet his face shone. This was very strange, but Paul explains it thus: "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away (or, more correctly, which glory was fading away) how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." **2 Cor. 3:7-9**. This passage of scripture needs prayerful consideration, but if we seek the light of the Holy Spirit upon it, we will find that the bread of God will be broken and our understanding will be enlightened to grasp a transforming truth.

The law, though holy and just and good, can only administer death to the unregenerate hearer. To the man who has not the love of God in his heart the law says, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." To the blasphemer it says, "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." To the adulterer it says,

"Thou shall not commit adultery." To the covetous it says, "Thou shall not covet." But, while all these commands are holy and good, the law has no power to change the heart or transform the life. The law is weak because of our flesh. Therefore every carnal man who has agreed to keep the law has made a covenant with death, for the law will slay him. Rom. 7:11-14. He will never be able to keep it because the law is holy, just and good, but we are carnal and sold under sin. O that men might see that the law was never intended to justify us, but to be OUT pedagogue to bring us, truant children, to Christ! **Gal. 3:24**. Though this covenant that Israel had with the law was a covenant with death and an agreement with the grave, in spite of this, when Moses received it, his face shone with glory. It was a glory that was fading away, for such a glory could not last. Phillips translation of **verse 13** says this: "We are not like Moses, who veiled his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing its fading glory." Then he continues, "But it was their minds really which were blinded, for even today, when the old agreement is read to them, there is still a veil over their minds ... Yet if they turned to the Lord (Christ) the veil would disappear." **2 Cor. 3:13-16**.

The law brought condemnation and death. Therefore, when Israel said, "All that the Lord hath said we will do", they were actually making a covenant with death and an agreement with the grave. To make this covenant with death active Moses, after he had spoken every precept to the people, "took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament (covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you." **Heb. 9:19-20**. Thus they agreed to keep the law, which no carnal mind can ever keep and it became a covenant with death and an agreement with hell (or Sheol). These carnal people had broken the law and worshipped idols even before the covenant was sealed.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God. The bread is His body. The breaking is the breaking of His word. When He broke that word to the travelers on the road to Emmaus, their eyes were opened and they knew Him. When Christ breaks the bread, the word of God, which in turn is Christ, our eyes are opened and we behold Him and transformation into His likeness begins. The wine, Jesus said, was His blood, shed for the remission of sins. His blood, beloved friend, is eternal life and those who drink of His Spirit drink deeply of eternal life. The blood of Christ is the life of God, eternal life and eternal light. Our partaking of the body and blood of the Lord is our recognition of His death and seals our covenant with life. Showing the Lord's death till He comes proves the covenant of life is in effect. It is not an agreement with death and the grave, but an agreement with life and resurrection. The covenant of the law brought condemnation, proving our guilt and making us flee to Jesus Christ for righteousness. He that offends in one point is also guilty of all. Do we now understand why the apostle said, "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance ... how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." **2 Cor. 3:7-9**. In **verse 10** the apostle continues: "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." In other words, if we compare the fading glory of the covenant of death with the increasing glory of the covenant of life, then there is no worthy comparison at all. We may as well compare Lazarus in a tomb with the glory of the mount of transfiguration. There is no room for comparison.

Paul in his effort to unfold this mystery explains that Israel could not see the glory that was on Moses' face because Moses had put a veil over his face. **Verse 13**. But the truth was that it was not the veil over Moses' face that stopped them from beholding the glory of God. It was the evil that was upon their own natural minds as he said: "Even today, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." **Verse 15**. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them." Therefore it is said, "Their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament (covenant); which veil is done away in Christ." **Verse 14**. Even now in the twentieth century this veil remains over every natural mind. Not only do Christians fail to see the glory of the law, but the vast majority never glimpse the more excellent glory of life offered by Christ in the new covenant of life.

Everywhere world wide much ado is made of physical healing. Christians fail to see that this glory is fading away. They cannot understand that healing is nothing more than the restoration of that which is physical, mortal and corruptible. It has never dawned upon them that there is a more excellent glory - a glory that excelleth where mortality becomes swallowed up by immortality and where that which is corruptible begins to

be swallowed up by the incorruptible. Have we ever heard Jesus say, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh (My word, My Spirit, My covenant of life) which I will give for the life of the world!" **John 6:49-51**. In this can we wonder that the old covenant with death and agreement with hell, made with Moses, had no glory when compared to the excellent glory of Christ's covenant of life!

Notice now that Paul said, "The veil is still upon their heart." The face is here likened unto a mirror in which the glorious image of the resurrected Christ reflects. Christ on the mount of transfiguration was a reflection of what a son of God really is. Now, if the veil of the flesh is over our eyes, which veil is the natural mind, two things are evident. First, the veil prevents us from seeing the glory of Christ, and, second, the glory of Christ cannot reflect in our faces as in a mirror because of the veil. But hallelujah! Paul tells us that in Christ the veil is done away. Those who are in Christ are not ordinary people. They "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit", for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death. They have come out of the denominational corral and escaped the sectarian jail of human tradition to live in a spiritual realm where the light of Christ, shining upon them, brings life and transformation. It is to these in-Christed people that Paul now makes this wonderful promise: "We all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18**.

Notice the sublime phrases of Weymouth's translation. "Now the Lord means the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, freedom is. But all of us, as with unveiled faces we mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same likeness, from glory to glory, even as derived from the Lord, the Spirit." My friends, healing is glorious, but in comparison with the transformation that follows as we behold the glory of the risen Lord it has no glory at all.

Having made these sublime statements in chapter 3, Paul now introduces the stern realities of chapter 4. Here he enumerates the earthly, corrupt things that hang as a veil over our eyes, always hindering us from beholding the glory of the Lord, retarding all possibility of our being changed into that more excellent glory. Notice now what he says: (1) "Seeing we have this ministry we faint not." (2) We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, (3) not walking in craftiness. God knows the cunning craftiness and sleight of men in modern religion whereby even preachers lie in wait to deceive. (4) Nor handling the word of God deceitfully. (5) By a manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience. (6) The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." **1 John 2:15-17**. (7) Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus. We identify ourselves with the death and burial of Christ that we may pass our time in this world as dead to it, but risen to walk in a completely new realm of life with our Lord Jesus Christ. Why do God's people live and strive as though they expected to remain in this realm of death forever? Should we not rather renounce these dishonest things and be content with such things as we have rather than lusting after more and more of the passing and desiring less and less of the permanent? As long as this death to self and the world is working in us, life will be produced in those to whom we minister. (8) Let us make certain that our light affliction, whatever it is and however severe, is working in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

From these exhortations in chapter 4 the apostle now leads the seekers on to behold in chapter 5 a more excellent process of glory while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. **Ch. 4:18**. Here our spiritual eyes are ravished with an exceeding great revelation of truth. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The house not made with hands is the body of Christ, but let us not forget that the body of Christ is made up of individual members such as you and me. The building of God refers to the incorruptible, immortal body, a fleeting glimpse of which Jesus revealed to three disciples on the mount of transfiguration. There he drew aside the veil that was on their faces and they beheld the Son of God as He really was. In this our state of mortality we continually groan. Pitiful is our mortal plight. Sad as it is, we may be benefited to hear the groaning

of the sufferers or see the weary, tired old bodies in nursing homes, sighing under the weight of their awful mortality. How true are these words: "In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house from heaven."

Verse 3. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." We will better understand this verse if we remember that it was at the moment of Adam's transgression that the excellent glory of the light of life departed from him and he knew he was naked. No radiant glory remained upon him then, but the restoration of this excellent glory in Christ brings to an end the nakedness of our mortality and replaces our groaning with an eternal weight of glory. "For we that are in this tabernacle (this mortal body) do groan, being burdened." Notice now the almost incredible words, which follow. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." **Verses 2, 3, 4.** Do you grasp the extent of these words, "not that we should be unclothed"? None of us are asking to be unclothed by death, but we groan that this corruptible, this mortal might be swallowed up of life. Is not this exactly what Paul was teaching when he explained, "The body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you?" **Rom. 8:10-11.** Is not this the same as saying "that mortality might be swallowed up of life"? We may disbelieve it if we will, but thus the Spirit speaketh.

Then the promise continues. "Now He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." **Verse 5.** Weymouth renders this beautiful revelation as follows: "For we know that if the mere tent, which is our earthly house, is taken down, we have in heaven a building from God, a house not made by human hands, but eternal. In this one, indeed, we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from heaven - sure that, when we have put it on, we shall not be found unclothed. Yes, we who are in this tent do sigh under our burdens, not that we wish to lay aside our tent, but rather to put the other over it, so that our mortality may be absorbed in life. And He who formed us for this very purpose is God, who has given us His Spirit as guarantee."

I am very much aware that all I have stated in these chapters may sound fantastic, and beyond belief, but these glories are only incredible to men of natural minds, for such can never receive the things of the Spirit of God. Surely the blindest man can see that this age of sin and all the corruption that pertains to it is swiftly passing away. God is taking away the first that He might establish the second.

In the beginning man became unclothed. The radiance of the light of life departed from him, leaving him naked. The very thing that was his life was stripped from him, leaving him mortal, corruptible and dead. Our blessed Lord, by momentarily removing the veil, revealed at His transfiguration what He really was and what all sons of God will be when mortality is swallowed up of life. As Paul has said, "He who has wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee."

Knowing that such glories are the promise and the will of God, and being assured that these promises are ours, then, "having these promises, dearly beloved," let us cleanse ourselves from all the defilement of the flesh and spirit, together with all forms and ceremonies of religion and from cunning craftiness and deceit that we may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil." **Isa. 1:11-16.** All such pretence in worship was an abomination in the past, but the ancient hypocrisy in religion is rampant everywhere in our day. All the eloquent and beautifully worded prayers in the prayer book will avail you nothing if all you do is recite the words while your heart is reaching out for the things of the world. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be. Where your heart is, that is where your mind is, and where your mind is, that is what you seek. If January and February were the only words you could

say, even these spoken as a prayer in the Spirit will open to you the length and breadth, the depth and height of the love and glory of Christ.

Now I see what Paul meant when he said, "Pray without ceasing." Your whole life becomes a prayer, a reaching out after Christ and the glory of His indwelling presence that departed from us in Eden. Now I know what David meant when he said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I appear before God?" Now I know why Jesus said, "When ye pray, say, Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." Now I know why John prayed, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." Now I know why my own spirit prayeth when my understanding is unfruitful. Now I know why Paul prayed, "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Now I know why I awake in the night with the Spirit of sonship crying, "Abba, Father." Now I know why in the day the Spirit within cries, "How long, O Lord, how long!" Those who hunger need not a dissertation on the value and composition of food. They need the bread of life. Those who thirst need not to know how much water is in the sea^ They need to be shown the way to the fountain of the water of life/They need to hear Him say, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

CHAPTER THREE BEHOLDING THE MORE EXCELLENT GLORY

PART THREE

These truths are presented with fear and trembling, but with fervent desire that the verities unfolded here may grip the spirit of God's elect with such forcefulness that many may become partakers of the more excellent glory, which glory should be the hope of every Christian enjoying the privilege of walking with God in these closing days of the age. These are the days clearly spoken of in Holy Scripture as the last days.

There is a path, which the vulture's eye hath not seen. Job 28:7. That is because the things, which inhabit this path are of no interest to vultures. The vulture is a bird of prey interested only in his belly and the dead things he can devour to hold his skinny bones together. He is an unclean bird, a scavenger concerned far more with things that are dying than with things that are living, more involved with death than with life. The whole world system has become like a devouring vulture and, when we see so many Christians clamor to partake as fully as possible of all the things this wretched age has to offer and the apathy they have toward the more excellent glory, it becomes necessary to dismiss them as believers walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit. To this end the Spirit bears witness that "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Rom. 8:13.** "O foolish Galatians," said Paul, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" **Gal. 3:1.**

It has been a source of great distress to see Christians, who had once chosen to leave the confusion of Babylon and the harlot system, begin again to cast amorous glances in her direction, then wantonly follow the crowd back into her cage of deception. Though the knowledge of their apostasy fills the heart with sorrow, we need not trouble about it, knowing inwardly that there can be but one answer to their vacillating. They are not numbered among those who are called of God to enter into the more excellent glory of the last days.

Centuries ago the blessed Isaiah, prince among the seers, lifted up his prophetic voice to tell of a highway which men would walk in the kingdom age, and, if they are to walk there in the kingdom age, we may be certain that all those saints in whose hearts the kingdom of God is developing will by faith walk this same road, be it in this age of grace or in the kingdom age to come. Thus spoke the Spirit through the lips of the prophet: "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called THE WAY OF HOLINESS; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:8-10.

This is the path, which the vulture's eye does not see. This is the way of which the church of Laodicea, the church of the last days, knows nothing. Yet this way of holiness is reserved for those elect few in this age whose spirits leap in response to Christ as they hear His knock at the door, saying, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me." **Rev. 3:20.**

It is when we sup with Christ that we partake of the broken bread, which He is. Christ is the Word of God. Christ is the bread of God, which came down from heaven. The broken bread is the broken word, of which, if any man eat, he shall live forever. This is the bread of life He breaks with us when He sups with us and we with Him. There in the eating of the Word and the drinking of His Spirit He becomes a true Father to us and we become true sons and daughters. Ah, what Christians miss when they begin to cast amorous glances toward the harlot system, which, professing to be rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing, knows not that it is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. **Rev. 3:17.**

In his introductory remarks addressed to the strangers of the dispersion Peter rejoices in these words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." **1 Pet. 1:3-5.** Here the apostle is saying that, when Jesus Christ arose from the dead, His resurrection brought a new and living hope for all mankind and especially for those elect saints who would be living in the last times, or the end of the days.

But what is that inheritance which He has reserved for the last times? It is explicitly stated in these words: "He hath begotten us unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." The beautiful statement — an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away — is a weighty statement full of hope and meaning. Is this blessed promise to be the inheritance of a people who all their lifetime and for centuries past have known naught but corruption, defilement and fading away? Is this to be the inheritance of the saints of the last times whose corruptible bodies have been defiled with sickness and merciless incurable disease, who have seen their mortal bodies fading away as their flesh was swallowed up by leprosy or ten thousand cancerous and debilitating maladies far too numerous to be named in anything but a medical dictionary?

In the previous chapter we endeavored to put as much emphasis as possible on Paul's statement, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." Before Noah led the world into a new beginning after the tribulation of the flood, Enoch was taken away. Before the double portion ministry of Elisha began, Elijah was taken away. With the coming of grace the law was taken away, and before the Holy Spirit came, our blessed Lord was taken away.

What man would not rejoice when he sees the lame walk, the lepers cleansed, the blind made to see and the deaf to hear? Who can restrain the voice of praise when the hand of Jesus calms the fever, delivers from cancer and every disease known to mankind? Yes, indeed! It is a wonderful thing to see every disease known to mankind healed by the gracious power of God, but what should we say if saints should begin to enter into an inheritance of incorruption where their bodies are undefiled by any of these tragic diseases and where there is no fading away forever, but a continual changing from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord? But, before that more excellent glory comes, we must see the irrevocable process at work once more. "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second."

Many who read these lines are young and have not been permitted to see the glories of former years when the Spirit of God was being outpoured, but many are old, having attained to eighty and ninety years, and have witnessed the glory of former things. Perhaps we are not unlike the people of Judah who saw the temple rebuilt after the captivity. The young people, who had not seen Solomon's magnificent temple, shouted for joy as the new temple was built, but the old men wept because the new temple was as nothing when compared to the splendor of the former temple. Many will remember how Christ in times past healed every disease known to mankind and that not occasionally. Now those who are honest must admit that healings are only occasional. I myself, a believer in miracles, have been sickened to hear the deceptive advertising of healing meetings, only to discover that the whole thing was a shameful sham, the cunning craftiness of some preacher who lay in wait to deceive the people and gather a crowd through misleading and fraudulent advertising. The real truth is that

divine healing, which at best is the rehabilitation of the corruptible, valuable as it is, is being taken away in preparation for that more excellent glory of incorruption, reserved in heaven for the saints and ready to be manifested in the last times. 1 Pet. 1:3, 4. This is a glory, which the eye has not seen nor the ear heard, neither has it entered the heart of man, but God has revealed it by His Spirit.

Why is it, my friends, that Christians rightly expect that a sinner who has received pardon and been saved by Christ's blood should immediately grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, that he should put on Christ and grow up into Him who is the head, that he should mature and become more Godlike as Christ lives and moves in him, that the Holy Spirit should increase in him and that he should advance from a child of God to a son of God? Are we not perfectly justified in expecting such growth, spiritual advancement and attainment? Of course we are right! Every Christian should continue to grow and be transformed, not only in this age, but in the ages yet to come. Why is it then that, while we expect Christians to grow and become strong in spirit, at the very same time we take for granted that the body must become weaker and weaker, sick and more sickly, until in failing strength and corruption it falls into the grave? Has not the body been redeemed as well as the spirit? Why are we so frowned upon for even suggesting that the corruptible may partake of incorruption and the mortal may partake of immortality? Did Christ not come to swallow up death in victory? 1 Cor. 15:54. Have we who dwell in mortal flesh never heeded the apostles words: "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed (by death), but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," or, as Weymouth translates it, "Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee." **2 Cor. 5:1-5.**

But some man will reply, "It is appointed unto man once to die; therefore, though our bodies are redeemed, they must grow weaker and more decrepit until they are consumed by death and fall into the grave." In saying, "We must die," we overlook a vital fact — the fact that we have already died and are already dead. Did not Paul arouse our imagination by saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin?" **Rom. 8:10.** Can one be any more dead than dead? Would going to the grave make you any deader than you already are, since divine inspiration says, "The body is dead?" We have often heard it said that such an one was "killed dead." Certainly we understand what is meant, but the statement is superfluous because, if man is killed, he is already dead. He cannot be any deader than he is. Yet this is the kind of philosophy we use when we say of those whom God has declared dead that it is appointed unto them to die. That appointment with death has already been kept. The realm in which we now sojourn is the realm of the first death. This, which we call life is the valley of the shadow of death. It is said of Jesus that He prayed with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard in that He feared. Heb. 5:7. He could not have been praying that He would escape the cross or that He would not die, as the preachers tell us, for He did die, but when He prayed with strong crying to be delivered from death, He was praying to be delivered from this whole dreadful realm of death in which He, as the last Adam, had dwelt for the past thirty-three years and in which, if I err not, He had previously suffered as the first Adam for nine hundred and thirty years, being tempted in all points as we are. It was not that He might remain in this realm that He prayed. His awful dread was that He might miss the cross and so be forced to remain here longer. Therefore He prayed mightily to the Father, who was able to deliver Him from this appalling realm of death, and He was heard in that He feared. By means of the cross He was delivered from this hateful realm of death, and by means of His death He has delivered all mankind, who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. 2:14,15. O great compassion! O boundless love! O great redemption!

Our Lord Jesus Christ not only spoke in parables insomuch that it is written, "**Without a parable spake He not unto them,**" **Mark 4:34,** but He also performed many mighty works which in themselves were parables. You have probably noticed the array of miracles and healings, which He did on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day, which is the seventh day, represents the kingdom age, the day of rest, when Christ will rule, bringing heaven's peace out of earth's upheaval and turmoil. Every miracle that Jesus performed on the Sabbath day is a parabolic miracle teaching us some blessed truth concerning that millennial kingdom. On the Sabbath day blind eyes were opened, lame men were made to walk, deaf were made to hear, dumb tongues were loosened, crooked limbs and bodies bent double were straightened. Impotent people who had never walked took up their beds and went their way. All these miracles are parabolic miracles bringing holy, glorious and indisputable revelation concerning that wonderful age, now so near at hand. If you will now make a spiritual application of these miracles, you will readily see that, while the opening of blind eyes teaches that the

inhabitants of that millennial age will have physical sight, the message is abundantly clear that our eyes, long darkened to spiritual truth and revelation, will be opened and every veil will be removed from our understanding. We will know as we are known and we will see all things as they are. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know as I am also known.

Apply this same truth to the healing of the lame man or the impotent man who had never walked and you will understand that in that day not only will the lame leap as the hart, but all will know how to walk with God in the Spirit and in truth. Consider the deaf, whose ears were opened on the Sabbath day. Certainly many have been deaf in the natural and how dreadfully silent the world must be never to hear the song of a bird, never to thrill at the voice of a loved one, hear the whispering wind, be hushed by the strains of sweet music or be moved by the voice of a mighty choir! Yet even more melancholy than this is the tragic knowledge that the vast majority of mankind never hears the voice of God. Their muffled ears, long muted by the raucous clamor of earth, are dull of hearing, their eyes they have closed and their hearts are heavy and do not understand. But there is coming a day when every type and parabolic miracle will be fulfilled. The lame man shall leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb will sing. The eyes of the blind will be opened and the deaf ears all unstopped. Then men shall see God with the eyes of the Spirit. Then will they be full of eyes, within and without. We marvel at a word of revelation now, but then will men hear and see and walk with the ears, the eyes and the power of the Spirit of God. Thus it was with Adam before his spiritual senses were dimmed by the deep sleep of death that fell upon him and thus will it be when all that was lost to us in the first Adam will be regained in the last Adam, who is Christ.

A few days had passed since our Lord had expounded the blessed truth of John, chapters four and five, when He led His disciples over the Sea of Galilee and, going up into a mountain, He lifted up His eyes and saw a great multitude of people following Him. This was the setting He required to introduce to all who had ears to hear and hearts to understand that Christ Himself is the bread of life that came down from heaven, of whom, if a man eat, he shall live forever. Seeing the multitudes, Jesus enquired of Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" though He Himself knew exactly what He would do. To this query Philip mused, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." But the gentle Andrew, never mentioned in scripture without being associated with his blustering brother, Peter, had a little suggestion, born of a faith in the wonderful power of the Christ he loved. "There is a lad here," said he, "which hath five barley loaves and two fishes. But what are they among so many?" I love this man Andrew. He was one of the two disciples who stood with John the Baptist and heard him say, "Behold the Lamb of God," and, leaving the beloved John, he went and asked, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" Jesus replied, "Come and see." And they abode with Him two days. It was this same Andrew who went and called his brother, Peter, saying, "We have found the Messiah," and he brought him to Jesus. John 1:41. Andrew is the man who came to Jesus about certain Greeks who wanted to see the Christ, and he was the man who had evidently been chatting with some little boys in the throng, one of whom had confided to this kindly man that he had five barley loaves and two little fishes in his lunch basket. Andrew was not a mighty orator, but a man who mingled with the people, a blessed man who always knew what to do in every emergency, and the one thing above all else he was ready to do was to introduce men with their needs to that wonderful Lord Jesus Christ, who could meet them all.

Thus it was that Andrew said, "There is a lad here who hath five barley loaves," which I suppose a thoughtful mother had given the little fellow when he had asked her permission to go to hear the great prophet who had arisen in Israel. Not only did Andrew know the lad had the loaves in his lunch basket, but somehow he had discovered that the little fellow was willing to give them to Him who Himself is the bread of God, which came down from heaven. I love that little boy. Sermons without number have been preached about the feeding of the five thousand, but not too much has ever been said about the little lad who willingly offered his buns and sardines to the great Christ, who smiled and patted his head and said, "Thank you," as He took them to bless them and multiply them until a multitude of five thousand men, besides women and children, were more than filled and twelve basketsful of food were taken up afterward that nothing be lost. I cannot help but wonder what the lad thought when he saw the mighty increase that followed his offering.

Volumes could be written if we were to explore every aspect of the feeding of the thousands who swarmed about the Saviour that day, but the more important truth here is that which has received the briefest mention. "And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples." **John 6:11.** These

five words - when He had given thanks - hold the key that will unlock the door to all who would "eat His flesh" and "drink His blood" and so live forever. O, Spirit of God, grant us Thy secret wisdom which Thou hast reserved for the mature, but above all else give understanding. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee, but Thou hast revealed them to us by Thy Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Those who tread these sacred courts are entering the realm of excellent glory. Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground. If we approach such sacred truth as the bread of life with an inquisitive or irreverent spirit instead of lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting, we will eat condemnation to ourselves, and, instead of partaking of the life that raised Jesus from the dead, we will become weak and sickly and die before our time just as the apostle gave warning to the saints at Corinth, saying, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." **1 Cor. 11:30.**

In the beautiful story of the anointing of Saul, the son of Kish, recorded in 1 Samuel, chapter nine, it is said of Samuel (verse 13), "The people will not eat until he come, for he doth bless the sacrifice." We may conclude from this that the practice of blessing food before it is eaten has been a long, standing one among the Israelitish people. Our Lord Jesus Christ not only carried on the practice, but gave it a very special meaning, which with the help of His Spirit I will show you as clearly as I can. Be not, I pray you, like unto those careless partakers of loaves and fishes, who, after they had participated in such a heavenly manifestation of God's glory, went rushing by land and sea to find Christ, only to be told by Him, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." What a tragedy that was and what a tragedy it is when Christians today seek Christ only for what benefit they hope to receive at His hand, without a thought of partaking of Him that they may become participants of the life that raised up Jesus from the dead!

The words of the blessed Master come ringing like a trumpet through the centuries, His accents falling like dew upon the listening ear, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you: for Him hath God the Father sealed." **John 6:27.**

From the mighty miracle of the loaves and fishes arose the even mightier discourse on the bread of life, a discourse filled with such profound truth and with such excellent hope for all who have ears to hear that my heart trembles to even begin to unfold the mysteries that lie hidden here, for what He said that day will blaze and burn eternally when worlds are burned away.

It is so easy to drive through beautiful scenery and see nothing but the ugly black top of the road. There are thousands who hum the music, but never sing the song. We listen with pleasure to a parable and never know that it contains the secret of life. It is so possible to sit on top of wealth and never dream it is there. My wife and I drove one day through a district in Saskatchewan where years of dearth and dust had driven many a valiant farmer to leave his hopes and dreams behind and move away. As we drove, we passed an abandoned farm yard, long forsaken by its owner. The buildings were gone and all that remained was the crumbling concrete basement of what had been the farmer's home. Standing not fifty feet from the abandoned basement was an oil well pumping vast wealth from some secret mine far below the forsaken wilderness waste on the surface. So it is with the church system of our day. While men and women starve for spiritual food and truth because hireling preachers have sermons to preach but no food to give, at our own right hand stands Jesus the Christ, saying, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." **John 6:50.** Can you not hear Him saying to your spirit, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me?" **Verse 57.**

Almighty Father, banish our doubts and fears. Purge away the vain traditions that have been handed down for years, traditions that have reduced our mighty rocks to misty clouds, changed into hazy myth every sure word that Christ has spoken and turned the beautiful paths of the righteous into forked and rock strewn trails leading us to nowhere. Thou art the One who has said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." We have heard Thy voice in promise saying, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me." Again today above the tumult of the world and beyond the vast expanse of the centuries our hearts catch the phrases that fell upon the ears of the multitude who saw the miracle of the loaves: "This is the bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he

that eateth of this bread shall live forever." **John 6:58.** Shall we who hear today believe and enter Thy excellent glory or shall we as they repeat the words of unbelief. "This is an hard saying; who can hear it"? **Verse 60.** Must it be said of us today as it was of them, "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him"?

Those who speak the truth are never the darlings of the world and those who hear the truth are always very few. We are living in that dark hour of Laodicea, a sad and pitiful time, when men love fables rather than truth, when Christians world wide have itching ears and will run nation wide to have them tickled. The path of the just, unpopular as it always has been with that worldly, giddy throng who listen to the music, but never hear the song, is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, a ray of dawn increasing until the day is full.

Nowhere in all scripture can we find more definite and profound statements than those given us in this mighty sermon concerning the bread of life. It is my purpose in the pages that follow to tell you exactly what Jesus said and emphasize the promises He made. If I understand not aright, then some day in endless realms of glory He will explain to me where I was wrong, but for both your sake and mine I now ask with the deepest possible respect why, if our blessed Lord did not mean what He said, He said it at all. I affirm that He must have meant what He said; otherwise there could not have been such a host of people who would not and could not believe those words of truth He spoke.

The miracle of the loaves and fishes had passed into history when the restless multitudes came swarming into Capernaum seeking for Jesus and, finding Him, they asked, "Rabbi, when earnest Thou hither?" To this Jesus replied, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." This profound answer falling from the lips of Christ vividly displays how deceitful and desperately wicked the human heart can be. When we seek but cannot find, it is time to lay aside all business and pleasure that our hearts may be searched and made bare by the Holy Spirit and that He may put His finger upon the lock that hitherto has denied Him entrance through the door of our life. How easy it is to deceive ourselves by thinking that nothing in our life or attitude hinders our relationship with God! What disappointment, what disillusionment and chagrin are ours to think we are seeking Christ only to discover that we are not seeking Him, but the loaves and fishes we hope to get from Him! Tens of thousands today could be healed by the power of Christ should they come seeking Him instead of seeking the healing they hoped to get from Him.

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you: for Him hath God the Father sealed." In these closing days of time men's hearts are failing them for fear and worry, looking after the things that are coming upon the earth. They worry about Antichrist. They worry about making a living. They struggle with payments, often for things they do not need. They strive and strike for better conditions, forever fearful lest some evil should befall them and they be left adrift and in need. Men and women strive so hard to attain the paltry things that perish that they have no time to labor for the meat that endures unto everlasting life. Our hearts are caused to wonder what might happen if mankind, and especially the saints of the Lord, would reverse the trend and begin to labor for the things that endure unto everlasting life. If we loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, deal our bread to the hungry, bring the poor that are cast out to our house, cover the naked, and hide not from our own flesh, then shall our light rise from obscurity, our health shall spring forth speedily, and our darkness shall be as noonday. Our righteousness shall go before us and the glory of the Lord be our rearward.

When the people heard the words of Jesus, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth," they enquired, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" O let us heed the reply He gave that day. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." To believe on Him whom God hath sent is very simple, is it not? Too simple, I fear, for minds that have been so preoccupied with great and mighty deeds that they have no time for simple believing. To the man who must be up and doing and trying to turn the world upside down, intent on instigating aggressive programs to try to "turn the tide", convert the world, or make an immortal name for himself, simple believing seems unimaginative to say the least. Yet I tell you the truth. It is better to believe the words of Jesus than to capture a city or defeat an army. It is better to believe His finished work than to compass land and sea to make many proselytes. It is better to believe than to build temples or have the

adoration of men. To believe is better than sacrifice and to hear is better than the fat of rams. This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom God hath sent. To believe on Christ is to partake of Christ. To believe is to partake of that meat which endures unto everlasting life. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **"I am that bread of life,"** said Jesus. **John 6:48. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Verse 51.**

We must pause for a moment here to make the truth clear that, when we speak of the bread of life, it is Christ, the Word, who is the bread of life. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In Him was life."** **John 1:1, 2.** I see no difference between truth and that which truth speaks. Neither do I see a difference between the Word and that which the Word speaks. Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is a word proceeding from Himself. It is the spoken word proceeding from the living Word. See now the perfection of this symbol of living bread, for man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **"I am that living bread,"** Jesus said; therefore we conclude that it is Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ the bread of God. O what fruitless wars are waged because we refuse to eat that all encompassing sentence, **"It is finished!"**

Call to remembrance here that the truth given by Jesus Christ in this sixth chapter of John was so offensive to the people who heard it that, it is clearly written, **"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him."** Verse 66. I shall not be surprised if the message contained herein is so offensive to some devout people that they will read no more. But truth lies not on the surface where swine may trample it with their feet, but it is like the jewels of a mine. It abides in its secret realm where it is hidden to all but those who search it out. Well did the wise sage say, **"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter."** **Prov. 25:2.** Nowhere in all His teachings did our Lord make statements more difficult to the natural mind than those found in the sixth chapter of John. These declarations of heavenly truth, falling as they did on the dull ears of men who sought Him, not for who He was, but for what personal benefit they hoped to get from Him, were extremely offensive to their carnal minds, yet these words of life were spoken that the believing might see and, believing, partake of Him who is the bread of God and the bread of eternal life.

The more the Jews strove against the truth the more offensive the truth became. When they refused to believe that He was the bread of God that came down from heaven, a symbolism not too difficult to comprehend, then He made a statement that not only staggered their understanding and repulsed their sensibilities, but which causes the mind of man to flounder in our day as well. **"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."** **John 6:53.** "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" And many of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" First of all we must believe; for **"if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."** **Isa. 7:9.** The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. But there is a wisdom which God imparts to the mature and, when we seek Him, He enlightens our minds, and our minds being renewed by His Spirit, our bodies begin to experience the excellent glory of transformation as this corruptible begins to partake of incorruption.

The Word of God is the bread of God. To partake of the word, which He speaks is to partake of the living Word which He is. The flesh of Christ, which He said is "meat indeed", is the bread of life, the Word of God as it is written, **"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him."** **"This is that bread which came down from heaven."** **Verses 56, 58.** Does this not clearly show that the bread of life and the flesh of which He speaks are one and the same thing? They are the meat of the Word and the bread of God, which is Christ, the Word of God.

Hear further how the scripture says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Then, that we might see that His Word is the flesh of which He speaks, it is clearly written, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Here we have a beautiful explanation of the symbolism Christ used, for it is plain that the flesh of which Christ says we must eat is His word and to believe His word is to eat the Word that was made flesh. His blood is eternal life; therefore to partake of eternal life is to drink His blood. "What shall we do that we might work the works of God," they asked, and He gave the clear answer: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Verse 29. When we eat, we

partake of our bread, and He who believes partakes of Christ, the true bread of life, which came down from heaven. Nothing can be received from God without believing faith. Every gift of God is part of Himself. Even Jesus, God's Son, is His gift to man.

Our Lord staggered their unbelieving minds yet more when He spoke the seemingly impossible words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." The blood of Christ is eternal life as the word of God clearly teaches. The British scientist, Dr. Langmuir, pointed out that blood plasma is congealed light. What a wonderful revelation that is! When Christ spoke of drinking His blood, He was telling us to partake of His life, and because blood is light, He was bidding us partake of the light, which He is. If we partake of life, we become life. When we partake of light, we become light, for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son (sons) to have life in Himself. These are wonderful statements to those who can believe and receive them, but they are statements that drive the unbelieving and the scorner away so that he departs scornful, striving, unbelieving, empty and sad. O to be like that blind man who cast away his earthly garment in his desire to get to Christ! Mark 10:50.

I have sought to explain the spiritual meaning of eating His flesh and drinking his blood that we might receive the beautiful truths spoken in the sixth chapter of John with faith and understanding rather than with questioning and unbelief as did the throngs who were able to eat loaves and fishes, but could not partake of the Word that was made flesh or the eternal life that was in the blood. **"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.**

Let us now turn our attention to the excellent glory of which He spoke to the multitudes who, though they had freely partaken of the loaves and fishes that Christ had blessed, were now totally unable to partake of the twelve basketsful of fragments - living bread that remains for those who are able to believe His word.

In answer to their question, "What must we do that we may work the works of God," Jesus had said, "Believe on Him whom God hath sent," but see how impossible it is for the carnal mind to break out of its prison of carnality. Believing! What was that to them? Their dull minds craved the spectacular, the supernatural and that which would supply all natural things. As the woman of Samaria, unawakened to her need, said, "Give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw," so these men now asked, "What sign showest Thou that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work?" As though they had not already seen signs enough to make a devil believe, they now ask for more. "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Verses 30, 31. How patient was our Lord in the face of their blindness and striving for natural things! It must be remembered, however, that it was for the faithful, not the unbelieving, that these truths proceeded forth from the mouth of God. Such divine pronouncements, though true, are impossible except to those who believe. If we follow church tradition, we will never believe them. They seem designed to make unbelievers even more unbelieving. If we follow what we have seen and always accepted, we will never believe them. In my heart I feel that the words Jesus spoke that day must be in some measure reserved for those of us who were to live in the end of the age, that glorious hour which Jacob Boehme spoke of as the "time of the lily", which is the time of the resurrection. Listen carefully then to what the mighty Rabbi said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." I could be wrong in my paraphrase, but this is what I think our Lord meant: "Moses gave you not that bread." That is to say, "Moses did not give that bread to you; he gave it to your fathers, but My Father giveth you the true bread." It is like saying the law was given by Moses. It was intended for those who lived in that dispensation, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ for those who live today. So now He is saying, "Moses gave manna to your fathers, but God now gives the true bread to you," for the bread of God is He which came down from heaven. Verse 33. The woman of Samaria, bedeviled by the darkness of the natural mind, had said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John 4:15. Now these say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," (verse 34), but they murmured at Him because He said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." Verse 41.

Take heed now that, as their unbelief increased, so the words of Christ became even more profound as He introduces to any who will believe that excellent glory of life that has been hidden to all mankind since that doleful day in Eden when the dark gloom of death displaced that excellent glory of life. Had our blessed Lord and Christ not spoken so boldly then, I would not dare to do so now. Though we believe, our hearts painfully

cry, "Lord, help mine unbelief!" Then Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Verses 49-51. I seek to prove nothing to any dark and carnal mind, but to those who believe, this is what He said: Your fathers ate manna and are dead. Verse 49. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. Verse 50. Our minds stagger before this weight of truth. Though these are very plain statements, they bewilder our minds until we, like Saul of Tarsus, cannot see for the glory of that light. But these amazing words of wonderment proceed forth from the lips of Christ, who cannot lie. This truth, haltered for ages in the death house of religious tradition, is truth destined to be revealed in the last days. Since He takes away the first that He might establish the second, then this excellent glory of incorruption is the second, that is to be established after the first has been taken away. When healing of the mortal flesh has been taken away, resurrection life must be established. Man who lives by bread alone must of necessity die as our fathers perished in the wilderness, but he who lives by the bread of God, that living word that proceeds from the mouth of God, shall experience change and transformation as it is written: "This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality."

"I am the bread of life," Jesus spoke the word. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." **Verse 35.** All too often precious saints write their pathetic letters, plaintively telling how starved they are for spiritual food. They go to church regularly, but receive no bread of heaven to abate their hunger or water of life to slake their thirst. Ah, dear friend, how often must I remind you that instead of going to church you should be coming to Jesus, for "he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." You cannot go to church. If you are a child of God, you are the church. Let those blessed saints who are hungering and thirsting for God hear the words of God: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." **Verse 57.** In like manner as Jesus, God's Son, derived all His life from the Father, so now are we to receive our life from Him. He is the bread that comes down from heaven. Not as our fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live forever. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing.

In writing these truths, which to the natural mind are both impossible and unbelievable, there is but little that we can add to the plain statements Jesus Himself has given. To try to enlarge upon His word is an impossible task. How can any man say with greater clearness that believers here and now may partake of that life which He is, that they will never see death, and that the grave itself will be robbed of its prey, than to quote the words of the Master Himself, "I am the bread of life?" "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." These staggering statements are infallible truth coming from the lips of Christ, who is both the truth and the life in one. If the death that our fathers died in the wilderness was a physical death, then the death of which Christ here speaks must also be physical. Would you not say so? We cannot compare apples to oranges; neither can we affirm that the death they died was physical while the life we live is spiritual. Such juggling of speech is artful dodging and leaves us with no continuity of language at all. If the first is physical, so is the second. If the first is spiritual, so is the second.

Some well-meaning soul will immediately insist, "It is appointed unto man once to die." Yes, that is true; but is it not also true that man outside of Christ is already dead? How can he become any more dead than he is? Did Paul not say, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died"? And did not this same inspired man say with incredible clearness, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness"? Can a body be more dead than dead? But Paul was sharing both the wisdom and the promise of Jesus when he hastened to add for the edification of every believer, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11.** "He shall make alive your mortal body!" Is this not what Jesus was promising when He confounded the Jews, and His own disciples also, by saying, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"? **John 6:51.**

When our Lord Jesus made these tremendous pronouncements, the unbelieving multitudes gave way to violent argument and demeaning abuse. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" they growled in disgust. "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" they murmured in unbelief. "Whom makest Thou Thyself?" they heckled, and uttered many other such statements of resentment and unbelief until many of his disciples went back and walked no more with Him. O that believers would learn that it is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. The words He spoke that day were both Spirit and life. Was it not the Spirit of life who rose up Christ from the dead? Is it not the Spirit who quickeneth all who believe in His name? Was it not His Spirit who imparted eternal life to us, even the life that is in His Blood? Shall not He who fulfilled His promise in quickening our spirit also make good His promise to make alive our mortal flesh by His Spirit that dwelleth in us? Impossible, some will say. Has such a thing ever been known? No, not in the history of the whole world. But are they right in making such an assertion as this? Has not the scripture clearly stated that "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, walked with God, and was not, for God took Him"? And again, Paul affirms, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Did he not escape the grave? And Elijah, too. Was he not translated and "taken up" in a fiery whirlwind into heaven? Of Melchisedec it is written that he had neither beginning of days nor end of life. And what must we conclude of John, the apostle, who in the sixth chapter of his book recorded these life-giving words of Christ? For when Jesus had told Peter by what manner he should glorify Christ, Peter, perhaps in deference to John, who had once enquired for him concerning the traitor, now returned the compliment by asking for John, "What shall this man do?" **John 21:21**. Jesus replied with words freighted with meaning, "If he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" **John 21:22**. It is true that Jesus did not say that John would not die, as is stated in verse 23, but He let it be known that such a blessing was by no means beyond the realm of possibility. It is a matter of more than passing consideration that, though history records the martyrdom of each of the other eleven apostles, there is no known record that John ever died. It is also important to know that none of the twelve apostles died a natural death, but each and every one of them except John laid down his life in martyrdom. I am convinced that to die is one thing, but to lye down one's life is another.

The more I heed the word of God and the more intently I listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the more I am convinced that we have neither been listening nor paying attention to what our Lord has been clearly saying. Because we have been unable to grasp what He said, we have passed over it with seldom an earnest thought, but often a carnal argument. For the most part all our human arguments arise because of inbred tradition, that progenitor of faithlessness and unbelief. "If any man keep My saying," said Jesus, "he shall never see death," but to this triumphant statement His tradition bound disputers replied with taunting sarcasm and derisive contempt, 'Wow we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest Thou Thyself?' John 8:52, 53. It is so easy to raise questions and produce what appears to be irrefutable arguments, but it is something else altogether just to close in with Christ and accept with gladness the word of faith He spoke.

The book of John is a very remarkable book. It is as much the revelation of Jesus Christ as is the book of Revelation itself. Its theme is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, masterfully laid out in the first verses of the evangel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." In chapter one Christ is presented as the Word of God. In chapter four He is the water of life. In chapter six He is the bread of life. In chapter eight He is the light of the world. In chapter ten He is the good shepherd that enters by the door and the door by which the shepherd enters. In chapter eleven He is the resurrection and the life. In chapter twelve He is the anointed sacrifice. In chapter fourteen He becomes the head of the body of Christ and the giver of the Spirit in whom all are baptized into His body. In chapter fifteen He becomes the true vine, drawing His life from the Father and we become the branches, drawing our life from Him. In chapter seventeen He is the intercessor, the mediator, between God and man. In chapter twenty He becomes the sacrifice and in chapter twenty-one He is the firstfruit of the resurrection.

This synopsis is far too brief to be of much value, but it serves to demonstrate that our Lord and Saviour is all things to all men. He who is the word of life is also the bread of life. He who is the bread of life is also the water of life, and He who is the water of life is also the Spirit of life. He who is the Spirit of life is also the light of life. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends.

As our rejoicing hearts hear our **Lord say**, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if a man eat this bread, he shall live forever," these inspired words of Paul come echoing down the corridors of time: "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." **2 Cor. 5:4**. O brethren, give heed to these words of inspiration, for here lies the key to that life of which Jesus spoke - "that mortality might be swallowed up of life" "For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11**. These wonderful statements of truth show that, when Jesus said we would live and not die, He was telling beforehand that the Spirit would change our bodies from corruptible to incorruptible and from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us now consider some other faithful words of inspiration that point unerringly to the truth of this excellent glory of change and transformation. Paul in his letter to Timothy, speaking of Jesus Christ, made this wonderful assertion that we can only describe as breathtaking: "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." **2 Tim. 1:9, 10**. Now what are we going to conclude when we read that Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light? Shall we believe these words of inspiration or shall we man the defenses of our dead tradition and deny that God's word means what it says? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." **Heb. 2:14, 15**.

The word abolish is an exceedingly powerful transitive verb. It means to put an end to, to do away with, to annul, to destroy. The synonyms of the verb are: annihilate, exterminate, eradicate, extirpate, and terminate. The word abolish is used only of institutions or conditions - never of people. Let us be doubly certain then that, when Paul made the statement that Christ has abolished death, he was using the strongest possible term regarding the termination of that dreadful institution, and, when he declares in the same sentence that Christ has brought to light life and immortality, He has taken away the first by abolishing it to establish the second, which is immortality. When God's people are faced with such truth as this, they are obliged to either believe and eat the word, which is life eternal, or turn aside and cuddle their traditions as did those unbelieving Jews in the long ago.

The notable English mystic, William Law, writing in about the year 1750, made the following statement, to which we all must give sincere and earnest heed lest we, like those who rejected Christ and the truth He brought, should refuse Him that speaketh from heaven simply because His truth upsets our tradition. Thus writes William Law: "Consider how it is that the carnal Jew, the deep-read scribe, the learned rabbi, the religious Pharisee not only did not receive but crucified their Saviour. It was because they willed and desired no such Saviour as He was, no such inward salvation as He offered them. They desired no change of their nature, no inward destruction of their own natural tempers, no deliverance from the love of themselves and the enjoyments of their passions. They liked their state, the gratifications of their old man, their long robes, their broad phylacteries and greetings in the market. They wanted not to have their pride and self love dethroned, their covetousness and sensuality to be subdued by a new nature from heaven derived into them. Their only desire was the success of Judaism, to have an outward Saviour, a temporal Prince that should establish their law and ceremonies over all the earth. And therefore they crucified their dear Redeemer and would have none of His salvation because it all consisted in a change of their nature, in a new birth from above, and a kingdom of heaven to be opened within them by the Spirit of God. O Christendom, look not only at the old Jews, but see thyself in this glass, for at this day, (O sad truth to be told), at this day Christ within us, an inward Saviour raising a birth of His own nature, life and Spirit within, is rejected as gross enthusiasm. The learned rabbis take counsel against it. The propagation of popery, the propagation of Protestantism, the success of some particular church is the salvation which priests and people are chiefly concerned about."

We will never understand the machinations of the natural mind. It is such a lying, two-faced hypocrite that there is no grasping the depths of its duplicity. While it shouts, "I want God" with one mouth, it contradicts all Christ says with the other. Even while it is swearing fidelity to the truth of the word of God, it is tearing truth to shreds in an evil attempt to make it conform to tradition. Time and time again I am moved to exhort God's people to

come out from every phase of the church system. It is full of dead men's bones. It has become a habitation of devils and a hold for every unclean and hateful bird. Yet for all this people refuse to budge, preferring rather to be fed the meager crumbs of tradition on a garnished table with sounding brass and tinkling cymbal and the voice of many words than to feast on the bread of life in obscurity.

So with the ancient priesthood with their broad phylacteries, their long prayers in public, their love of being addressed as Rabbi, father and reverend, strutting about like peacocks in their long robes, robbing widows in their penury, binding heavy burdens upon the people, but unwilling to touch them with one of their fingers, and so it is today. Amid this impious cesspool of Pharisaic hypocrisy the blessed Christ came to His own, but His own received Him not. They wanted none of His gospel to the poor, His healing of the broken-hearted, or the recovering of sight to the blind. They were not interested in His delivering the captive or setting at liberty them that are bruised, and as for His preaching the acceptable year of the Lord - they cared not a whit about that. On with the program! Advance the tradition! Fill the earth with our order and bring in a temporal kingdom where things will be done our way! That was what they wanted, and so they hissed, "He has a devil. Why hear ye Him?" "Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead. Whom makest Thou Thyself?" they jeered. And so amid the rising crescendo of their blasphemous taunting they screamed, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! It is not fit that He should live."

"Careless seems the great Avenger;
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
Twixt old systems and the Word.
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future;
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows
Keeping watch upon His own."

Lowell.

No matter to what extent the religious systems murder the innocent and resist the truth, our great heavenly Father always has a people who eagerly partake of living bread. The apostle Paul, who knew too well the violent contradictions of scribes and priesthood, left this beautiful exhortation so full of meaning to the brethren of all ages who would follow Christ and give heed to His voice above the clamor and din of earth's vain religions: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Rom. 12:1, 2. Among the tender mercies of God I can think of nothing greater than that a believer may partake of that living bread which came down from heaven, of which, Jesus solemnly said, if a man eat, he shall live forever. It must have been with this truth burning in his heart that Paul in Romans, chapter 12, begins to beseech the elect saints by the mercies of God to present their bodies to Christ as a living sacrifice. Their spirits, though alive because of the Christ within, were still dwelling in dead bodies, but now the time is come for the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead to also "make alive" our mortal bodies by His Spirit dwelling within. If the saints will follow the path of spiritual progress through the book of Romans, they will see man advancing through the realm of the grace of God from the place of a rebel against Christ to justification, sanctification and full sonship, which is adoption.

I make this declaration with confidence, knowing that full sonship comes only with the redemption of the body, as Paul taught in Rom 8:23. I am not a Greek scholar by any means, but a little research in either Young's or Strong's Concordance or any English-Greek Lexicon will show us that the word transformed in Rom. 12:2, quoted above, is translated from the Greek word metamorphoo, from which comes our English word metamorphosis. The word metamorphosis, according to Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary, means to change from one form or shape or substance to another. (Biological meaning): Any marked development in the form and structure of an animal in its development from embryo to adult, as from chrysalis to butterfly or tadpole to frog.

It is a great confirmation to know that the word rendered transfigured (Matt. 17:2) is also derived from the same root word metamorphoo. That wonderful vision given to the three disciples when Christ was transfigured before them actually demonstrates before our very eyes exactly what the word of God means by being transformed. In that heavenly hour when Jesus was transformed or transfigured on the holy mount according to Matt. 17:2, His face shone as the sun and His raiment was white as the light. Mark in his gospel adds that His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow so as no fuller on earth could white them, Mark 9:3, and Luke 9:29 sums up with the significant words: "His countenance was altered and his raiment was white and glistening." The reader is aware that the word glistening indicates the shining as from an inward light rather than to glisten from a reflected light. The shining of the sun is from an inward light; the shining of the moon is from a reflected light. It was probably for this reason that Matthew affirmed, "His face did shine as the sun," and Luke for the same reason used the word glistening.

There is a marked distinction between incorruption and immortality. The meaning of the former is "not subject to decay or spoilage." The meaning of the later is unending existence; eternal life. It is my opinion, however, that the dictionary meaning falls far short of the Bible meaning. Even that one text, 1 Tim. 6:16, which, when speaking of Jesus Christ, states, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," indicates that this more excellent glory of immortality far excels incorruption, glorious as that blessed state may be.

Notice now that in **2 Tim. 1:10** this enlightening statement is made: "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light..." The first attainment, then, is incorruption - a state in which death is abolished. The second is immortality, which brings life and immortality to light. For this very reason Paul, when teaching the resurrection of the dead, stated first, "this corruptible must put on incorruption," and second, "this mortal must put on immortality." **1 Cor. 15:53.** "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory (or life)." **Verse 54.**

It is concerning this change from corruption to incorruption that Paul is speaking. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." **Rom. 12:1, 2.** We must certainly have noticed that the exhortation to the saints here is that they present their bodies a living sacrifice. We presented our spirits to God when first we confessed our sins and believed on Christ the Lord. At that moment we were quickened and our spirits became alive, as it is written, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1.** But, though Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin, though the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness. Rom. 8:10. We who have been saved and our spirits made partakers of eternal life have not yet presented our bodies to Christ for salvation as we formerly presented our souls to Him. As the burnt offerings were laid upon the altar long ago, so now the apostle calls upon the saints to present their corrupt bodies as living sacrifices that we may be transformed and begin here and now to partake of that deathless state of incorruption where degeneration is no more and decay is a thing of the past.

The body is not only the seat of the carnal nature, but the body is itself the carni. (Latin meaning flesh.) This fact - that the physical body is the flesh of which the Bible speaks so often - is a fact that cannot be over emphasized. Preachers have preached and teachers have taught about the flesh, the flesh, the flesh, for centuries, never once realizing that the flesh of which they spoke is the corrupt body, the carni, which continually wars against the redeemed spirit, bringing it into subjection even as spoken by Jesus to His dozing disciples, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. **26:41.** O how unutterably true those words are! The flesh (the corrupt body) lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things we would. It has always been thus. It is today and it will always remain so until we present our bodies as living sacrifices that transformation may take place.

It must now be noted that this transformation is accomplished by the renewing of the mind. The vast majority of God's people have walked all their lifetime, not being led by the Spirit, but following instead the dictates of the body. At every turn of the road it is the body that hinders spiritual progress. Should we not believe this, we have only to consider how many hours a day are spent sleeping just to rest the body. Consider how many

hours each day are spent preparing meals to feed the body and how many hours are spent eating and drinking, bathing and washing, primping, choosing clothes, relaxing, amusing oneself and many other such innocent activities. These things are not sinful - far from it. The truth is that most of them are essential, but place in contrast all the hours we must spend just to keep the body fed, clothed, rested and comfortable with those few minutes spent edifying the spirit and we will easily see that for our whole lifetime we are bond slaves to the body. O so often people write to tell me, "Do not send me any more literature. I have no time to read," but if they told the truth, they would likely say they have plenty of time to read the news, the magazines and novels to entertain the carnal mind or watch the late night shows with their violence and crime as thousands of Christians do. Don't tell me there is no time to edify the spirit and commune with Christ. There is plenty of time to do what we want to do, but the truth is that most Christians find time for those things that pertain to the realm of the flesh.

The hour must come when the realm of the flesh is abandoned and Christ becomes Lord and Master, that those who live in the Spirit also walk in the Spirit. This is the place of the renewing of the mind. "Let this mind dwell in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," Paul says. The mind of Christ is the Father's mind. It is the mind that transforms the human chrysalis to the heavenly butterfly, the corruptible to the incorruptible, the finite to the infinite.

In the light of Paul's teaching - "Be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind" - it is of singular interest to note that biologists have determined that, when a caterpillar enters its cocoon, the process of change from the chrysalis to the butterfly is caused by a certain hormone in the tiny brain of the insect. In other words the metamorphosis begins in the creature's mind. In the light of this biological fact is it not most remarkable that Paul said by inspiration, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind?" All our lifetime we have been subject to the bondage of corruption and death and of the carnal mind, which is the mind concerned only with the body. Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent every year in an attempt to keep people from dying, yet for all this they know they will die. But in Rom 12:1, 2 a truth is introduced showing that the transformation of the body will begin with the renewing of the mind. What other reason could the apostle possibly have had for exhorting the saints to present their mortal bodies as a living sacrifice? It was that they might be transformed by the mind of Christ dwelling within. If ever a reason was given for a change of mind and a renewal of understanding, this must be it: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind."

Open the cocoon of a worm while the insect is in the process of metamorphosis and you will discover that within that death cell is such a mass of corruption that one would be hard put to it to imagine how anything as graceful and beautiful, if not heavenly, as a butterfly could possibly emerge from it. What a spiritual lesson this is as we look upon our dying bodies, convinced that only the grave is a fit place for such as we are! Yet patient Job, sitting in dust and ashes amid the stinking mass of his own corruption, breathed the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The renewed mind soars by faith far beyond the visible corruption of the natural to the realm of the Spirit and incorruption where the mind of Christ transforms our corruption to incorruption, speeding the day when this mortal shall put on immortality.

Paul was following the teaching of Jesus when he said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:12. In the Old Testament sacrifice of the burnt offering the sacrificial animal was killed at the door of the tabernacle. It was flayed, its legs and entrails were washed, the whole animal was cut in pieces and all the parts with the head and the fat were laid upon the altar and burned to ashes. Lev. 1:3-9. This was the whole burnt offering. It was typical, of course, of the presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices to Christ. When Paul therefore reverently exhorts, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice," this is that the old may be consumed by the fire of God, thus showing how complete that living sacrifice must be. The burnt offering of the Old Testament was transformed into ashes, but the living sacrifice we present is transformed to the deathless state beyond corruption, even as Jesus displayed when He was transfigured on the holy mount.

The full truth concerning this more excellent glory is far too extensive to be fully dealt with here; therefore, by the mercies of God, I beseech you as Paul did to consider with prayer and great carefulness the presentation

of your bodies as a living sacrifice, even as the Holy Spirit has taught in Rom. 12:1-2. We are to present ourselves living, holy, and acceptable to God. This is not considered some special sacrifice on our part, but is rather our reasonable service.

We are told that we are to be no longer conformed to the world. Pitiful is the indisputable fact that an incredible number of God's people are inordinately conformed to the world. In our day of outer darkness and delusion deceived preachers from the pulpit and on the air are telling the people that Christians should have the best of everything in the world. They should have the best homes, drive the top grade cars, wear the most elegant clothes, and have plenty of money to bestow on their outward show. These preachers are deceiving the people. They neither speak the words of Christ, who said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," nor are they speaking the words of the apostle, who said, "Be not conformed to the world," or "Having food and raiment, let us be content." They do not remember that the love of money is the root of all evil, which, when men covet, causes them to err from the truth and to pierce themselves through with many sorrows. Heed none of these deceivers who would have you believe that gain is godliness, but follow after Christ out of a pure heart. These deceivers, disguised as angels of light and light bringers to the earth, are not only conformed to the world themselves but they teach others to follow their pernicious ways. The man who gives in hope of receiving abundance in return is giving with the wrong spirit and with the wrong end in view. "Be not conformed to the world" was the exhortation of the faithful Paul. Shun its programs. Avoid its amusements. Keep clear of its deceptions. Shy away from the worldly church system, for it is Babylon. Eschew the very appearance of evil. Love not the world or any of the things that are in the world, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but of the world; and the world with all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who does God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die.

Thus Paul, having said, "Be not conformed to the world," followed this instruction with a statement which to every natural mind is incredible, if not preposterous, Even God's own people pass it by with scarcely a moment's meditation. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind." Be transfigured, be changed, or metamorphosed even as Christ demonstrated to three men on the holy mount. This transformation must have been Paul's burning quest when, writing to the Philippians, he burst forth in prayer: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." How could Paul have stated more clearly than he did that he was fervently expecting to experience the power of the resurrection during his life time? The margins of some Bibles read, "That I may attain the out resurrection from among the dead ones."

"Our conversation is in heaven," **Phil 3:20**, that is, our manner of living is in the heavenly realm, for that is what conversation means in this sentence, "from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." **Phil. 3:20, 21.**

Centuries ago dear Martha stood weeping at the grave of her beloved brother Lazarus. **John, Chapter 11.** Jesus said unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again." "I know," she sobbed from a broken heart, "that he will rise in the resurrection at the last day." To this truth Jesus responded, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" How could she believe? Did not all history bear witness that such a thing could never be? And yet history had never heard of anyone like Jesus of Nazareth; neither had any ever appeared on earth's scene of death and darkness who could say, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "Believest thou this?" He asked the weeping woman, arousing a glow of hope in her heart. Again today He is asking those of us who hear His promise, "Believest thou this?" Let these words sink down deep into our ears, for the hour of resurrection and transformation is at hand. Once again His voice is speaking from the excellent glory, bearing the glad tidings of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Therefore we follow after, forgetting the things, which are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, if by any means we might attain that "out resurrection from among the dead ones." This is the more excellent glory ready to be revealed in the last times.

"He that has formed us for this very purpose is God, who has given us His Spirit as a guarantee." 2 Cor 5:4 (Weymouth).

CHAPTER FOUR BEHOLDING THE MORE EXCELLENT GLORY

PART FOUR

For years I wondered why it was that a college graduation exercise, at which students receive diplomas for work accomplished, is called Commencement until a remark by a friend made me realize that the graduating students were not really graduating, but were only commencing to put their studies into practice. Their graduation was in reality a beginning rather than an ending and a commencement rather than a termination. What they had learned in theory was only a smattering of what they would learn in practice as the days extended into months, the months into years, and the years into a lifetime of experience. Far more would be learned in the college of experience than had been learned in theory and they would undoubtedly find by experience that at least some of their theory would fall far short of the truth.

Astronomers studying the heavens for centuries had formed many conclusions about the planet Saturn, but, when the pictures came back from the exploring satellite, they were astonished to find that a closer look had exploded almost all their long established theories. So shall we Christians find that, in drawing nigh to our blessed Lord, who in loving kindness draws near to us, practically all the established dogmas of learned theologians will be exploded when we see Him as he is. "What things were gain to me" said Paul, "those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. When we see Him as He is at close range and face to face, we "suffer the loss of all things," and, finding them old, useless, and ready to vanish away, we purge ourselves of them as we would of dung that we may lay hold of the glory of Christ and be found in Him without spot or blemish.

I feel assured that the three preceding chapters concerning the more excellent glory are illuminations of great significance in this present hour. I have felt the presence of Christ as I have written them and I know they are inspired. My earnest request is that all who have read them will read and reread them with diligence and prayer. If these truths are reread six months from now, the searcher will find that not only his understanding has been increased, but rays of new light are shining from their pages. It is careless and wrong to casually read these revealing truths and then imagine we know them. Our reading of them is only a commencement exercise. All the glory of experience lies ahead. In Christ we know nothing until we know it experimentally. All the "following after" and "pressing toward" precede the "apprehending." The things which eye hath not seen, or ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man are the things that come to the diligent seeker after truth. Herein is the scripture fulfilled, "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened; for he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Dearly beloved brethren, I leave the following truth for your consideration, but only the wise will understand it. Though God is light, He hides Himself in the shadows. "He covereth Himself with thick darkness." Ah, but you ask, "Why would the Lord intentionally hide Himself?" It is to assure that only those who seek Him with all their hearts will find Him. The prize is to those who diligently seek with a pure, undivided heart, as it is written: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The Lord is not far from any one of us. Draw nigh to God and He will advance toward you, but you must seek him without alloy. Never seek things; only seek God. From the dilatory, the reluctant, the sluggish, the dawdling, the procrastinator and the spiritually lazy He always hides Himself. These never come to know Him. They may believe, but faith is never active in their hearts. You cannot serve God and Mammon (Mammon, the Syrian god of riches, personifies riches and greed), therefore you are unwise to try. You cannot live after the demands of the body, which, of course, is the flesh, and still attain to the realm of the Spirit; so do not try. You cannot put on the graces of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, brotherly love and charity until you have put off anger, wrath, malice,

blasphemy, lying and filthy communication out of your mouth. So do not try. You cannot put on the new man until with repentance you have put off the old man. You cannot have the mind of Christ until you have put off the carnal mind. So do not waste your time trying. Men and women who talk about sonship but who have never been cleansed from tobacco and alcohol have not yet truly repented of sin. We have every reason to doubt their profession.

Instead of seeking worldly pleasure and associates and scheming to attain every glittering thing this world has to offer, seek rather to let that mind dwell in you which was also in Christ Jesus, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now see the result of a spiritual mind like His in the words that follow: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." **Phil. 2:6-11.**

Let us not then lightly lay aside this truth of the more excellent glory, which the Holy Spirit has illumined and of which the word of God speaks in such awesome and reverential terms. Let us rather lay hold on the prize that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, let us faint not. Let us renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness or handling the word of God deceitfully; for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; persecuted, but not forsaken; knocked down, but not knocked out, always bearing about in our bodies that crucifixion of self, that dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies.

These are truths that vitally concern those who live on the earth just before the coming of our Lord. They do not concern those who, eating and drinking with the drunken, excuse themselves by saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming." They concern those who, like Enoch, walk with God.

We shall not attain that more excellent glory by any human striving, but we shall be like Him when we see Him as He is. Therefore let every man who has this hope dwelling in him depart from iniquity, together with all the love of the world, even as Enoch, who was translated that he might not see death. Seek not for visions. Pray not for spectacular manifestation of the Lord. Christ alone knows who you need. Therefore seek His face, listen to His voice, set aside holy times for fasting and prayer - not to bombard heaven with childish requests, but rather to listen to that voice speaking from heaven, which once in the days of Moses shook the earth and again declares, "Yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also the heavens." The most necessary element in prayer is not speaking, but listening for that blessed voice that guides the universe speaking to our inner man. That was the voice that Adam heard as the perfumed breeze swept through the trees of lovely Eden. That was the voice that shook the earth when the fiery law was given at Sinai. It was the still small voice that spoke in love to the weary Elijah. Jesus is the speaking word, speaking better things than Abel. Refuse not Him who speaketh from heaven. Thine ear shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

I beseech you therefore, beloved saints of God, to give diligent heed to this mighty message of the hour, because it is only as we live in vital relationship with our blessed Christ that Christ is formed in us and the change progresses from glory to excellent glory to more excellent glory, even as by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us.

We are drawing very near to the end of the age. The coming of the Lord is nigh. It is much nearer than we think and probably much different than we think. In the years that have passed many theories and doctrines have been formed concerning the coming of Christ, most of which, I fear, were the product of the natural mind and had little to do with the actual truth. The further we go with God the more we realize how little truth we have

really known, and we realize, too, that the little we have known or thought we knew has hindered us from going on to the fullness and the glory of the coming of the Lord.

When our Lord came to earth some two thousand years ago, the scribes, Pharisees, and doctors of the law had their stereotyped doctrines and theories about the coming Messiah, but, when the King finally came, His coming was so contrary to their set theories that they did not recognize Him at all. The idea of the King of Israel being born in a manger was nonsense to them. The idea that He was to be lifted up on a cross was an even greater stumbling-stone. They were not in the least prepared to accept or receive any of these things because such things were contrary to all their preconceived ideas. So they gave their word against Him and hung Him on a cross saying, "Let His blood be upon us and upon our children." But the tradition of the church today is even more involved than the traditions of Israel. For centuries Christians have talked of the second coming of Christ. They have filled books with arguments about how and when and for whom He will come, but I fear that, when He does come, many will never know a thing about it or, if they do, they will reject Him because He will not have come in accordance with their theories.

There are a number of scriptures that I would like to consider with you. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, there will be little need of explanation. First of all, however, there are a few things we should try to grasp and a few things we should let go.

No doubt there is a place for sound doctrine, but how good it would be if we could realize that doctrines as we know them are only articles of faith that have been set forth by certain sects for their people to accept and believe. Most of us imbibed the doctrines of the sect among whom we first believed. Doctrine that is set forth in this manner is not true doctrine. It is likely to have a fragment of truth but at best be only in part. It was likely living and real to the man to whom it was first revealed, but his successors merely received it as a tradition and it meant little or nothing to them and changed their lives not a whit. Doctrine that is not progressive in its scope is valueless. When a revelation becomes a tradition, it is practically worthless and serves only as an opiate to deaden the minds of those who accept it.

We are going to have to do more than accept dead doctrines. We are going to have to see the living Christ, for He is the Word of God and the Doctrine of God. It is going to take more than sermons on holiness and sanctification to make us holy and sanctified. We are going to have to see Him and be changed into His image. It is going to take a great deal more than meetings and human fellowship to bring us to a knowledge of God. We shall have to meet Him as Thomas and Paul and John met Him. We must hear His voice speaking to the deep recesses of our hearts. We must speak to Him and hear His answer and His command. Church meetings have been a blessing to us in our spiritual infancy even as the country school house was a blessing in our natural infancy. But church meetings have no ability to produce Christian maturity. Maturity can only come by personal association with Christ Himself. I am willing to stake my life and what feeble ministry I have on this assertion: no man or woman can ever become mature until he has cast off the yokes and bondages of human tradition and religion and has met Christ personally, spoken to Him face to face and heart to heart, and continued to walk in the ever increasing light and glory of what he saw. The Apostle Paul struck the keynote to the whole thing when he said, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

Once a man has seen Christ, he has no need to confer with men, for man's traditions and ideas will stink in his nostrils and all human suggestions, thoughts, and ideas will be found to be desperately constricted, confined, and short of the mark. As the feeble flickering light of a wax candle fades before the rising of the glorious sun, so all human doctrine and understanding fades into insignificance and nothingness before the glorious rising of the sun of righteousness.

Just as sure as we live and move, the next great event in the order of things is that those who believe and are faithful are going to know the transcending glory of His appearing and they will see Him in His beauty. That one glimpse will do more for them in a second of time than all the meetings they have attended, all the songs they have sung, and all the doctrine they have listened to in their whole life.

Have you ever wondered what is the difference between a Pharisee who laboriously, fervently, and reverently adhered to the minutest commands of the law and a man like Paul who, though he made no effort to keep the

law, had a far higher and richer standard of holiness than the Pharisee? I'll tell you what the difference is: Paul had met Christ personally. His eyes had beheld His wonderful beauty and purity and with that beholding he had been changed into that same image. To walk as Christ walked from henceforth was not a matter of slavish imitation of a hero or an idol but a matter of being. He walked like Christ because he was like Him, for his eyes had beheld Him. Yet the Pharisee, adhering strictly to his tradition, was only a slave to what he believed and at the end of his life was no more like his pattern or his doctrine than he was the day he began.

Has not the above also been the picture of the Christian? Here and there someone has met the Lord and been changed into His image, but the vast majority of so-called "born-again" people spend their lives in the shallows miserably trying to be like Jesus so that they will go to heaven when they die, but with the other side of their nature reaching out to partake of as much of the things of the earth as they feel they dare. No man who has heard the sweet sounds of heaven's music can lend his ear to earth's rasping discords. Much less can those whose eyes have seen the King in His beauty be entertained in their parlors by the adulterous seed of Hollywood. It is not a matter of do's and don'ts. It is a matter of whether or not we have seen Him.

How I wish that for a while at least God's people could forget their continual groaning and moaning for fellowship with people and for the rest of their lives concentrate on finding fellowship with Him. How I wish they could quit groaning for meetings and the wonderful days of the past and meet Christ personally for the first time in their life. You are not going to find Christ in meetings any more. If you are going to look for Him there, you are going to be disappointed, for the times are changing and old things are passing away. A new day and a new era is coming when men shall know God and His mind will dwell in them and they will walk in the light and glory of His will.

There is no greater authority on these things than the word of God itself. Paul the Apostle was ordained of God to bring Christians the teachings of the church age. He knew how a church meeting should be conducted and it must have been a glorious thing at times to meet together as he taught the people. But it is a source of wonder to see how right in the midst of his instructions about spiritual gifts and all the other wonderful things that were to take place in a public gathering he soared away into the Spirit to tell us of a more excellent way - a glorious way where all the former things would fall into decay, where prophecy would fail, tongues would cease, knowledge would vanish away, and preaching would be no more. Certainly none of these things are necessary in that realm where we meet Him face to face. Surely there is no need of seeing through a glass darkly when we have seen face to face. Surely there is no need of partial knowledge and partial prophecy when we know Him as He knows us.

How sad my heart often gets when I hear someone trying to explain from 1 Cor. 13 how we should show love. With all respect I must say that no one is ever helped by such teachings, for at best it can only make him an imitator and he is no more like Christ by being an imitator of Him than a parrot is like a man because he imitates him. The foundation and root of the whole matter of love is that God is love and that he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in Him. There is no love apart from God for God is love, and God has manifested His love toward us in that He gave us His Son that we might have the love of God in us because His son is in us.

Our great need is not a return of the good old meetings of the past with all their tongues, interpretations, prophecies, healings and miracles, for we can have all these things, together with much more and still have absolutely nothing. Our need is to meet with Christ personally and individually and there find all the needs of a groaning creation are met by the fullness that dwells in Him. Love is not a thing. Love is a person, and God is that person.

Let us see now and take note of some of the strange and wonderful promises He left us for the last days. I am fully aware that the church has already explained away many of the wonderful things He left us as a sure inheritance. But these promises of Christ are true and, when they actually take place in those who believe them, their fulfillment is going to bring about the transformation of the ages.

We are not following some cunningly devised fable when we look in faith for Christ to manifest Himself to us personally. He has told us by His word of truth that, "unto those who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. There are many people today talking about a rapture when they

believe they will be caught away suddenly into heaven, but there are very, very few people who are looking for Him. If we can rid our minds of the church tradition of rapture for a while, we may be able to see more clearly what the scripture means when it promises that unto them that look for Him shall He appear. We have grown too busy in our numerous activities to be looking for Jesus to appear to us as He did to Mary, Peter, Thomas, and Paul and transform our lives by His glorious presence. But the hour is at hand when Christ will appear to those who are looking for Him and this will surely take place right while the multitude of Christians are busy with the usual forms and ceremonies of church activity. He will have come as a thief in the night and they will be unaware of it.

It would be well worth our time to consider prayerfully just what is actually stated in the promise of **Heb. 9:28** which says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto those who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This is a promise of God and can no more pass away than any other of God's promises. It clearly describes the purpose of the first coming of Christ - that is, to bear the sins of the world, but it also describes the purpose of His coming the second time, which is to bring full salvation to those who look for Him. That statement in itself explains Paul's remark in **Romans 13:11**, "And knowing the time, that now it is high time to awaken out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The two statements go hand in hand. It is a grave mistake to think that we entered into the fullness of salvation when we believed. Indeed we were believers. Indeed we were saved, but the nearer we get to the second coming of Christ the nearer our salvation comes, for He is going to appear the second time to bring us to the fullness of it.

Weymouth's translation of **Heb. 9:28** reads thus: "Christ also, having been once offered in sacrifice in order that He might bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, separated from sin, to those who are eagerly expecting Him to make their salvation complete." And Moffat: "Christ, after being once sacrificed to bear the sins of many, will appear again, not to deal with sin, but for the saving of those who are on the lookout for Him."

The Lord Jesus greatly puzzled His disciples by saying, "A little while and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." **John 14:16**. This statement so puzzled the disciples that they said to each other, "What is this that He saith unto us, a little while and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while and ye shall see Me; and because I go to Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith, a little while? We cannot tell what He saith." That statement has puzzled Christians of all ages, it has caused wonder in us all and because we have not understood it, we have come up with many theories and strange answers.

I have sometimes thought that Christ's answer to the question was intentionally ambiguous, but as I read it today, it seems to be a clear description of all that has happened to true believers from His first appearing to His second appearing. It portrays a weeping, lamenting, sorrowing, travailing church contrasted by a laughing, rejoicing world, but He tells them, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day ye shall ask Me nothing; verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you."

The traditions of the past have so dimmed our understanding that every truth is side-tracked to be made to conform to the doctrines and teachings of a Babylonish church. Thus it is that when we speak of Christ's appearing unto those who look for Him, our minds fall into the thought of a rapture and once again we begin to look for a moment when the whole Babylonish church is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and the whole world left to the Antichrist. I cannot accept it. The truth is that the existing church is not looking for the Lord. It is too engrossed in the pleasure of the world and its numerous activities and programs to want the Lord to come, but Christ will appear to the ones who are looking for Him and hoping that every shadow in His shadow, every knock at the door is His knock, and every footstep is the sound of His feet. Their hearts are crying, "Oh, Lord Jesus, how long?" Their lips are repeating, the prayer, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The great and glorious hope of the individual believer is that the Lord will manifest Himself to him and thus complete the work of salvation within Him. Unto such as desire His presence more than life itself and, except they see Him, for grief would gladly lay them down and die shall He appear. There are many instances of the

Lord's personal appearance to His people and whenever He appeared to any of them, a vast and wonderful change took place in their lives.

There is a beautiful story in Luke 24 that tells of one of the many appearances of Christ and of the transforming results that followed. The blessed Lord had been crucified and laid away in the tomb. With the death of this great prophet of God, who they thought should have redeemed Israel, faith and hope had ebbed from their lives as the tides of the sea ebb from the shores leaving unknown rocks and sinking sands. The sun, darkened for three hours at Calvary, had now set beyond their little horizon and with it the last faint rays of hope had faded into darkness. Two disappointed and heartbroken disciples trudged wearily down the road to the little village of Emmaus. They might as well go home, they thought. There was nothing else left to do. As they plodded their weary way homeward, their rough hands of toil brushed away the blinding tears that crowded unbidden o'er their sight. Choking back the sobs of sadness and disappointment, they communed with each other and recounted with brokenhearted bitterness the events of the past few days. As they communed and reasoned, a shadow fell across their path and a stranger drew near who, walking with them, asked the meaning of their sorrow. The record reads thus.

"And, behold, two of them went the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him, and He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and the people and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. But we trusted that it should have been He, which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women of our company made us astonished which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came saying they had also seen a vision of angels which said that He was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulcher and found it even as the women had said; but they saw Him not.

Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"] And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went; and He made as though He would have gone further, but they constrained him saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew Him and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures; and they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen and hath appeared to Simon, and they told what things were done in the way and how He was made known by the breaking of bread."

My heart leaps within me for joy as I contemplate this wonderful story and anticipate the glad hour when He shall appear in some like manner to you and to me and to all others who love His appearing. I do not know the day nor the hour of His appearing, but I do know that, when our eyes behold Him, our tears of sorrow will turn to pearls of praise, our broken chords will vibrate once more, and in a moment of time we shall be like Him for we shall see him as He is. From the distant mountain peaks of faith comes an echo clear as vesper ringing. It is the voice of Job sounding from out the centuries past, "I know that my Redeemer liveth and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and if after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in My flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another." This is the kind of appearing that is going to make the difference and change our lives and make us new creatures. And when it happens, it will do more for us in the twinkling of an eye than all the sermons, teachings, and doctrines have ever done for us in a lifetime. Furthermore, those unto whom the Lord has thus appeared will be able to accomplish more for the earth in a moment of time than in a whole lifetime spent in the shallows of our present state.

I have often thought of the wonderful words "no man can see God and live." Oh how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me to reverently say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live as they used to live, but they are transformed. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into that same image of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure he is changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion. There is no possibility of any man's ever being the same again or living as he used to live once he has personally met the Lord and his eyes have beheld Him, the King in his beauty. "As for me," said David, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." My own heart answers, Amen. That is when I, too, shall be fully satisfied.

There are few recorded instances of Christ's appearances more enlightening than the account of Christ's personal revealing of Himself to Thomas. It is a sobering thing to know that a man could be with Jesus for three years and yet never really see Him. But truly a man could be with Jesus three thousand years and never see Him until it pleased God to open his eyes and understanding. Thomas was naturally slow to believe. By his very nature he was inclined to be a doubter. In any case the stories about the resurrection of Jesus sounded like idle tales in his ears. It may have been as a result of this doubt that he was absent when Christ appeared to the other ten, for "Thomas called Didymus was not with them when Jesus came." Was he not the man who had said, "Lord, we know not where thou goest and how can we know the way"? And was it not he who at Lazarus' death had said, "Let us go that we may die with Him," and was he not now saying, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe"? But he did not know what a transformation would take place in his life when his eyes would see the resurrected Christ. How he longed to see the Lord, but like many of us doubters now he was almost beyond hope that he would see Him again. He did not know one glimpse of the Son of God would pierce the gloomy mists of doubt and throw a rainbow of hope about his shoulders. "Reach hither thy finger," said Jesus, "and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing." And Thomas answered and said unto Him, "My Lord and my God!" Gone were the gloomy doubts. Gone were the mists of fear and unbelief. Thomas has seen the risen Lord. He is transformed by the presence divine. Church history records that after seeing Christ none of the disciples ever exceeded Thomas for his fervent faith and labor of love until the day he gladly laid down his life for Christ.

Saul of Tarsus was a hard-headed bigot if one ever lived. It is difficult for a man who has been strictly trained in tradition from childhood to have any inclination to change. We cannot help but admire the man and his background as it is recorded in sacred writ. Few men have ever been able to boast of a better record after the natural than Saul and well he was aware of it. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness of the law, blameless. Phil. 3:5-6. He had been taught by the great teacher Gamaliel, and had risen above many who were his equals. His zeal for God and the law stopped at nothing less than a determined effort to stamp out Christianity at all cost and by any method. With this thought in mind he was on his way to Damascus to bind and chain the Christians and bring them to Jerusalem when Jesus Christ met him and revealed Himself to him.

As he rode along the road to Damascus, his mind was filled with hate both against Christ and against Christians. His heart rejoiced at the thought of the persecution and slaughter he was about to bring upon them. Yet his heart was not all bad, for he was doing it ignorantly in unbelief and he thought he did God a service. Suddenly a light above the brightness of the sun shone upon him and he, falling to the earth, heard a voice speaking to him. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art thou Lord?" he asked, and the Lord replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And he trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And He said, "Arise and go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Years later when Paul was writing to the Galatians, he said, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Flesh and blood and sermons of men can never do for anyone what Jesus can do. A whole volume could not rightly give account of the works and the glorious life of this man after Jesus revealed Himself to him. But Paul increased the more in strength and confounded the Jews, which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.

Acts 9:22. No life has meant more to the world than Paul's after he saw the Lord. He must have realized how much he owed to the revelation of Christ in his life when he said of Jesus, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles, and last of all He was seen of me also as one born out of due time. ... But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, and yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." **1 Cor. 15:5-10.**

The greatest need of Christians today is to meet with Jesus. One moment of such an open revelation of Him will bring about a transformation such as nothing else could bring. Whether the Lord appeared in the New Testament or the Old, the result was always the same. It brought complete transformation to the one who met Him. What a message is brought to our hearts by Job when he said, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear." Even this did indescribable good to his soul, for no man was more righteous than Job. But when the next phase of his experience came, he exclaimed in awe, "But now mine eye seeth Thee," and he was a completely transformed man. The glory of God's presence had made him look desperately unclean until now he cried in penitence, "Wherefore I do abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Many times, no doubt, you get desperately restless because of the apparent inactivity that besets you. I certainly do, but in waiting on God He has spoken to my heart and made it crystal clear that, until my mind is completely free from every last vestige of Babylon's harlot system, I shall not see His blessed face. Nothing is more real to my spirit than the truth that by God's grace we must come out of her. There is no use in coming out of one phase in Babylon and then starting up the same old thing over again in another place with a little different setup, for that really only amounts to the birth of one more harlot in the same great mysterious system of Babylon. There is something deep within me that tells me that the kingdom of heaven is not going to be launched from the same old launching pad we have used for the past two thousand years. It is going to be as different from the systems of the existing church as the ministry of John the Baptist was different from the forms and ritualistic ceremonies of the Pharisees. People will think you a fool and a fanatic to hold to such notions, but this is the way it will be. I have no hesitation in saying that I do not believe in the church's frantic programs for the conversion of the heathen and of the world. It never has worked, it is not working now, and it never will work. What the church now does and what Jesus and the apostles did, are not the same thing at all. They went in the power of God. Today they depend on organization and money. I do not believe that the Church is right in proclaiming that, if the heathen are not reached now, they will be lost forever. Such human teaching makes God's wisdom foolishness, His omnipotence, impotence; omniscience, thoughtlessness; His love, hate; His purpose, aimlessness, and His glory, shame. It makes the devil to be stronger than God, and makes an all-wise, almighty God depend on the impotence of men. The Bible contains marvelous promises for the heathen and when He is ready to reveal Himself to them, they will come. The church, like the Pharisees, compasses land and sea to make a proselyte and often they are worse than before.

If we really searched the scripture to find out what God is doing in this age, we would soon find out that we are not in the midst of some frantic scramble to drag as many unwilling victims as possible from an inferno that somehow got out of God's control, but rather we are in a perfectly ordered plan in which God is calling out a people and preparing out of them a people for the government of the kingdom and of the ages to come, and in the dispensation of the fullness of times - the dispensation following the kingdom - God's grace will be extended to every creature. Can any sensible man deny that this is what Paul taught in **Eph. 1:9-11**: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in Him. In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." That is minutely the plan of God. The churches' gruesome doctrines of rue and torment in a blazing hell for sinners, who have never heard that God had a Son, would seem to me to charge the blessed Lord with crimes more heartless and inconsistent than those of Adolph Eichmann.

The desperate crying need of the true Zion is to be completely delivered from the daughter of Babylon. Our true condition is perfectly described in the words of the prophet Zechariah. **Zech. 2:7**. "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon." The true church, the elect of God, has dwelt so long with Babylon that we imagine she is our true mother. Like ducklings hatched by a chicken we accept her as our mother though all our ways are contrary to her. Babylon has invaded the minds of people until they are at a loss to

think without her. But the Lord has begun to purge away the filth of the daughter of Zion by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. Isa. 4:3-6. It must be of this that Zechariah spoke when he said, "And He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan was standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire! Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel, and He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him; and unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment." **Zech. 3:1-4.**

In connection with the above it is clearly seen that nothing will deliver us from the filth of Babylon like meeting the Lord face to face. Was that not Paul's experience when he met Christ? He took all his past goodness, all his ancient tradition, all his natural descent, all his righteousness after the law, and threw it on the dung pile and reckoned that everything that had been a gain to him in the past was now nothing but a loss. Phil. 3:4-9. It will be exactly the same with you and me. All this Babylonish tradition with all its commendable works, its righteousness, and its program will be found to be like salt that has lost its savor fit only for the dung pile.

This Joshua who stood before the Lord clothed in filthy garments is you and me dressed in the garments of Babylon, (the great church system). But notice, please, that this Joshua met with the Angel of the Lord (which is Christ). He stood before Him and new garments were put on him. A fair miter was placed on Joshua's head, (this is the mind of Christ), and he was commanded to walk in the ways of the Lord. This is the will of God. Ah, what a difference it makes to meet with Jesus. How soon the filth of the carnal mind begins to disappear with all its human ways of looking at things, and that glorious fair miter, the mind of Christ, begins to change our lives with their carnal outlook, causing us to walk in the will of God and become men to be wondered at. (Verse 8). It makes us branches of the glorious vine, and bids us call every man our neighbor under the vine (Christ) and under the fig tree (God's chosen Israel). Please read verses 8-10.

There is never time nor space to consider these blessed truths as we should consider them. We will have to omit from our study list many of the personal appearances of the Lord as recorded in the scripture and consider them in our closets of prayer before the Lord. The appearances of Christ to individuals and companies of individuals were so frequent throughout the New Testament that I would say we had every right to look for and long for that transforming experience ourselves. What a tragic loss there would have been to the story of the resurrection if Jesus had not appeared to a weeping woman who stood numb with grief, peering into an empty sepulcher for the body of her blessed Lord. Hearing footsteps behind her, she turned and saw Jesus standing, and knew Him not. "Why weepest thou?" He asked. "Whom seekest thou?" And she, supposing Him to have been the gardener, answered amid her sobs, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." Jesus said unto her, "Mary!!" It was the voice she knew and loved so well. There was no mistaking it. That was the voice, which had commanded seven devils to leave her body. She had heard that voice call men from out the tomb and still angry storms by a word. Yes, she knew it well. "Rabboni!!" she exclaimed with enraptured awe, and fell at His feet. But He bade her not to touch Him, saying "Go to My brethren and tell them I ascend unto My Father and your Father and to My God and your God." John 20:11-18.

What assurance would have been lacking had He not appeared personally to the disciples as with locked doors they sat huddled in fear of the Jews, mourning and weeping over what seemed to be the greatest loss the world had ever sustained. But see how hope banishes fear as light banishes darkness when He stood in their midst, saying, "Peace be unto you," and showing them His hands and His side. Perhaps one of the greatest understatements of all time is contained in the words, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." **John 20:19-23.**

What a change took place in Thomas as he cried, "My Lord and my God!" at the appearing of Christ, and in Peter as he girt his fisher's cloak about him and cast himself into the sea to hurry to Him. John 21:2-4. What indescribable joy must have filled the two Marys as Jesus met them, saying, "All Hail," and they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. Matt 28:8,9. See also Acts 1:3-11 and Cor. 15:7. If Jesus had not appeared personally to Paul, do you think we would have the undying truth today that we read in all his epistles? Had He not appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos, would we have had the glorious truth of the Revelation? Would John himself have known that fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, which he wrote about

afterward in his epistle, saying, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"! **1 John 1:3-4.**

I may be wrong in what I am going to say, but I think there is excellent reason to believe that every writer of the New Testament had met Christ personally and individually. I am not merely referring to His life on earth, but I mean that at some time after the resurrection Jesus had appeared to them, and because He had thus appeared, their lives had been so changed, their minds so transformed that they simply were not the same men and women they were before He met them. God forbid that I should seem mysterious in my talk, but there must come a day when His promises will find their fulfillment. It is not a catching away into the sky that we need. It is a revelation of Jesus Christ to our individual hearts. Then will our eyes and our understandings be opened and our innermost beings transformed. We need that which will make Christ to be far more than an historical character. We need to meet Him and see Him as the Son of the living God.

The following story quoted from abundant experience of the renowned evangelist, Charles S. Price, will help us to see the necessity of meeting Jesus Christ face to face.

"It is the poor and the needy who have been given so many good things, and it is the rich whom He has sent empty away. A crippled man was brought to the meetings some years ago. Those who brought him told me he was a man possessed of all the faith in the world and one who was known in the community for his good life and works. He was a good-living man and, no doubt, loved his Lord; but he was to go away from more than one service because of the one thing that he lacked, and which His Master was ultimately to reveal to his mind. "How the people prayed for that cripple! I can see him now, struggling to rise in answer to the entreaties of the people that he arose in faith and walk. Many times I knelt by the side of his chair and rebuked the power, which bound him. The days went by and yet there was no sign of his healing - no acquiescence had come from the skies in response to prayer. One afternoon they wheeled him to a corner in the building. He asked the people to leave the two of us alone, and then said something, which has lingered in the chambers of my memory.

"What a failure I am," he declared. "I came here strong in what I thought was my faith in the Lord. As I look deeply into my heart I find something about which I wish to confess. What a poor, miserable failure I have been. I have been spiritually proud of the fact that people have pointed to me as a man who suffered without complaining. They pointed me out as the man who never grumbled, although he had a cross to bear. I grew proud of my reputation and I can see now that what I termed my goodness has been self-righteousness in the sight of my Lord.

"He put his face in his hands and wept. There was something so pathetic about that poor, crippled man that the tears welled up in my eyes too. I reached out my hands and put them on his head and commenced to pray. I prayed for his healing; and, as I prayed, he stopped me. "Dr. Price," he said, "I don't need healing half as much as I need Jesus. I am so hungry for His presence. More than anything else in my life, I want to know Him better, and I am content to spend my days in this chair if only He will flood this self-righteous heart of mine with His peace and love." So I watched the cripple in the wheel chair disappear around the corner of the building.

"He went away quietly, and my heart went with him, as they wheeled him out of the building. All the way home my heart was singing for him the hymn:

"Saviour, Saviour, hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by!"

"A broken and a contrite heart will He not despise! How sweet it is to come to the end of self! How wonderful, after we have toiled all night and have caught nothing, that He condescends to wait for us on the shore! How gracious the voice that tells us to cast our nets on the right side of the boat, that our joy might be full! What determines which is the right side of a boat? Why, the way it is going, of course. You will soon find out where the right side is if your boat is going toward Jesus; and the boat must be empty, if you would bring the Nazarene on board.

"A few days later I was leaving the building in company with Dr. Manchester, the man who buried President McKinley. At the door of the auditorium sat the man in his wheel chair, patiently waiting for the doors to open for the evening service. The afternoon meeting was over. Dr. Manchester looked at the face of the crippled man and stopped. Then he walked over to him and I followed. "Are you coming for prayer?" he asked.

"For prayer and to receive healing," as the reply. There was something different about the man. His voice - his tone - his eyes - such a look of reflected glory on his face. I knew something had happened. "Tell me," I said, "What has happened? My brother, I discern you have experienced something that is so wonderful I can feel its glory, though I do not know what it is."

"Then he told me he had been with Jesus. He had spent the night in prayer - not in intercession alone, but in praise and worship. He told me that at four in the morning a consciousness of the presence of His Lord had overwhelmed him. He knew Jesus was in his room in a special way. He told me how his voice in adoration had commenced to praise his Lord. He said that he then became conscious of an infusion of the Life Divine. Something passed from Jesus to him; and he felt as though a fog had rolled away from his heart and mind. From that moment on he knew his struggles were over; and a sweet and holy peace was wrapped around his soul. He told us that now he knew, when once again he came to obey his Lord in the anointing with oil, strength would flow from Jesus, and life divine would be given him to restore him to health and strength.

"As I looked into Dr. Manchester's face, I noticed that tears stood in his eyes. Then he spoke, "Why does this man have to wait until tonight?"

"He does not," I replied. "The Great Physician is here now. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

"A moment later it was over. Out of his wheel chair arose that man. He ran and jumped and praised the Lord for his deliverance. It was a miracle of power divine. Around him on the snowy street, men and women gathered first to praise, and then to pray. Unsaved hearts were broken, and many were the penitential tears that were shed! More than once I have been with a group of disciples, struggling at the foot of a mountain; and oh, how my heart can testify to the difference it makes when into the midst of our helplessness Jesus Himself comes walking."

The glorious appearing of Christ is called that blessed hope. Let other men spend their time in arguing the how, why, when, and wherefore but let it be that you and I, who realize that the world's greatest need is men who have met with Jesus, have heard His voice, have seen His face, and have felt His transforming power, begin our earnest watching that we may be found ready and waiting when He appears. Christ will appear to those who look for Him. He is coming for those who are watching. What I say unto one I say unto all. Watch!! He will not intrude into the picture show to reveal Himself to us. He will not even interrupt our T.V. or earthly amusement. Neither will He interfere with those who are engrossed in worldly plans. If we are going to see Him when He comes, we are going to need to be watching and listening for Him.

How well I remember my old boyhood home out on the boundless Canadian prairies. Our farmstead was twelve miles from the nearest town and in the pioneer days our only means of travel was by team and wagon. I do not think there is any place on earth that can be so completely silent as the vast prairies at night time. Their wonderful solitude causes one to stand in His presence. One of the most wonderful experiences of my life has been to stand alone in that immense vastness and listen intently to try to catch some faint sound of movement or life of some kind. With not even a breath of air moving there was no sound at all, and whenever there was a sound it could be heard for miles. How often when father or brothers had gone away to the village in the morning and were returning late at night, we would stand outdoors and listen for the sound of wagon wheels in the distance. Returning at intervals, we would listen again and again until at last we could hear the sound we were waiting for. Then we would light the dim old kerosene lantern and be waiting on the doorstep to welcome them home. I shall never forget those good and wonderful days. But tonight I am not listening and waiting for the sound of a wagon rumbling over the plains. I am standing at the door waiting, looking, and longing for Jesus to come; and He is sending His message before Him, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

There is a great and damning fault among Christians that seems to be past explanation. It is a fault that has developed and grown more grotesque as the years have come and gone. Men and women have come to desire and covet spiritual things, not for the glory of God and the honor of His eternal purpose, but that they themselves might become great men in the earth. Many a man has spent long periods in fasting that he might attain a great spiritual gift, yet all the time he is supposedly seeking the gift his talk shows that his mind is full of hope that he will become a great and powerful minister to whom people will look with awe and pride. This is wrong seeking and a very great evil. Many a man has sought after the gift of healing - not because he was burdened for the sick, but because the gift would bring him honor among the people. He expected it would bring him crowds and fame and money. Oh, let men search their hearts before they ask of God lest they ask amiss to consume it upon their own lusts. James 4:3. The result of such asking is spiritual death. It is of the carnal mind and hateful in God's sight. The carnal mind is always desirous of spiritual gifts! It likes to appear honored of God and accepted. That is why there are so many false prophets, false teachers, false healers, and also miracle workers in the world. Men who love people to think they are the great power of God will, for all their apparent wonders, hear God tell them on that day, "I never knew you." We have an example of this kind of man in **Acts 8:9-10**. "But there was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime used sorceries and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, to whom the people gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying. This man is the great power of God." There are such men in our day who have similarly bewitched the people. They clamor for spectacular gifts that they might have a spectacular following. This is not the way a man should seek a gift.

I greatly fear that many people will desire to see the face of Christ in the same inquisitive manner - not because they love Him or long to be like Him, but only to see what God would look like. Their interest is more on the level of a crowd rushing to see the President or the Queen or of nosey little children crowding around to catch a glimpse of the victim of a tragic accident. In **Exodus 19:12-21** we gave a perfect example of this very thing. At the time of the law God commanded Moses in these words: "Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about saying, Take heed unto yourselves that ye go not into the mount or touch the border of it: - and the Lord said unto Moses. Go down; charge the people lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." Imagine that! Lest they break through to gaze! It was only their curiosity they wanted to satisfy. They were inquisitive, prying, peeping Toms. Their only interest in God was to gape and stare.

I am not exaggerating when I say that the average Christian has a similar attitude toward God and miracles. It is better not to approach to God at all than to approach with the attitude of sightseer.

David said, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning." **Psa. 130:6**. This is the desire men should have when they seek the face of Christ. Men and women who with burning love and desire stand weeping for His presence will see Him when He comes and be found ready and waiting to be changed by the glory of His presence into that same image. Their longing prayer shall be, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flocks to rest at noon." **Songs 1:7**. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth, but I found Him not. I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad way I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but found Him not. The watchmen that went about the city found me; To whom I said, saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth." **Songs 3:1-5**.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient. Establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." **James 5:7-8**. "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." **1 John 3:2-3**. And they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads. He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come. Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER FIVE THE OVERSHADOWING PRESENCE

As we walk through the wilderness of this world, there can be no greater need among men than communion with Christ. Having written the previous chapters, there comes an intense awareness that the revelation of any great mystery must be vanity and utter futility if the key to the door through which we enter to become partakers of the riches of God's inheritance remains hidden from us. However towering and forbidding the walls that bar our progress to the distant hills sublime may be, we are faced with no problem whatsoever if in our hands we hold the key that unlocks the inhospitable gates. Then may our happy souls command, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." **Psa. 24:9**. But, if no key to the door is in our hand, weary ourselves as we may, we shall not find admittance to the celestial storehouse our vision beheld afar.

Upon a time almost two thousand years ago our blessed Lord scathingly reproached those blind leaders of the blind, who were none other than the bigoted ecclesiastics that imagined themselves to be the spiritual leaders of the day. With derisive rebuke He cried, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." **Luke 11:52**. Oh, what a blistering rebuke that was! The men who were looked to as the spiritual leaders of the people of God were the ones who were guilty of hiding the key so that neither themselves nor those who followed them were able to enter in to the green pastures of truth. He must be a blind soul indeed who cannot see that the ministers of the church system, who now are looked to as spiritual leaders of our day, are for the most part blind guides who see no vision of things that are nor things that are to be - who know not where they are going nor how to get there. Yet Christians, who hold in their hands the promise of eternal things, sit apathetically at their feet year after dreary year listening to their infantile fairy tales and giving abundantly of their means to assist them in their grandiose schemes, while the world sinks ever downward into the dismal abyss of crime, divorce, broken homes, sodomy, vandalism and every rebellion that the bottomless pit can produce. Sinners and Christians alike wander and lose their way as they blindly grope in the abysmal darkness that covers the earth and the gross darkness that covers the people of God.

If we will but listen again to our Lord's rebuke and denunciation of these blind guides, we will hear Him say, "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge, for ye enter not in." Open your eyes now, O Christian, and you will see that, at the very moment in which He said the key of knowledge was taken away from the people, in that same sentence He reveals to us what the key of knowledge really is in these words: Ye enter not in. Ah! This, then, is the strange and unexpected discovery of the "key" to enter in. Actually there are no barred doors at all. We only imagine it to be so. The key is to enter in through the unlocked door. Long centuries ago when the life blood of Jesus Christ flowed from Him to open the fountain in the house of David for sin and uncleanness, that life blood He shed forth was eternal life. That eternal life today enters the soul of every believer to quicken him and make of him a new creation. When our blessed Lord worshipfully bowed His sacred head and said to God, His Father, to the world and all creatures therein, "It is finished", at that most dramatic moment in all the history of earth the veil in the temple was rent asunder - not from bottom to top by man - but from top to bottom by the hand of God, and there before their wondering eyes for the first time in the history of fallen humanity the way into the holiest of all was made not only visible but open wide to all. For that very reason the apostle, endued with the wisdom of God, proclaimed this heavenly message: "Wherefore, brethren, let us come with boldness into the holiest of all by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." No longer need we seek the key. The key is to enter in through Christ, the unlocked door.

Yet, true to the dark pattern of the ages, those unbelieving Jews sewed the riven veil back together again to bar from our vision the more excellent glory that shines like a radiant sun just beyond the veil, that is to say, our own flesh. The key to entering into the more excellent glory so expressly taught in scripture and in the chapters of this book is nothing more or less than this: that we "enter in", that we stand no longer without, listlessly dandling the eternal promises in our heads and refusing to stretch forth our hand of faith or move our unwilling feet, but that we come with boldness, casting off the "fear of the Jews", those perennial enemies of Christ and all His ways; the fear of the preachers, who say and do not; the fear of leaders, those blind leaders of the blind; that we cast off all subservience to denominations, those wretched prison walls behind which dwarfed Christians are kept chained in their cells of sectarianism and the strait jackets of unbelief. Cast off their bondage and their fear and come with boldness to Christ, the unlocked door. By Him and Him alone, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and he shall go in and out and find pasture. Before us stands Christ, the door. He is a door unlocked. We need no other key than this - that we enter in. Let those who will remain without, but

let us enter in to the holiest of all by this new and living way, whither the forerunner hath for us entered, even Jesus Christ, made a High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

These secrets we must know that we may enter in to the presence of God. Beyond the great veil that hung between the holy place and the holiest of all was the Shekinah, that unspeakable light of God's presence, the light which no unclean man approaches. Into the glory of that realm only the High Priest was allowed to enter, and that but once a year; but when our great Christ came, being made an High Priest - not after the earthly order of Aaron, but after the heavenly order of Melchisedec - then the door was opened wide that we all may freely enter once more into the very presence of God.

Once the blessed Christ of beauty
Was veiled off from human view;
But through suffering death and sorrow
He has rent the veil in two.

And why should it not be thus? Those priests of Aaron could not give eternal life because their own lives were passing away, each one ending in death, but this High Priest, Christ Jesus our risen Lord, because He "ever liveth", has restored to us through the shedding of His life blood that eternal life which departed from us in that dark day of transgression in Eden long, long ago.

It is only in the presence of God that men truly live. Apart from Him and apart from His presence all is death. In Him and Him alone is life - life eternal. Except He abides in us and we abide in Him, we have no life. "I am the vine," He said. "Ye are the branches... If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." "I am the door." Thus spoke our Lord, and may I add, He is the unlocked door. "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Let us now earnestly consider the importance of the presence of God and, in speaking of this living presence, let us find that the presence of God is something far more than a pretty theory. Instead and in truth it is that shadowing Shekinah, that presence which is none other than God Himself. As I was considering this awe inspiring wonder of the presence of God, this glory that emanates and radiates as an aura from God Himself, I was solemnized as the truth began to dawn like a sunrise upon me. It was this: After Adamic man had entered into the transgression that dark day when angels hushed their singing and all the world stood still, it is said, "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." **Gen. 3:8.** He, who only yesterday in the cool of the evening had walked in the very presence of God,

Where the perfumed breeze
Swept through the trees
In that heaven blest land of Eden,

Now with sorrow, nakedness and a darkened mind hid himself in fear from the presence of God among the trees of the garden, becoming almost identical to those pre-Adamic nations who inhabited the world before him. The image of God had departed from him. The heavenly garment of light had vanished from him and he stood in darkness among the trees of the garden, hiding from God's presence, naked and terribly ashamed. Thus in darkness must man ever remain until that gladsome day when he by faith enters once again into the presence from which he hid by the new and living way which Christ has consecrated for us, opening wide the door before us in our wonderful day of grace.

It is never my wish to be controversial and I suggest that what the reader cannot see he lay aside. Never say no and slam the door, for the moment you say no, you close the door and God can teach you nothing. Thus you are doomed to remain in those pharisaical prisons where men are drowned in human tradition.

Some time ago, while reading the story of the healing of a certain blind man, Mark 8, I was arrested by these words: "And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town: and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking." Then said I to the Lord, "Whatever does this mean - I see men as trees?" It is seldom that the Lord immediately shows us the answer to our questions, but if we wait patiently, sooner or later He will reveal

the truth to us. As time went on, He began to reveal that trees in scripture not only refer to those magnificent monarchs that lift their leafy arms as if in praise to God, but represent in many, if not most, instances nations of men.

As we read the scripture, we discover that many nations become clearly identifiable as trees. Perhaps the foremost example of this is found in the prophecy of Ezekiel. In **Ezekiel 31:3** the mighty Assyrian is described in this manner: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs." Then to our amazement we are told in verses 8 and 9 that this same Assyrian was a tree in the garden of God. Here it is. "The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches, so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him." This verse is not talking about a tree nor an individual, but a great nation that was in Eden. Though this is not our subject now, if you look, you will find that the other trees - the oak, the fir, the chestnut, the fig tree and the olive - are all symbols of nations. "I see men as trees, walking."

Thus we find our father Adam, who only yesterday was clothed with light and filled with wisdom above all other races on earth, now fallen, stripped of his heavenly glory and abandoned by the light and, except for the fair color of his skin, he was not unlike the other races about him. In fear he hid himself from the presence of God among the trees of the garden because now, in his fallen state, he was far more in their earthly image than in the image of the heavenly.

This sad and pitiful picture has been with us throughout the ages as God's people, once living under the shadow of His presence by day and being led and given light by the pillar of fire by night, began to demand as they did in the days of Samuel, "Give us a king to reign over us that we might be like the other nations" 1 Sam. 8:1-6, or to cry, "Up, make us gods to go before us, for as for this man Moses, we know not what has become of him". Exod. 32:1-6. The words "we will not have this man to rule over us," Luke 19:14, have been the words of man's rejection of God ever since Eden, and undoubtedly before that; but God has an elect people according to His grace, who even now are entering beyond the riven veil into the holiest of all to live and move and have their being in that glorious presence which is the Elohim Himself and the Immanuel of God.

O, my Father, Thou who dwellest
In a high and holy place,
Yet shall I regain Thy presence
And again behold Thy face.
Day by day Thy Spirit leadeth
Ever upward unto Thee,
Till at last I find perfection
In Thy pure reality.

I find words and phrases totally inadequate to portray the transforming glory prepared for the man who would dwell in the presence of God and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. At the dedication of Solomon's temple the presence of God filled the house with such indescribable glory that the priests could not stand to minister. 2 Chron. 5:13-14. God's presence is no fanciful flight of imagination. It is a reality beyond man's power to understand. It is an invisible Spirit felt to be near. It is Jehovah Shammah - the Lord is present. We can scarcely be wrong in saying that ever since the transgression in Eden men have been hiding themselves from His presence and God's people as well as sinners find themselves shrinking from its transforming glory as a worm shrinks from a fire. We must remember that this presence of which we speak is the Shekinah. It is the presence of Christ. It is the fire that formed the pillar over the tabernacle. It is the fire that fell on the altar in the days of Moses, never to be extinguished through all of Israel's journeys. Compare Lev. 9:24 with Lev. 6:12. This is the fire that consumed the sacrifices. It is the fire that fell from heaven to destroy the prophets of Baal and it is the same fire that fell at Pentecost, transforming men of common clay into burning, holy, powerful sons of God, whose power and boldness turned the world upside down, accomplishing in the hearts of unlearned and ignorant men a transformation that culture and education could never achieve in a thousand generations.

Then again this marvelous presence may come as a still small voice without any other manifestation at all. Thus it came to Elijah when he stood in the mouth of his cave, his mantle reverently wrapped about his head, while he listened with awe to the instruction of the Almighty. Who can possibly say in what manner the great Jehovah Shammah will manifest Himself to us or how He will make His presence known? I for one cannot say, because this is a relationship between each of us and the Almighty Elohim that can only be experienced. It can never be explained nor pried into. It must be experienced by those who abide under his shadow.

A. B. Simpson was a saintly man of God who learned of the presence of God, not from books, but by experience. We quote here a few words of his testimony for the enlightenment of all who are willing to learn by them.

"A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a book called True Peace. It was an old medieval message and it had but one thought - that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me, if I would only get still enough to hear His voice. I thought this would be a very easy matter, and so I began to get still. But no sooner had I commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears - a thousand clamoring notes without and within until I could hear nothing but their noise and din.

"Some were my own voice, my own questions. Some were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and the voices of the world of turmoil. In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with acclamations of unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and answer some of them, but God said, "Be still and know that I am God."

"Then came the conflict of thought for tomorrow and its duties and cares. But God said, 'Be still.' And, as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that, when the voices ceased (or I ceased to hear them), there was a still, small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort.

"As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, the voice of wisdom, the voice of duty. And I did not need to think so hard, nor pray so hard, nor trust so hard. That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul; it was God's life and strength for soul and body and became the substance of all knowledge and all prayer and all blessings, for it was the living God Himself as my life, my all.

"It is thus that our spirit drinks in the life of the risen Lord and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like a flower that has drunk in through the shades of night the cool and crystal drops of dew. But as dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to a restless soul.

"O the calm, the rest, the peace which comes as we wait in His presence until we hear from Him!"

Be still, just now be still!
There comes a presence very mild and sweet;
White are the sandals of His noiseless feet.
It is the Comforter whom Jesus sent
To teach thee that the words He uttered meant.
The willing, waiting spirit He doth fill.
If thou wouldst hear His message,
Dear soul, be still.

Simpson

In the 32nd and 33rd chapters of Exodus the account of a great transgression committed by the children of Israel is given. The record reveals that, while Moses was in communion with God in Mt. Sinai, receiving the sacred law written by the finger of the Almighty, the children of Israel impatiently called upon Aaron, the brother of Moses, saying, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him." **Exod. 32:1.** Aaron in his irresolute and fickle vacillation cravenly bowed to their demand and made them a golden calf, of which they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." When Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it

and wickedly made a proclamation, saying, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought in peace offerings: and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." **Exod. 32:5-7**. This is the gist of the terrible story of their idolatry, and I shall add without any fear of sincere contradiction that the same feeble minded irresolution has blighted the history of God's people throughout the ages. No sooner has a great work of God begun than the rank and file of the people go awhoring after some visible god that their corrupt and carnal minds have devised. To it they slavishly give their worship and their gifts.

Throughout the pages of history this turning aside from the truth is evident. We will find its evil image in the history of every powerful religious movement, and if you look within, you may find this abominable shilly-shallying in your own heart, as I also have found in mine. In the days of Samuel it was not good enough, nor was it Israel's pleasure, that God Himself should be their King to provide their every need and go before them into battle. No! They wanted a visible king who would rule over them and go before them into battle so that they would be like the other nations. Thus they rejected the King of all kings and Lord of all lords in favor of some corrupt and vacillating man, and the Lord in His infinite grace and goodness did not cast them off entirely, but because they had rejected Him, He brought leanness into their souls. Many a battle was lost and much blood was shed until at last their wretched and carnal decision brought them into such bondage that, after the death of Solomon, they were so oppressed that the whole nation split asunder, and after many years more of strife, bloodshed, loss and idol worship, they were all carried away into captivity. Even then their Jehovah Shammah (the Lord is present) did not forsake them.

The New Testament records in some detail the unspeakable glories of Pentecost and the heavenly wonders spoken of in the book of Acts as the Holy Spirit filled the waiting throngs with Himself. Pentecost was the most transforming event that had ever occurred throughout the ages. Thousands of souls were saved. Lives were transformed. Sick were healed. Devils were cast out. Dead were raised to life again. The people were so changed and made new by the power and presence of the Lord that nothing could stand before them. But alas, alas! It was not long before there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews. Acts 6:1. Then later the Judaizers rose up, demanding that all the converts should be circumcised and commanded to keep the law. Acts 15:1-5. Blind leaders of the blind they were, unable to understand that these heavenly saints, transformed into Christ's image by the power of the Spirit, were circumcised, not in the flesh, but in the heart, and the law to them was not written on a stone nor was it staring at them from a scroll, but written indelibly by the Spirit of God in the tables of their hearts and in their reborn spirits and gloriously manifested in their very beings. O cursed carnality! How I despise thy slavish bondage and fear whereby thou hast corrupted the ways of God from Eden's fragrant garden to the dawn of the dispensation of the fullness of times! Pitifully sad it is that before the end of the first century A.D. John wrote, "Even now there are many antichrists." **1 Jno. 2:18**.

Antichrist, dear brethren, in the strictest sense does not indicate one that is against Christ, but one who is in the place of Christ. If we see this necessary fact, we see both that men and women can be antichrists and that sects and denominations can be antichrists. Many preachers today are so worshipped and admired by the people that they have put themselves in the place of Christ. The law of God is just and holy and good and it is the very mind of Christ, but if we put the "thou shall not" in place of the law of the Spirit of life, then we have put the commandment in place of the Spirit, where it ought not to be, and have unwittingly raised up an antichrist. I keep the ten commandments every day of my life, but my keeping them is not accomplished by tying them about my neck on a golden chain or by placing them in an ephod, as the priests did under the law. It is accomplished by the transforming power of the living Christ, the true Word of God, living and moving and having His being within this heart and temple which I am. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" is the word of the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Abide in Him and let His Word, His living Word, abide in you. This is the way of truth and the only way of victory and sonship. We no longer slavishly keep the law, but the law keeps us. There is none other way acceptable with Him. "O foolish Galatians... received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" **Gal. 2:1-2**.

Follow the course of every great revival or time of refreshing down through the ages and always without fail we will find some carnal man conniving to bring the move of the Spirit under human control and adjust the worship

according to his liking and his human way of looking at things. Well do I remember when the great move of the Spirit began in the little city of North Battleford, February 13, 1948. The glory of God's presence descended from heaven that blessed morning to dwell among us, and for many months it seemed to carry all things before it by the majesty of its celestial wave. The glory of that wonderful visitation began to sweep over all North America as city after city was visited by its blessed refreshing. Well do I remember the pastor of a large congregation, who had received the message with gladness, saying to me, "We will have to form some kind of an organization or people are just going to take this message and run with it." I did my best to warn him of the perils of any attempt to organize a move of the Spirit of God, but my warnings fell on deaf ears; and when I returned some months later, to my dismay he had membership cards in the hands of the ministers round about and, of course, he himself was the head and king pin. Thus it has always been as carnal man seeks to dethrone the Almighty that he might set himself in authority. Thus "he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." That is what antichrist is. Whether he be a man or an organization of men, that wicked spirit grows until the whole system is antichrist.

There are, praise be unto God, always those who are not content to bow to the Babylonian image of human organization. Their hearts refuse to be satisfied with less than the presence of God. They refuse to have men rule over them or lead them. They seek only His presence. They abhor and refuse the antichrist doctrine of shepherding that places man instead of Christ. There is one ambition I have in life. I pray it may not be denied. I desire that, when my earthly pilgrimage is over, the tens of thousands who have read my writings or listened to my sermons may be found to be so enamored with Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd - Jehovah Ra-ah - that they will scarcely notice that I am gone.

As the antichrist spirit showed its ugly head in the offerings of Cain in Eden, so now it manifests its rebellion with the setting up of the calf of gold, and had it not been for the intercession that the Spirit of God laid upon His servant Moses, the whole nation of Israel would have been wiped out. In the midst of all the confusion that followed this great sin of idolatry (Exodus 32 and 33), Moses took the tabernacle, from which the presence of God had departed, and pitched it outside the camp of Israel. Exod. 33:7. And after he had done so, the cloud and the pillar of God's presence, that had departed, descended once again upon it. Verses 9-11. Then every person who sought the Lord went outside the camp of Israel to the tabernacle. What an infinite lesson this is for us today! Once the people of God become filled with man's carnal ways and man's worship, the Spirit of God withdraws from their midst and an evil spirit, a false, deceiving spirit, comes to take His place, and because they are deceived, they think they are right. For this reason the great apostle wrote, "[Wherefore let us go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.](#)" And again he wrote, "[Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.](#)" **2 Cor. 6:17.** Christ in the Revelation echoes the call: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins or receive of her plagues." Stay in the camp if you want to, my brethren, but you will find in the end that God is not there.

Careless seems the great Avenger!
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the Word.
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch upon His own.

Then to side with truth is noble,
When we share her wretched crust
Ere her cause brings fame and profit
And 'tis prosperous to be just.
Then it is the brave man chooses
While the coward stands aside,

Doubting in his abject spirit
Till His Lord is crucified
And the multitude makes virtue
Of the faith they have denied.
New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth.
They must ever up and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth.
Lo! Before us gleams her campfires;
We ourselves must pilgrims be;
Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly
Through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the future's portal
With the past's blood rusted key.

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide
In the strife 'twixt truth and falsehood
For the good or evil side.
In the dawn of each new era
With a recognizing start
Nations wildly look as nation,
Standing with mute lips apart,
And grand truth, yet mightier manchild,
Leaps within the future's heart.

James Lowell

Take heed to the words of that wonderful poem. All who are willing to go unto Him without the camp to seek His presence will find how unspeakably true these phrases are.

So Moses pitched the tabernacle of the congregation outside the camp and all who sought the Lord went out there to worship God, for there and there alone may His presence be found. However offensive these words may be to those who tarry with the crowd, they are as true in our day as they were in the hour they came forth from the lips of Christ. The Spirit of God has withdrawn Himself from all human systems, the denominations and sects of men, and whether we wish to believe it or whether we do not, it still remains true that all who would seek Him and abide in His presence must do as Moses and Joshua and all others who sought the Lord did - go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. The Lord never intended any of us to have a continuing city here, but we seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God.

The worshipping of the golden calf constituted one of Israel's greatest calamities. I dare not take space here to say how this golden god men call money is part and parcel of all modern worship and religion. "Give us your gold," they seem to say, "and with it we will save the world." Flee, my friend, while yet there is time, from the wrath that is about to fall upon this golden calf, the god of Babylon. During Israel's unholy rebellion the Lord said unto Moses, "I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite... for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way." **Exod. 33:2-3**. But this promise brought only mourning to Moses. He was not satisfied that an angel should go before them. No power in heaven or earth could be a substitute for the presence of God. His heartfelt prayer - yes, his demand - was, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." **Exod. 33:15**. And God in grace and mercy accepted the repentance of the people and promised again, "My presence shall go with thee, and I shall give thee rest." **33:14**.

Our journey through the wilderness of this world is far too important to be attempted without His presence. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation, but the indwelling presence of Christ alone can change men into the image of God. Naught can we receive of the works of grace

apart from His abiding presence. The graces of His Spirit cannot be known apart from Him. Spiritual gifts apart from Him are a fake and a fraud. They are no longer gifts of the Spirit, but manifestations of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit cannot exist without His presence. It is utterly impossible. Human declarations of fidelity are of no value to God. If our consecration comes not by the Spirit, it is of the flesh and is therefore a falsehood. A lady once offered me a drink of whiskey. I said, "No, thank you, madam. I don't drink." "Ah," she said, "you signed the pledge and kept it." But no, I had not signed the pledge at all. I had been saved and that is what made the difference. That is the only transformation that is pleasing to Him. He does it all as we yield ourselves to His indwelling presence. Man may reform himself, but only the indwelling Christ can transform.

As we voyage along through this pilgrimage of life, we will find as we walk in His blessed abiding presence that there are very few decisions for us to make. They are all made for us and His presence, going before us, is leading us one step at a time. One of the sweetest memories I have is of a day when my small son trotted and skipped by my side along a busy street, all the while amusing me with his childish patter, but when we came to the busy intersection thronging with people and traffic, I felt his little hand slip into mine while he walked secure and unafraid through the dangers all about him.

There is a power whose care
Teaches my steps along the pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone wandering, but not lost.
He who from zone to zone
Guideth my uncertain flight
In the long, long night that I must walk alone
Will guide my steps aright.

CHAPTER SIX COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near. (Luke 24:15)

There is a more excellent glory, which our heavenly Father has prepared for His saints. It is the glory of incorruption and immortality. None but those who dwell in the transforming presence of Christ will find it. In the shadow of the Almighty is the secret place of the most High. This is the place of which the prophet David spoke, saying, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." **Psa. 91:1.** These are words of shining enlightenment. Here ordinary saints may dwell. Here they may abide eternally. No longer is the Holy Place confined to a corner of the wilderness tabernacle as it was in the days of Moses, but David, looking with prophetic vision far into the future, spoke of this our day when the door, which is Christ, standing wide open, would bid us enter the secret place of His presence. When the veil in the temple was rent asunder, the voice of the Almighty was proclaiming, "Let us come with boldness into the holiest of all by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." **Heb. 10:19.**

Only those who dwell in His presence will share in the more excellent glory of incorruption and only those who know the secret of communion with Christ will dwell in His presence. Let us then earnestly consider the truth that follows that we might better understand how man may commune with Christ and so abide in His presence forever. There seems to be a powerful message in the words, "As they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near." This impressive verse illumines our path, for communing with Christ is the key to abiding in His presence.

Times without number I have seen it happen that, when devout men and women begin to speak of Christ and commune together concerning Him, before many moments have passed by they become aware that Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit has joined the gathering to enlighten the understanding, make the dark things plain, quicken the mind and confirm their devotion. Oh, how unspeakably true it has proved to be that, where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He stands in the midst of them! The gatherings of which

the Saviour speaks are not pre-arranged meetings, announced in bold letters in the daily newspaper. These are gatherings arranged as if by chance, as was the communion between Cleopas and his wife on the Emmaus road. Wherever hungry, devoted hearts are reaching out to Christ, there will His presence be. It is the Comforter, whom Jesus sent to teach us what the words He uttered meant. I once read of a trapper working alone in the far North Country, where cold and snow are everywhere and weeks pass by in utter solitude. The trapper was a Christian and, being alone, he often whiled away the hours by taking up his banjo and singing hymns unto the Lord. One night, as he thus worshipped, he heard a gentle tapping at the door. "Who is there?" he called. A voice replied, "We are angels of the Lord. We just came down to listen." More of the story I do not know, but of this we may be certain: In every nation and every clime, should even one commune with Him, He will be present though unheard and unseen.

Our Lord is meek and lowly in heart. We will find that He seeks out men and women who, like Himself, are meek and lowly in heart. They shall find rest for their souls as He covers them with His feathers and under His wings they trust. Beloved in Christ, learn this simple truth. The presence of Christ is not a place to which you go to meet Him. The presence of Christ is found wherever a soul is reaching out to Him. Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus. He loved them because they loved Him. Several times in scripture we read of His visiting in their house, but never once do we read that they ever went to visit Him. Jesus knew they dearly loved Him and that His presence was welcome in their home. Martha had lovingly served Him, ministering to His every need. Mary had poured the precious ointment upon His head and washed His feet with her tears. Lazarus, according to ancient authority, had been an almost constant companion. He it was who sat at table with Him after being raised from the dead. Our blessed Lord, who communes with the meek and lowly, dwelleth not in huge temples, erected by the business acumen of empire building preachers. His presence is always found with worshippers humble and true, who worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but the hour cometh when these empire building preachers, who have squandered hundreds of millions of dollars taken by craft from the poor to build great monuments to their own ingenuity, will stand both naked and empty handed, vainly protesting, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" To this the Lord will answer, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Learn as early in life as possible that it is not what we do for God that counts. It is what we are, and what we are depends entirely on our relationship to Christ. Furthermore, our relationship to Him depends entirely on our communion with Him. If we do not take time to commune with Him and live our life in His presence, we will develop no relationship with Him and all our labor will be wood, hay and stubble.

God has given no greater blessing to man than the word of God and prayer. Without these we can never hope to form a relationship or a communion with Him. We have been taught many falsehoods about prayer. We have been exhorted to make all our wants and wishes known to God with the assurance that He will supply them all. This, however, having no true basis in scripture, is not the truth. Our wants and wishes almost always arise from the corrupt fountain of the carnal mind. Christians have become like bratty little children running loose in a department store, begging their mothers for practically everything they see but do not need, while they whine and snivel because they are denied. We must learn, beloved friend, not to come to God with all our wants and wishes, but rather to enquire of Him. Wait long and in silence in His presence until His voice of wisdom speaks above the outer din to your inner being, enlightening your mind, convicting of sin, giving understanding, transforming your thinking and giving you all wisdom in the knowledge of His will. If He has something He wants you to do, He will make it known to your heart as you wait in His presence. Never fall into the error of designing a program of your own liking, then asking God to bless it. He will not bless it. That is why so many preachers become professional beggars. Let the Holy Spirit lead you into His own way. Then you will find you have no need to ask Him to bless it. His blessing will be there because the work is His. Did not Jesus say, "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will lead you into all truth"? And yet again, "He shall receive of Mine and Show it unto you"? And again, "He will convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment"?

Whoever gave you or me authority to tell God what He should do? Whoever gave us authority to storm the throne of grace until we get our heart's desire? Where did we get the notion that we would be heard for our much speaking? Let us unlearn these errors of the past and abandon the instruction that false prophets and false teachers have made us believe, and let us come in humility, saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Prayer is not man commanding God. Prayer is God presenting His wishes to man. Certainly the Bible

says, "Ask and ye shall receive", but let us walk close enough to Him to know what the burden of His Spirit is. Ask for that and we shall receive. See what wise instruction the Holy Spirit gave through Paul when he said, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought", **Rom. 8:26**, and having said this, he told us the way we should pray, for said he, "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us (the saints) ...according to the will of God." **Verses 26-27**. This is the true pattern for prayer. Let us diligently follow it. Abandon the human error of presenting your wishes to God. Your wishes are probably the enemies of His will. Abandon your prayer lists with their vain repetitions, like a monk counting beads. God will not hear us for our much speaking.

Communion begins, not with our storming the throne and making demands before God, but in waiting in His presence to hear the still small voice of the blessed Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whose ministry it is to lead us into all truth, making us wise in all the wisdom of God. The Holy Spirit is our great teacher, teaching us the ways of righteousness and truth. He is our ever, present guide, ever directing our lives into all His mind and will.

So often God's people tell me, "I am seeking God's will." That is good and it is the right thing to do, but know this first of all. You are in God's will right now. Continue to walk in submission to Him. Commit your way to Him from day to day and fifty years from now you will stand in utter amazement when you contemplate how faithfully His loving hand has guided you throughout the journey of life.

Next as a method of communion God has given us His holy word. A great deal of emphasis has been placed upon Bible study. Bible Schools and colleges have been erected and maintained at enormous expense for the study of the Bible, the study of Theology and the turning out of preachers to preach what they have been taught. Many an honest life has been spent in an endeavor to teach men and women the scripture, but remember this: No man on earth can understand the truth unless it is revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. For many years it was my privilege to teach large classes in Bible School besides ministering to hundreds and often thousands in large congregations. But this I have learned: However diligent the teacher may be or however earnest the student, no man can learn or receive truth except it be given him from heaven. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. We may wrestle with a truth for years and never be able to grasp it, but if we will ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth, sooner or later He will open our minds to it and we will marvel at its simplicity. Young Christians should first of all read the Bible from cover to cover as a narrative. This will familiarize them with those themes and covenants that run from Genesis to Revelation. By this they will understand what Jesus and the apostles are saying when they make hundreds of references to Old Testament scripture. The Bible interprets itself if we study it. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the author. It is His ministry to lead us into truth and bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever He has told us. Never depend on the worn out old doctrines of the church system. They become strait jackets and plaster casts handed down from the mother of harlots. Steadfastly refuse to confine truth to the codes of denominations. Ask the Holy Spirit to interpret and reveal His truth. Of Him Jesus said, "He will guide you into all truth." Not part of it nor half of it, but all of it. For this reason I never cease to bid God's people to leave the denominations, the non-denominations, the inter-denominations, and the sects, together with every little ist and ism and receive the Holy Spirit as their only instructor, teacher and enlightener. John the beloved taught us, "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 Jno. 2:27**. Let us avail ourselves of this blessed promise.

The word of God is much more than the written word. The word may appear as the created word, or the creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." **Psa. 19:1-4**. Even a person who has never seen a Bible can learn great wisdom from the creation, which declares the glory of God. In creation we see the truth of death every night and resurrection every morning. We can see the death of all things every autumn and the restitution of all things every spring. We see God's omnipotence - in ten thousand ways in every wind and waterfall, every tide and ocean, every earthquake, tempest and tornado. His faithfulness is fresh every sunrise and new every evening.

The greatest of all is the Living Word, which is Christ Himself. Many years I puzzled over the words of Jesus, "Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, ye have no life in you", but when the answer came, "The Word was made flesh", the simplicity of it was astonishing. So to eat His flesh is to partake of His word, and that Word is Christ Himself. His blood is life. How simple, then, it is to become partakers of His flesh, which is His word, and of His blood, which is His life, for, said He, "My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed." In Him is life (blood) and the life is the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. What wonders these are! No marvel that Jesus cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39. Beloved saint, it is true! "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Eat and drink of the inexhaustible Christ. There and there alone is life eternal.

In meditation upon these things a strange and wonderful unfolding pervaded my spirit and the truth that Christ is "the Word" became exceedingly clear. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. From John 1:1-3 we read these strangely wonderful words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." The creative word that came forth from the lips of the Father in the beginning was the word spoken in Genesis, chapter 1. By it God commanded the light to shine. By it the universes were formed. He spoke the word and light and darkness were separated. By His word the sun ruled the day and the moon the night. By His word the grass grew and the beasts and nations came into being. He said, "Let Us make man in Our image" and it was so. All things were made by the word of God, and without it was nothing made. That word was light and life and God; but carnal man can never comprehend light. Though the light shone in the darkness, the darkness of the human heart could not receive it. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; but here again men could not receive life, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They were not born of light and could not comprehend the way. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. Because of this blindness and darkness and inability to comprehend the life, the light, or the word of truth, God in grace and mercy wrapped the Word, the truth, the light and the life in human flesh, presented all this glory on the level of man, and called Him Jesus Christ, saying, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Only then did man behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, life and light. In like manner that vapor and water and ice are one and the same thing manifested on different levels, so the Word, the Truth and God's Son manifested in the flesh are one and the same. For this very reason it is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and was manifested among us as God's Son, our Christ, the Word of God. It staggers the imagination to be sure, but this is what God says. The Word was made flesh to dwell with man that man might become the Word to dwell in God. "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God..." **2 Cor. 3:2-3.**

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God" **Rev. 19:11-13.** Because the Word was made flesh, Jesus said, "Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, ye have no life in you." It is here in eating His flesh and drinking His blood that we come face to face with the deepest meaning of communion. The flesh of which He speaks is the Word and Christ is the Word. The blood is the life and that life is eternal. It was the same night in which the son of God was betrayed that He took unleavened bread, saying, "This is My body, broken for you." Then He took the cup of wine, saying, "This cup is the new testament - or the new covenant - in My blood. Drink ye all of it."

Paul in his teaching concerning this Passover supper explained, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" We have been explaining how communion with Christ brings us into the realm of the more excellent

glory, the realm of incorruption and immortality. In the ordinance of communion we grasp with greater clearness the reality of eating His flesh (the word) and drinking His blood (the life). Weymouth in his translation of this passage uses the word participation instead of communion. Thus the bread which we break, is it not participation in the body of Christ? Moffatt uses yet another expression. "Is it not sharing the body of Christ?" Each of these words is most enlightening. We should meditate long upon them all - communion, participation and sharing.

It is our responsibility to give particular heed to these things because Paul makes it clear that our failure to understand this sacrament is the reason that many are weak and sickly among us and many die. 1 Cor. 11:30. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old, yet his eyes were not dim nor his natural force abated. He had become well nigh incorruptible. No feeble person existed among the two million Israelites in the desert, and this is the reason: "They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:3-4. I know of no place on earth today where the communion, the Lord's supper, is taken with understanding. It is therefore taken unworthily. 1 Cor. 11:29. The covenant of grace, which it represents, is not even thought of, let alone partaken of. From these wonderful facts we see as never before the importance of communion with Christ and partaking of Him. Moses saw it and understood it; and I suppose, had not God told him to go up into the mount and die, he would have lived in incorruption unto this day. Learn to commune with Christ, the Word. Enter into the secret of His presence. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

The importance of our daily communion can never be over emphasized, but before closing this chapter, I would like to disclose a truth concerning the sacrament of the Lord's supper that is so important that, if we can grasp it by the Spirit, it will revolutionize our relationship with God during this age of grace. We have all noticed, perhaps without a question, that the first section of the Bible is known as the Old Testament and the second section is known as the New Testament. A testament is actually a will or a covenant. The words testament and covenant come from the same Greek word *diatheke*. The legend on my will reads, "Last will and testament." Within its covers specific instructions are given as to who shall be heirs of the property I possess. As long as I live, my will is of no value to anyone. No one can receive anything from it or make any bargain in lieu of it, but, the moment I am proclaimed dead, the property belongs no longer to me but to my heirs. They do not have to ask for it nor pay for it. It is theirs. The entire New Testament is a faithful record concerning the things our Lord Jesus Christ willed to those who are His heirs at the proclamation of His death. There are hundreds of promises given in the New Testament, every one of which became our property when our Lord died and His will and testament came into force. In that last will and testament there are promises of salvation, justification and sanctification. There are promises of physical healing, promises that the Spirit would make alive our mortal flesh, promises that we should be filled with the Holy Spirit, promises that God's power would keep us. There are promises of sonship, adoption, incorruption and immortality, the kingdom of God, resurrection and reigning with Christ. Think of the words, "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." **John 17:24.** And "I give unto them eternal life." The promises in Christ's will and testament are so varied that they touch every phase of our Christian existence, both in this age and in the ages to come. To continue to try to name them all would be futile. Think of all that is entailed in this one declaration, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee", and "Lo, I am with you always."

Let us remember once again that these are promises that Christ put in His will, the wonderful New Testament. But let us remember also that no one could claim any of them while Jesus was still alive. Heb. 9:16-17. It is true He healed the sick, but that was an act of His mercy and love - like a gift given during the life time of a wealthy testator. But the moment Jesus died, all the promises of the New Testament (will) were ours, not to ask for or beg for or even pray for, but to receive as His last will and testament.

Throughout the Bible practically every covenant or testament was sealed with blood. Heb. 9:22. A lamb was slain in Eden. Noah made an offering after the flood. The Abrahamic covenant was sealed with blood. The Mosaic covenant was sealed with blood. The Davidic covenant was sealed with blood. So, true to God's pattern, the New Covenant was sealed with blood - not the blood of bulls and goats, but with better blood, even the blood of the Son of God. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission." **Heb. 9:22.**

On the night in which our Saviour was betrayed, He observed the Passover supper with His disciples. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, **Take, eat; this is My body.** And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying **Drink ye all of it: For this is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**" **Matt. 26:26-28.** Thus the shedding of the life blood of Jesus Christ was the proclamation by God Himself that Jesus Christ, the testator, was dead and His last will and testament was in force.

When the apostle Paul discussed this matter with the Corinthian Christians, he wrote, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, **Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.** After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament (will) in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.**" **1 Cor. 11-23, 26.** By using the word show as in the King James Version we have, I fear, been missing the dynamic meaning and the great significance of the sacrament. In the British Revised Version we have this very meaningful translation: "As oft as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do proclaim the Lord's death." This word proclaim struck me like a thunder bolt, Paul is here emphatically teaching that, every time a Christian observes this Passover supper, which we call the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we are proclaiming anew that the mighty covenant, the unalterable testament, the eternal will and testament of Christ is in force, because the testator, Jesus Christ, died; therefore every promise in the entire New Testament is ours - not to be asked for, begged for, or requested, but it is ours as a covenant right.

If you pause to think, you will become fully aware that the whole church system and Christians of many ages have, when keeping this sacrament, been merely reminding themselves in a sentimental way that Jesus died for them, as a sorrowing parent might remember the death of a child. But the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was never intended to be a tearful reminder of His death on the cross. It is instead the proclamation of the death of the testator, Jesus Christ our Lord. The proclamation of His death brings His last will and testament into force. Because the testator, who made the will, is dead, every promise He made and every gift He promised within the covers of the entire New Testament is fully active and fully ours as heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3:29. This almighty message we proclaim every time we break the bread and drink the cup. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death until He come." Oh what a difference it makes to our Christian experience when we see ourselves no longer as starving mendicants, begging crumbs from the Master's table, but heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ in the mightiest will ever made! And not only made, but now through the shedding of His blood fully in force and active]

I cannot advocate that God's people attend the gatherings of some Babylonish system to partake of the communion, because there they will partake of division, and where there is division, they come together, not for the better, but for the worse. 1 Cor. 11:17-18. Would it not be much better to do as they often did in New Testament times and simply sit at table once or twice a year in your own home or with a few devout friends and there with unleavened bread and wine remember the body and blood of the Lord?

Acts 2:4,6. For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we do proclaim the Lord's death and declare that the glorious last will and testament of Christ is fully in force and active in our hearts. No longer need we be as strangers who lick up the crumbs that fall from the Master's table, but sons of God and heirs according to the promise.

It is remarkable, to say the least, that the book known as The New Testament, with which we are all so familiar, is actually the last will and testament of Jesus Christ. Within its two covers are contained the terms of the will together with all the riches of the inheritance. Is it not incredibly strange that, though we are so familiar with the words of the New Testament, we have failed to understand that what we have been reading for so many years is in fact and in truth the last will and testament of Jesus Christ?

In closing the precious truth of this chapter, we shall point out one more important and blessed fact. When anyone makes a will, he always appoints an executor, whose duty it will be to see that the terms of the will are

faithfully carried out after the death of the testator. With the last will and testament of Jesus Christ we find something never before known in the history of the world. The testator who made the will and the executor who discharges its terms are one and the same person. Instead of the word executor the scripture uses the term mediator. Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. Now Jesus Christ, according to the scriptures is the testator who made the will, leaving all the marvelous glories of the new covenant to us, His elect children. But three days after His death He, the testator, rose from the dead and became the executor of His own will. Thus the Holy Spirit teaches that, "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the mediator (executor) of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament (that is, the Old Testament), they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." **Heb. 9:13-16.**

Therefore as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death until He come. The death of Christ makes us heirs of the inheritance. His resurrection assures us of its benefits. Amen and Amen!

CHAPTER SEVEN SOME MUST ENTER

O Father, who hath sent Thy Son that a world born in sin might be born of God, grant that our eyes may be opened to the abundance of Thy goodness and mercy. Thou who hast sent the Spirit of Thy Son into our hearts crying, Abba Father, grant that He may open our understanding to see that the old and imperfect is passing away as the kingdom dawning increaseth more and more!

The truth being revealed concerning the more excellent glory is of extraordinary importance to the saints who live in these momentous hours just preceding the resurrection. The glorious and long-awaited resurrection of the dead has been fully and faithfully promised in Holy Scripture and is doubly assured by the indisputable fact of the personal, physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first born from the dead.

There are only a few people in the world hardy enough to disbelieve the death of Christ. That Jesus actually died at Calvary is attested to by many infallible proofs. Pilate believed Him to be dead. The centurion believed He was dead. The fact that blood and water flowed from His wounded side is proof indisputable that He was dead. He Himself, after having said, "It is finished," gave up the ghost. God pronounced Him dead. The apostles said He was killed. The women came to embalm His dead body. The soldiers, knowing He was dead, "break not His legs." Every Old Testament sacrifice foretold the death of Christ. The proofs of His death are certain and infallible. He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Indisputable as is the death of the Saviour, the proofs of His resurrection are even greater. Highly trained soldiers under pain of death for neglect for sleeping guarded His tomb; yet the stone was rolled away and the tomb found empty. Surely this is proof insurmountable that Jesus rose from the dead. That He was seen of Mary and the other women, then of the apostles, then of travelers on the road to Emmaus, then of the eleven on various occasions is proof abundant that He rose from the dead. He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He ministered among the people for forty days, speaking to them concerning the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3. He was seen of James, and later by all the apostles by the lake. He was seen of over five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. 15:4-7, and after His ascension into heaven He was seen of Paul. Verse 8. Many years later He was seen in wonderful glory by John, Rev. 1:10-18, and likewise many saints down through the centuries have been visited by the glorified Christ. The greatest proof of Christ's resurrection is found in that one disputable fact that, after He ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit as He had promised, John 16:7, to abide with and in the believer to transform all who believe on His name. By many infallible proofs He has proven Himself to be alive forevermore. He is the first born from the dead, the first of billions who will rise because He rose. I have reason to be sure that many now reading these lines can testify that they, too, have seen the resurrected Jesus Christ.

I feel a great urgency about this message because we are rapidly approaching the hour when some must enter the more excellent glory of incorruption. As it is written, this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal, immortality. That is the realm where death is swallowed up in victory. Paul has clearly stated that adoption, which is sonship in all its completeness, comes with the redemption of the body. Rom. 8:23. Since we are members in particular of the Christ body and are the "fullness of Him," then it certainly follows that God's Christ, both the head and the body, must be completely resurrected that the body might partake of the same incorruption as the head.

This corruptible must put on His resurrection form. We must be changed into His likeness. The body of our humiliation must be transformed into His heavenly image. The resurrection of all that are in the graves, each in his own order, is an absolute certainty, for Christ, who cannot lie, has promised it. There is no room for error in this respect. That the dead in Christ will rise first, 1 Thess. 4:16, is also a certainty. It is also a certainty that the in Christ people, or the "inChristed," who are still living on earth when He returns, will be changed. 1 Cor. 15:51-53. They will receive their resurrection bodies at the instant the dead saints in Christ arise. We are all greatly lacking in understanding, but I am not at all certain that the resurrected saints will be caught away at the instant of their resurrection. They will certainly be changed as it is clearly stated in 1 Cor. 15:52-53, but, though Paul in 1 Thess 4:16-17 speaks of a catching up, he does not necessarily infer that the catching up is at the same instant that the dead and the living are changed. It is therefore my opinion that, as our blessed Lord at His resurrection was changed from corruptible to incorruptible in the twinkling of an eye, yet remained on earth forty days to minister, so also will the inChristed body be raised and be manifested among men before they are taken up.

While the apostle Paul was on earth, he clearly stated that he was endeavoring to attain the resurrection and thus reach adoption and sonship even in his day, as is recorded in **Phil 3:10-16**. What else could he have been seeking when he said, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection...", and again, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead?" He undoubtedly sought to attain to this marvelous change, this transformation from corruptible to incorruptible, even in his day.

Because of the frailty of my own understanding, I tread softly here, yet may we not expect that some will enter that realm of full sonship, an elect from among the elect, even before the trumpet sounds? There must be an Elijah company who, according to the prophet Malachi, will minister, no doubt in the heat of opposition as the book of Revelation clearly shows, Rev. 11:3-12, but none shall hurt them or make them afraid. They will turn the hearts of many fathers to the children and many children to the wisdom of the just. Mal. 4:5-6. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. Then shall the inChristed sons rise to meet their elder brother and head to return with Him for the glorious kingdom reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords. He who has prepared us for this change is God, who has given us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee.

"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one (thing), and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." **1 Cor. 15:39-44**. This resurrection body is the more excellent glory, excelling the corruptible body of our humiliation as the sun excels the light of a penny candle. When our Lord Jesus Christ at His transfiguration was manifested in His resurrected form as He will appear in the kingdom, His face did shine as the sun and His garments were white as the light. Matt. 17:1-3. Thus it was with the resurrection of Christ and thus it shall be with the resurrection of all who are in Christ, for the head and body united form one glorious Christ.

When the writer of the book of Hebrews wrote the fourth chapter, he commenced with this warning: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." **Heb. 4:1**. All the events that occurred in the history of Israel were for our learning upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Rom. 15:4. Their seventh day was Saturday; our seventh day is the dispensation of the kingdom of God. Their rest was Canaan; ours is the kingdom of God. No wonder Paul bids us fear lest we should come short of God's promises and fail to enter in! Since the seventh day of which he speaks represents

the Sabbath rest of the kingdom of God, he therefore bids us fear, lest the promises left us of entering into that rest be missed or we should come short of it. Israel in the wilderness failed to attain, because they did not believe. Unto us is the gospel preached as well as unto them, but, if it be not mixed with faith, we will fail to enter in to this more excellent glory. "For He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into My rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief," Heb. 4:4-6, it remains that another day would come in which some would enter in to share with Christ the glories of the incorruptible realm. There remaineth a rest (verse 8) to the sons of God, and some must enter it. Those to whom it was first preached entered not; therefore the promise remains for us, the sons of God, at the end of the age.

Some two million Israelites perished in the wilderness because they could not believe to enter the land of Canaan. Nevertheless, Caleb and Joshua, with all those under the age of accountability at the time of the rebellion, entered in. Millions refused to enter the ark with Noah, but some entered in. Enoch walked with God and entered in, for God took him. One hundred and twenty tarried till Pentecost at the bidding of Christ and entered in to the new glories of a spiritual realm. Publicans and harlots entered in while scribes and Pharisees in unbelief spurned their Christ and received Him not.

So in our day the greatest glory of all ages lies before us - the more excellent glory of entering the realm of incorruption. Many will refuse to believe and will forfeit their right to enter in, but some must enter in. They shall partake of the bread of life, which Christ is. They shall not die, but they shall be changed. Their corruptible will put on incorruption and their mortal, immortality. They shall know no end of days, for they will be made one with Him who hath neither beginning of days nor end of life, but abideth continually and forever. Some must enter in. God has prepared us for this change and has given His Spirit as a guarantee. What greater guarantee could possible be given? Let us therefore, as Paul, become conformable unto Christ's death that we might in this, the end of the age, be made partakers of His resurrection. Not as though we had already attained, either were already perfect, but we follow after if that we may apprehend that for which we were apprehended of Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:10-14. We count not ourselves to have apprehended, but this one thing we do: forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth to the things that are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Can you imagine a saint two thousand years ago seeking to attain to the resurrection from among the dead? That is what Paul was doing. I have no way of knowing whether or not he attained his precious goal, but some must enter in: and Peter has given us the assurance that there is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, ready to be revealed in the last times. 1 Pet. 1:4. Surely then this message is to us, and some must enter in.

O, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Old things are passing away. They are not permanent. All things are to be made new. Let us therefore relinquish the things that belong to the passing and lay hold on the things, which are permanent and belong to the age to come, for some must enter in.

In our journey from the natural to the spiritual realm we are continually beset with dangers and pitfalls. For every gain we make it seems there can be many losses, and every triumph can bring its defeats. It is for these reasons that it may be profitable for us to consider things as they are, and to solicit God's help that we might see ourselves as He sees us. We cannot repeat too often the great fundamental fact that every fresh degree of light, which shines upon our pathway must of necessity bring a corresponding repentance. If we will pause long enough to meditate on the following statement, we will likely decide it is true: "Things that seemed spiritual in our yesterdays seem to be only natural in our todays and will seem carnal in our tomorrows." If that is not our testimony, then we may well begin to question whether we are making any real progress in God at all. But if our testimony should prove opposite to this, so that things, which were carnal in our yesterdays are accepted as part of our spiritual life today, then we are in a bad way indeed, for, if I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

It would be profitable here to go over a few of the warnings that are constantly repeated in the word of the Lord. Always remember that the Bible is God's word. Every word of it was given by revelation. Not only thoughts were inspired of God, but the words as well. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. 3:16. The scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. Verse 15.

Notice the testimony of the scripture to "word" inspiration. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue." **2 Sam. 23:2.** "Hear, oh heavens, and give ear, oh earth, for the Lord hath spoken." **Isa. 1:3.**

"Behold I have put My words in thy mouth" **Jer. 1:9.**

"Thou shall speak My words unto them." **Eze. 2:7 and 3:4.**

"David himself said by the Holy Ghost." **Mark 12:36.**

While I could multiply such passages as these, it is perhaps unnecessary, yet for your study you might refer to such other passages as follows: **John 19:24. Matt. 2:5, Matt. 5:18, John 10:35, Luke 24:25, 44.** The references of Jesus to the scriptures were always calculated to give the utmost confidence and trust, saying, "Ye search the scriptures because in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." And again, that heaven and earth should pass away but the word of the Lord would not pass away, neither would a jot or tittle fail until all was fulfilled.

The Bible abounds on every hand with useful and practical instructions for our guidance in every day life. It covers every phase of life from birth to immortality. It uncovers every sin and work of the flesh. It shows in detail the purpose of God for all time. It unfolds the paths of righteousness and truth to all who will walk in them. By taking heed to it young men cleanse their ways. It displays the glories that await those who walk in righteousness and the dire peril of those who walk in evil. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, containing one hundred seventy-six verses. Only three of these verses (121, 122 and 132) fail to mention the word of God by calling it judgments, statutes, precepts, testimonies, word, or some kindred name. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb, moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them is great reward." (**Psa. 119:9-11**).

Now to come back to our original thought - to go over the oft, repeated warnings contained in the word of God. "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." **Heb. 4:1.** There is always a tendency for God's people to grow weary with the journey and fail to enter into the rest God has promised us. We sometimes console ourselves and excuse our apathy by saying we should not get over-anxious about ourselves and get ahead of God. Of course, we should not get ahead of God. We will have a difficult time doing that, for we cannot enter into anything He has not revealed to us. The moment, however, He reveals a truth, an experience, or a height to us, it is time to strip for the race and get moving. Paul did not calm the people by telling them not to get over-anxious. He told them to fear lest they miss it.

I have been amazed of late at the number of instructions given in the word of God about this very thing. Let us listen to a few of them. "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." **Heb. 4:1.** "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." **Heb. 4:11.** "They that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may attain." **1 Cor. 9:24-26.** "Run with patience the race that is set before us." **Heb. 12:1.** "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God." **Phil. 3:12, 16.** "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" **Gal. 5:7.** "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." **Heb. 3:12.**

None of these warnings give us any reason to rest on our oars. Labor is labor wherever you find it, and there is always toil and hard work connected with it, often disappointment and work that has to be done several times over. There are always those who would like to "sit at ease in Zion," but the path of the will of God lies by the way of Gethsemane and Golgotha, both being places of awful travail that will cost us all far more than we possess. I know of a truth that there will be no reward for those who do not labor to enter in. The spirit of ease that has settled over us will have to be dispelled or the losses will be great and irretrievable. Jesus taught us to "strive to enter in at the gate", for, He said, the gate is straight and the way narrow and only few would find it.

I was thinking of the words of the Greek poet who wrote:
Vice there is in abundance,
And easy to find,
For the way to it is smooth,
And lies very near.
But before the Temple of Virtue,
The immortal gods have placed Labor.
And the way to it is long and steep
And at the commencement rough,
But once the traveler has reached the summit it is easy,
However difficult it was at first.

Everything that is worthy and valuable is filled with labor, and the road to it always lies through the mountains of difficulty and never through the plains of ease. We may wish we could rest, and indeed we shall at last, but before rest comes work and travail, for we must labor to enter into His rest.

The apostle Paul on one momentous occasion was carried by the Spirit into the third heaven. God in sovereignty reached down and picked him up (whether in the body or out of it he did not know) and carried him into the celestial realm, the third heaven. He never did repeat any of the things he saw there, but so great and glorious were the visions of that holy hour that he found it unlawful to utter its secrets to ordinary men, and he died without disclosing it to anyone. His vision in the Spirit must have at least equaled the glories of the mount of transfiguration, which Peter briefly describes as the power and coming of Christ, which they saw when they were with Him in the holy mount. But because Paul had gone into that holy of holies through the sovereignty of God, he was not allowed to remain there, but was brought back to his former condition. He never could forget the glories he had seen. Therefore, to attain them as an eternal prize, he spent the rest of his earthly life pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, running that he might attain; fighting not as those that beat the air; keeping his body (flesh) under and bringing it into subjection, wrestling flesh and blood and principalities and powers; and finally, having fought a good fight, there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, and not for him only but all those who loved the appearing of Christ.

It seems to me that our journey to the celestial could be more accurately described as a run rather than a walk. "So run that ye may attain," Paul says, and again, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Running is never an easy matter. It takes every ounce of energy that we possess. Those who engage in this sport strip off every possible article of clothing, and carry nothing with them. There is no idleness or sitting at ease. They are out to win. Runners in this life obtain only a corruptible crown, but runners of the race we speak of obtain an incorruptible crown. Here, only one receives the prize, but there many may receive it.

Many years ago, when I was a child, a number of long distance runners ran a race from San Francisco to New York. They were running thirty and forty miles a day. I still remember following the newspapers every day for the report on their progress. They encountered many difficulties along the way. Some dropped out almost every day. Some could not stand the pace; others developed sore feet. The runners were constantly bothered by motorists who pulled alongside and tried to question them as they ran. About the halfway mark one runner was standing out above all the others. He was a Finlander, whose name was Gavuzzi. By the time they had reached the three-quarter mark it seemed there was no chance of anyone overtaking him. I can still remember the pictures of his unshaven face and the appearance of his sinewy body. But just about here trouble began to overtake him. He developed a severe toothache and after several more days he was forced to drop out, and another who was not so swift but had more endurance took the prize. Running, you see, is not just a matter of

walking up to the grandstand to get your prize. It is a thing that requires stripping, patience, endurance, as well as speed.

Paul spoke of the Galatians who did run well for a time but were hindered. That is ever our trouble. We do very well for a time, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke us, and we become unfruitful and drop out of the race altogether.

Let us labor to enter into rest. Let us strive to enter the straight gate. Let us run that we may receive the prize. Let us fight not as those who beat the air. Let us wrestle, not merely as those who wrestle flesh and blood. Let us press toward the mark, straining every nerve. Let us keep our body under and bring it into subjection, lest, after having preached and believed wonderful things, we should ourselves be discarded. Let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let us add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, and godliness, for he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off. But he that possesses them shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

One day a lawyer came to Jesus asking him, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind; this is the first and greatest commandment." One of the scribes, having heard this same answer on another occasion, said, "Well, master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but He, and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offering and sacrifices." And Jesus, perceiving that he had answered discreetly, said unto him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

The point I want to make is just this: To love God with all the heart and soul and mind is the fulfilling of all the law and will of God. This is better than burnt offerings or any sacrifice. This is indeed the fulfilling of all the law and the prophets. It is the foundation of the kingdom, the beginning of all righteousness, and the end of all good judgment and equity. It is the thing that God requires above all else. But there is another god that men love. That god is money, the god of this present age. To love him is not the foundation of the kingdom, but rather the root of all evil. Money is the thing that rules this age. We cannot buy the necessities of life without it, and there is no lust of the flesh or desire of the eyes, ears, or taste, that cannot be obtained by those who possess it. It is connected with every war in history and with every dive and brothel in the world. For the love of this god men miss the kingdom. The rich young ruler wanted to be perfect, but went away sadly when he saw it would require the sale of his earthly possessions. And Jesus, feeling just as sad, saw him go, and said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom." Of course, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, because rich men and poor alike become worshippers of the god of this age, and we cannot serve God and Mammon. It is impossible to serve two masters. We are bound to love one more than the other. We are bound to cling to one and despise the other. Mammon was the Syrian god of riches. He is not only the Syrian god of riches, but he has become the god of the whole world, the god of this whole age, and to love him is the root of all evil.

We do not have to be rich to love money. Poor men can love it, too. They often love it and strive for it even more than rich men. We do not have to be a sinner to love money. Christians love it as much as others. An elder, a deacon, or a minister can be a lover of money and perform his ministry for filthy lucre's sake. He becomes a worshipper of the god of this age. They that love him finally err from the truth and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

Jesus said that riches were deceitful. "The deceitfulness of riches chokes the word." He told us to "beware of covetousness". He said it was hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom. Paul warned Timothy not to trust in uncertain riches. Indeed, they are uncertain, for, as Solomon said, they make themselves wings and fly away. He told us that to covet money caused us to err from the truth, and to love money was the very root of all the evil in the age.

Why is the love of money the root of all evil? This is a very good question and it should be answered. Let me ask another question. What can you buy with money? Am I not right in saying that money can only buy temporal things for the body and can buy nothing for the soul or the spirit? Can you think of any eternal thing that can be purchased with money? Or on the other hand can you think of any temporal thing that money

cannot buy? All things that can be lavished on the flesh can be purchased with money, but not one thing that belongs to the spirit can be obtained by money. When the sorcerer offered Peter money for a spiritual gift, Peter replied, "Your money perish with you, for you have thought the gift of God could be purchased with money." We must conclude then that spiritual things such as love, wisdom, knowledge, kindness, and a thousand other eternal things are obtained for the soul and spirit without any help from the god of this world. Anything that the flesh can use for any comfort or ease, to delight the eyes or ears or taste or any other sense, can be obtained with money. Anything to eat or drink or put on, any luxury or comfort or mode of travel can be bought with money. Furthermore, anything that can be bought for the body, or anything that can be purchased with money is a transient thing that will soon perish and disappear.

Now, since the flesh lusts against the Spirit and is at endless conflict with it, then anything that seeks to make us earthly and fleshly-minded is a great evil. The things that belong to the realm of the flesh {the body} are passing away. Even the flesh itself is passing away. Anything that is passing away is not real. It is like a bubble that floats prettily in the air only to burst never to exist again. It is like the darkness that disappears with the dawn and has no certain dwelling place. It is like a flower in the field that blooms for a moment and disappears, a vision of the night, a fleeting shadow, a moment of joy, a passing sorrow, or a sudden pain. When such things have passed by, no one knows where they came from nor whither they have gone. Those, however, who indulge themselves in the things that belong to the body grow to think that nothing is true or real but what is bodily and can be touched or seen or eaten or drunk or enjoyed by the passions of men. Unwittingly they change true riches for false; things that are unseen by mortal eyes for things that are seen. They exchange things that are spirit for things that can be touched, tasted, and felt by the body. The soul now begins to think that these things, which belong to the body, are real and therefore becomes fleshly minded. The carnal or fleshly mind is an enemy of God and an enemy of all things spiritual. It follows, then, that because the soul is burdened down with the earthly and visible, it is impossible for it to be spiritual, and when the time comes to depart out of this world by death and enter the realm of the Spirit, it will fear to die and want to remain in the body, because it is a stranger to the realm of the Spirit and has come to believe that the realm of the body is the only realm that is real, when in truth it is the only realm that is unreal.

Did you ever notice how the legion of spirits that possessed the man at Gadara were filled with dread at the thought of leaving the body of the maniac? When they found they must go out into the deep where there was no body, they begged to be permitted to enter the bodies of the swine. They would sooner inhabit the flesh of a pig than no flesh at all. I could be wrong, but I am inclined to believe it was Jesus rather than the demons who caused the pigs to run down the hill into the sea. You see, when we become fleshly minded and think the transient things are real, then every time our soul would fly to the spiritual and eternal it is dragged back again by the physical and visible thinking that corporeal things are real, when, indeed, there is no reality in them for they are passing away.

Will you agree with me that everything everywhere is made up of things, which are visible and things, which are invisible? And is it not true that visible things never remain the same but are always changing, and that invisible things always remain the same and never change? And to which of these two things is the body most like? And to which is the spirit most like? Is not the body like the visible and changing and the spirit like the invisible and unchanging? When then the soul and spirit become lovers of the body, they are dragged away by it into things that are always changing and never remain the same. They become as unlike God as it is possible to be and are completely bound up and imprisoned by the body (flesh). When we try to discover any spiritual thing by the use of any of our bodily senses, we are taken into the realm of unreality and change; for everything connected with the body is changing while everything that belongs to the spirit is unchanging. It is small wonder then that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for all things connected with the natural belong to time and change, while all the things belonging to the spiritual are eternal and changeless. So then all who would come to know the wisdom of God and the revelation of the Lord, must turn their spirits from the realm of the physical and changing, the corrupt and mortal, and fly away into the realm of the pure, eternal, unchanging, and immortal. It is only there that rest and truth are found, and, abiding there in the Spirit, even the body itself begins to be lifted from corruption to incorruption and from mortality to immortality. We said a moment ago that when the soul comes into the realm of the flesh, it becomes carnal and fleshly-minded because it is dragged into the realm of the body. Inversely then, when the soul and spirit dwell in the secret place with God, they lift the body till it also becomes incorruptible, immortal, and eternal.

When anyone first comes to Christ from the world of sin, His spirit is fast bound up and imprisoned by his flesh, and, while he may live the rest of his life in this same condition, yet the Spirit of God immediately seeks to deliver him and change him from walking after the flesh to walking after the Spirit. A strife between the flesh and the spirit begins, the flesh on the one hand endeavoring to bring the soul into bondage and death, the spirit on the other hand seeking to bring both soul and body into the liberty of life and peace. This is the greatest reason imaginable why we should live in temperance, and hold aloof as far as possible from the unreality of physical desire, earthly pleasure, fear or pain, and instead have great desire for spiritual pleasure, wisdom, knowledge, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Can you not see that when your spirit is associated with the earthly, it becomes earthly, and when it is associated only with the heavenly, it becomes eternal and spiritual? If your soul becomes associated with the pleasures and pains of the body, it is bound to think that these sensations are true and real when there is no reality in them, but they are only fleeting passing things that appear like mists and are gone. Every physical pleasure has a way of fastening the soul more securely to the body and giving it a fleshly nature. Thus the soul or mind comes to think that the pleasures of the body are real and true, and because of this it comes to have the same fancies and desires as the body and becomes defiled by the flesh and cannot enter into the holiest of all. The soul has become a slave to the flesh and has lost all intercourse with the divine.

While the spirit and the body are united and dwell together, one must always be in subjection to the other. Either the body will be servant to the spirit or the spirit will be servant to the body. One will be the servant and be ruled. The other will be the master and rule. We cannot avoid this conclusion. Either the flesh will rule the spirit, or the spirit will rule the flesh. Since, however, the flesh is like the mortal and changing, and the spirit is like the immortal and unchanging, then the spirit is the one who should be the master. If the spirit is the master, it will save the flesh by lifting it to the realm of God and immortality, but if the body is master, it will ruin the soul by dragging it to the realm of the carnal, the mortal, and changing.

You may well wonder why I am taking so much time to describe the flesh and the carnal mind, but what is the value of talking about things we have never understood? Is there any use in talking about the carnal mind if we do not know what makes the mind carnal? Can we ever be delivered from it by ignorance? Why do Christians like to talk about the flesh and remain in ignorance as to what the flesh is and how it operates? Why do they continue to talk about the carnal mind and get angry when the revelation reveals what the carnal mind really is? We claim to love and desire the life in the Spirit, yet we make more and more provision for the flesh, so that we can enjoy more fully the fleeting sensations that belong to the body. We make provision to gratify every physical sense, yet every one of them perishes as it is used. Col. 2:21-22. The more we see, the weaker our eyes become. The more we hear or feel the weaker the sense of hearing and feeling becomes, until, when a man has reached seventy years, he has lost seventy per cent of his physical senses.

Oh! that men would awaken to the truth that they might see where reality dwells; that their eyes might be opened to see that their search for satisfaction in the realm of the body is but to chase rainbows and grasp the emptiness of bubbles in their hands. A mist may appear for a moment and then disappear. A dream of the night might terrify, but its phantom figures disappear with our awaking. So also the fleeting fantasies of the flesh are dissipated with our awaking to the realities of the Spirit. The things that are seen are only temporal. The things that are not seen are eternal.

We squander health in search of wealth,
We scheme and toil and save,
We squander wealth in search of health
And all we get's a grave.
We live and boast of what we own,
We die and only get a stone.

That is about all the reality there is in the physical realm. I think you will agree with me that it is not reality at all. It is a ghostly phantom, a mist that appears for a little time and is gone. We can see, however, that those who set their hearts on obtaining as much as possible of the passing sensations of time are dragged into the realm of the unreal, and their minds become absorbed with physical things, bodily, fleshly, carnal things, until the

realm of the carnal mind is the only realm that is real to them, when in reality it is the only realm that is unreal. The wind will soon pass over it and it will be gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the things of the Spirit are from everlasting to everlasting, and the righteousness of God to children's children.

For centuries and millenniums past men have always thought that the things of the Spirit were misty, ghostly, and unreal but that the things bodily and physical were the things that were tangible and real. The truth is exactly opposite to this; it is the spiritual and eternal things that are real and changeless, and it is the bodily and physical things that are always changing and never remain the same. They soon disappear - ashes to ashes and dust to dust.

I do not think there is need for more instruction as to how we are going to enter the realm of the Spirit and live and walk there. Our greatest necessity is to see the unreality of the realm in which we have lived so long. When we see its uselessness and fruitlessness, our love will turn away from the changing to the unchanging and from the passing to the permanent.

It is hard to imagine how anyone can truly love a thing that is always changing and never remains the same. Yet it is our ignorance of the realm in which we live that makes us love it. If a woman should love and marry a man because of his wealth, what cause do you think she would have to love him should he lose his wealth and become poor? And if a man should love a woman only because of her beauty of form and face, can she expect to retain his admiration when she has lost that beauty? But if he loves her for some spiritual quality such as kindness or patience or some other virtue, he will never cease in his love for her, for these are things that do not change. They always remain the same. This is the very thought the apostle had in mind when he wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world... for the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." We have loved the world because we did not know its changeable character and we did not know that all things that belong to it pass quickly away and God has no permanent purpose for any of it.

We have come to the place in our experience where we are to pass the inner veil and enter the Holy of Holies where God lives and no flesh can abide. How many will attain to that glory I cannot say. God alone knows that. But this I do know; it is just as impossible for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom as it is for corruption to inherit incorruption. God seems to be standing before the veil saying of our flesh, "You cannot bring that in here." The time has come to lay aside every weight, put off anger, malice, wrath, put away lying, mortify the deeds of the flesh, put on charity, crucify the flesh, cast off the works of darkness, flee youthful lusts, abstain from all appearance of evil, purge ourselves of the leaven of malice and wickedness, and add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, and every other spiritual virtue, for these things are unchanging and always remain the same. They abide in the realm of the Spirit of God and are unknown elsewhere.

I hope we have all become aware that we are entering a new era, a higher plane, and a new age. All the old things belonging to a natural realm are passing away because they belong to the realm of the passing, but all things of the Spirit are becoming new. These latter will abide forever because they belong to the realm of the permanent. Let the old things go! Do not set your heart on them nor weep at their passing! Set your heart on the realm of the Spirit. Make that your life and your very existence. I fear that in the past and even until now we have treated the realm of the Spirit with unbelievable casualness. Too often we look upon the realm of the Spirit as something to be entered into for an hour or two on Sunday morning while the rest of the time is spent making as much progress as possible in the natural realm, and in laying up goods in store for the body. Perhaps we have forgotten that all progress we make in the natural realm is only loss eventually, for, should we gain the whole world and yet be cast away, it has profited us nothing and is only loss to us.

I know that my Redeemer liveth and he shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and if after my skin worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another.

As we read these pages of truth, surely we must realize that for many months past there has grown an ever increasing knowledge within that the order we have known all our lives and which has existed for the past two thousand years is now rapidly passing away. The things that we have seen and heard and known and loved are waxing old and are ready to vanish away. The kingdoms of this world are preparing themselves for their

own destruction. The systems of the church are decaying before our eyes and nothing can save them. Even while we read these lines many men and women filled with human zeal are putting forth frantic efforts to turn the tables, stem the tide, reverse the decadence, stop the advance of Communism, revive the church, reach the heathen. Every imaginable device is being used to accomplish this end; radio, television, literature crusades, missionary programs, citywide organized revival meetings, and a multitude of other ideas. It is not within my right to condemn such zeal or effort or speak a word against those who are so involved, but it is within my right to say that we are at the hour when all these human efforts are passing swiftly away. The imperfect things that have been used of God in an imperfect age are vanishing away with the age itself, for "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part (imperfect) shall be done away."

Man has always had a reluctance to give up the good things of the past and lay hold of the better things of the future. Even in the natural realm some men scorned the thought that the automobile could ever replace the horse and buggy, but it did, and, if time were to prevail long enough, the automobile itself would be replaced with something far superior. But it is in the spiritual realm that the new is always resisted. Christians are like homing pigeons who are no sooner moved than they fly back to where they were before. God's people always hate and resist the coming of a new order. They are loath to change the visible for the invisible, but their rage and fury against spiritual progress and revelation do not hinder the program of the Lord, for He moves irresistibly on from the things of time to the things of eternity, from the realm of the imperfect to the realm of the perfect, from the passing to the permanent.

There was a little period of twilight between the ages of law and grace when God raised up a mighty prophet of whom it was said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." As his thundering voice echoed among the Judean hills, whole towns and cities went out into the wilderness to hear his message of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. Four hundred years had gone by without the voice of a prophet and never had any person then living heard such things as John spoke. His message was new and vital and the priests, the common people, and the soldiers alike came to humble themselves and repent in preparation for the kingdom and the King that were soon to appear. We can safely affirm that no revival in history was ever greater, and probably none was ever of shorter duration, for this prophet was pointing the eyes of the people to the Lamb of God, and when Jesus Christ suddenly appeared on the scene with even greater power and glory, all men and women soon forgot John and turned to Him. It was a sad day for the disciples of John when they came to him saying, "He to whom thou bearest witness beyond Jordan, the same baptizeth and all men follow Him." But it was not a sad day for John. Well he knew that the glory and wonder of his own ministry of preparation was but a passing thing. It was given to endure but for a moment that that which is permanent might come.

Now, can you not see that the message of John, which for a few months blazed and shone with its scintillating glory and power and truth, had waxed old and was ready to vanish away the very moment he cried aloud to the people. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world?" Once Christ had come, there was no more need of John's ministry of preparation. It was one of the passing things and it was ready to vanish away. Can you believe even for a moment that you would be willing to sit and listen to one of John the Baptist's sermons after Christ had come as John's ministry predicted? Do you not think those sermons would seem strangely dead and out of date if we were to hear them now, for who would want to hear him tell of a Christ that was soon to come after He was daily seen among them?

There is an interesting story in the Acts of the Apostles concerning a mighty preacher by the name of Apollos who, knowing not that Christ had come or that Pentecost was twenty years past, preached only the baptism of John. Thus it reads, "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and, being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." **Acts 18:25.** A Christian man, Aquila, and his wife Priscilla heard him preach these things and immediately took him aside and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Verse 26. I am certain that the fiery zealous sermon of Apollos as he preached the baptism of John twenty years after Calvary and Pentecost were history must have sounded pitifully out of date to the enlightened Aquila and Priscilla. For this reason they took the great preacher aside and showed him the way of God more perfectly. It is a precious testimony in his favor that thereafter he "mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly, showing from the scripture that Jesus was the Christ." **Acts 18:27-28.**

Once again we are at the place where the old is passing away and the new is coming in. The glory and wonder of an age we have loved is fading out and the heralds of God are proclaiming the transcending wonder of a better though still imperfect age. The kingdom of God is at hand. The man-child, who will shepherd the nations with an iron hand, will soon be caught up to the throne, for it is from the throne that the sons of God shall rule. Rev. 12:1-6. Is it any wonder, then, that the things that have been the order of an imperfect church for the past two thousand years should now be waxing old and be ready to vanish away? Just as Aquila and Priscilla were struck with the obsolescence and oldness of the message of Apollos as he boldly proclaimed the baptism of John, I am compelled to testify that I feel the same way concerning the present preaching of the gospel in our day. It has been God's order and truth for the past two thousand years, but a better and more enduring age is upon us, for that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. The age of grace must give way to the kingdom and Paul's gospel must give way to the everlasting gospel of Rev: 14:6, which is to be proclaimed immediately following the birth of the manchild. Rev. 14:1-6.

The struggling missionary programs that have been used of God to bring the elect few from the masses of the earth are about to vanish away, for the hour is upon us when all who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death will see a great light. Isa. 9:2. The hour is at hand when no one will have to say, "Know the Lord", for all will know Him from the least to the greatest. Heb. 8:11. All the frantic efforts devised by human zeal to revive missionary programs will fall into the dust of decay. They are passing and not permanent. They have waxed old and are ready to vanish away. The hour is at hand when "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journey run" and all men shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

The message of healing, which has had such a wonderful day in revivals through the ages, cannot again be revived. The healing campaign has run its course in spite of all claims to the contrary. God is taking away the first that He might establish the second. Certainly there have been many healings and certainly there are still healings, though in no such abundance as is claimed. It is passing away that the more permanent order may come, for the hour is at hand when the lame man shall leap as a hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and there shall be no sickness in all the land. Isa. 35:5-7.

As I write these things and meditate upon them, there is a tremendous sense within that the sun is setting on this dispensation of the grace of God. But the same sun that is setting on Europe is rising on America and the sun that is setting on America is rising on the Orient. So also it is that the sun which set on the age of the law was at the same moment rising on the age of grace, and now that it is setting on the age of grace its gladsome rays are heralding the kingdom morning and the age-lasting joy that shall be upon us. It is the crowning day.

How totally inadequate do our words become at such a time as this! How futile are our explanations, how faint our exhortations! Only the revelation of the Almighty can teach us the things we ought to know and may God grant that spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Him that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened to see that the millennial dawn with lithesome steps is tripping o'er the kingdom hills.

On this very day and at this very moment all the end time signs spoken of by Jesus, by Daniel, and by Paul are coming to pass before our very eyes. The prophetic words of Jesus Christ come echoing down the corridors of the years saying to men of our day, **"Many shall come in My name saying, 'I am Christ!' Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." "There shall be famines, pestilence, and earth-quakes." "Many false prophets shall arise and deceive many." "There shall be signs in the sun and the moon and on earth distress of nations." "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."** See **Matt. 24**. Is there yet anything lacking in the prophecy of Paul, which he spoke in these words, "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof? 2 Tim. 3:1-5. Each truth of this prophecy abounds in minutest detail in our day. Not only do such things abound on the level of the individual, but they abound in international relations and the world of religion. The great leaders of the earth both of the East and of the West think nothing at all of lying, accusing falsely, truce breaking, or covetousness, and boastfulness abounds

without measure or precedent. Traitors and spies are continually discovered. The love of pleasure is everywhere and forms of godliness abound on every hand, yet they are devoid of the power of God.

Covetousness, boastfulness, and betrayal are found not only among the worldly. These things abound in the religious world as well and go hand in hand with all manner of deceit and trickery, which Paul has aptly described as "[the sleight of men and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.](#)" Eph. 4:14.

Daniel was told that in the time of the end "many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase," but it is doubtful whether even he could possibly have envisaged the ease with which moderns run to and fro. He could have had no idea of the swiftness of twentieth century travel or of men in orbit circling the earth in ninety minutes. He could have had no thought of trips to the moon nor of sending rockets to Venus. Such a vast increase in knowledge was hidden even from this man who is renowned for his wisdom beyond almost all men who have dwelt on the earth, but his prophecy is a sobering testimony that we are in the very last hours of this passing age. See Dan. Chapter 12, especially verse 4.

I feel so deeply within about this truth, so positive that we are at the very end of the dispensation, so sure that the manifestation of the sons of God is even at the doors that I have a burning desire to exhort all sober-minded men and women to set themselves aside more completely unto God. Give yourselves to watching, to fasting and prayer. Do not even try to "go along" with the existing church system. Seek to make Christ your head. Seek to be possessed with His mind. Seek to have Him daily reveal His will to you. Relax your hold on things that belong to time and lay hold on the things that are eternal. Let us turn our eyes from the realm of the passing and lift them up to the celestial hills of the permanent, for, when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 17
FROM DEATH TO LIFE
BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
FOR SINNERS ONLY

"Feed My sheep" was the commandment Jesus gave to Peter. There was but one commandment left to be given and it was the all important one, "Follow thou Me." There is beautiful harmony between these two commandments because there is no possible way by which a man can feed the flock of God if he himself is following Christ afar off.

The scriptures record that, on the night when Jesus was betrayed and the howling, bloodthirsty rabble came to seize Him and to take Him captive, a certain brave man drew his sword in defense of his Master, smiting the servant of the high priest and cutting off his ear. Matt. 26:51. Each of the four gospel writers bear record of this incident, but John alone identifies the sword-wielding man as none other than Simon Peter, saying, "**Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear.**" **John 18:10.** The servant's name was Malchus.

Simon Peter was no dastard in war. The fiery nature of his natural man was both ready and willing to face overwhelming and fearful odds. The mob who had come to take Jesus were armed men with swords and staves, determined to end forever the works of God's Christ. Matthew described the mob scene in these words: "**And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.**" **Matt. 26:47.** This was no band of weaklings who had come to take the Lord, but a great multitude of well armed men, bent on their malevolent and vicious intent, and Peter, seeing one of them lay hands on his beloved Master, drew his sword and smote the offender and cut off his right ear. His personal courage was ready to take on the whole mob. Then why was it, we may ask, that this brave and resolute man was seen a few minutes later 'following afar off'? Matt. 26:58. And the record tells that later still he emphatically denied that he had ever known Jesus at all.

I hope no man among us will blame him too much or condemn him for his sudden weakness. He was in a position more dreadful and scary than perhaps any of us have ever been, and we know our blessed Lord understood his weakness, too. Well Jesus knew and well we also know that many a valiant man who will stand up boldly against the fiercest foe will run and hide in fear rather than confess to a vital and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God knows that, too. He has seen our many efforts to stand for Him when the going gets rough, and He has seen our failure with gracious understanding. He knows that in the natural we are very brave, but He also knows that the spiritual realm is far above the natural world and its weakness. In that blessed realm human bravery will not suffice. In fact, it will not do at all. Spiritual strength comes only by the Spirit of God and all earth's bravery or bravado is only weakness in that realm. Jesus wasn't amazed at Peter's weakness. It was no surprise to Him at all. For a long time He had known that this hardy man was far too dependent upon his human resources. That is why He told him earlier, "The cock shall not crow twice before thou hast denied Me thrice." Peter was sure such a thing could never be, but God knows how frail the natural man really is. He knows that man must die to himself and all he is or ever hopes to be that Christ may be his strength. Jesus turned and looked on Peter when He heard the denial for the third time, and Peter, remembering the words of the Lord, went outside and wept bitterly. The look of Christ was not a look of anger, but, oh, what sermons can be preached by a look! A look is not unlike a smile. Indeed, a smile is a look. Long ago in the world we used to sing:

There are smiles that make us happy;
There are smiles that make us blue.
There are smiles that drive away the teardrops
As the sunshine drives away the dew.
There are smiles that have a tender meaning
That the eye of love alone can see;
But the smiles that fill my life with sunshine
Are the smiles you give to me.

A look can tell of friendship, displeasure, or appreciation. It can speak of hate, disgust, mistrust. It can expose doubt, fear, or rebellion. It can show the tenderness of love or the vileness of lust. It can tell of forgiveness, mercy, or understanding. There seems to be nothing that cannot be said by a look.

It is now almost sixty years since the blessed Holy Spirit laid His convicting hand upon me and told me as only He can do that the time had come for me to leave the world and all its blighting sin and come to the cleansing fountain of blood that all my sins might be washed away. Many and fierce had been the days of struggle as the Holy Spirit prepared my heart with great conviction of my sin and showed me as only He can my great need of Christ. I shall be thankful forever that one night, as I stood in the midst of my convictions and struggles, a saintly woman turned around from where she stood several rows of seats in front of me and smiled at me. I don't know what made her turn nor do I know why she smiled at me - we had never met nor spoken - but her smile told me I need have no fear in trusting God, that He was as good as His promise and that, if I would but come, He would meet me and save me from my sin.

And so it must have been with Peter that sad night when Jesus turned and looked upon him. Peter knew the meaning of that look. He knew there was reproof and he knew there was forgiveness, but above all he knew there was understanding.

God understands our sorrows;
He sees the falling tear
And whispers, "I am with you;
You need not have a fear."

Peter denied the Lord three times that night, and that is why Peter was grieved that morning by Galilee when Jesus said, not once, not twice, but three times, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" He wanted to make sure that Peter was forever finished with the vanity of trusting in himself, and I am sure he was. Once before Jesus had said to him, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren." **Luke 22:31-32.**

Perhaps I will shock many people when I say that at this particular time neither Peter nor any of the other disciples were converted men or born of the Spirit. You ask how that could be. It is because they were still living in the dispensation of the law. No man can be truly converted until he receives the Holy Spirit to quicken him and regenerate his spirit, and this is why the scripture says, "...The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:39.** It was not until after the resurrection and Christ's own glorification that He appeared in the midst of His disciples and breathed the Spirit upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." **John 20:22.** These same men, upon whom He breathed the Spirit that they might be regenerated, born again, New Testament Christians, were the men who some fifty days later were filled with the Holy Ghost when the day of Pentecost was fully come. Acts 2:1-4. On that day the fire and glory of God descended upon them, and they were baptized with the Holy Ghost according to the promise of Jesus, which He gave them just before His ascension into heaven, saying, "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." **Acts 1:5.** The Feast of Pentecost is fifty days after the Feast of the Passover. Jesus, true to type, was crucified a few hours before the Passover began and was taken down from the cross that He might not hang there on the Passover day. He was buried and remained three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. After He arose in triumph from the tomb, He was seen of men for forty

days. That adds up to forty-three days since the Passover. On the day He ascended to heaven, He commanded His disciples, saying, "...Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." **Luke 24:49.** "Then He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." **Luke 24:50-53.** "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." **Acts 2:1-4.**

Such was the heavenly preparation of this man Peter, to whom Jesus had said, "Feed My sheep," and such was the preparation of all those men the Lord was sending forth. Such also should be the preparation of every Christian, for the things of which we have spoken actually comprise a simple New Testament experience.

I do not think that by any stretch of the imagination any could say that Peter's two sermons, recorded in the book of Acts, were masterpieces of oratory or elocution, but his eloquence knew no bounds in fervency of speech and passion of experience. Great were his experiences in God. Varied, indeed, had been his testings and temptations. Through them he had learned the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh, and knew beyond doubt that it is vanity to put one's trust in the flesh, but that he who puts his trust in the Lord shall never be ashamed.

"Feed My sheep and follow thou Me," His Lord had told him, and through all his life he steadfastly did that very thing until the crowning day came and it happened to him as Jesus had told him, "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst where thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." **John 21:18-19.** And so it was that, when Peter was an old man and knew that his death by crucifixion was near, he wrote in triumph, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." **2 Pet. 1:14.**

For many months now I have felt a burden on my heart to write a message that would be of special benefit to those precious people who as yet have not come to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. While it is true that practically the whole New Testament is addressed to believers who have come to the knowledge of salvation, the Bible is such a versatile book that it meets people in every walk of life and ministers to them on whatever level of experience or need they may be.

"Come, ye sinners, lost and hopeless,
Jesus' blood can make you free;
For He saved the worst among us
When He saved a wretch like me."

How good it is to read in the book of Jude, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation..." **Jude 3.** The common salvation is a level of salvation common among the children of men. I regret to say, and yet I suppose it is the will of the Lord, that by far the greater number of professing Christians have never obtained anything more than the common salvation. They become just the every day, run-of-the-mill sort of Christians. They have believed on Christ and they have been saved and they are satisfied with the most meager experience. Just so long as they make it to heaven when life is over that is all they care. They have been made partakers of a salvation which Jude calls the common salvation. They never know that higher realm of the "so great salvation" or, higher still, the salvation "reserved in heaven." Included in this common salvation group may be found thousands of people who have never known a time when God ever spoke to them or touched their lives in any way, yet they believe in God, in Christ, in the blood, in the atoning death and in the power of His resurrection, and in their hearts they believe they will be saved through His death on the cross. Knowing the infinite extent of God's grace and believing that Christ has reconciled all things unto Himself, we must believe that many of these people are walking in the realm of the common salvation. Our unbelief can never make the faith of God without effect. God forbid! It is God after all who has exercised faith for the salvation of the universe and it certainly shall be according to His decree.

But you, my brother in the world, and you, my sister without an experience of God's glory in your heart, need not remain so close to the realm of death. You need not abide in a dismal experience where you can never testify that you have assurance from His Spirit that you are saved from your sin. God has assured us time and again that it is possible for a man or a woman to know beyond any doubt that he is saved and a child of God. The word saved is a very scriptural word and is used many times in the New Testament. Its meaning is very simple. We speak of people being saved from drowning because someone pulled them out of the water. We tell heroic stories of people being saved from burning buildings by someone who rescued! them, perhaps at the risk of his own life. When we speak of being saved from sin, the meaning is the same the difference being that the way a man is saved from sin is not the same as the way a man is saved from drowning. Sin is the transgression of the law of God — that wonderful law that is recorded word by word in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. Because no one has ever been able to keep that law, therefore, the word of God plainly tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3:23.

How thankful our hearts should be that God does not leave us to die in such despair as that! Though He tells us plainly that through the deeds of the law no flesh can be saved, He shows how the righteousness of God may be attained without the law, even the righteousness of God, which comes through Jesus Christ to every one who believes in Him. This is the meaning of Rom. 3:20-22.

For a man to be saved and know it there are two things he must know and two things he must do. First, he must know that he is a sinner. The Bible tells us this in the verse we have quoted. Rom. 3:23. Secondly, he must know that, if he confesses this inherent sinfulness to God, God is faithful and just to forgive him of his sins and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness, for "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sins." Then there are two things he must do. First, he must confess his sins to God and believe that when he does so he is both forgiven and cleansed from all his sins. I cannot remember how many times I have knelt beside a seeking soul who longed for the knowledge of salvation and yet could not find assurance. The whole trouble is that God's way of salvation is so simple that sinners often stumble over it for its sheer simplicity. When, therefore, I found a man who could not find assurance that his sins were gone, I have pointed him to the simple words of 1 John 1:9. Nothing can be more simple or assuring than this, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Have you sincerely confessed your sins to God?" I have asked, and invariably the answer has come, often through tears of sincerity, "Yes, I have." "Then do you believe He has forgiven you as He promised to do in that verse of scripture?" "Yes," is usually the sincere and inevitable reply. I do not remember anyone who ever failed to see that God meant what He said in this scripture and found assurance by it.

Because the way of salvation is so very simple, sinners often fail to grasp its beautiful simplicity. They look for something difficult. They have often been taught that they must do good works and try to do the best they can and all such manner of things. I have no quarrel with good works, nor do I question the honesty of a man who is trying to do the best he can, but such is not the way of salvation. "What must I do to be saved?" the trembling jailor cried that wonderful night at Philippi. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved," was Paul's answer, and at that very moment amid all the confusion that prevailed, the jailor believed and was saved and baptized in water. It is just as simple as that, if you can only believe it. But I have good news for you still, for you do not even need to depend upon your own faith. Our wonderful God has promised that He Himself will give you the faith to be saved and to believe that the blood of Christ cleanses you from all sin. So He says in His word, "**By grace are ye saved through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.**" **Eph. 2:8.**

What a blessing it is when a man who really longs to know that he is saved and justified in God's sight really reaches out in the simplicity of his faith and believes the truth as God has spoken it! I shall never forget the night my bother, Philip, was saved. He, like myself, had spent many years under deep conviction of sin. On November 21, 1926, while some Salvation Army people were singing the song:

*She only touched the hem of His garment
As to His side she stole
Amid the crowd that gathered around Him,*

And straightway she was whole.
Oh, touch the hem of His garment,
And thou, too, shall be free.
His saving power this very hour
Will bring new life to thee.

While they sang that beautiful song, Jesus of Nazareth laid His nail-pierced hand upon me, and by His Spirit He bade me come to Him. I started for the altar where some had already gathered to pray, and I had not gone three steps before my burden of sin was gone. I didn't know what had happened, I felt so light, and it was not until the next day, when I saw how different my walk had suddenly become, that assurance began to fill my heart with the knowledge that I was truly saved. But while I knelt there before God, I told Him that what I was doing was for forever, that from that day on I would belong to Him. I told Him that if I made mistakes or even sinned in days to come that I would still be His, and He heard my blundering prayer and saved me by His grace. I was only a lad of seventeen years then; I am much older now and, as my mind wanders over those rolling hills of time, my soul sings a thousand hallelujahs because of His faithfulness throughout the many years.

All the way my Saviour leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His wondrous mercy,
Who through life has been my guide?

But I really started to tell you about my brother Phil. It was just nine days after I came to Christ that the conviction of years deepened in his soul. One night he decided to go to a meeting with me and, as we walked along the snowy path, he said to me, "George, I am trying hard to make up my mind tonight." I tried to assure him in my feeble way that God would meet him if he did, but when at last we arrived at the meeting house, we found the doors closed. To our great disappointment no meeting was to be held that night. I am sure the Good Shepherd was leading us, for we soon found ourselves standing somewhat bewildered at the entrance of a little Pentecostal mission, a strange people of whom we knew nothing. As we waited, an elderly lady with her daughter approached and turned toward the door. "What kind of meetings do you have in there?" my brother ventured to ask. "Oh," she said with fervent conviction, "we have wonderful meetings here. Won't you boys come in?" So in we went and sat down amid these totally new and strange surroundings. We had never heard people pray like they prayed, and their singing was with an exuberance and joy that we had never heard nor dreamed of. The pews were nothing more than benches, fashioned from cheap lumber. There were no carpets on the floors, nor was there an orchestra or choir - nothing, praise God, but the joy of the Lord that rang with a certainty from overflowing hearts. Then one by one they rose to testify, and such fervent testimonies they were! We had never heard the like. There were young men in the bloom of youth, young women shining with the glory of God, old men who had traveled far on the journey of life and old ladies whose faces shone with heavenly sweetness.

As they testified and sang the praises of God, my poor brother leaned over to me and whispered, "This seems to be alright, George," and I agreed that I thought it was. There was a little sermon by some layman and then almost everyone went to pray. Someone asked my brother if he was saved yet. "No," he said, "but my brother is." "Well," said they, "why don't you come to Christ now, too?" And with no more hesitation away he went to pray. As he knelt in prayer, God gave him great repentance. The rough old bench was a pool of bitter tears, but for all his weeping, assurance just did not come. God knows how best to deal with us and it is good sometimes when assurance does not come too quickly. I tried to assure him with what little I knew that God had accepted him, and others, who knew much more than I, explained the way of salvation more perfectly. Finally he sat up looking dejected and disappointed, not knowing it was his own unbelief that kept God's assurance from him. Then an old preacher, a man by the name of Bunting, came. He sat down beside him and explained the way of salvation to him, but still he couldn't believe. Finally, taking a little New Testament from his pocket, Mr. Bunting said, "Do you see this little Testament?" "Yes," was Phil's dubious reply. "Have you got this Testament or have I got it?" he asked.

"You've got it," Phil replied. Then the old preacher handed it to him and said, "Now you take it," and Phil reached out his hand and took it. "Have you got it now?" he asked. "Yes," my brother nodded. "And have you

got salvation, too?" he asked. Phil sat for a moment as silently the light began to break across the meadows of his soul, and then, scarcely believing the simplicity of it all, he replied, "Yes, I think I have." Then he made a move to return the Testament to its owner and dear Bro. Bunting said, "No, you keep that. It's yours." I have often thought of the wisdom of that little act of assurance.

Well, we left the building without too much assurance and started down the snowy streets, but I think I could take you to the very spot where assurance bloomed like a flower of spring in the garden of his heart, and with the joy of a man who has just found a precious jewel he said to me, "You know, George, I believe things are different." Assurance flooded his soul and for the rest of the long walk home we gloried in the goodness of our wonderful Lord.

It's just like Jesus to roll the clouds away;
It's just like Jesus to keep me day by day;
It's just like Jesus all along the way;
It's just like His great love.

It is just as simple as that. There is nothing difficult or hard about God's way of salvation.

Between the saddle and the ground
Sinners Jesus sought and Jesus found.

We said above that there were two things a sinner needs to believe and two things he needs to do. He must first believe he is a sinner and, secondly, he must believe that, if he confesses his sins to God, God will forgive him and the blood of Christ will cleanse him. Then he must confess his sins to God and believe that God, according to His word, has forgiven him and saved him. There is one thing that is absolutely necessary for a new, born child of God to do and, if he fails to do it, sooner or later his experience will grow cold. He must confess openly and unashamed that he is God's child and that Christ has saved him from his sins. God's word plainly teaches us this. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." **Rom. 9:9-10**. There is nothing like confessing Christ in humility before men to bring full assurance of salvation. We must never be ashamed of Christ or His great salvation. Jesus Himself has plainly said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." **Matt. 10:32-33**. When a man comes to Christ and is saved, he should not hide his light under a bushel. Go, confess Christ before your wife; she, too, will probably want to come to Christ. Tell your children that you have found the Saviour. Let the people among whom you work see that there is a change that Christ has wrought by your clean walk and your freedom from all evil habits. Lay aside all filthy talk, smoking, drinking, swearing and all such evil everywhere common among sinners. It will not be long before people will want to know the reason for the hope that is within you, and then you can tell them with meekness and fear what Jesus Christ has done in you.

There are certain things that accompany salvation. Paul wrote of certain professing Christians who fail to show the fruit of God's Spirit in their lives, but who bring forth thorns and briars instead. He wrote, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation..." Just as certain evils always accompany a life of sin and are manifest in the lives of those who are living in sin, so there are certain graces that accompany salvation and those who are living the life of the redeemed. There are certain evils that we put off and put away from ourselves the moment we are saved. For this reason Paul said, "Put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another..." **Col. 3:8-9**. All such evils as anger, wrath, swearing, dirty talk and lying have no part at all in the life of a Christian. They should be put away immediately and grace should be sought from God to overcome them completely. Such earthly habits as smoking and drinking have no place nor part in the life of a born again person. A Christian will find abounding joy and complete satisfaction through the joy of the Lord when truly saved. God does not ask you to give up the world and all things in it and give you nothing satisfying in return. He tells you to put off all these evils, but in their place He says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one

another..." **Col. 3:12-13.** A new born child of God should always remember that the joy of the Lord is his strength (Neh. 8:10), and, forgetting the things that are behind and looking to the glorious things that are before, he should press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:13-14.

To seek after God and to desire to be wholly His is the noblest desire that can fill the human breast. There are a few necessary things of vital importance that every seeking soul should know. God is not far from any one of us and His presence is certain and sure. They that seek shall find.

"To those who fall how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!"

First, a person seeking God should know that there is never anything indefinite or uncertain about God's plan. This is an important fact that is left out of almost every sermon we hear preached to sinners. The gist of evangelistic preaching usually runs in this vein: You are a sinner and, though Christ can save you, you must repent or be eternally lost. There is, of course, an element of truth in that statement, but it plunges the seeker into the realm of uncertainty as to why this should be and leaves him in a quandary concerning God's loving purpose toward him. Let every man and woman who longs to know that he is a child of God be assured that there is nothing uncertain or indefinite about God's dealings with us. Oh that all men were taught to understand that God knew them, not only when they were born, but long before they were born. Yea, even before the foundation of the world He knew them and planned the course and order of their lives! Before the world began, God knew you. He knew when you were to be born. He knew where you would be born. He arranged that you should be born into such and such a family

under such and such a condition, whether favorable or unfavorable, that through those circumstances, whether pleasant or disagreeable, He might mold and fashion your life into the exact vessel He chose you to be in the unspeakable glory of those great ages which are yet to come. Oh that men would see and understand this marvelous truth, for the knowledge of it lends abounding assurance to a troubled heart. Many centuries ago, some six hundred years before Christ was born, the Lord said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou earnest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." **Jer. 1:5.** Now God is no respecter of persons, and I have perfect confidence that He, who knew Jeremiah from the beginning, also knew you, dear reader, long before Adam was in Eden's lovely garden, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. Did not Paul confirm this very thing when he said, "Whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate... whom he did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." See **Romans 8:29,30.** It was before the world began that God foreknew us, and it was before the ages were formed that He predestinated us to share the likeness of His Son. As time went by, He called us, and then He justified us. As we walk with Him, He sanctifies us and makes us holy, and the day of glorification will surely come in its appointed time. It is important for you to know, oh seeking soul, that you are not some idle chip on the ocean of time, unloved, uncared for, and with no appointed future. Know rather that you are a special object of God's love and care, a person with a place in God's eternal purpose for the ages to come.

You will have noticed in the scripture quoted above (Rom. 8:29-30) that the Lord said, "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called." When the time comes in your life for God to speak to your heart with His still small voice, He sends the Holy Spirit to you, and when He is come, Jesus says, He will reprove the world (you and me) of sin and righteousness and of judgment (not judgment to come, as so many quote). John 16:8. He convinces and convicts us of sin because He wants us to know that we are sinners and that it is only when we confess our sins to Him that we find forgiveness. So John wrote: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **1 John 1:9.** That, then, is the first thing to do when coming to God. Confess your sins to Him. A seeker should pay no heed to how he feels, but simply believe what God says. He says, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When therefore God says He forgives the man who confesses his sin, be assured that the moment you confess and ask His pardon you are forgiven. Let neither man nor demon ever dissuade you of that wonderful fact. God is faithful. He cannot lie. Titus 1:2. Neither can He deny himself. 2 Tim. 2:13.

The Holy Spirit next convinces us of righteousness (John 16:9) - first that Christ, our Saviour, is righteous and, secondly, that, because we have believed on Him, we, too, are righteous and fully justified from all things. A Jew once said to a Christian brother, "Do you think Adolph Hitler could be forgiven and saved from sin?" The

brother replied, "Of course he could, if he confessed his sin and believed on Christ." "Good!" said the Jew, "for I know that, if God could not forgive him, then He could not forgive me either." And that is perfectly true. Saul of Tarsus called himself the chief of sinners, but the moment Jesus spoke to him, he fell down before God and accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord, and he who was so wicked and sinful in the past was made righteous, because Christ is righteous. When we come to Jesus Christ, we abandon forever any righteousness we ever thought we had, for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Isa. 64:6. Receiving Christ as our Saviour and Lord, we receive His righteousness as well. If God, therefore, gives us His righteousness, what need have we to depend upon our own? He who believes is justified from all things in God's sight and made pure and righteous, even as Christ is righteous. 1 John 3:7.

Repentance is godly sorrow for our sins. That is why Paul said, "**Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**" **2 Cor. 7:10**. The sorrow of the world is the kind of sorrow or regret that a thief has when he is caught in his thieving. That, of course, is not true sorrow. It is merely self-pity. But, when men or women know that they were born in sin and shapen in iniquity and that all their lives they have been seeking to enjoy the pleasures of a sinful world, then, when the Holy Spirit speaks to them and convinces them of their need of His righteousness, the time has certainly come for repentance and whole-hearted turning to the Lord.

Jesus one day took a little child on His knee and said to His disciples, "**Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.**" **Matt. 18:2-3**. To be converted means a complete about face, a complete turn around. It means leaving off the old ways of the world with all its rebellion against God and embracing instead of the salvation of the Lord. It means you are no longer a sinner, but a converted saint, born anew by the miracle-working power of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all mankind. Nor does our blessed Lord leave us without an inner witness. To every believing heart he says, "**He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.**" **1 John 5:10**. And yet again: "**The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.**" **Rom. 8:16**. That wonderful witness will assuredly come as we believe God's word and bear witness to His faithfulness.

There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Mohammed is dead; Buddha is dead; Confucius is dead, but Jesus Christ, God's Son, is alive forevermore, and in His nail-pierced hand He holds the keys of death and hell. It is Christ who unlocks the door and delivers men from their sin. It is He who on that great last day will unlock the door of hell itself that all men may stand before Him in judgment. He who hath received much, of him shall much be required, and he who hath received little, of him shall He require the less. Luke 12:48. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12. Therefore every man needs Christ and Christ alone and must believe in Him as his own personal Saviour that he might be saved. The great sinner needs Christ to cleanse him of his sin. The one who has sinned but little needs Christ just as much. There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3:23. There are none too old to be saved, and none too young. The man full of his own righteousness needs the salvation of Christ, and the most dissolute and wicked wretch also needs the grace of Christ to lift him to higher ground.

Let no man ever say he has gone too far in sin, for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. However wicked the past may have been, let me assure you that it is not the greatness of your crimes that keeps you away from the love of God, but the unbelief in your heart. There is only one damning sin known among men. It is not blasphemy. It is not robbery. It is not adultery, and it is not murder. It is unbelief. For thus saith God, "**By Him all that believe UK justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.**" **Acts 13:39**. God is just as willing to save the worst of sinners as to save a penitent child.

Many years ago in the farming country where we lived there abode a woman who for many years had been the talk of the neighborhood. Long ago her husband had left her because of the life of sin she continually led. She had a family of five children and, though she was so rough and coarse and very sinful, to her credit it must be said that those in need or in trouble could expect her to be among the first to offer a helping hand. But she was bad, and there was no mistake about that, though it is not my place to recount or recall her sins. Among her family of five children there was one little boy who was slowly dying of Blight's disease. His name was Kenny.

As time went by, my brother Philip and I were converted to Christ and received the infilling of the Holy Spirit, as I mentioned earlier in this writing. It so happened in the good will of the Lord that this woman moved away from our district and went to live at a little village called La Porte. She was a farm woman and unlike most women she managed and worked her own farm herself. She plowed the fields like a man, threshed the grain and hauled it to the elevator with her own horses and wagon. She hesitated at nothing. As the years passed by and the blessed Lord laid His hand upon my brother and me and sent us to preach the gospel, a door was opened to us in that same little Saskatchewan town of La Porte - a French word meaning the door. We knew of no Christians in the place, but held our meetings in a community hall. The Holy Spirit moved upon some of the people and they believed on Christ and were saved.

It happened one day that my brother and I were driving our old touring car along the road when we noticed this woman and the son who was suffering from Bright's disease coming toward us with a team of horses and a wagon. We did not stop to speak, but waved to her and went on. As we drove along, I said to my brother, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if that poor woman came to the meetings and gave her heart to Christ and God should heal that little boy?" He agreed, of course, that it would be wonderful, but I confess that neither of us expected that such a thing would ever be.

One night when our little meeting began, to our surprise there sat this woman with a friend of hers on one side and her little boy on the other. Night after night she attended the services, and one evening, after my brother had preached, he asked if there were any who desired prayer for God's help. To our utter amazement her hand was among the first to be raised, and the lady beside her raised her hand as well. My brother and I were very inexperienced preachers and we always took turns in preaching. It was the following evening, I believe, that we held our service in a tiny hall because the larger hall was in use. It was my turn to speak and I am sure it must have been a very simple sermon, but our lack and childish simplicity means nothing when that wonderful Man of Galilee is there sending forth His Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. After the little sermon we sang an invitation hymn, and oh what a look of sadness and dejection was on the hardened face of that poor, benighted woman! Presently the lady beside her arose and walked to the bench at the front to pray. Then I heard the woman say aloud, "I guess I'll go, too." She came up to the front and knelt before God to pray. I shall never forget how she wept before the Lord and how she confessed her sinfulness to Him. Her body shook with sobs of repentance as the bitter tears coursed down her cheek and fell as rain on the bench where she knelt. Then Jesus came, and faithful to His word He spoke peace and forgiveness to her troubled heart. He cleansed her from sin and filled her heart with assurance that she belonged to Him forever. Then she looked up to heaven and with a heart bursting with joy, she cried, "Oh, I feel so different!" And do you know, the hard lines of sin that had marred her face for so many years melted away as Jesus came and wiped the tears of sorrow all away, and we knew that the same Jesus who long ago said to a sinful woman, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," was with us in that little hall that night.

A few weeks went by and one day there was a knock on the door of our little shack, and there before us stood two little boys. One was the boy who was slowly dying of Bright's disease and the other a little friend of his. We asked them in, and as they played around the house, I said to my brother, "I wonder if that little fellow came down here to be prayed for?" We could only guess, for he had not said so. So Phil asked him, "Kenny, did you want us to pray that God would make you well?" The little freckled fellow sheepishly said, "Yes." So we all knelt down together — two boys about twelve years of age, my brother Phil and I. We anointed his head with oil and prayed a simple prayer that Jesus would touch him and heal him and make him well. No power on earth could save him, for the doctor had told his mother that she could not expect him to live more than two or three years. Already his condition was so severe that his bed sheets had to be changed three times in the night. So we prayed and the boys went home.

The next Sunday we were invited to have dinner at their home. We had only just been seated when the lady said, "I suppose you boys would like to know how Kenny is." "Yes," we said, "we surely would." "Well," she answered with tears of joy, "I haven't had to attend to him once since he was prayed for," and so we rejoiced together. I will not mention further details now except to say that Kenny grew to be a man, joined the army, fought all through World War II, and then returned home.

Some weeks later this new born saint, Kenny's mother, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and I shall never forget the joyful song she sang as the glorious anointing of God's Spirit rested upon her and filled her hungry soul.

Is not this the land of Beulah,
Blessed, blessed land of light,
Where the sun is always shining
And the sky is always bright?

She has gone home to heaven now to dwell with the Lord she loved, and when I see her in the sweet bye and bye, I'm sure I'll hear her tell the angels how Jesus came to save her that night so long ago.

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Freely bestowed on all who believe,
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured;
Will you this moment His grace receive?
Dark is the stain that we cannot hide;
What can avail to wash it away?
Look, there is flowing a crimson tide!
Whiter than snow you may be today.

CHAPTER TWO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONVICTION OF SIN

The vast wealth of blessing freely bestowed upon mankind by the coming of the Holy Spirit is, I freely admit, beyond the scope of my ability to portray, nor need we attempt to encompass with our limited understanding the full extent of that which our omniscient heavenly Father knows. In the months past we have written briefly of some of the mighty workings of His divine power in the lives of those who yield themselves to Him, but until we rid ourselves of the reasonings of the human mind to let the mind of Christ dwell in us, we will be unable to grasp more than the rudiments of all He is and does. **"But, when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." John 15:26-27.**

I know no words, be they many or few, that could more adequately describe the blessedness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the believer's heart than these inspired words of Jesus by which He promised that after His departure He would send the Holy Spirit to abide with us forever. **"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7.**

The physical presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, walking among men for thirty-three years manifesting the truth, the light, the life, and the glory of God, must have been the greatest and most blessed visitation the world had ever known. We dare not on the events of power and glory that daily filled the mighty ministry manifested to the world by that first Son of God. Should we now allow our minds to explore a ministry of such greatness that even the world itself could not contain the books needed to describe it, we could not now write of that Comforter whom Jesus promised to send that we might share His sonship. Behold what infinite importance Jesus, the Son of God placed upon the coming of the Holy Spirit when He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." His departure out of this world meant the coming of the Spirit, and this in His wisdom was expedient. (The word means serving to promote a desired end.) He had been with them and had worked the work of God among them, but henceforth by His Spirit He would be in them, transforming them into God's image and likeness and through them extending God's work and will in all the world as well.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth, John 6:63, and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8:9. Only by the entrance of the Holy Spirit are men born of God, and from that new birth all who henceforth walk in the Spirit, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, are changed into the image of Christ from one glory to another by each successive step until we arrive at that same image. 2 Cor. 3:18. God hath both finished and

manifested His first Son. That Son, Jesus Christ, is the firstborn of a vast family of sons, who are members of His body. God is now in the wonderful process of finishing and perfecting these younger sons who are members of the Christ body. The Spirit has baptized them into the body of Christ and they have all drunk of that one Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13.

More and more like Him! Repeat the blest story
Over and over again.
Changed by His Spirit from glory to glory,
I shall be satisfied then.

As diamonds are dug from the grime and filth of a mine thence to be cut and fashioned into objects of extreme value and beauty, so now does the Holy Spirit search out from among the filth and corruption of the world those who by God's grace are predestined to share His image and likeness. Man in sin is lost. He is without God and without hope. He is a stranger and an enemy. He is blind and cannot see his way; and, worst of all, he is dead in trespasses and sins. Could a cold stone by its efforts transform its lifeless self into a man, then might a man dead in trespasses and sins transform himself into a living son of God. If the dead by some effort could arise from his tomb, then might he who is dead in sins deliver himself from death's chain to walk in newness of life; but these things cannot be. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The Holy Spirit quickens those dead in trespasses and sins by planting the life of Christ within them. Man, to enter the kingdom of God, must be born from above. The Spirit of life - the Holy Spirit - reaching down from above, touches the dead soul with the life of God. Then and then only does the creature live. All nature teaches us this vital lesson. Five distinct kingdoms are clearly visible: the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, the human kingdom, and the kingdom of God. Each of these kingdoms is fast sealed and shut up in its own realm. By no effort of its own can the mineral enter the vegetable kingdom. By no effort of its own can the plant enter the animal kingdom. By no effort of its own, can the animal enter the human kingdom; and by no effort of his own can man enter the kingdom of God.

The clay that lies inert and lifeless in the garden possesses no power by which it can transform itself into a plant and enter the kingdom above it, yet how often our eyes have seen the miracle of a living seed planted in the ground, springing forth, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. We have seen that seed of life from the vegetable kingdom above touching the deadness of the clay, lifting it up through its tender stem, transforming it into a living plant, a flower, a vegetable, a fruit, or an oak, depending entirely upon the kind of seed that was planted in the dead earth. We shall further affirm that it is impossible for a plant by some effort of its own to enter the animal kingdom immediately above it; yet we have seen with our eyes how both animals and men, eating that plant, do by a miracle which we call digestion lift it up into the animal kingdom and transform it into the flesh of a beast or a man. Though perhaps my thought may seem crude, am I speaking aught but truth and soberness when I say that even the flesh of beasts, eaten by man, does by the same miracle of digestion become the flesh of man? Thus does each kingdom, when touched by the life above it, leave its own realm to enter into the realm above its own. We should now plainly see how impossible it is for man by some effort of his own to enter the kingdom of God above him. How could he by any process transform himself into the likeness of God? It is impossible! Yet when the Spirit of life from God's kingdom above enters his soul, planting there that incorruptible seed of the word of God, that liveth and abideth forever, then that man is born of God. Yea, he is born into the kingdom immediately above him, which kingdom is the kingdom of God. He becomes God's child, God's son, and a full partaker of God's Spirit of life. He is born again. He is born from above.

If we have considered the matter as we ought, we will surely have noticed how all things in God's creation come from a seed whether it be of the vegetable creation, the animal creation, or whether it be the kingdom of God. An oak tree comes from an acorn, planted in the earth. Man comes from a seed, planted in the womb; and sons of God come from the incorruptible seed, planted in the heart by the Spirit of God. That is why Peter said we are born of incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. 1 Pet. 1:23.

We speak the truth in saying that God seeks His sons from the corruption in which they are lost, without God and without hope in the world. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to arrest these men in their night of sin. He awakens them, brings them to repentance, gives them faith to believe God's great redemption, and then He

quickens them by planting within their hearts that incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. Therefore Jesus told them, "When the Comforter is come (the Holy Spirit), He will reprove (that is, convict and convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Have we not by experience found that man, convicted of his sin and thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of Christ and His power to save and deliver from death and bondage, will soon turn his heart to God in repentance and faith to receive the life that comes pouring into his soul from above?

Let us then consider the work of the Spirit in convicting men of sin. I greatly fear that in our day men are not being convinced and convicted of sin as they ought to be; and, because they are not being convicted of sin as they ought to be, they are not being delivered from the bondage of their corruption. The sad consequence inevitably follows that before long they sink back into sin again, seeing no evil in it. But the man who has seen his deplorable state in sin even as God sees him and has repented with the repentance the Spirit gives him will never again turn back, nor will he desire to do so. My lifelong observation has convinced me that men who turn back, or backslide, are men who never thoroughly repented in the first place. We make a great mistake when in our anxiety to bring men to a decision we force a sort of premature birth, an unwholesome conversion, that is followed by a life-time of sickly, immature Christianity. The world does not need religion. The world needs conviction, repentance, conversion, and life. Men need to know that they are dead in trespasses and sins and that the wrath of God abides upon them. "But," you may ask, "what is the wrath of God?" I must reply that the wrath of God is death. "The soul that sinneth, it will die" is the edict of the Lord. God's wrath against sin is manifested in the death of the sinner, a Christless death in which he abides throughout all the decades of his existence until Christ comes into his heart. It was this very truth that Jesus was making clear to us when He said, "He that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son hath not life; but the wrath of God (death) abideth on him" because he hath not life. Though such an one should live in the extreme fullness of earth's pleasures, yet he is dead while he lives (1 Tim. 5:6), a stranger to Christ, and an enemy of God.

The condition of a man outside of Christ is a condition of complete and utter helplessness, and, insofar as his ability to help himself is concerned, his condition is also one of utter hopelessness. That which is dead is both helpless and hopeless. "The dead know not anything" and are powerless to avoid the corruption that sets in as the skin worms destroy the body. Our condition as sinners outside Christ is the condition of death. To the Christians at Ephesus Paul wrote, saying, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1**. And Jesus also, when speaking to the Jews who contended with Him, in like manner revealed man's condition of death when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." **John 5:25-26**. The tenor of thought forcefully expressed throughout the whole scripture is that man in his natural state is dead. It is because of this fact and this alone that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself entered the realm of death, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." **2 Cor. 5:14**. What statement could be more plain or what fact more clear than that which is stated here: - because all are dead, Christ died for all! And, if Christ died for all because all were dead, then without Him and the divine life He freely bestows mankind is not only dead but helpless and hopeless as well.

As a man with his voice arouses another from sleep, so those who sleep in death shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. Our Saviour demonstrated time and time again throughout His earthly ministry that the power to raise dead men by His word was inherent in Himself. He was, yea, rather is, both the resurrection and the life, and all who hear His voice must come forth. "Young man, arise," He said as His fingers touched the bier (Luke 7:14), and the young man arose to be returned in life to his widowed mother. "Talitha cumi; maiden, arise," was the word of power He spoke to the maiden silent in death (Mark 5:41), and at His word her heart resumed its beating, the blood its life giving flow, and all the people rejoiced at the marvelous thing they had seen. "Lazarus, come forth," He called as they rolled the stone away; and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. "Loose him and let him go," the Master spoke; and Lazarus walked in the newness and freedom of life.

"I am the resurrection!" Thus He spoke
In lovely Bethany one cloudy day
To weeping sisters; yet those living words

Healed not their wound, nor dried their tears away.
Naught did they see but death; the chasm wide
Was deep and dark and cold. They did not know
Eternal life was standing by their side.

"I am the resurrection!" Yet they wept
Though Life Eternal looked into their eyes;
For resurrection came to visit earth
When Jesus left His home beyond the skies.
So Life walked down that day with human feet
To where death trembled in the grave's dark gloom.
Life challenged death; he dropped his keys and fled,
And with Christ-life a man came from the tomb.

"I am the resurrection!" Angels smiled
That day in spring they rolled the stone away
While humans wept. They could not yet believe
That conquered death could never hold his prey.
But in that grave Life stepped from out a shroud.
Life fears no shrouds nor death's vales dark and wild.
The everlasting arms are lifting him
And tenderly as mother lifts her child.

"I am the resurrection!" Jesus walked
Beneath the trees that He himself had made,
And watched a broken-hearted woman weep
Outside a tomb where all her hopes were laid.
If He could bring a dead man back to life,
If by His word death vanished from the tomb,
Could He not bring back hopes that now are dead
And resurrect lost joys from night's dark gloom?
"I am the resurrection!" Jesus spoke;
One word fell from the lips of endless
Life, One word, a name; but that was word enough
To banish all the darkness, fear, and strife.
Raised from the dead were Mary's hopes and joys.
Gone were her sorrows, gone her doubts and fears.
She understood then what we now should know —
Eternal Life is walking through the years.

He is the resurrection! And today
We walk the road with Him in life anew.
The resurrection life He gave to them
Is life that now He wants to give to you.
He is that life! He gives it freely when
We bid him enter, nevermore to part.
You find it not beyond the starry skies;
You have it when you have Him in your heart.

Charles S. Price

Man has no life in himself. He is dead in trespasses and sins. But, as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. John 5:26. When, therefore the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins hears the voice of the Son of God, he awakens to an entirely new life as Jesus said. "I give unto them eternal life." We are mistaken in our thinking when we conclude that eternal life is called eternal merely to

signify duration. Eternal life does not speak of duration but of the kind and quality of life that Jesus gives. We already have physical life, and those who possess nothing more are dead while they live. Eternal life is not the life of this world, but the life of the ages, for that is what the Greek word *aionian* means. Christ gives the believer His life, and His life is the life of the ages. It is the life that will fill all things forever. It is the life of God, and, because it is His life, it is as timeless and endless as Himself. Endurance, however, is only one of the qualities of the life that Jesus gives. **"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3.** Since the Saviour said, "I am the life," then we should be able to see that life in all its fullness is what He is in all His fullness. The life He gives is a different quality of life. That which man calls life God calls death. He sees us with this mist, this vapor we think is life, as dead men burying our dead, but the life He gives to those who believe is His own life, and that life is Christ Himself. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," was the promise He made. It is certain they cannot perish. His life is imperishable because He is imperishable and He is life. "I give unto them *aionian* life," Jesus said, and *aionian* life is the life of the ages. Eternal life is not an extension of this present life. Christ is eternal life. The life, which He is, is the life He now gives to those who believe. That life is imperishable because He is imperishable. We are in error when we say, "Jesus died that I might live." The real truth is that Jesus died that He might give His life to us. He is the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died, and, as a result of that death, His life now reappears in the millions of those who believe.

We are inclined to lightly pass over many profound statements of Holy Scripture. There is "a time to be born," the wise man said. Eccles. 3:2. Jesus in His unfolding of the mysteries of God made this remarkable declaration: **"All that the Father hath given to Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.** He also said with equal force, **"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44.** These two definite assertions are contrary, if not completely opposite, to the negative preaching of modern evangelists, but let God be true though every man be a liar. No man comes to Christ until the Father draws him. Organize all the revival meetings you wish. Preach your heart out; persuade, exhort, cajole, warn, rebuke, and threaten, but they still will not come except and until the Father draws them. You may by persuasion gain a proselyte or a mere professor, but only the Spirit of God can make a believer. It is the Lord who adds daily to the church such as should be saved; it is not man. Acts 2:47. There is a time to be born in the Spirit just as there is a time to be born in the natural. Men come to spiritual birth when they hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to the innermost depths of their spirit; then they that hear and believe live. No man comes except the Father draw him, but all that the Father hath given to Jesus Christ will come to Him. John 6:37. Our believing on Jesus Christ is the beginning of the resurrection. Our faith in Him is actually the first step in the order of a resurrection which, when completed, will include our spirit, our soul, and even our bodies in perfection, incorruption, and immortality. First the spirit is quickened and made alive by the life of Christ. Then the mind is renewed as we become possessors of the mind of Christ. God does not put His thoughts into our minds; He gives us the mind of Christ. Finally, the body is renewed as it is written, **"This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (The victory here mentioned is the life of Christ.) O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory." 1 Cor. 15:53-55.**

As the resurrection of the dead from the grave proceeds, "every man in his own order" (band or group), 1 Cor. 15:23, so likewise the quickening of the spirits of men walking the earth, dead in trespasses and sins, comes "every man in his own order" Every man comes to Christ in his proper time — when the Holy Spirit calls him. This Jesus plainly taught when He said, **"All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me," John 6:37,** and **"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44.**

If we can lay aside the tradition of the evangelists, theologians, and sects and listen instead to the word of God, we will clearly see that it is only when Christ calls men by His Spirit that they come in repentance to God. Did Jesus Christ consult Saul of Tarsus as to whether or not he wanted to become a Christian? Did He plead with that rebellious, persecuting tyrant to change his ways and to follow Him? No! He did not! He told him in the plainest and simplest manner possible that he was a vessel chosen of God and that he was to bear the name of Christ before Jews, Gentiles, and Israelites, that he must stand before kings to testify in Christ's name, and

that in doing so he would suffer great persecutions and hardships. Paul had nothing to do but obey. No wonder this murderous Christ-hater was able to say with power and assurance, "Every man in his own order." If you will search a bit, you will not look far before you find many men who were similarly called against their will and told by the Spirit of God what they must do, though at first they had no intention of doing any such things. Moses was certainly among those unwilling ones, as was also Jeremiah and many others, both in scripture record and in history as well. When the Spirit of God speaks, dead men, though bound hand and foot with grave clothes, come forth from the darkness and hopelessness of death's deep sleep to be loosed and let go, to live and to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus our Lord.

When the hour comes for men to be called to Christ, the first work of the Spirit is to convict them of sin. "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." With eloquent words the poet sang:

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin;
Nor how, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.
But I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.

Our hearts respond with reverence and a fervent amen to such truth as this. I frankly confess that after almost half a century of walking with God, I still cannot explain the miracle of conviction of sin, nor do I fully understand that heavenly wonder, the miracle of the new birth. My ignorance is yet more manifest as I behold with bewildered admiration the miracle of those things we speak of as being natural, which occur momentarily all about us. "Knowest thou how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child?" the Spirit questions. **Eccles. 11:5.** To this, with bowed head and wondering heart, I confess, "My Lord, I know not!" If we understand not the miracle of a leaf falling from a tree in autumn, how shall our little minds explain the miracle of the bones that grow in the womb of her that is with child? How much less are we able to explain the wonder of the Spirit moving in grace and power over the lifelessness of the soul of one dead in trespasses and sins, awakening the spirit with conviction of sin and granting repentance unto life eternal through Jesus Christ, our wonderful Lord! Jesus spoke of something more than a far off resurrection day when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." **John 5:25.** No one was more certain of a great and final resurrection than was the Christ, who said, "I am the resurrection," and no one understood as well as He that there is a resurrection which now is, taking place in the spirits of those who, believing, receive life through His name. As the breeze, moving gently in the tree-tops, bears in its breath the mystery of God, so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the heart of sin, rousing and awakening him to repentance and salvation. The method by which the Spirit convicts men of sin is shown here to be threefold. He will reprove or convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment: "Of sin because they believe not on Me; of righteousness because I go to the Father; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." **John 16:8-11.** The great damning sin upon which the Spirit fastens His work of conviction is the sin of unbelief. "Of sin because they believe not" is the word of the Lord! Unbelief is the one great damning sin. Sin and unrighteousness of any and every kind remain to darken the soul and hold it in the vice-like grip of death wherever unbelief is found, but sins of years are washed away and blackest stains become as snow when men believe on Christ, for the Holy Ghost has said, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." **1 John 1:7.** If there is no belief in the blood of Christ, no spirit of repentance toward God, no faith toward Jesus Christ, then nothing is cleansed and the soul dead in trespasses and sins remains in his death and the wrath of God abides upon him — because he has not believed. We have already shown that the wrath of God is death, and, since the unbeliever is already dead in sins, thus the wrath abides upon him while he remains in his unbelief. **John 3:36.**

When Jesus with three of His disciples descended from the mount of transfiguration, a scene of pitiful confusion met His eyes. A lunatic boy, violently possessed of a demon, had been brought to His disciples, but they could not deliver him. So they brought him to Jesus. "And when He saw him, straightway the spirit tare

him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And He asked his father, **How long is it ago since this came unto him?** And he said, Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, **If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.** And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, **Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.** **Mark 9:20-24.** The question we ask must not be, "If Thou canst help us," for with God all things are possible. The question of eternal importance is this: "If thou canst believe."

"Lord, now, indeed, I find Thy power and Thine alone
Can change the leopard's spots, and melt the heart of stone."

The question is not, "Can Christ save me?" The question is, "Do you believe that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" The question is not, "Can God forgive and save a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, or any other?" The question is, "Do I believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin?" He who believes that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him will in one moment make a wonderful discovery — that, though his sins were as scarlet, they are now as white as snow, and, though they were red like crimson, now they are as wool. Isa. 1:18.

Conviction of sin, seizing upon the sinful heart, will cause the penitent spirit to cry from its unsearchable depths,

"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole.
I want Thee forever to dwell in my soul.
Break down every idol; cast out every foe.
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat.
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet.
By faith for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." **Rom. 10:17.** Simply stated the meaning is this: Faith cometh by hearing the word of God. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." It is when the Spirit whispers the promise of God into the sinner's heart that faith, born of the Holy Ghost, reaches up to grasp and lay hold on the truth and bring salvation and the life of Christ to the believing heart. How often during my life I have knelt by the side of repentant sinners only to find that, though they had confessed their sins to God, they still did not have the witness of the Spirit that the blood of Christ had cleansed their sins away. Oh such occasions I always opened the Bible at that bright promise in 1 John 1:9 to let them read for themselves God's wonderful assurance that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And I think I can say to the glory of God that I know of neither man nor woman who, seeing the simplicity of that straightforward promise, was unable to believe to the salvation of his soul.

He will reprove - i.e. convict and convince - the world of sin. Conviction of sin must be recognized as the first and initial work of the Holy Spirit in the unbeliever. If there is no true conviction of sin in the heart and conscience of the sinner, then there is no true conversion. Men must be convicted of the fact of sin, the fault of their sin, the folly of their sin, and the filth of sin. The fact of sin is that we have transgressed the commandment of the Lord. The fault of sin is that we have despised God's word, God's law, and God's Christ and have done ill worthy of death by our transgression. The folly of sin is that, while we continue in it, we are acting against our own reason and against the word of the Lord as revealed by His holy law, against the conviction of our own conscience and the reproof of the Holy Spirit, and in so doing are treading beneath our feet the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for the remission of our sins. The apostle spoke a fiery and dreadful truth when he exclaimed, "He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace" Heb. 10:28-29. The words of the evangelist could not

have been far wrong when he cried with eloquence, "Oh dying but immortal men, ye blood-bought hearers of the word, better for thee that Calvary had not borne its burden and that the lips of Christ had not been opened in invitation if, rejecting all, thou goest into eternal desolation, thy hands and thy feet be dabbled with the blood of the Son of God!"

The folly of remaining in sin could be attested to by ten thousand reasons, for "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The filth of our sin can only be fully seen as we behold the inherent purity and glory of God. I dare not deviate from my subject now to endeavor to portray the holiness and the glory of God, but let us at least call to remembrance how, on those occasions recorded in which the Lord revealed His holiness to men, those men, though themselves among the holiest on earth, shrank always to hide themselves in dust and ashes from the blinding light of that holiness which He is. No greater man ever lifted his prophetic voice to unfold eternal mysteries than the prophet Isaiah, yet the inglorious vileness he felt as he saw himself in the revealing light which God is, is recorded for us in these inspired words: "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." **Isa. 6:1-7.**

The reason sinners today are not aware of the filth of their sin is because preachers have lost sight of the glory and holiness of God. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so..." "For among My people are found wicked men; they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich." These words, quoted from the fifth chapter of Jeremiah, I say with extreme regret, picture with vivid inspiration the dreadful condition of preachers and priests in our day. They prophesy falsely and the people love to have it so. But what will they do in the end thereof? Because the preachers have lost sight of the glory of God and have given themselves to numbering their congregations, while compassing land and sea to make new proselytes, therefore the people, Christian and unconverted alike, have lost their sense and realization of the dreadful filth of their sin. It is true that some occasionally speak of the holiness of God, but they seldom seem to have any true conviction of it and seldom do they live the thing they preach. Therefore their sermons are clouds without water and empty words preached from empty hearts.

No man will ever convince men of the filth of sin while he consents to believe that Christ was a hippy, bumming idly about the country as a rebellious, long-haired mendicant, intent on stirring up trouble. I am amazed beyond belief that an almost countless number of professed spiritual leaders have gone aimlessly along with such imbecilic absurdity, and, not content with this, have even allowed themselves to be instructed by this unclean rabble, who are intent on fulfilling every lust of the flesh, repenting of nothing, but gratifying every unclean and hurtful inclination. Christ, so far from being a hippy, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Heb. 7:26. Let us both see and partake of the holiness of God; then shall our presence be a rebuke to those who live in ungodliness. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and where will that cleansing be more manifest than in the purity of heart and life and conduct of those who believe? If the cleansing within fails to be manifested in the cleansing of the outward life, who can believe that Christ is in them at all?

The folly of sin is the more accentuated in the light of the indisputable fact that there is a fearful penalty for sin. Among the very first instructions given to man was God's faithful and immutable warning of the dire and inevitable result that would follow if he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "Thou shall not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die." And, when man in disobedience stretched out his inquisitive hand to partake of that which God has forbidden, the life of God departed from him and he stood naked, ashamed, and dead in Trespasses and sins. This, O reader, is the first death, and this first death

passed upon all men for that all have sinned. This whole existence, which we now erroneously call life, is, in fact, death from the cradle to the grave, and all men and women outside of Jesus Christ are dead. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," said Paul, speaking to men whose spirits had been made alive through faith in Christ, Eph. 2:1, and, speaking to believers who had received the life of God in their souls, he spoke of the yet unregenerate body, saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10**. Thus we should clearly see that, even after we are born of the Spirit, our bodies are still dead and will remain so until the resurrection morning. But it was not of this first death only, that Paul spoke when he said, "The wages of sin is death." **Rom. 6:23**. The Spirit has faithfully told us of a second death into which unbelieving men shall surely go. That second death will be a period of time similar to this first death we are now experiencing, but much more terrible and severe than anything we now know - so much so that it is described in Rev. 21:8 as a lake of fire. Its only inhabitants will be the sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, the fearful and unbelieving, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. The penalty of sin is very great. Not only in this present age does it curse us, but in that second death which is to come. It can only be described as the "lake of fire."

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, yea, the Spirit of holiness, to reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, but woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the believers are lukewarm! They are neither cold nor hot. They manifest neither the holiness nor the love of God. Their lives, lukewarm and nauseating, have become mingled with the world and all its ways. As Belshazzar in the dissipation of his licentious orgy mingled the vessels of the Lord with the debauchery that delighted his ungodly heart, so these men, saved and unsaved alike, mingle together, speaking in tongues, worshipping Mary, celebrating mass, converting the world, preaching that God is holy and Christ is a hippy, dancing on the altars, using pop for communion, while delighting in feasts, breakfasts, and dinners. Well did Jude describe this generation in these fearful words: "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." **Jude 12-13**. O corrupt and filthy Sodom of the twentieth century, your degenerate heart does not know that the things in which you delight will bring the wrath of God upon you! Neither do you remember the words of our Lord, who said, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." **Matt. 24:37**.

He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. There is no surer way to reprove the world of sin than by a faithful demonstration of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God the Father, the highest authority in all the universe, has now declared to angels, principalities, and men that the righteousness of His Son is sufficient to make all the world righteous, and that we, too, shall be made the righteousness of God in Him. Give audience and hear with reverence the truth He would have us believe: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (reconciliation and satisfaction) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus." **Rom. 23-26**.

So complete was the righteousness of Christ that, when men by wicked hands killed Him, God raised Him from the dead, and, being raised from the dead, He ascended to the right hand of God's throne. There Stephen in spirit beheld Him when he cried, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God!" **Acts 7:55**. Nothing so completely manifests the righteousness of Christ and the acceptance by the Father of His sacrifice and death as does His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven. Therefore, Jesus said that when He, the Spirit of truth, was come, He would reprove the world of righteousness "because I go to the Father"

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

CHAPTER THREE REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD AND FAITH TOWARD JESUS CHRIST

As we journey through the wilderness of this world, ever climbing the pathway upward and onward, it has pleased our omniscient Father in heaven that from time to time the ascending pathway of our pilgrimage should seem less steep and rugged as our spirits break upon those broader planes of higher ground. Our kind heavenly Father is well pleased when He can call a brief halt in our toilsome journey and say, **"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile."** **Mark 6:31.** Perhaps it is in the shade of Elim's three score and ten palm trees and the cool delight of her twelve sparkling wells of water, Ex. 15:27, or perhaps we stand before some burning bush to contemplate the past and consider the future, or eat a meal from an angel's hand because the journey has been great and the way exceedingly hard. 1 Kings 18:5-7.

To these new heights of experience and new realms of glory every saint of God will come if we fervently "follow on to know the Lord." But it is lamentably true that the vast majority of men and women who begin the pilgrimage to the distant peaks of spiritual attainment soon grow footsore and weary of the way as Israel did and in their hearts turn back again into Egypt, or at best find some cozy level of Christian experience or embrace some pet doctrine where they can talk and bask in fond remembrance of the good old days and sing, "The old time religion is good enough for me." Moses said to the children of Israel, **"A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear."** **Acts 7:37.** But the fathers would not hear him; neither would they obey him, but **"thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt."** **Verse 39.** And so it came to pass that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. Jude 5.

Those who are always mourning for Christian fellowship, who imagine they cannot live for God without many others to buoy them up, should bear in mind that there are more tares in the field than wheat. There are more goats in the pasture than sheep, and much more ground is yielding nothing than that which yields one hundredfold. There are more false prophets than true prophets, and there are many false christs to steal away your love, but only one Christ who is the Son of God. I must confess that I grow very weary of being reminded that Paul once said to persecuted Hebrew saints who stood in continual fear of death and martyrdom, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is..." Why is it that those who are forever harping on this string have never read nor considered that this same Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, who were not persecuted, but full of divisions and sectarianism, continually affirming, **"I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ,"** told them in no uncertain voice that, **because of the division among them and the sectarian spirit they displayed, they were assembling together, not for the better, but for the worse."** **1 Cor. 11:7.** Tell me, you whose Christianity is founded on the formality of assembling, what good is it to assemble yourselves when your coming together is not for the better, but for the worse! Would it not be much better for you to walk with Christ and fellowship with Him, remembering that He told you, **"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them?"** **Matt. 18:20.** It is better far to read and pray with your wife in the breakfast nook or commune with your friends in the parlor with Christ's presence about you than to assemble with ten thousand people where disunity and division exist. All who thus assemble partake of the spirit of division and **"come together, not for the better, but for the worse."** **1 Cor. 11:17-18.**

"I know," said one, "that modernism is creeping in, but what denomination is it where it is not?" In this you speak the truth, my friend, for there is no denomination, which is not honeycombed with division and modernism; neither is there any denomination in all the world that has an open door to the revelation of God. If you will be perfectly honest with yourself before God, you will agree that denominations once formed never advance in spiritual growth or spiritual understanding.

From time immemorial their trend has always been backward and downward to deadness and emptiness. Indeed, they do grow in numbers, but what value is it to compass land and sea to make a proselyte if we discover in the end that he is twofold more the child of hell than he was in the beginning? **Matt. 23:15.**

Religious denominations are the false christs of which Jesus spoke in **Matt. 24:24.** Do you not know that men trust in sects and denominations for their salvation and often times they cannot imagine themselves Christians at all unless they are joined to one of them? Why do men search here and there for the false christs of which Jesus said there would be many? Are they not everywhere about us? Do not their high places adorn many streets? Do they not inscribe your name on their roll and claim you as their property, acting as though they were your mediator and pathway to heaven? Of course the truth hurts us and men, as always, hate to hear it.

We despise those who wax so bold that they lift up their voices against the confusion of Babylon, declaring that men should walk with Christ and follow only Him.

Yesterday a minister sat in our parlor with whom we spoke freely of the ways of God. Before he left, he apologetically informed us that he was a member of a certain denomination, but he said with noticeable chagrin, "You almost have to belong to a denomination to be properly recognized by the government, to get income tax deductions, to perform marriages, and to obtain half fare on trains and buses." How interesting that is! Is there really something very special in the word incorporated, which is so proudly displayed on the official documents of every sect in the land? Have you ever considered that the word incorporated you so proudly display on your letterhead signifies that the system you think to be the church is in fact incorporated with the world system? Could Christ be a part of a thing like that since He openly declared, "I am not of this world"? Was He not saying, "I am not of this world system"? But you proudly display the fact that both you and your sect are openly incorporated with it when you should be as your Master who said, "I am not of this world." You should not partake of its systems or in any way fall under its dominion. The true church is no more a part of this world system than Christ is a part of it. Well did He say to those about Him, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." John 8:23. Let all who long for sonship, all who would be peculiarly His, turn from all these vanities that men have devised. Let us break our connections with all that is from beneath and let us walk with Christ as pilgrims who have no continuing city in this world but who seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 13:13-14.

Let the heart of every faithful pilgrim be assured of this: Though the world is full of religious sects and denominations of every kind which blind men to truth and obscure that holy virgin thing which Christ called "My church", yet His church is in the earth, untouched, unsullied, and undefiled, a pure virgin church to be presented to Him without spot and without blemish. Eph. 5:27. That church is not and never was a denomination, nor is it a sect of any kind. Its members have shown repentance toward God and faith toward His Son. Their souls are washed in the blood of Christ. In one Spirit, even the Holy Spirit, they have been baptized into one body and that one body is the body of Christ. Eph. 4:4-6. His church is as pure a virgin as Christ Himself. As Christ was born of a virgin undefiled and untouched by the powers of human organization or procreation, so also is the virgin church. His church is not incorporated with the world system. It cannot possibly be. The names of its members are written only in heaven, even in the Lamb's book of life, founded long before the foundation of the world. The moment a man repents of his sin and believes on Christ for the salvation of his soul, he becomes a member of the true church, the tabernacle which God pitched and not man, the church, the house not made with hands, which is His body; but the moment a child of God allies himself with one of earth's harlot systems, he begins to lose sight of the true and heavenly tabernacle which God pitched, his eyes beholding the false church pitched by man. No longer does he remain a chaste virgin for Christ, walking in the purity and light of his heavenly citizenship, but, having hearkened to the charming voice of one of Babylon's harlot daughters, he embraces another bosom that will rob him of his first love, wither his experience, close his spiritual eyes, and make him a citizen of Babylon instead of a citizen of heaven.

It was of this harlot church woman that Solomon wrote this mysterious prophetic parable: "For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones; I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, and in the evening, in the black and dark night. And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now she is without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt (the world). I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the good man (Christ) is not at home; he is gone on a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life." Prov. 7:6-23. How could divine inspiration give a bitter portrait of those harlot, denominational systems who coax the young converts to their steeple houses with glowing promises of food, fun, fellowship

and opportunity but who in reality displace the love and the purpose of God with a false love, a false purpose, a false system, and a false christ?

Woe to us that we live in a day when man and his systems of religion are everywhere exalted. Have you ever noticed how the faces of the world renowned and internationally known preachers smile out condescendingly from page after page of their magazines, while articles and testimonials and pictures exalt their prowess as preachers, healers, and miracle workers and proclaim their great revival meetings, their radio and TV ministry, their missionary work, and their programs for the poor? Everywhere we go we hear men talking of this great ministry and that great ministry, lifting up to public gaze this renowned man and that remarkable sister, but I hear very few saints talking one to another of how wonderful is Christ, the Son of God, who said, "**And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.**" **John 12:32**. Somewhere along the line they have lost Him in the crowd, and like Joseph and Mary they have gone on without Him, but, if they would retrace their steps, they would find Him sitting among the devout, answering questions and attending to His Father's business.

We live in a day when men without any true commission from God are compassing land and sea to make proselytes, not for Christ, but for themselves. Christ is used as a sort of allurements, a bait, to gain their ends. They could be likened to the seven women taking hold of one man saying, "**We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach.**" **Isa. 4:1**. Men who compass land and sea to make disciples seem to have the uncanny ability to make disciples for themselves rather than for Christ. It is very easy to see that in our day almost all men are devout followers of some human leader of whose ministry and talents they speak with awe and reverence. Ah, fools and slow of heart, should we not turn from these vanities and follow Christ, who said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"?

The greatest need of the hour in which we live is not a world, wide revival. It is not that we should have great power as the apostles or Elijah or Moses. We do not need more preachers or missionaries, radio programs or literature; and as for money, may the thought forever perish that God's program should live or die or in any way depend upon the corrupt foundation of the mammon of unrighteousness. Those deluded men who with one breath proclaim their labors to be a work of faith and their ministry to be a ministry of faith but with the next breath have the audacity to warn you that, unless you come through with your dimes and dollars and tithes and offerings, their work will suffer, are deceivers both of the people who heed them and of themselves as well. Let Christians learn to call a horse a horse and a spade a spade. If my work depends on begging, then let me beg and call myself a beggar and not a man of faith. But, if my work is of faith, then let God, who possesses the silver and gold and the cattle of a thousand hills, open the riches of His storehouse that all the work of which He is the author may grow and prosper in whatsoever manner He pleases.

The great need of the hour is neither revival nor power nor program nor miracles nor money. The great need of the hour is that men and women should get down to the serious business of loving God in spirit and in truth. "Ah," you say, "but I do love God. I am saved. I pray. I read the Bible. I tithe. I belong to a church." Do not be so quick to justify yourself, my brother. The time has come for every man to examine himself, whether he be in the faith. 1 Cor. 13:5. We can perform all these tasks regularly and faithfully and still be no nearer to the heart of Christ than was the Pharisee who stood and prayed with himself, saying, "**God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.**" **Luke 18:11-12**. Oh, how sickening is all our corroding self-righteousness! How soothing and deceptive is this everlasting church-going and this constant assembling as though God is delighted or satisfied with such a thing as that!

Well did Isaiah prophesy of this lukewarm, apathetic and indifferent age, saying, "**Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.**"

Isa. 1:2-6. "Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." **Verse 9.** "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offering of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me (continual assembling), who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies (conventions, conferences, revivals). I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." **Verses 9-13.** Please note this last statement: "even the solemn meeting!" "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you:" (How often we hear the people exhorted to raise their hands and praise God, and how dead it usually is! But why does God hide His eyes in our midst?) "Yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." **Verse 15.** In other words we are guilty of rebellion, self-love, hypocrisy, self-seeking, love of pleasure more than love of God, possessing all manner of forms of worship but denying the power of God and the wisdom of God. Christians have become lovers of the world and all the things that are in it - the lust of the flesh (appetites), the lust of the eyes (avarice), and the pride of life (ambition).

The prophet then follows his fearful rebuke against Israel for their filth, their pride, their assemblings, their prayers, and the lifting up of their hands to praise the Lord with a call to bitter and heartfelt repentance for their hypocritical profession. "Wash you, make you clean," he cries. "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." **Isa. 1:16-18.**

There is a great and ever increasing need of repentance among Christians and all who name the name of Christ. there is a desperate need of true repentance for sin and a wholehearted turning to God. Our lukewarm forms, ceremonies, and assemblings demand Godly sorrow, for "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death." **2 Cor. 7:10.** Too many Christians, I fear, have repented of the repentance and consecration they once so fervently made, but true repentance is not to be repented of. Thousands of Christians there are today who once repented of sin, receiving the joy and life of Christ. They abandoned the world and all that is therein and with the dew of rejoicing as pearls upon their cheeks they pressed hard on the upward way, but, as time went by, like Lot's wife they turned to look back at things they had left behind. As their love for God waxed cold, they found reasonable though feeble excuses to drag some things they once destroyed back into their lives. Once they had renounced the world and all its vain show, its pride, its vanity, its pleasure. They had stripped for the race and fervently sung, "I won't turn back! I won't turn back!" But now, alas, the love of many has grown cold, and families are building again the things they once destroyed. Forgetting the fearful warning of Paul, "If I build again the thing which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor," **Gal. 2:18,** they begin to drag back into their lives the things they once threw out, building again the thing they once destroyed.

Thousands of Christians who once bade farewell to earth's vanity are today attending picture shows and dances and embracing many evil things, all the while deceiving themselves that they love God, but in truth and fact they have repented of their repentance. The picture show that was once an abomination to them they now watch hourly, daily, and nightly in their living-room. They rush home from church where a few minutes before they paid their tithes and offerings and lifted up their hands in pretended praise to God, fill their dinner plates, and perhaps without thanksgiving for their food they assemble around the television to feed their souls on the lowest form of corruption the carnal mind can produce. Can Christians such as these honestly expect to be among the sonship company, who will rule and reign with Christ in the glory of His kingdom? I tell you, nay. This can never be! The wisdom of God has clearly shown that all who will reign with Him in His kingdom must be first absorbed in His will and filled with His mind. How can he be filled with the mind of Christ who permits his soul to be fed corruption? Hath not God Himself declared, "The mouths of fools feed on foolishness"? What then is this tragedy that has overtaken God's people? There can be but one answer: They have repented of their repentance. Their once godly sorrow has been replaced by the sorrow of the world that worketh death. It encompasses men with such darkness that they willingly believe a lie, believing that evil can in some way be good and that good can in some way be evil.

"Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil; learn to do well." Was there not a man in Israel, Achan by name, who hid a beautiful Babylonish garment in his tent?

Surely there could be no wrong in keeping such a pretty garment! Yet for his vacillating both he and all his house by God's command were destroyed. Was there not a man in Israel who indulged in the innocent pastime of gathering up sticks on the Sabbath day, who was ordered slain for his disobedience? Num. 15:32-36.

I do not expect that men will love me for uttering the truth about these things. I care not a straw for that. I seek neither the love nor the admiration of any man, but earnestly covet that you may prove to be the love slave of Christ, who through His great love and mercy once delivered you from all these corrupting vanities. He washed you in His blood and placed in your heart that first love which burned as a bright light set on a hill for other men to see. But God has somewhat against you now, for you have left your first love and built again the things you once destroyed, making yourself a transgressor. Your heart should repent with a godly sorrow and with a repentance not to be repented of. If I build again the things, which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor, and what is sin if it be not transgression?

All over the world today Christians are mourning their lack of power and influence. My brother, do you dare to imagine that you can influence a man while you stand on the same ground as he? Is it not a spiritual fact that the "husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruit"? Must we not live above men if we hope to lift and save them? There is a very simple yet solemn reason why healings and miracles have all but fled from our midst, and the world has lost all faith in Christ and the church system. How can any man who lives in the flesh ever hope to heal a body of flesh? For of whatsoever a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage. Can we expect a man to cast out demons while he daily allows demon possessed men and women to be his entertainers? Did not our Lord cast out unclean spirits? Could He have done so if He Himself had been unclean? Should it be difficult to observe that all uncleanness in man springs forth from spirits of uncleanness? Christ cast out spirits of violence, spirits of infirmity, and spirits of insanity, but this He could not have done had He been violent, infirm, or insane. Violence, then, is motivated by violent spirits. Every time you watch a shooting, a murder, a bludgeoning, or a rape, you are watching acts motivated by violent spirits and your mind is being influenced by them. Whenever you watch adultery or the filth of sodomy, you are being influenced by unclean and filthy spirits, just as smokers and drinkers are influenced by advertising, and then we wonder whatever has happened to our young people! Have we drifted so far into darkness that our minds are bereft of reason? It is time to repent! It is time to return to God! It is time to abandon every evil thing that we may love Christ with an undivided and unhindered love.

I do not pretend to have jurisdiction over the faith of any man, but before God, who requires me to be faithful, I exhort all Christians to discard their televisions as the Ephesians discarded their piles of books worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts 19:19. These ghostly one-eyed demons are without doubt the greatest moral corrupters the world has ever known. If you do not believe this to be so, then ask yourself this question: What is it that has caused such unheard of moral degeneracy, such looseness and permissiveness, such rebellion, such disobedience, such defiance, such violence, such irresponsibility, such disrespect for law, such disregard for everything that is holy and good until the thoughts and intents of society are only evil continually? You will find that from this source more than all others combined comes the forceful answer to your problem.

I quote now from an article, which appeared in the North Battleford News-Optimist on Feb. 25th, 1974. "Juvenile crime and brutality are mounting rapidly in the western world. Canadian parents do not realize the gravity of this social sickness. Nor are they aware that one of the principal germ carriers may be right in their living rooms - the TV set." So says C. E. Edwards of Bridgetown, N.S., Deputy President of the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation. He is a school inspector and a specialist in audio-visual education. In 1962 he was Canada's representative to the International Conference on Screen Education in Norway, sponsored by UNESCO. Mr. Edwards believes that television has almost unlimited possibilities as a medium for educating and civilizing. But he fears that the fine influence on children of the many good TV programs is swamped by the constant flow of programs that emphasize crime and violence.

"This 'conditioning' goes on year after year, and the whole time unthinking parents abet the gradual process of brutalizing their children by allowing unrestricted use of the TV set, and by going out to buy the products advertised between the sluggings and shootings. Two decades of constant glorification of the fast-draw, the switchblade and the judo chop are showing clearly in the police courts. There are other contributing factors to the increases in youthful crime, no doubt, but I accuse the massive, continuous injections of TV violence into

the home as a major cause. American teen-agers are turning to crime in record numbers. Arrests of youths seventeen and under are increasing three times as fast as the growth in juvenile population. (Journal of American Insurance, October 1963.)

"According to the Canadian Corrections Association, the number of persons between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one convicted of indictable offences in Canada increased thirty-five percent from 1957 to 1961. This is about three times the population growth in this age category. Ontario Chief Justice C. McRuer said in January that, in the last five years for which figures are available, convictions for juvenile delinquency in York County had almost trebled - from 922 to 2726. He has tried four youths, none over sixteen, for capital murder in the last two years.

"Psychologists suspect that the minds and personalities of children are being changed by TV in many ways. Children are under the sway of the TV set, on the average, one-sixth of their waking hours. Only thorough and continuing research can accurately assess all the changes that are being imposed upon Canadian children by TV. But there is one effect of TV that has been established. The youth today is more brutal, far more likely to land in jail than his father - because he has learned to be like that from the picture tube in the living room." End of quote.

Please don't waste your time telling me that there is some good in it. I know that! But, if I must swallow ninety-nine percent corruption to obtain one percent good, then I know I can find much more benefit inquiring of my God and listening to the sweet strains of His eternal wisdom as He speaks to my heart. And, my brother, may I ask how long ago it is since your last great burden in prayer? How long ago is it since you rose early to wait before God until He spoke words of wonder and glory to your heart? Has something displaced His glory? Has some idol of wood or gold or tin possessed your time, your mind, and your heart? Then put away the evil of your doings, learn to do well, and He will accept you.

One of the saddest passages in the Bible and yet one that proffers great hope is found in Revelation 3:20. The setting is at the end of our age; the words were spoken to the church at Laodicea, a people rich and increased in goods and satisfied in themselves that they had need of nothing. They are fundamentalists. They believe in justification by faith. They speak of the baptism of the Spirit. They believe in divine healing. They believe the Lord will come and rapture them. Yes, they know the doctrines and have studied them for years. They have great missionary programs. They put on revivals. They have programs for the poor. They are rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing. That is, at least, man's estimation of the situation, and it is hard, if not impossible, to convince the carnal mind of his need. Nothing is worse than a self-satisfied Christian. Better it would be to be an out and out sinner than a carnal, self-satisfied Christian. Even publicans and harlots will repent and enter the kingdom before him. But what does God say of Laodicea? "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." How dreadful a predicament to be wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked and know it not, and, worse still, to imagine oneself to have need of nothing! Yet this is the case with millions in our day. The most pitiful thing of all, however, is this: Christ, who should be enthroned in their hearts, is in reality standing outside the door! He is not within at all! While they loudly sing, "He lives within my heart," the truth is that other things have crept into their hearts and, with their permission, have pushed Him outside and left Him standing there.

"When Jesus came to Kensington,
They wouldn't give Him pain:
They simply passed Him on the street,
And left Him in the rain."

The Lord no longer finds a place within the precincts of this self-satisfied Laodicean church system with all its denominations and sects, its false prophets and false christs. He has turned away from it completely to seek those blessed virgin spirits who will open the door and let Him in. Over the wide world today Christ is coming to individuals. You will not often find Him among the crowds. You will find Him communing with some Mary and Martha, or perhaps you will find Him opening the scriptures to disappointed and heart-broken men as they wearily plod to their Emmaus. Lo, He calls, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me." Here, oh saint of God, is a

promise of everlasting importance, given not to crowds or multitudes, not to churches or assemblies or conventions, but to individuals, to men and women who have grown weary of formality, tired of hypocrisy, disgusted with church ways, sick of conventions and the artificiality of revivals and the wearisome assemblings. They are fed up with the big, the famous, the outstanding and the great. Their hearts are longing for reality. Their minds demand to know Him by whom and through whom all things exist. They desire to hear the words of His lips and feel their hearts burn within them as He unfolds His eternal purposes. No man can love Christ because some preacher has told him he should. To love Christ you must see Him as He is, and when you hear Him speak, you will say, "Never man spake like this man." When you see Him as He is, you will love Him as all the virgins do, for from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. Glory to Christ forever and evermore! The moment we see Him, we instinctively know that we belong to Him and that all our hope of eternal fullness dwells in Him.

It is unto you who long to know the Christ separate and apart from the soul-possessing demands of insipid church systems and groups that He now comes in goodness and mercy. He who has been turned away from the door of Laodicea, that poverty-stricken church system that possesses everything but Christ, now comes to stand at the heart door of needy individuals such as you and I whose hearts long, not for riches, but for reality; not for ceremony, but for sincerity; not for religion, but for righteousness; not for Christology, but for Christ. It is to you, my disconsolate brother that He now comes. It is to you, my burdened sister that He now calls. Even now, as you sit in distressed contemplation because of the abounding corruption around you and the obnoxious luke warmness that you would gladly spue from your mouth, the Son of God has come to visit you and offer Himself as the eternal satisfaction for your deepest heart longing. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," He says. Ah, so that is the voice I hear so clearly! The disturbance, the turmoil, the discontent, and the dissatisfaction within my soul was not of my making after all! It was the hand of Christ knocking at the door, telling me that, though my life was filled with the riches of Laodicea, the King of kings and Lords of lords was not enthroned in my heart. The disturbance and lack of assurance you feel within your spirit is in reality His voice, warning you that all is wrong with the system, with Laodicea and Babylon, and all who remain in them will be spued from the very mouth of God and become partaker of Babylon's plagues.

But listen more carefully to the wonder of the promise He so freely gives to the individual Christian of this age, the "any man" who will hear His voice and open the door to Him. I find it difficult to believe that a greater promise was ever given to "any man" than that which He now offers to the lonely, discontented, hungry individuals who at the end of this age turn from the vanities of the Laodicean church system to open the door of their hearts, their souls, and their spirits that God's wonderful Christ may enter in and take his rightful place in their lives. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." It would take many more pages than we have at our disposal to unfold the wealth that lies hidden in this gold mine of truth. Take heart and courage, disconsolate saint, for, though Christ has been barred from the doors of the system that insists upon calling itself the church, His promise is unto you if you will but hear and recognize His voice. If you will arise and open wide the door of your heart, He will enter. Yea, He will enter, not as a guest, but as Lord forevermore, the owner and possessor of all things. He has already declared, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." **2 Cor. 6:19-20.** Bid Him therefore enter the temple of your body, not to sit amid the clutter of Laodicea with all her abominations, her riches and her increase, her forms and ceremonies, but, breaking down the idols and casting out the foes, bid Him establish His eternal throne in righteousness and glory in a clean and sanctified heart.

"I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me" is the promise of Christ. Here is the true fellowship you have been seeking. Here is the communion your heart has craved so long, even the communion of your spirit with His Spirit. "I will sup with him and he with Me." "I am the vine, ye are the branches," said Jesus. It is when He sits to sup with us that we partake of the fruit of the true vine, which He is. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give him is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." **John 6:49-51.** Have our spiritual ears heard the words of life that flowed from the lips of Paul when he said, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body

which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament (covenant) in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." **1 Cor. 11:23-25.** To sup with Christ is not merely to adhere to the formality of a communion service, which often can be meaningless, empty, and devoid of the Spirit; but he who communes with Christ partakes of Christ, and, in partaking of Him, partakes of His very nature and likeness, becoming eternal and immortal and sharing not only in His likeness, but in His spiritual body and in Himself.

"And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures." **Luke 24:30-32.** Yes, my brother, it is true even in this hour of Laodicea that, if you will turn from the vanities of the church systems and, putting them from you, will open your heart to Christ, He will indeed come in to you. Your heart will burn as He opens the scripture to reveal to your starving spirit the things that have lain hidden in the mind of God from the very foundation of the world. Your heart will burn as He sits to bless and break that eternal bread which He is and He will give it to you, saying, "This is My body."

"Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." "I will come in and sup with him and he with Me." If God did not need you, He would not have created you. God is not satisfied with forms and ceremonies. Christ desires not only that you should sup with him, but that He should sup with you. He desires that you partake of Him and become one with Him, but there is a way, which perhaps only He can understand, by which He also partakes of you and becomes one with you. Ho, every one that thirsteth! Ho, every one that hath no money! Ho! Awake! Listen! Hearken! Hear! Come ye to the living fountain of waters! Come ye to the rivers of the water of life! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price! For "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Yea, out of his being shall flow rivers of living water. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me."

We mentioned earlier how important a thing it is that men and women should love Christ. My brother and my sister, it is certain that you know that every man who has been bought with a price no longer belongs to himself, but to Him who bought him. **1 Cor. 7:23.** "Ye are not your own," saith God. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." **1 Cor. 6:19-20.** Of course you belong to God because He bought you and paid for you with the life blood of His Son. Since, then, these things are so and cannot be spoken against, you, being God's purchased possession, no longer belong to yourself. Neither do you belong to this world nor to this age nor to any of the systems of this age. Your time is not yours. Your possessions are only leased to you. How right and good it was that saints in the infancy of our age considered that none of the things, which they possessed was their own! **Acts 4:32.** And should we imagine that the things, which God has temporarily placed in our hands, belong to us? Should we not be stewards only and not possessors and owners? How quickly God can change our circumstances and erode from us all that we have, for riches make themselves wings and fly away like a dream in the night.

When the blessed and saintly Lucian stood before his persecutors, he was asked, "Of what country art thou?" To this he replied, "I am a Christian." "What is your occupation?" "I am a Christian." "Of what family art thou?" "I am a Christian." Such saintly and blessed words are worthy to be emblazoned on the very gates of paradise. To this man Christ was everything. Christ was his business', Christ was his occupation', Christ was his country; Christ was his family connection. It is this that the Spirit teaches when He says, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." Indeed, you are not your own. You have been purchased by Him and you are His eternal possession.

Do I not speak the truth when I say that modern Christians have forgotten that Christianity is their business, that Christ is their Lord, their owner, their redeemer, their possessor, that they do not belong to this age nor to any of the things in it but to Him who is before all things and by whom all things consist? Christ, by whom are all things and for whom are all things, has become a sort of handy convenience to millions of Christians - someone to save them when life is over, someone to heal them when they are sick from living after the flesh,

someone to call upon when finances go wrong, someone to pray to when relations go astray. I fear that, as Rachel hid her father's gods among the camel's furniture, so Christians have buried Christ among the accumulation of junk and rubbish they have dragged into the temple, which they are. "My house," saith God, "shall be a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

For me to live is Christ. For me to die is Christ. My business is Christ. I belong to no sect, no order, no denomination. I am not denominational. I am not undenominational. I am not interdenominational. If anything, I am anti-denominational, anti-sectarian, anti-every conceivable thing that would try to possess me or own me or direct me or in any way hinder me from being completely His in spirit, soul, and body. Where the Spirit of God is, there the true church is. Everything we lost in Adam we find and gain in Jesus Christ. So may God, who has separated us from the community of the ungodly, unite us forever with those who are consecrated to Him.

Concerning that wonderful principle of loving only Him, being His citizens and His possession, I found my spirit much stirred by the words of the saintly Basil, who lived about 300 A.D. Because of his holy life and godly teaching the Roman emperor threatened him with banishment, confiscation of goods, and death. When it came to his ears that he had been thus threatened, he replied, "Not one of these things touch me. His property cannot be confiscated who has none. Banishment I know not, for I am restricted to no place. I am the guest of God to whom the earth belongs. And death will be a benefit to me to send me more quickly to God." Those, I think, must be the words of one whose citizenship is in heaven and whose only true love is Christ.

The days in which we live are very evil. They are without doubt the repetition of those days immediately preceding the flood. We are now seeing on every hand the literal fulfillment of the words of Jesus Christ who said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man." In those days the world was given over to the flesh. Men were eating and drinking, not for the sake of needed sustenance, but for the very sake of eating and drinking. Wasteful and gluttonous, they were consuming all they could on this wretched, dying realm of the physical flesh, whose eyes are not filled with seeing, whose ears are not filled with hearing, whose appetite is never filled with dainties. In the days of Noah they were marrying and giving in marriage, not in the pure simplicity of marriage that was ordained of God, but for the filth and momentary satisfaction of the flesh. They were marrying and divorcing, remarrying and divorcing again, just as we see it all about us today. In our day divorce and re-marriage has become such a tragedy that it is almost impossible to speak to a crowd of half a dozen without finding some among them who are divorced and remarried. It would be tragic enough if this situation existed among the world of the ungodly, but the whole professing church system is honeycombed with this evil, which always precedes the wrath and judgment of God. Along with the corruption of sex goes violence, sodomy, rebellion, until all the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are only evil continually.

It is unusual and remote for me to write of the things we shall now consider, but in these days, when people are intent on marrying and giving in marriage, imagining that the paltry thing called sex that is everywhere exalted as a goddess to be desired, admired, cherished, and coveted as the highest aim in life, now that it is taught in schools, foisted on young people, and made to be the end and purpose of marriage itself, there is something very special to be said for those consecrated people who because of their great love for Jesus Christ have chosen to remain unmarried and fully devoted to Christ, rather than for the mere sake of marriage to marry outside of Christ or become a partner unequally yoked with an unbeliever. In these evil days when marriage is completely out of perspective, entered into lightly by immature children who know nothing of what life or responsibility is all about, we find practically nothing being taught either in writing or by preaching about the blessings of virginity so clearly spoken of by the apostle Paul. Therefore, for the edification and comfort of the many faithful young men and women who have deemed the riches of Christ far more important than marriage at any price, I wish to point out that the apostle Paul consumed at least one chapter in the New Testament (1 Cor. 7) to exalt the benefits that accrue to those faithful virgin people who remain steadfast in their devotion to Christ, finding no necessity outside of Him. I would emphasize also that, while Paul is showing the blessings of virginity, he is at the same time pointing out the difficulties encountered by those who are married — who have the wishes of their partners to consider as well as the will of Christ and the demands of the gospel.

We do not have space enough here to explain the chapter, 1 Cor. 7, verse by verse nor to compare it with other writings of the New Testament. But Paul with great wisdom and plainness of speech pointed up one of

the greatest difficulties of married life, be that marriage ever so happy, well ordered and successful. "The wife," he said, "hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." **1 Cor. 7:4**. This should bring to our immediate attention the fact that once we enter into the marriage contract it is well nigh impossible to be as completely devoted to Christ as we once were for the very simple reason so wisely and vividly explained in verse 4, quoted above. There is now another person to be taken into account, a wife or a husband, a third party to be taken into consideration in all phases of our work and devotion.

Paul, speaking of virgins, is not speaking only of women, for a man may also remain a virgin. Paul lived in a day of great distress when peril and persecution were always present. We also live in an hour of great distress of nations, perhaps the greatest in the history of the world. Therefore, Paul said of the virgins, whether men or women, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. (That is, to remain unmarried.) Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you." **Verses 25-28**. Again he says, "But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." **Verses 32-34**. It is not my thought or ministry to endeavor to establish any rules or regulations about any of these things, but let those men and especially those young women who for the sake of their devotion to Christ have denied themselves things so earnestly sought by the millions about them be mightily encouraged by this powerful word of wisdom and inspiration: "He who giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." **Verse 38**.

Why should anyone think it unreasonable, incredible, or impossible that many in these evil days should desire not only to forsake the confusing bondage of the harlot church system, but to entirely cut themselves free from every form, custom, or relationship that could prove to be a weight that might hinder them in the all important race we are now running? It is true that Paul said, "It is better to marry than to burn" (**1 Cor. 7:9**), but would he have made this concession if all men and women had through God's grace overcome the burning as he himself had done? **1 Cor. 7:7**. He also said, "To avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." But could this possibly apply to those who through grace have crucified the flesh, treading all physical passion beneath their feet? Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is wisdom and understanding, in one simple and powerful word of wisdom wrapped up the important matter of virginity and complete separation unto Christ in these remarkable words: "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." **Matt. 19:11-12**. If you then are among that number whose highest ambition is to be a chaste virgin unto Christ, a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, then receive this wise teaching of Christ. If on the other hand you are among those who cannot receive this saying, then forget about it and leave it alone, but hinder not those who can receive it. "Consecrated virgins," wrote the saintly Cyprian, "are the flowers of the church, reflecting the holiness of the Saviour. They are the elite of the faithful. They are married only to God, to Christ, and in that heavenly union find abundant compensation. They have found the pearl of great price."

Perhaps in this writing I have made some statements that are difficult to be understood. Many, I fear, will shrug them off as irrelevant and unimportant. Some will certainly be angry and refuse the teaching while others will go merrily on refusing to heed aught but that which pleases them. It is ever true that, though we mourn, few lament, and though we pipe, there be few that dance. Nevertheless, I have a sincere reason for writing these things. While I waited before God and chastened my soul in His presence, it became clear that we are moving into the final phases of this age of abounding evil. God's elect, who have run the race with patience and determination, are entering that final home stretch in preparation for the kingdom age.

The elect of God are beyond doubt a very special people, members in particular of the body of Christ. They are a people hand picked for sonship from the teeming multitudes of the dispensations. They are few in number.

They are chosen in the furnace of affliction. They have stripped for the race. They have girded up their loins with truth. They have laid aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset all mankind. They have pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. That calling is full sonship in Him. They have counted every dear and precious thing of earth but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord. Christ has become all in all to them. He is high and lifted up within them. They love Him first and foremost and all else they love in Him.

The age is passing away and all the lusts thereof. Because the nations refuse to retain God in their knowledge, carnality knows no bounds and sin and iniquity are rampant. The reprobate mind has so seized upon the world leaders that every decision they make is retrograde and evil. The bottomless pit is open wide. The smoke is ascending. The sun is darkening. The locusts, the unclean spirits, have gone forth into all the earth, deceiving the hearts of mankind. The nations are gearing and tooling up for the great and terrible Armageddon. Drugs, medicine, and pollution are dissipating the health of the people and preparing the way for the plagues that will wipe out billions of earth's people. But, while all this evil is in preparation, God is preparing His mystical company of pure sons who shall take the government of this world and reign in an age when sin shall be no more.

The importance of Christ's being lifted up in our lives in these final hours of the dispensation cannot possibly be overestimated or over stated, for as we see Him as He is, admire Him, love Him, and behold His face, we are changed into His image. "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit is Lord there is freedom. But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Run the straight race through God's good grace;
Lift up thine eyes and see His face.
Only believe and thou shalt see,
That Christ is all in all to thee.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Rev. 22:20-21.

CHAPTER FOUR FROM DEATH TO LIFE

During those holy hours in which John the beloved disciple was carried away in the Spirit to behold in vivid detail the revelation concerning the end of the age, he heard the voice of Jesus speaking in triumph from the resurrection side of the tomb. No longer was it the lonely voice of Jesus the Galilean, despised, rejected, filled with sorrows and acquainted with endless grief but the Christ multitudinous whose multisonant voice rang out as the sound of many waters. It was the voice of Jesus now in company with all that vast family of God's beloved sons who through His infinite design have become one body in Him. The thrilling message that poured forth from His lips was this: "I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." **Rev. 1:17-18.**

To accentuate the greatness of that message and to aid our understanding concerning the depths of truth written in this book, we quote here the rendering of the above verses from the Bible translations of Rotherham, Weymouth (original), and the Emphatic Diaglott. "Do not fear! I am the First and the Last and the Living One, - And I became dead; - and lo! living am I unto the Ages of Ages." Rotherham. "Do not be afraid: I am the First and the Last, and the ever-living One. I died; but I am now alive until the Ages of the Ages..." Weymouth Original. "Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; I was even dead, but, behold, I am living for the Ages of the Ages. " Emphatic Diaglott.

Our purpose in quoting the above three renderings of Rev. 1:17-18 is that our minds might embrace the undeniable truth that the life now possessed by Jesus the Son of God is not a life such as ours, which is but a vapor that appeareth for a little time and is gone, Jas. 4:14, but His life is the life of the ages, continuing on and on, age after age, even forevermore. I have nothing in common with the teaching, which holds that after this

age of grace comes eternity. Eternity is eternity. That which is eternal has neither beginning nor ending. We are in eternity now and always have been and always will be. Eternity is filled with ages just as weeks are filled with days and days are filled with hours, and hours are filled with minutes and minutes are filled with seconds. The truth is that following this age of grace comes another age, the kingdom period. After the kingdom age comes another age, the fullness of times. After the fullness of times come more ages which, as we have noticed above, are described as ages of ages. There is nothing stagnant or static about the God we love and serve or in the purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the ages began. The purpose of God, which began ages ago is now in progress and will be carried out endlessly in the ages of ages, which are yet to come. The sooner God's people dismount from their rickety hobby-horse of human tradition taught by the hired clergy of an apostate church system and forsake the high-sounding fiddle-faddle that pictures a comparative handful of saints in a heaven of bliss while countless billions are shut out from God's presence forever in the direct and most indescribable misery the sooner we will be able to see God's eternal purpose progressing from age to age and from glory to glory until in the dispensation of the fullness of times God gathers together in one all things in Christ, whether they be things in heaven or things in earth. Eph. 1:10.

How my soul exults in these wise words of wisdom, written by A. P. Adams in his description of the New Jerusalem, the heavenly bride of Christ, who appears adorned for her husband at the end of the kingdom age! Rev. 22. "Its jasper walls and pearly gates, its foundations of precious stones and golden streets are only representations faintly symbolizing the transcendent majesty of that new and perfect government. Every blessing for mankind is represented as flowing out of this grand city. The Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple and the light of it; and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it; and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there is no night there. This is no selfish orthodox heaven with narrow gates all fast upon a handful of saved, and myriads of the lost eternally wailing around its outer walls; this is a great city with twelve gates, each one wide enough for a regiment to march in abreast, and never shut, thank God."

The life of the ages! How could we humans, who have seen naught but death, ever describe that life which He has and which He also is? What boundless glory must have flooded the heart of the eternal Son when He cried, "Behold, I am alive forevermore, (or for the ages of the ages), and I hold in My hand the keys of death and hell." It is part of God's purpose to destroy all death, the first death, the second death, and every form of death there could possibly be until death in all its forms will be erased and eradicated from a universe in which He Himself is both the life and the light. In the new heaven and the new earth where the sons of God, who are the Temple of the Lord, Rev. 21:22, reign in life with the bride of Christ, who is the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:1,2,9-21, there will be no death anywhere any more, for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." **Rev. 21:3-4.**

It is my earnest prayer that the Spirit of God will give each one who reads these pages the spirit of thoughtfulness and revelation. If your spirit is able to grasp the truth I purpose to set forth in the following pages, the truth concerning life and death, many stumbling stones will be removed from the highway of your understanding and you will see great truths in a light which has been hidden from you hitherto. We must always remember that light dispels darkness and brings into clear perspective all things that were hidden in the gloomy mists of death. "Truth is the light, but falsehood is the night;" therefore, when light shines we see things as they are and not as they have always seemed. It is a very common thing among us to find both children and adult men and women who are afraid of the dark. We can forgive them for this because there are many reasons for being afraid of the dark - not because of the dark itself, but because of the dangers we cannot see while we walk in it. The pitiful thing is not that men should be afraid of the dark but that they should be afraid of the light. It is when men, and especially Christian men, are afraid of the light that we need to be troubled. Men in the temporal realm are afraid of the dark and welcome the light, but in the spiritual realm men love darkness because their deeds are evil, and are afraid of light lest they be reprov'd. Let us who are of the light have no fear of walking in it, for the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Light shining on any portion of truth quickly dispels the darkness that long hung over that truth until things that seemed beyond explanation become simple, reasonable, and easily understandable. If, for example, we accept the widespread theology which is forever proclaiming that the day of grace is almost over, we are thrown into distress, worry, confusion, and into many harmful and useless human works in our efforts to

redeem the time; but if our spiritual understanding can grasp the words of Paul, we will clearly see that we who have received the life of Christ here and now are being raised up together and made to sit in heavenly places so that through us in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace. See Eph. 2:5-7. Only then do our minds settle down in confidence and harmony, knowing that God's purpose now in our days is to save and prepare and raise up an elect and chosen people who, having fully partaken of His marvelous grace in this present evil age, will in the ages to come be used in God's wisdom to reveal and display the exceeding riches of His grace to all people, as is clearly taught in Eph. 2:4-7. Let us then love the light that we may walk in confidence and be not ashamed, and let us flee from the darkness lest we walk in nakedness and confusion. For many centuries men who love to be honored as theologians (though in my opinion there is no such person or ministry, for we know nothing yet as we ought to know) have debated loud and long about what day of the week Jesus died, as though it mattered in the least. The truth that will mark a change in our Christian experience, unfolding and unraveling many difficulties, will come with the discovery that the real death that Jesus died was on that day when He laid down or laid aside the life of the ages to become a man and to enter into the realm of death in which mankind has dwelt since the day Adam sinned and all men died in him, for God had said, In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die." When the blessed Son of God became a son of man, on that very day He entered the realm of death in all its dark and gloomy horror, and there in the living hell of this realm He abode for thirty-three and one-half years, a whole lifetime of death, and then on the cross of Calvary He ended forever His death experience.

It was only hours before the cross that Jesus prayed, saying, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." **John 17:45.** The glory that He had with the Father before the world was was the life of the ages (eternal life). It was this life that He had power to lay down and power to take up again. John 10:17-18. And now in a few hours His thirty-three years of death would be ended by the cross and He would take up again the life and glory that He had with the Father before the ages began. It was after God had raised Him from the dead and He had taken the pre-existent life again that He proclaimed in triumph, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." **Rev. 1:18.**

It is very important that we see this truth, because, once we understand it, we comprehend as never before the limitless depths to which the Son of God went in His redemption of us all. His death was not confined to a few hours on a bloody cross, terrible as that must have been, but the truth is that He entered into death when He entered the world and walked in all its hateful power, felt its lifelong sting, resisted and defeated its temptations, wept at its sorrows, was beset by its endless grief, was touched by the frightful hurt of its infirmities, felt the dreadful pangs of terrifying loneliness and the exasperating frustration of misunderstanding, and bowed His back to the injustice of the rulers of this present world. Who has suffered and He has suffered not? Who has known grief and He has not known grief? "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken. And he made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." **Isa. 53:7-10.**

Man that is born of woman is born in sin and shapen in iniquity and, because we have sinful natures and dwell in a world where sin with all its sordid evil exists on every hand, we are accustomed to it, never remembering anything better. A man who is born in the poverty of a dungeon pays little heed to his condition since he knows nothing better, but a free man, thrown into a dungeon, is thrown into an agonizing hell. No man on earth can properly understand the terror, the horror, and alarming dismay of the death Christ suffered when He took upon Himself the form of a man and became obedient unto death, because no man has yet tasted the glory of that world of life He enjoyed with the Father before the ages began. Paul tried to explain the extent of His poverty and humiliation with these words of inspiration: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." **2 Cor. 8:9.** And again, with the use of words that, though inspired, are yet feeble, he exhorted us to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but

made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." **Phil. 2:5-8.**

I find myself too confined to set forth this truth as I should do, but let us request of God's Spirit the ability to see the death of Christ in all its lifelong extent - not as six hours on a cross, but as thirty-three and one half years, fully partaking of death in all its aspects, tempted in all points as we are, suffering in all points as we do, that through His suffering He might become the first perfect man, the first perfect Son of man. The Son of God through His incarnation became the Son of man that we who were born sons of men might through Him become sons of God, yes, perfect sons of men and perfect sons of God. What a sacrifice that was and what a death He died! And now He is alive forevermore, triumphantly holding in His incorruptible hand the keys of both death and hell, and is abundantly able to offer the life of the ages to dead men who believe in Him. "I give unto them the life of the ages," He has proclaimed, "and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand; My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man can pluck them out of My Father's hand." **John 10:28-29.**

Now it naturally follows that, if our blessed Lord spent all the days of His earthly existence in death, we also are doing the same, and I shall advance many infallible proofs to show that the very thing men have called life is not life at all, but death. Indeed, we may claim that three score and ten years are the years of our life and, of course, we all understand what is meant by that statement, but the real truth is that the three score and ten years during which we dwell in this corruptible body are not the years of our life, but the years of our death. When we mortals put a man in a coffin and bury him in the dark, cold earth, we say the man is dead, and indeed he is; but have you heard what Jesus answered when one of His disciples said to him, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father?" The strange reply He gave was this: "Follow Me: and let the dead bury their dead." **Matt. 8:21-22.** How strange that statement sounds to us who do not understand what death is, but the Lord was really telling them that the able-bodied men who were carrying the coffin to the cemetery were just as dead as the man who was lying breathless within it. In other words the very thing we insist is life God says is death. The sooner we learn that lesson the sooner we will release as useless all things that pertain to this realm of death that we might be enabled to firmly lay hold on life, even the life which Jesus gives, aionian life, or the life of the ages.

When the truth of this dawned upon my soul, I found many earthly things slipping away from me in a manner I had not known hitherto. Who among us could ever desire to lay fast hold upon that which he discovers to be naught but death? The things that are dead we bury out of our sight, and I think I am right in saying that the lusts and temptations that belong to this death lose their grip upon us when we know that they are naught but death and that the flesh life to which these temptations cling is but a vapor that the wind driveth away. I cannot see myself slaving to lay up great wealth in store for that which I know is dead. What an abominable lie has gripped our hearts, deceiving us into endless labor and travail until on every side men and women are dying of heart attacks in their worry to provide worthless goods for this body of death.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

In the book of **Genesis, chapter 2, verses 16-17**, we have God's first command to Adam in these words: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." For many years I explained this passage of scripture by saying the man, Adam, died spiritually the moment he ate of the fruit of the tree, but that he lived on physically for over nine hundred years before death came to his body. Now this may seem a very plausible sort of explanation and one that is very satisfying to the natural mind but it is not the truth at all. Neither is it enough to say death set in right there and then. The real truth is that the moment he partook of the fruit it happened to him exactly as God had said it would - "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

God's word is always rue, but it is our meddling with it that makes it awkward and difficult to explain. The truth is that life departed from Adam when he sinned, and what he experienced and endured for the next nine hundred years was not life at all but outer darkness and death. We in our ignorance call it life, but God, who

knows what life really is, calls it death. It may be difficult at first for one to understand this truth, but once it is seen and accepted and the reality of it floods the soul, many things which hitherto were filled with mystery become living with truth and reality as I will show as we progress.

Paul the apostle in confirmation of this truth, when writing to the Christians concerning their walking after the flesh or after the Spirit, uttered this heart rending cry to God: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" **Rom. 7:24**. Now how could man with human words ever tell us more clearly than he did in this anguished cry to God that the body is indeed dead and that it is nothing more or less than the mortal tabernacle in which we spend the years of this death! It is most certainly the body of this death. Now Paul, as though to add great weight and force to what he had already said concerning the body of death, continues to add strength to his argument by saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10**. This statement is positively true to fact, and when we accept the fact that what we have insisted is life is that which God calls death, then we can understand the truth that Paul is trying to get the believers to see.

You will ask why it is, then, that Paul says, "The Spirit is life (or alive)." The answer is very simple. The people to whom he is speaking are believers. Our Lord Jesus plainly told us. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life, (or, the life of the ages), and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." **John 10:27-29**. The moment any man believes on Jesus Christ, accepting Him as his Lord and Saviour, at that moment the gift of God, which is eternal life, is given to that believing man and the life of God, which is in fact and in truth Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begins to live and dwell and abide in that man as a well of water springing up unto the life of the ages. Christ is the tree of life. Man in the beginning by an act of unbelief and disobedience partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the life of the ages departed from him; but now, through an act of repentance and belief, he partakes of the tree of life, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Of Him it is written, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not (cannot overcome it)." **John 1:4-5**. The truth of the matter, my believing brother or sister, is simply this: In Him is life, and the only life we have is the life Jesus gave us the same day that we repented and believed. That was the life of the ages, which Christ Himself is. All else besides that is death and must never be construed to be anything else but death. Man calls it life, but the Bible and God, who is its author, declare that it is death.

In these last days medical science has become extremely efficient in prolonging what they believe is life. Humanity is gulping pills by the thousands of tons; hearts, kidneys and lungs are transplanted in an effort to prolong life. Homes for the aged are springing up everywhere, giving every imaginable intensive care in an effort to prolong life. Thousands of suffering people at enormous expense are kept breathing by artificial means who would be a thousand times better off to have gone to their graves. And all this effort, extra pain, endless suffering and weariness is supposed to be the preservation of life. Rubbish, my well-meaning friend! We are not by this means preserving life; we are preserving death. We are keeping men and women in the realm of death who should have passed beyond the realm of death into the realm of life. Full well may every man along with every sufferer wail out the apostle's bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

We repeat again and again that Christ is life. In Him is life. In Him alone is life. Life cannot be had apart from Him. Outside of Him there is naught but darkness and darkness is death. "Who so drinketh of this water shall thirst again" were the words He spoke to the troubled woman at the well of Samaria, "but whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become a fountain within him, springing up for the life of the ages." **John 4:14**. (Weymouth). He is the fountain of life. He alone is the fountain of eternal youth. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

On the last day of the great feast at Jerusalem, recorded in the seventh chapter of John, many and varied opinions were given of Jesus. Some said He was a good man. Some said, "Nay, He deceives the people." Others questioned, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Others wondered whether or not He would venture to come to the feast. While all this confusion prevailed, Jesus stood up to speak such living

words as scarcely ever before or since were spoken, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given..." **John 7:37-39.**

Sweet mystery of life, at last we've found Thee! And we have found that Thou, O Christ, art life — not that life which flourishes as grass in the field today and tomorrow the wind passes over it and it is gone, nor life like ours, which is as a mist which the wind driveth away, but life aionian, life everlasting, life eternal, life evermore, the life of the ages. Well spoke our beloved Lord when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, the life of the ages, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," **John 5:24**, or as Rotherham has translated it, "Hath passed over out of death into life." It is a wonderful hour in the experience of any man when he passes from death "across to life," **Jno. 5:24** (Moffat), and that is exactly what happens when we believe on Christ. As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and to all who believe on Him life is given, even that eternal life which God Himself is and which abounds like rivers of living water within us when Jesus Christ comes in to abide. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is every man that trusteth in Him!

With this wonderful realization firmly abiding in our hearts we are better prepared to grasp the truth Christ clearly gave us when he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." **John 5:25** Think on that statement, child of God. Was not Jesus telling us that we are dead as dead can be? And did He not make two remarkable statements - first, the hour is coming, and, second, the hour now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live? Have not we who have believed proved the truth of this in our very spirit and in our experience? The greatest proof in the universe that Jesus Christ is alive forevermore is the fact that, when we believed, He came to dwell within us. He came to live His life in us. He came to deliver us from our sin and our habits and make us to know that death would never more hold our spirits in its vice-like grip. Do we not know that He who lives and was dead, and, behold, He is alive forevermore, has come to us that we might live also? He who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification has come to deliver us from our offences and raise us together with Himself to share with Him the life of the ages. And marvel not only at the wonder of this, "for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment)." **John 5:28-29**. This final resurrection we will consider presently.

The scope for elaboration here is limitless, but, as our space is somewhat limited, we will have to deny ourselves some of the luscious fruit of truth that awaits us by the way. Having seen that the only life we now possess is the life of the ages given us by the Son of God when we first believed and that all existence outside that realm is death, we are much better equipped to understand Paul's reason for saying to the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." **Col. 3:3**. And again, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." **Col. 3:4**. And I think, too, that his teaching in the entire seventh chapter of Romans becomes increasingly clear. The flesh he so vividly describes is undoubtedly the dead body (the body of death) in which we now dwell and which besets us with much trouble and temptation, and because of which we are never entirely free to devote ourselves fully to God, but must be forever spending our time ministering to the body of this death — feeding it, clothing it, washing it, providing it with shelter, providing for its old age, paying its doctor bills, giving it things to see and hear and taste and feel and smell. It is this fleshly body of death that interferes with all our communion and intercourse with God. It is the body of death which would sleep when God would have us watch and pray, which would eat when God would have us fast. Its lusts are never satisfied, its worm dieth not, and its fires are not quenched. Who can wonder that Paul cried in despair, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" **Rom. 7:24**. I think the battle is three parts won and the victory assured the moment a man sees that the flesh is the body and the body is dead, just as God told Adam it would be. So the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of righteousness - His righteousness, of course, for there is none other, the righteousness that comes with Him when we believe in Him and He gives us Himself and with Himself His life.

Since, then, our spirits are alive because of the indwelling Christ, Paul leads us on to another marvelous hope and truth which I fear thousands of earnest Christians are failing to see. Paul's statement, "The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness," is followed by this very precious and understandable conclusion: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11.** Paul is not speaking of that which we often refer to as divine healing. I am well aware that the sick bodies of countless thousands of God's people have been touched by the power of God and returned to physical health. I have witnessed too many cases of healing during my own life to ever dare deny that fact. Nevertheless Paul, in Rom. 8:11, is not speaking of divine healing, which at best is simply the restoration of natural health. He is speaking of a life far, far beyond the natural. He is showing us that the only real life anywhere is that life of Christ, which has already made our spirits alive. If, therefore, we will cease to concentrate on physical life and physical well-being, which in the final analysis is only death, and concentrate instead on the life which He is, then a strange and wonderful thing will begin to manifest itself in our bodies. We will discover to our joy that the life which He is is also quickening and making alive our mortal bodies and that here and now that same Christ-life that made our spirits alive is giving life to our bodies as well as they become partakers of the resurrection which He is. Thus it comes to pass that He who raised up Christ from the dead now makes alive our mortal bodies by His Spirit that indwells us. This is the first step to resurrection and incorruption.

I am sick and tired of all the phony advertisements of healing meetings and of all the lying statements about miracle men and miracle women and great men of faith and God's men of the hour. I am repulsed by front cover pictures of great healers with their microphones in hand and crowds of people being prayed over. In the first place most of it is merely show business or a wonder that happened somewhere else a long way off from where we live. These are gimmicks to attract bigger crowds with bigger offerings, and buy more books, and get more excited over more grandiose schemes that had their origin in the scheming heads of carnal men. They glamorize the healing of one man who could have been as well healed had his wife or neighbor prayed for him, but they never mention the tens of thousands who go away as they came, with their vessels empty. These large, super, and giant miracle men are the lying wonders of our age. Do not seek to be like them nor seek to follow them. Their mouths are open sepulchers. Their tongues pour out deceits. Their hearts are far from God. They cause people to go awhoring after the healing of "this body of death," but they never teach the people the boundless truth that "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Concentrate on Christ, my friend and brother, and the resurrection life assured you by His indwelling Spirit, and forget about the momentary reviving of a dead carcass, which is indeed the body of death. If, instead of running hither and yon to some spectacular meeting to give ear to a highly paid, highly advertised man whose interest in you depends largely on the size of your wallet, you would spend those hours in communion with Christ, listening to His secret instruction and touching Him who is Himself the resurrection and the life, you would soon find that the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead would begin to give resurrection life to your mortal flesh. A change that this world has seldom seen would begin to take place as the mortal felt the pull of immortality and the corruptible tasted the power of incorruption and endless life.

Do you remember that Paul spoke of Jesus, saying, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto..." **1 Tim. 6:16.** It is here in this blest communion with Christ that the life of Jesus becomes manifest in our mortal flesh. 2 Cor. 4:10-11. The world and believers as well are filled with the harmful imagination that, as long as we are physically well and can run here and there unhampered and unhindered by any disability, capable of enjoying the good things of life, partaking of the pleasures offered to us on every side, we are without doubt among those happy people who are really enjoying life and getting the most out of it. But it seems we have forgotten that Paul gave forth some truth that gives the lie to all such folly and falsehood when he said, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." **1 Tim. 5:6.** People who are healthy and well-to-do and capable of much worldly pleasures imagine they are enjoying life and seeing many good days, but the real truth is that they are dead while they live just as God told Adam he would be and as Paul clearly stated in the quotation above, and as we, too, have endeavored to show.

There is not a man on the face of the earth who can even remotely comprehend the extent of the horror, the loneliness and debasement into which Jesus Christ came when for our sakes He entered the realm of death. Should we mortals endeavor to describe the humiliation, or even try to understand it, we would succeed only in

marring the wonder of it. The inspired men who wrote the epistles, the gospels, and the prophecies of scripture make little or no attempt to describe that which is indescribable, but satisfy themselves instead with a few majestic statements which hide forever within themselves their infinite truth and meaning. "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," said Paul, "that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." **2 Cor. 8:9**. God alone could ever reveal the boundless truth that lies hidden in this statement, which with one hand embraces the riches of the unseen and eternal where all is life and with the other partakes of the poverty and degradation of fallen man in all his sin and death. "Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Earth's voices must fall silent here, for they will never be able to tell the story of the humiliation He willingly suffered when He, who was life itself, laid aside the life of the ages to partake of death for our sakes. I would have said that such a divesting Himself of the life of the ages would be impossible had He not said, "**I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.**" **John 10:18**. My dead eyes can only receive light, but His eyes are as lamps of fire, Dan. 10:6, and everywhere He looks they give light. My ears can receive sound only, but when He hears He gives understanding. My dead words can only kill; His words are life and give both life and spirit to all who hear them.

There is a great difference between the man who lies in the coffin and the man who stands beside it, yet both alike are dead. But He who alone is life, having never touched death, humbled Himself for our sakes and became obedient unto death. He stooped to die and lived thirty-three and one half years in it. Then at the end He went to the cross and there expired in separation from God the Father, the only one in the universe who fully understood His humiliation. He who was the richest became the poorest; the holiest became sin. He whom angels eternally praised was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, "a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him ... I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death." **Psa. 22:6-8,14,15**. With these and many other words the psalmist David describes the humiliation and pitiful loneliness of the thirty-three years of our Lord's death.

There is a truth written in Hebrews, chapter 5 and verse 7, concerning the death of Christ, which I think has gone entirely unnoticed and completely unexplained. I do not think you have ever heard the explanation of it that I will now present. The verse reads thus: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." **Heb. 5:6,7**. We will not speak of the priesthood of Melchisedec at present, who here is the type, but of Jesus Christ, who is the anti-type. The passage says that He (Jesus) in the days of His flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. Now the general interpretation of this passage is that the cross with all its dreadful horror was the cup He dreaded, and that His flesh shrank from it and the death it entailed. But I think we are all very careless readers of God's word, for in reality this passage says no such thing and the meaning is opposite to what has been taught. Did you notice that it says He offered up prayers to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared? Now, if He prayed that He might be saved from death, and was heard, then His prayer must have been answered and God must have saved Him from death. What was it that He feared? Was it the cross? No, a thousand times no! What He feared was the terrible possibility that He might not go to the cross and so be obliged to remain more years in the horror of this death. Already He had spent thirty-three years in the terror and horror of its clutches and the greatest dread of His life was that He might continue in it longer still. Therefore, with strong crying and tears He offered up prayer to God that He might be saved from death and He was heard in that He feared. When He expired on the cross, He passed from the realm of death to the realm of life, and on the resurrection side of the tomb He cried in triumph, "**Behold, I am alive forevermore.**" **Rev. 1:18**. God had certainly heard and answered His prayer.

And now I believe I see more clearly than I have ever done why it was that Paul, who, as you and I do, still dwelt in this hellish realm of death, cried out, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." It was not the cross that Jesus feared but the possibility that somehow it might escape Him or He might escape it and thus be condemned to spend further years in this tortuous prison house of death. You will no longer fear the cross when once you see that it alone can save you from this realm of death and corruption in which you have always lived. The cross was Christ's door of exit from the realm of death, and it has now become your deliverance also. The cup, which Jesus dreaded most of all as He prayed in the garden was that final, fearsome, indescribable phase of death which would separate Him from His Father. The most heart rending and terrible cry ever to shake the gates of Paradise was expressed in those climactic moments of His thirty-three years of death. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Everyone in heaven and earth had forsaken Him, and now God, His Father, too.

I think the interpretation I have given above is the correct one, and that this is the true meaning of the passage is well confirmed by Weymouth, who translates it thus: "Jesus during His earthly life offered up prayers and entreaties, crying aloud and weeping as He pleaded with Him who was able to bring Him in safety out of death, and He was delivered from the terror from which He shrank." **Heb. 5:7.** Weymouth (original). We must conclude, therefore, that His prayers were not that He might be saved from the cross, but rather from that whole realm of death into which He willingly came to fulfill His blessed part in that purpose devised of God before the ages were formed. His death extended from that moment when He divested Himself of His glory and made Himself of no reputation, was born of a woman in Bethlehem, and was made in the form of man to dwell in the fashion of a man, and in all points to become obedient unto the full extent of man's death. Until we enter fully into the glorious realm of life, we will never know nor fully understand how deep was the humiliation He suffered when for our sakes He tasted a whole lifetime of death, which Paul so aptly describes as the days of His flesh. Heb. 5:7.

Deliverance from the power of self is without doubt the hottest and hardest fought battle that will ever be fought during the lifetime of any man, and the greatest ally of self is the flesh. We are filled with self confidence, self esteem, self defense, self vindication, self seeking, self centeredness, self inspection, self pleasing, self choosing, self assertiveness, self respect, self boasting, self expression, self indulgence, self satisfaction, self admiration, self congratulation, self excusing, self justification, self righteousness, self complacency, self reflection, self love and selfishness. But, if we can see that self and the flesh are already dead things, existing in the realm of death only, then with what joyful abandon can we assign them to the cross, knowing, as Jesus did, that the cross and the cross alone is the God-sent causeway from the realm of death across to the realm of life.

The fearful agony and bloody sweat of our blessed Saviour was not because He feared the cross and desired if possible to be saved from it, but rather that He feared and loathed His prison house of death in which He had been confined all the days of His flesh and now He longed for the cross and reached out eagerly to embrace this final hour of death's agony, for beyond it was life, even the life of the ages, which He had laid down when He came to the world and of which He had said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." As He faced the cross, He said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." **John 17:4-5.** And shall not we who now face and share His cross look upon it as our deliverance from this hateful realm of death, this prison house into which by disobedience we came? The strong crying and tears of the blessed Christ that He might be delivered from this realm of death made Him the princely fore-runner and deliverer of all those who long to be delivered from death and pass from death across to life. This is He who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. Heb. 12:2.

Because of the almost unspeakable importance of the theme we are discussing and because of the life-giving transformation the revelation of it is working in my own life, our time will be well spent in enlarging somewhat upon it; and, though we cannot hope to exhaust such a boundless theme, we know that all who think upon it will find many things falling into place which before seemed impossible to explain. In this light, then, let us notice a few important statements of scripture. In Col. 1:18 Jesus Christ is called the "firstborn from the dead." In the Emphatic Diaglott the direct translation is that He is the "firstborn out of the dead ones." And again in

Phil. 3:11 where Paul says, "If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead," the Diaglott translates his words, "If possibly I may attain to the resurrection out of the dead ones." The "dead ones" Paul speaks of here are actually the people we have thought of all our lives as living ones. These are people who are walking about, eating and drinking and being merry, people who, like the pleasure-loving woman of 1 Tim. 5:6, are dead while they live. Paul well knew that there is a resurrection coming in the future, but he also knew that, if he became thoroughly identified with Christ here and now, it would be possible for him, without tasting the grave at all, to attain the resurrection - not from the grave, but from among the dead ones, the people among whom he dwelt every day. We have good reason to believe that John attained this "out resurrection" and perhaps many others as well, but it cannot be attained by anything but complete identification with the death and the resurrection of Christ. I have not attained it and I know of none now on earth who have, but that does not bar its possibility in these closing hours of the age when death has seized upon all.

Paul in his sermon at Antioch, speaking of the resurrection of the dead, made the clear statement that Christ, being raised from the dead, would never again return to corruption. See Acts 13:34. Now, since He did not see corruption in the grave (see verse 35), then the corruption Paul referred to was certainly his thirty-three and one half years of death, or the days of His flesh.

"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." **Heb. 2:14-15**. Had we understood what death really is, and had we known that this, which we call life is naught but death, then Paul could profitably have written, "And deliver them who through all their death time were subject to bondage." We are, indeed, terribly and horribly in bondage to the body of this death, and with us the whole creation is groaning, waiting for the day when the sons of God will deliver them from the bondage of corruption. In this (the body of death) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven that we might not be found naked. That nakedness is the condition in which Adam found himself when death seized upon him. He had lost that clothing of life the moment he had sinned. Man alone of all God's creatures has to wear clothes to cover his nakedness. Every dress or suit we buy testifies loudly that life has departed from us and we are naked and in death. Therefore we desire not to be naked, but clothed upon, that that which is mortal may be swallowed up of life.

Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, by partaking of death during the days of His flesh and ending all death on the cross of Calvary, has brought to light both life and immortality. He is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see. 1 Tim. 6:15,16. But fear not; for, though no man hath seen immortality but Christ, yet His immortality has gained immortality for us all. He "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, abolished, abolished, abolished - and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." **2 Tim. 1:9-10**. Oh, read it and re-read it and rejoice in it with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Through His thirty-three years of death He hath abolished death and through the power of His glorious resurrection He has brought both life and immortality to light.

There is no greater theme in all the Bible than the theme of the resurrection. It would seem to be the crowning truth of the plan of redemption, for, "if when we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of His Son, how much more shall we be saved by His life." **Rom. 5:10**. It is plain to see that from the indisputable fact that there will be a resurrection unto life we can only conclude that the life we now live in the flesh or in the body is in reality naught but death. So Paul, speaking of the glory of the resurrection, says, "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (Even the dead who do not sleep in the grave.) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?" **1 Cor. 15:51-55**. It would be quite impossible to express a thought more clearly than Paul has done here. The words of this text show with utmost clarity that our present

mortality and our present corruptibility are naught but death. Think of it. Meditate upon it and love this realm of death no more. Therefore he says, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall death be swallowed up in victory." I do not need to argue with any man to prove our present mortality. We are all aware of our constant and unremitting decay. Therefore, when Paul, speaking by the Spirit, teaches that, when this mortal puts on immortality, death is swallowed up, then that should certainly prove to us that death and mortality is one and the same thing. The terms are synonymous. Glorifying in this blessed fact the apostle rejoices triumphantly with his two-fold question: O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The long years of our death have been nothing but a sting and every grave that swallowed us up at the end has been a seeming victory, but in the moment of immortality at the resurrection of the just the saints will shout in triumph over both death and the grave.

Jesus told us that the gates of hell should not prevail against His church. Gates, I am sure you understand, are not weapons which we use to batter down walls but gates are bars and bars are to keep some people out and other people in. But they will not prevail either to keep us in death, to keep us in the grave, or to keep us in hell, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (the true church). O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? O gates of hell, thou shall not prevail!

I wish now to make plain a subject about which there is nothing but ignorance in all Christendom. I speak regarding the second death. The Bible is very clear in its teaching that there are two resurrections. Jesus told us that the hour was coming when all who were in the graves would hear the voice of the Son of God and would come forth, they that had done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that had done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation. Daniel, writing long before, spoke of the resurrection, saying, "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and age-lasting contempt." When John received the revelation of the end times, the truth was clearly revealed to him that these two resurrections, one of the just and the other of the unjust, would be one thousand years apart. He wrote in the book of Revelation saying, "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead (the unconverted and wicked dead) lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Only the blessed and holy have part in this first resurrection. Rev. 20:4-6.

It is very plain from this passage of scripture that the first resurrection, which is the resurrection of the saints, will take place at the coming of Christ and before the one thousand year kingdom of God, but that the rest of the dead (the unrighteous and wicked) do not live again until the one thousand year kingdom age is over. It is also clear from these verses that all the just are raised to life in the first resurrection and all the wicked are raised to death at the second resurrection and will then partake of the second death similar to the death we now endure. Therefore it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." None of those who overcome during this present age of death will ever be hurt of the second death. Rev. 2:11 This word hurt is most significant, and we shall enlarge upon it before the ending of the study.

Whereas so few people have understood that our present existence is, in fact, the first death, it is only normal that they would be in even greater darkness regarding the second death. I think that we have made it very clear from scripture that this life, which we now live in the flesh is in truth not life at all, but death. Whether we live a few days or one hundred years, it is death, decay, corruption, change, aches, pains, sorrow, heartache, sickness, war, travail, dispute, graft, greed, and every terrible calamity and heartache imaginable. Indeed, as I mentioned above, it has been a hurt from beginning to end. There are not enough nouns or adjectives in all the languages of earth to fitly describe the abominable hurt of this present death. This death, which we all have suffered and which we still suffer, is indeed the first death, but, thank God, the people who have received Jesus Christ - for they alone are blessed and holy and they alone are righteous - will never know or experience any more of death. Death will have no more dominion over them and the grave will have no more victory over them.

There is coming a wonderful day when there shall be no more death. In that day "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." **Rev. 21:4**. Now, when the God of all truth tells His people that a blessed day is coming in which there will be no more death, then all our faith and all our doctrine must be adjusted to fit His immutable word. If it is God's word that a day is coming when there is no more death, then it is plainly evident to anyone with eyes to see that there will be no more death of any kind, whether it be the first death or the second death, or whatsoever other death there could possibly be, for all death of whatsoever sort will be obliterated from God's glorious redeemed and restored universe. The moment death has served its purpose in God's plan of things it will be done away and never again through all eternity will its power be felt. It is not only John who writes that there will be no more death, but Paul also, speaking with mighty words of inspiration and confirmation, declared, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." **1 Cor. 15:26**. It follows, therefore, that, if death is to be destroyed, then there will be no more death, as John so clearly stated in **Rev. 21:4**.

It was through Adam that all fell into death, for in Adam all die. It is in Christ that all are made alive. Thus Paul wrote, saying, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." **1 Cor. 15:22**. "But, every man in his own order, (like soldiers marching in platoons and companies), Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are His at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father..." **1 Cor. 15:22-24**. Therefore, in the resurrection we have three phases or orders in which men are restored to life: First, Christ the firstfruits; second, they that are His at His coming; third, the end, that is the end or final part of the resurrection, when all shall be raised to life and all have departed from death forever through Christ.

Someone will surely ask me, "How is it then that 'the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death'," as stated in **Rev. 21:8**? This question is most legitimate and certainly deserves an answer; for, if the lake of fire is such as people have imagined it to be then all our understanding would be in jeopardy. Christians through the tradition they have received have pictured the lake of fire to be some vast, seething, flaming lake, perhaps bigger than the world itself, into which God will throw every useless and unmanageable thing. But I do not think it is such as that. If I am not mistaken, the verse we have quoted above explains itself by telling us with great simplicity that the lake of fire is "the second death." Is that not what the apostle said and also what he meant when he wrote that certain people would have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, "which is the second death"? We must conclude from this passage, then, that the lake of fire is the second death.

Furthermore, with regard to this lake of fire and brimstone, it is of utmost importance that we clearly understand what sort of fire it is that is referred to here and what this brimstone (or sulphur) really is. God pity us that the tradition of an apostate church system has foisted the crude notion upon us that would have us believe that the lake of fire is a stinking lake of raging flames and vile sulphurous fumes, filled with devils and the piercing shrieks of the doomed rending the universal sky in hopelessness forevermore. Such crude notions are not the truth and are an insulting and outrageous affront to the wisdom and the love and the glory of God.

A simple look at the original language of the New Testament will assure us beyond doubt that this lake of fire has nothing whatever to do with that which we commonly call fire. It is not natural fire; it is spiritual, as we shall show. In the **Acts** of the Apostles, **chapter 28:2-3**, we have this statement: "They kindled a fire, and received us every one." In this simple passage the original Greek word used for fire is "pura" and the word signifies natural fire. There is no doubt in all the world that the fire these kind barbarians lit to warm these rescued sailors was a simple camp fire such as we have so often seen. It was ordinary natural fire. But, when the day of Pentecost was fully come and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like fire, the Greek word is "pur," which is spiritual, the fire of God, the fire of the Holy Spirit, the fire which God Himself actually is, for our God is a consuming fire. **Heb. 12:29**. When we consider the marvelous, fiery purging that took place at Pentecost, delivering these baptized men from self and carnality as none other in history has been delivered and empowered, then we better understand the purpose of the fire of God and what it does for those who are touched by its power.

Now the point I wish to make clear and forceful is simply this: The Greek word *pur*, which has reference to the fire of God, or spiritual fire, in Acts 2:3, is exactly the same word that is used in Rev. 21:8 where it is stated that certain ones were cast into the lake of fire. Furthermore, this word *pur* is the same word used by John the Baptist when he said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. 3:11. Other places where the word *pur* (spiritual fire) is used may be found in Matt. 3:12; 5:22; Acts 2:19; I Cor. 3:13,15; Heb. 1:7; Rev. 3:18; 8:5, 14:10, and many others. The word *brimstone* or *sulphur* is derived from the Greek word *theion*. The word means divine fire or sulphur. (See Young's Analytical Concordance, page 116.) Examples of the word are found in Rev. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8.

How then can we doubt the indisputable fact that the lake of fire is a spiritual lake filled with spiritual fire - the same fire indeed with which the disciples were baptized at Pentecost, though the purpose was different? The same Greek word *pur* is used in both cases. This lake of fire, then, is the second death. The life we now live in the flesh is the first death. It is a realm of fiery trials that are to try those of us who in this dispensation had our names in the book of life and were chosen to be saved in this age. For all such there will be no second death. That is reserved for the fearful and the unbelieving, and for them it will endure until that marvelous day when throughout all God's universe the proclamation shall go forth, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." **Rev. 21:5.** "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Rev. 20:6. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." **Rev. 21:4.** Well has Paul spoken, saying, "In the dispensation of the fullness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth." **Eph. 1:10.** And John, as if to shout Amen, wrote later to say, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof. And the nations of them, which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." **Rev. 21:23-25.**

CHAPTER FIVE AFAR OFF AND BROUGHT NIGH

Oh, my Father, Thou that dwellest
In a high and glorious place,
When shall I regain Thy presence
And again behold Thy face?
In Thy holy habitation
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood
Was I nurtured by Thy side?

For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast made me here on earth
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth.
But at times the secret something
Whispers, "You're a stranger here;"
And I feel that I have wandered
From a more exalted sphere.

Oh, my Father, Thou that dwellest
In a high and glorious place,
Yet shall I appear before Thee
And again behold Thy face.

Day by day Thy Spirit leadeth
Ever onward onto Thee,
Till at last I'll find contentment In
Thy pure reality.

"Now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Many centuries ago the apostle Paul uttered one of the most profound statements of truth that ever fell upon the listening ear of mankind. He had been teaching that the Lord with wisdom and understanding had called Israel to be a special people for His name. Then he recounted their acts of rebellion against Him, showing how they fell for a season from their God-appointed place to wander into all manner of corruption, idolatry and sin - so much so that He cast them from their special place, saying to Israel, "All day long have I stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." **Rom. 10:21**. But, lest we should imagine that God had cast them away forever, the apostle hastened with assuring words to ask, "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew..." **Rom. 11:1-2**.

Should the reader be a Christian brother or a man who has not as yet received the grace of God in his heart, it is my earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will enlighten his eyes to understand that God's ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts, for as heaven is higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. But let us be assured that He whose wisdom is greater than angels is even now causing all things to work together for good to them who are the called according to His purpose. In like manner also to those who are strangers to His love and grace He declares, "The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord." **Psa. 37:23**. The word good in the text is a supplied word and not in the original.

With these lofty thoughts of God in our minds, knowing that His ways and methods are higher and better than our own, our hearts respond with joyful accord when Paul in wisdom shows that it was God's intention that all mankind should come to know Him through faith in God's Christ and not through their own works of righteousness. Therefore, exalting mightily the grace of God rather than the works of man, he wrote to the Gentiles these almost incredible words of faith: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." **Rom. 11:32-36**. The clearest possible rendering of the final verses of Romans eleven is found in the translation by Goodspeed, which in **verses 34-36** gives this clear wording: "Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? Or who has advanced anything to Him for which he will have to be repaid? For/raw Him everything comes, through Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends."

Somewhere hidden in the spirit of every man there abides the secret knowledge that we came forth from God, even as this text forcefully declares. This, too, is the thought so beautifully expressed by the poet in the idyll quoted on page one.

"In Thy holy habitation
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood
Was I nurtured by Thy side?"

I shall be surprised indeed in that glory world above should we find that these blessed words of Christ, spoken of Himself, do not in truth apply to us all: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father." **John 16:28**. Far away in the depths of my ransomed being there is a chord that vibrates in response to the words, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world," and that same chord responds again to the words,

"Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

"Yet shall I appear before Thee
And again behold Thy face."

We came forth from God, our orbit leading us from the celestial to the terrestrial. There can be no doubt of that; and by faith we know that this same orbit will guide us again from the realm of the terrestrial back to the bosom of the Father, for from Him everything originally comes, through Him everything now exists, and in Him everything will ultimately end. Glory to God forever! Amen!

My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven that many years ago He let me hear a secret from His own heart, a secret that few in our generation have ever understood. When He breathed it into my listening heart, it well nigh stunned me because of my tradition and unbelief, yet I could not doubt the truth He taught me when He said, "The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20**. I was thunderstruck by these words because for years teachers and preachers had instilled the very opposite into my mind. They taught that man through disobedience had ruined the plan of God and God was hard put to the test to devise some alternate scheme by which He might salvage some small part of the deplorable wreckage the devil had accomplished. But when I heard the voice of the omniscient Lord, speaking from the throne of His own omnipotence, taking upon Himself all responsibility for the vanity and error into which His creatures had fallen, my heart was amazed in His presence and for the first time in my life the "purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" began to unfold to my enlightened spirit.

It is when man begins to see purpose in the fall that he truly begins to love God. A purposeless God could not be loved by anyone, but He is dearly loved by those who have seen that we have obtained an inheritance in Him, "being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." **Eph. 1:11**. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Eph. 3:8-11**.

As dew distilling from the mighty ocean falls in snow and ice upon the rugged mountain, there to remain in the grip of glacial death for a thousand years or more until released at last by the warmth of the sun to race down the mountain side in rushing torrents of water and join a thousand babbling brooks to expand into a mighty river and flow into the eternal seas, so as a mist has the spirit of man gone forth from the presence of God. Buffeted by the frigid winds of earth, he learns the lessons before ordained by the wisdom of God, and when the Sun of righteousness shines upon him, freeing his spirit from the icy bondages of the flesh, cleansing him by the power of the blood of Christ, he returns to God whence he came, not empty and alone, but as a mighty river, once again to become one with the ocean of God's self.

Thus, sinner friend of this vain world, we find ourselves "far off from God. Like the prodigal son we have been left to wander wanderings that have brought us to a far country. So far away from God are we that never in a thousand years could we find our way back to Him. "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way." Our own willfulness has led us into a far country, far, far away from God. I do not know into what part of this far country you have come, but all around about on every hand in every walk of life men and women roam by the millions who are far away from God. As a wayward son in carelessness and willfulness leaves his parents and his home to waste his substance in riotous living, never bothering to contact father or mother or friends who formerly loved him, forgetting to pray or turn his footsteps home again, neglecting to write or phone or inform anyone of his whereabouts, so mankind has turned away from God to wander off in the wilderness of disobedience and seek pleasure where pleasure can never be found.

Just how far our unbelieving hearts have led us in our wandering is clearly stated in the word of God. Before ever man can return to the Lord, he must be awakened by the Holy Spirit to his sinful condition; otherwise his eyes will never be opened to see himself as God sees him. It is a most amazing thing to find that men who all their lives have been content to rest in their own self righteousness suddenly see themselves as the cheapest

of sinners when the Holy Spirit shows them how far from God they really are. The apostle Paul, before his conversion, lived in close contact with the law. He did his utmost to conform to its precepts in every way. When it pleased God to reveal His Son, Jesus Christ, to him, immediately he saw himself as the chief of sinners in need of repentance and cleansing. After his conversion to Christ he wrote these immortal words: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." **Phil. 3:4-8.**

There is no value whatever in recounting our own righteousnesses before the Lord. He pays no attention to them at all, accounting them to be as filthy rags. It is a great detriment to any man to depend upon his own works of righteousness, because that makes him trust in a lie. Better far it would be to learn the truth of the scripture which clearly states, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." **Isa. 64:6.** How well that truth was emphasized by Jesus Christ when He told how two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee, looking confidently up to heaven, no doubt with sanctimonious face and folded hands, said, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners; unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." And Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." **Luke 18:10-14.** It is written that whosoever confesses and forsakes his sin shall find mercy of the Lord. Prov. 28:13. "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, else would I give it," wept David as he begged the forgiveness of his sin, knowing that a broken and a contrite heart the Lord would not despise. O that sinners would confess their sin to God! Then would the blood of Christ cleanse them thoroughly from all iniquity, give them a new heart, and put a right spirit within them.

Not only did we sinners find ourselves far off from God, but our sorry plight was greatly emphasized by the solemn fact that we were without God and without Christ and without hope. Paul writing to Gentile Christians, fervently reminded them of their former lives and hopeless state. "Wherefore remember," he said, "that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who were called the Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." **Eph. 2:11-12.**

A man is certainly in sad predicament when he discovers that he is without God and without hope, yet it is in this very condition that we all find ourselves when we are awakened to our sinfulness and our dire need of the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. No one in the universe knows as God our Father knows that all His sheep have gone astray and have become lost upon the mountains of sin and unbelief. It was because of our lost state that Jesus Christ came into the world, saying, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." **1 Tim. 1:15.**

Many and wonderful were the parables spoken by our Lord during His ministry upon the earth. Each and every one of them bears in itself some special truth that the Lord would convey to mankind. In the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of Luke three parables are given - the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the lost son. These three parables, following each other as they do, are given in succession that the teaching of each might complement the other. Together they show how really far off from God and hopelessly lost we sinners really are. The parable of the lost sheep shows that a man is lost naturally. The parable of the lost coin shows that a man is lost hopelessly; and the parable of the lost son shows that a man is lost willfully. Centuries ago the prophet Isaiah cried, "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him (Jesus Christ) the iniquity of us all."

Many creatures of the animal kingdom are possessed of a remarkable sense of direction, so much so that it is almost impossible to lose them. Cats and dogs, for instance, can be blindfolded and carried many miles away

from home, but will find their way back again. We have in Saskatchewan record of a cat that returned from the west coast of British Columbia about a thousand miles away, finding its way back home over mountains and prairies, arriving almost starved and at the point of death. Birds speed their way through the trackless air to some pin-point of an island in the distant seas. Horses, given rein in a prairie blizzard, will guide a lost one home. But man soon loses his sense of direction and when lost is prone to walk in circles or perchance in the opposite direction entirely. Thus, like a sheep, he is soon lost, goes astray, and turns to his own way.

True as this picture is in the natural realm, it is even truer in the spiritual realm. Man simply cannot find his way back to God. He is lost by nature. He is naturally lost and ever prone to go astray. What other reason could be given for man's constant tendency to move farther and farther away from God? Why does even a child, left to his own devices, wander from one sin to another, each day going a little deeper and a little farther beyond his depth until he is held captive in the vise-like grip of sin? Men, like sheep, are prone to wander and easily go astray, and were it not for the Good Shepherd, who calls His sheep by name, they would perish without hope and without God in the world.

I was straying when Christ found me
In the night so dark and cold;
Tenderly His arm went round me
And bore me to His fold.

That, I know, will be the testimony from the myriad ranks of the redeemed in the ages yet to come. "We who were afar off have been brought nigh through the blood of Christ." So as sheep are lost naturally, man is also lost naturally. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," wept David when he saw the awfulness of his plight in the sight of the Lord. Then, seeing his need of a transformation from above, he cried, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Many years ago while yet a little boy I saw scrawled upon a wall a cartoon in which the unknown cartoonist had pictured in a straight line these six things: a baby bottle, a set of playing blocks, a deck of cards, a cigarette, a whiskey bottle, and a skull and cross bones. Underneath he had scrawled this nomenclature: Life is one... thing after another. Though I was but a boy when I saw it, I was greatly impressed, and since I have come to know the Bible and have seen man's natural tendency to go astray, wandering from one sin to another, finally to die in despair without God and without hope, I realized how forcefully that transient artist had portrayed a life lived without the redeeming power of the Son of God.

"I am the good shepherd," Jesus said. "The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." **John 10:11,14-16.** "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." **Luke 15:4-7.**

The shepherd went out and sought for his sheep,
And all through the night on the rocky steep
He sought till he found it;
With love bands he bound it,
And I was that one lost sheep.

Now the lost coin was lost in an entirely different way. Though it was not lost naturally, yet, being lost, it was lost both helplessly and hopelessly. There it lay in the crevice into which it had rolled when it had fallen from its owner's purse. It could never of itself return to its original place, because it had neither power of speech nor means by which it could raise itself. The lost coin was doomed to lie forever where it was, as many a lost coin is now lying, had not the good woman sought diligently to recover it. Taking her broom in her hand, she swept

the floor, searching beneath the rugs and furniture, then sifting through the dust and dirt until at last she saw where it lay, helpless and hopeless to either call or draw near. So she picked it up and returned it to its place in the dowry, rejoicing with her friends that she had found that which she had lost.

Of all the wealth of scripture truth nothing is more certain or clear than the fact that man of himself is both helplessly and hopelessly lost. He cannot find his way back to God if he would and he cannot return in his own righteousness, for all man's righteousnesses are filthy rags in the sight of God. Between unregenerate man and God there is an impassable gulf, making it impossible for him to pass from the realm of the natural to the realm of the spiritual. Not only is man without God; he is also without hope, as we have already seen in the words of Paul: "Having no hope and without God in the world."

The scripture describes unregenerate man as strangers and foreigners to God, men who cannot speak heaven's language, who are not acquainted with the way of the Lord. If we offer sacrifice, it is unacceptable. If we offer works of righteousness, it is but filthy rags. How far off from God is man in such a hopeless state as this! It is immeasurable. But to the glory of God it is plainly written here that the woman who lost the coin lit a candle, and swept the house, and sought diligently until she found it. But find it she did, and in the joy of the moment she called her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." Jesus Christ is the light of the world. He is the light that shines in a dark place. To many of us now His light may seem no more than the light of a candle, shining in the darkness of the world, but once His light shines upon us, such a response is created in our dead and dormant hearts that we find ourselves answering, "Here am I, Lord. What wilt Thou have me to do?" When the light of heaven shone down into the hopeless heart of Saul of Tarsus, he heard a voice speaking to him and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutes! Thou Me?" And he, crying from the night of his desperate hopelessness, said, "Who art Thou, Lord? What wilt Thou have me to do?" When the light of the candle divine comes shining into the darkened recesses of the soul, that man can never be the same again. Once Jesus, the light of the world, shines upon him, never again will he be satisfied with the outer darkness of this world. In the parable of the lost son we have yet another example of man's depravity and his condition without God, for this boy was lost willfully. He had been raised in the fear of God and had long known the ways of the Lord. His father had instructed him in the way of truth and at his mother's knee he had been taught to pray. As a child he had knelt at the altar of the Lord, expressing his faith and hope in God. He was no stranger to the word of the Lord and the scripture he believed from cover to cover. But like so many before him, he got his eyes off the Lord and began to covet the tinsel about him. He saw and coveted the frivolity and fun the world was having in their unbelief and in his backslidden heart he wanted to run with them. It was a much easier way; everything seemed so happy and gay out there and he seemed to be missing so much. The day soon came when he was of age and could make his own decision. Feeling he had no time to lose, he called his father and said to him, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me, and he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living." O what a time he had! Never had he dreamed the world was such a friendly place, full of so many friendly people, and never before had he found that he himself was such a grand fellow. So he let his money fly in every direction. He had plenty of good hard cash and prodigally he wasted it. The more money he spent the more friends he had, and the more friends the more fun. How glad he was that he had broken free from the restraints of home. "Poor old Dad," thought he, "doesn't know what fun he had been missing."

These things belong to youth
And are its natural right;
My books, my pastimes, and my friends
The merry and the bright.
My Father's heart is kind;
He will not deem it ill
That my small corner of the world
Should please and hold me still.

But there came a day when famine raised its ugly head in the land. Things began to go wrong and stark reality began to dawn on him. His money was now gone, and to his utter amazement and chagrin he discovered that once his money was gone his friends were gone, too. Those good pals who had slapped his back and blessed

him as a jolly good fellow when he was the life of all their parties were suddenly strangers to him. He had yet to learn the bitter lesson that "every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts"; but "all the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? He pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him." **Prov. 19:6-7.** The famine increased and none would take him in; neither would any one give anything to him or help him. Ah, my good man! Early in life we must learn the bitter truth that the friendly outstretched hand of the world is not reliable. It will be drawn back the instant you are no longer able to contribute anything to it. For our learning it is written here, "He began to be in want and no man gave unto him." During life we discover that we have few true friends - only the merest handful. They soon forget us and soon neglect us.

When we come to such sorry straits as this, our corrupt carnal mind does not immediately think of returning to God, and the Lord in wisdom does not soon call us back, either. Well He knows how necessary it is for mankind to learn by experience that there is nothing out there in the world but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The sinner must discover for himself that the country into which he had wandered is afar country. His own wickedness will correct him, for he must learn that he is afar off and without hope in the world. When the mighty famine arose, as sooner or later it must do, he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country who sent him into his fields to feed swine. His pay was poor, and, being hungry, he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. Luke 15:15-16. The young man, who once was a son in his father's house, surrounded by servants and bounty on every hand, now finds himself in afar country surrounded by swine and himself sitting in a corner of the pig-pen, ready to eat the husks that the swine did not eat, for no man gave unto him.

Is it any wonder that Paul speaks of our unregenerate condition as afar off or that Jesus in the parable describes this as a far country? See into what straits his willfulness has brought him and how destitute man becomes when he turns from God to walk the dreary ways of the earth. All its promise is but a fading leaf. It is like a mist that the wind driveth away or as the grass which today springs green in the field, but tomorrow is withered in the heat of the sun. Think not, young man, that youth will abide with you forever, for you will not have gone many steps before silver threads will begin to adorn your brow, and when you look into your mirror, instead of a carefree, smiling youth, you will see a careworn man, fast going the way of all the earth.

It was when the young man was in the swine pen of his extremity that he suddenly came to himself. Now he knew by bitter experience what his inner self knew all along, and when he came to himself, he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger; I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." So he arose and came to his father, "but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him: and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry."

The sound of the sinner's prayer, "I have sinned; God, be merciful to me, a sinner," is like sweet music in the ears of God, for thus saith the Lord, "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance."

Sinners Jesus will receive!
Sound the word of grace to all
Who the heavenly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.
Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin.
Purged from every spot and stain,
Heaven with Him I'll enter in.

Many years ago a young man by the name of Jack Dahl left his home in Norway to seek a new life in Canada. His mother was a godly woman and he a wayward young man. Like so many other young men and women, he

longed for the day to come when he could pack up his meager belongings and get away from home. His parents were hard working people and had taught him work and honesty, too, but like so many others he chafed for the day when he could say goodbye, be on his own, and be able to live his life as he pleased without those parental restraints, which he deemed so old-fashioned and unnecessary. In his mind he dreamed of a far away land. He would go to Canada and make his way in that brave new world of promise of which he had heard so much.

Finally the great day came and, calling his parents, he told them of his plans to leave. They did not try to dissuade him from his purpose, but told him from the love that was in their hearts that difficulties and hardships would be met whether he went away or remained in the land of his birth. Seeing his determination to leave, they yielded themselves to the inevitable and began to gather together a few things for his journey. All too soon came the day for his departure. Goodbyes were tearfully said and his mother, putting her arms around him, kissed him goodbye, softly saying in his ear, "Remember, Jack, wherever you go, I'll always be praying for you." Bravely brushing the tears from her eye with the corner of her apron, she smiled as he drove away. She watched and waved from the door until the turn in the road obscured him from her sight, then, brushing back a wisp of hair, she returned with a sigh and prayer to her tasks.

Many years passed swiftly by for Jack. He found that life in a far off country did not hold all the promise he hoped it would. He learned many evil ways and became a rough, hard man with little or no thought of God. Too soon the years were adorning his brow with silver. His hands were hard with much toil and his heart was hard with years of sin.

In the year 1933 I was traveling as an evangelist through the towns of Saskatchewan and by the will of God I was led to preach the gospel in a little country school house near the village of Naicam, the very community where Jack was farming. The Spirit of the Lord began to move among us and, before many days had gone by, some thirty or more people had knelt at the benches to give their hearts to Jesus Christ. Jack's wife and daughters began to attend the meetings, and one happy night they knelt in prayer to consecrate their hearts to Christ. The joy of new found salvation filled their hearts and it was with gladness the good lady and her daughters went home to tell the good news to Jack. But their joy was soon turned to dismay, for he railed upon them for indulging in such foolishness and promised them that he would go the very next night and break up the meeting.

Of course, I knew nothing of his intentions and so the meeting commenced as usual. We had sung a hymn or two when Jack arrived at the school. He tied his horse outside and approached the door, but in the good wisdom of the Lord I had at that very moment picked up my banjo to play and sing. As he entered the door the words of the song he heard were these:

The night was dark and stormy;
The wind was howling wild
As an aged mother gazed upon
The portrait of her child.
She gazed on his baby features
That had once filled her heart with joy;
He's now o'er the wide world roaming,
A mother's long lost boy.
Your mother still prays for you, Jack;
Your mother still prays for you.
And though you're far o'er the ocean,
Your mother still prays for you.

Poor Jack stood quietly in the doorway. Tears came to his eyes as the Spirit of God spoke to his heart. He listened through the song and with rapt attention gave audience to the sermon. Then Brother Amundson, a man of great wisdom in the things of God, seeing the concern upon his face, spoke to him of the Lord and led him to the altar of repentance and prayer. As he confessed his sins to God, Jesus Christ came into his heart and he went home to join his wife and daughters in the great family of God, singing, "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart!"

Well did the apostle Paul know the greatness of the love and mercy of God. Through years of revelation the Lord had taught him the universality of salvation. Well he knew that redemption included every man, but it must have been through scenes like these in which he saw sinners finding peace with God that he wrote with assurance these blessed words: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Though all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God and we are without hope and without God in the world, our minds being blinded as we walk in lasciviousness and uncleanness, and though we are dead in the trespasses and sins, afar off from God, yet through the blood of Jesus Christ we have been brought nigh to Him to find a place in His sanctified throng.

By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be saved, but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are justified freely through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus. God, through faith in the blood of His Son, has sent forth the Holy Spirit to deal with us on behalf of Himself, telling us that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is available to us all the moment we believe and accept Him. At this time God the Father declares the righteousness of His Son that He might be just and the justifier of every man who believes. First believe, my friend and brother. First believe. To believe in Christ and the completeness of the work He has accomplished on your behalf is the thing of greatest importance. When man was afar off from God, without hope and without God in the world, having no righteousness with which to approach the Lord, at that time Christ the righteous died for us that all who would believe should be justified from all things.

Salvation is by the grace of God. It is by grace that it might be by faith. If we depend on works, we are lost, for it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. If we depend on personal righteousness, we are lost, for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. There is nothing upon which a sinner may depend save the mercy of God, which is freely offered to us through Christ our Lord. The moment a sinner looks up into the face of God and says, Lord, I believe (that Jesus died for me," in that very moment he is justified from all things. His sins are cleansed away through the power of the blood of Christ and (the Holy Spirit comes in to walk in him and dwell in him that God may be his Father and he may be His child.

Faith is a wonderful thing. Like all other heavenly gifts it has its source in God. Man in himself has no faith, but when the Lord convicts us of sin, and points us to the Saviour, in His love and kindness He also puts faith into the heart of the seeker that he might be justified by faith. For that reason it is clearly written, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8.

Salvation is by the grace of God. It is the Lord's unmerited favor and kindness toward man. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." **Titus 3:3-6**. So, you see, salvation is of the grace of God. It is His unmerited favor toward us. He gives salvation freely to all who believe, without works of righteousness or without any merit but faith in Him. It is of grace that it might be by faith that he who believes on Christ is justified in the sight of God. His righteousness is imputed to us. It is given to us that God might be just and the justifier of everyone who believes. All who believe are justified from all things. They are made pure in God's sight, for the blood of the righteous Christ has cleansed them from all sin.

Once we are afar off, but now through the blood of Christ we are brought nigh. He who once said that we were enemies and aliens, without hope and without God in the world, afar off from God and lost in sin, having no righteousness of our own, now speaks the word of peace to us, saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." **1 John 3:2-3**.

Long ago in the city of Chicago a woman lay dying. She had lived a long life of sin without care or thought for God. While she was young, life had gone her way, but as the years went by her friends became fewer and fewer until at last, deserted and alone, she lay dying in her dismal attic room. In her distress she sent her daughter to call for the neighborhood minister. "Tell him," she said, "that I am dying and I want him to tell me how to get in." The night was cold and the minister himself knew not the true way of salvation. On the walls of his study hung the pictures of his college classmates and his degrees in learning. He was reluctant to leave the comfort of his home to go out on such a cold night to such a dismal district, but because of the importunity of the girl he aroused himself and, wrapping his warm coat about him, was led to the dingy apartment where the dying woman lay. A look of pleasure wreathed her careworn face as he came in. "I'm so glad you've come," she said, "for I want you to tell me how to get in." The poor minister was baffled. He knew not what to say. For years he had taught the people to do the best they could, to join the church, and to live good respectable lives, but here was a situation he had never faced before. Seating himself on the chair beside the bed, he began to tell her how we should think kind thoughts and do kind deeds. "Ah," said the woman, "but I am dying. It is too late for that now." "Well," said the minister, "you should keep the golden rule and do unto others as you would have them do to you. If we do the best we can, we will be alright." "But," said the woman, "it is too late for that. Is there nothing else you can tell me?" The minister, in his distraction realizing how vain such words were in such a critical hour as this, ventured to quote a scripture he had learned to recite as a child. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believed) on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." "That's it! That's it," she cried. "That's what I wanted to hear. Now kneel down and pray for me." The minister kneeled to pray, but unable to pray for the woman, he prayed for himself, and as he prayed, Christ came into his heart; and he got in, and she got in. It is of grace that it might be by faith that all who are afar off might be brought nigh to God through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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**TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 18
LEARNING FROM ILLUSTRIOUS MEN**

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-4

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**CHAPTER ONE
ABEL, ENOCH, ABRAHAM**

Our relationship to Jesus Christ will be mightily enhanced as we give heed to a great line of our illustrious forefathers, who through their immovable faith in God subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Heb. 11:32-39

In all the sad, dark history of the world, where the omnipresent power of evil stalks like a ranging bear, God has not left Himself without faithful witnesses, men and women staunch, steadfast, immovable, worthy of trust and loved by God. By the eye of faith they were able to look far into the oncoming millenniums to see the unfolding purpose of dispensations yet unborn and grasp the consummation of the eternal plan of the Most High. God, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, has purposed that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He would gather into Christ everything in heaven and everything in earth. There shall be nothing left unrestored, nothing left unredeemed, no one left unsaved. Hell itself will be emptied of its inhabitants whosoever they be even as Christ, that towering rock of ages, Himself declared when He said, "On this rock will I build My ecclesia; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Gates are not for attack. Gates are constructed for defense and the gates of hell shall fail to keep her inhabitants against the power of Christ. Surely this is what the Psalmist spoke when he plucked his harp strings and sang, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."

O great compassion! O boundless love!
O loving kindness, faithful and true!
Sprinkle your souls with the blood of the Lamb,
And I will pass, will pass over you.

God has never left Himself without a witnessing people, neither in generations past nor in our generation. Nor will He in generations yet to come. In each generation His wisdom passes into holy souls. He makes them friends of God as did Jesus when He said to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." **John 15:15** This is not the wisdom of the world, but the wisdom of God. It is wisdom more splendid than the sun. Its brightness outshines the constellations. Over the God-given wisdom of saints, evil can never triumph. Their understanding embraces all things and orders all things for good.

Oh, what a towering cloud of witnesses have successive generations revealed, each saint in his order proclaiming some separate aspect of the greatness, the goodness or the power of an almighty Father! Some saints, like Moses, displayed power as God, standing in the place of God. Others as Joshua wielded power as kings and were renowned for their strength and authority. Others, like Joseph, were intelligent advisers, uttering prophetic truth to save and deliver the nations. Others, like Solomon, directed people by their advice and the wise proverbs of their teaching. Others, like David, composed psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, setting them as melodies in the hearts of the people. Others, as Abraham, were rich and powerful, living peaceably in their pilgrimage, while others, equally honored in the sight of God, wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented. Some have seen their honor pass on to future generations while others, equally loved of the Father, have passed from earth's turbulent scene unwept, unhonored and unsung.

ABEL - THE MAN WHO OFFERED A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE

Of Abel it is written that he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and by it he being dead yet speaketh. Heb. 11:4 It is the day of sacrifice in lovely Eden and two brothers draw near the altar to worship the Lord. In the hand of Cain is a pretty sacrifice composed of the good and luscious fruit of the earth, beautiful indeed to look upon and much to be desired in the sight of man, but not the kind of sacrifice that a sinner must bring to God; for sinners are dead in trespasses and sins and the fruit of the ground has no power to give them eternal life, it, too, being dead even as the earth from which it grew. Beautiful as his offering was, there was nothing in it that could give him life nor cleanse his sin away, for it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Near by his side stood his brother Abel. In his hand was an innocent lamb, which he slew and laid upon a rough altar. From the open wound the blood red stream of life poured forth. While Cain scowled and chided at what to him was a gruesome slaughter and a useless sacrifice, the heavenly Father smiled His approval and accepted the life blood of the lamb as atonement for sin. Abel was pronounced righteous and God placed the witness in his soul that what he had done by faith was well pleasing and acceptable in His sight. Four thousand years later, when declaring that the just shall live by faith, Paul added this marvelous confirmation: "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by the which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." **Heb. 11:4**

But why, brother Abel, did you offer to God this uncouth sacrifice of a bleeding lamb? Was not the offering of Cain, thy brother, prettier far, the work and labor of his hands and a splendid manifestation of his husbandry? Far away in the misty valleys of time I see him smile his reply, pointing with unerring finger to a distant skull-shaped hill. It is the hill of Calvary where through the haze of four thousand future years and the rising mists of blinding tears a lonely cross appears and upon the cross on the wind swept hill a Lamb is dying. It is a Lamb indeed, but no ordinary lamb. It is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. From a wound in His side a river of blood is flowing. But is it blood, O brother Abel? Yea, far more than blood. It is eternal life, for the life is in the blood.

Learn, O saint, that your Father in heaven glories not in the blood of ten thousand sacrificial lambs, yet how better can we learn than by these that what of life they had to offer was in their blood, for the blood thereof is the life thereof. When, therefore, Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross of Calvary that blessed sacrifice was not made to mollify the rage of an angry God, as thousands are erroneously preaching today. Far be that from the truth. That glorious sacrifice was made by a Father who so loved the world that He gave His Son, because in Him was life. God did not give His only Son to die in my stead, as orthodoxy insists and as

preachers are always declaring. Do you not know that I was already dead in my trespasses, my sins and my unbelief? Jesus did not die that I might not die. The truth is that I was already dead. Eph. 2:1 He died that He might give His life to me. And His life is eternal life. Yea, He is eternal life. What other person could possibly have said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish?" O my Christian brother and my sinner friend, eternal life is the only life I have. I possess none other, and that life is in Christ's blood. His blood is that life, and, the moment any man believes, eternal life becomes his possession and he will never perish because the life Christ gives is both eternal and imperishable.

I see a crimson stream of blood
That flows from Calvary.
Its waves, which reach the throne of God,
Are sweeping over me.
And now no condemnation
Abides to turn away
My soul from His salvation.
It's in my heart to stay.

Now do I understand, O Abel, why thou broughtest a bleeding, unblemished lamb for your offering to God. Frail and insignificant though it was, it pointed an unerring prophetic finger to that true Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. The penalty of sin is death; therefore all were dead. Eternal life is in the blood of Christ; therefore, all who believe on Him receive eternal life. This is the new birth of which Jesus spoke and it was of this wonderful regeneration that Paul wrote, saying, "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1**

O what potent words were penned by Paul when to the Romans he declared that the faith of God the Father in the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, was so great that in one mighty pronouncement He forgave and remitted all the sins of the past! "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith (God's faith) in His (Christ's) blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." **Rom 3:24-26**

When Abel offered his feeble sacrifice of blood, he was testifying to his faith in Christ and his belief that the blood of Jesus not only cleanses from sin, but gives to the believer eternal life, inasmuch as "the life is in the blood." Thus it is written, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Christ is the more excellent sacrifice. The blood of Christ is better than the blood Abel offered. That blood was the type, but the blood of Christ is the anti-type. If, therefore, the typical "blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" **Heb. 9; 13-14**

Naught of the blood of beasts
On Israel's altars slain
Could give the guilty sinner peace
Or wash away his stain.
But Christ the heavenly Lamb
Taken all our sins away —
A sacrifice of nobler strain
And better blood than they.

Surely Cain, the brother of Abel, must have been the first modernist who ever lived. Who else but an unbelieving modernist could ever imagine that one dead in trespasses and sins could possibly obtain life by bringing to God what he himself knew had no breath of life in it? Will such people never learn that, should they bring the whole world itself and everything in it as an offering to God, they would still remain "dead" in their sins? Does not all creation teach us that all the righteous acts we can perform and all the gifts we can bring will

never bring a dead man back to life? The nurses and doctors in the hospitals often struggle long and hard to preserve a man's life, but once the man is dead, they know he is beyond their reach. Nothing known to medical science can bring him back. Should we offer for his life all the diamonds of Africa and a thousand rivers of oil, no man on earth could bring him back. How then can works of righteousness or an offering of the fruit of the field or a life time of good works change the situation? Only Christ can raise the dead. He alone is the resurrection and the life. But let me bear this true witness, though you may never have heard it before. When Christ raises the dead, He does not give back the flickering candle of life they once possessed. He gives His life and His life is eternal. Yea, more also, He gives Himself.

Today within our ransomed spirits we hear Him say, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." **1 John 5:11** "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." **John 10:28**

He is the resurrection, and today
We walk the road with Him in life anew.
The resurrection life He gave to them
Is life He wants to give to you.
He is that life, O vision blest!
From us, Lord, never part.
We find it not beyond the starry skies;
We have it when we have Him in our heart.

Abel brought not the fruit of the earth. His ear was in tune with the wonderful message of the prophet Habakkuk: "The just shall live by faith." Though Paul had not yet proclaimed the message that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, Rom. 3:28, those words were living in the heart of Abel as he brought an offering of blood as an emblem, a symbol and a type to manifest his faith in the blood of Christ, which would be shed for man's redemption. Redemption is simply this: Christ came to man and, finding him dead in trespasses and sins, He gave him His own life and freely offers it now to all who will believe as Abel did. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.

ENOCH—THE MAN WHO WALKED WITH GOD

Of the life of this illustrious man history's pages record but little. Few, brief and far between are the passages in God's word that tell us aught about him. From Gen. 5:19 we learn that Jared was his father and that Enoch had brothers and sisters. He begat a son, Methuselah by name, verse 21, who lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years and evidently died the same year the flood came. In the epistle of Jude we are told that Enoch was the seventh from Adam and that he prophesied of the coming of the Lord, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." **Jude 14-15**. The writer of Hebrews, Heb. 11:5, plants the feet of this remarkable man among that vast family of the faithful, who have arisen through the centuries to be marked UN saints who have lived so completely in the realm of faith that their possibilities in God became limitless.

In the annals of a man whose life spanned a period of three hundred sixty-five years and whose recorded biblical history could be contained in one brief paragraph is it not a most remarkable thing that twice in that brief record we are reminded that, "Enoch walked with God?" **Gen. 5:22, 24**. The scriptures have much to teach concerning man's walk with God. During the ages many men and women have walked with God, yet upon this one man is conferred this testimony: "Enoch walked with God, and was not for God took him."

The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us three very definite things concerning him: first, that he was translated that he might not see death, 11:5; second, that he was not found because God had translated him, and, third, that before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." We conclude, therefore, that, though his recorded history is exceedingly brief, yet, had a whole volume concerning him been written, it could have added little to these eloquent statements: that Enoch walked with God, that he had this testimony that he

pleased God, that he prophesied of the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints, and that, having walked with the Lord three hundred years after the birth of Methuselah, the magnetism of heaven far exceeded that of earth and he was not, for God took him, and that he was translated that he might not see death.

There is seldom anything very exciting about walking. If a man is seen running, he is noticed by every person on the street and many start guessing as to what might be the cause of his haste. They wonder if he is running to catch a bus, keep an appointment, or perhaps he is trying to make a get-away. In those wonderful days when late, late prayer meetings were no exception to the rule, my youngest brother was returning home from such a prayer meeting with his friend at 4 A.M. The streets were empty of pedestrians so to speed their journey they broke into a run. They had not gone far, however, before a big voice boomed, "HEY!" A patrolman walked up and asked, "Where are you boys going?" "We're going home," they replied. "Where have you been?" he asked. "To prayer meeting," was their answer, so with a smile and a pleasant good night he walked on. It was their running that attracted attention. Had they been walking, he would have thought nothing.

So Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. It was not an exciting thing to do, but, as they walked, the fellowship between the two became so close that at the end of the three hundred years Enoch was nowhere to be found, for they had walked together straight into the celestial realms and Enoch was translated that he might not see death and he was not, for God took him.

Walking is not a means of rapid transportation. It is the slowest locomotion common to man, yet there is no means of movement so reliable. Walking, we understand, is the best exercise known to man. It is better than running, jogging or swimming. It is something every normal person is capable of doing. It can be tiring and it is often tedious, but without the ability of mankind to walk the world would come to a standstill and its inhabitants would perish.

If we will apply these few thoughts to our spiritual walk, we will have a lesson of life-long worth. How often have we, impatient souls that we are, longed for more rapid progress in our walk with God! How we have longed to reach some great spiritual height that we saw far off in the Spirit, as Abraham saw the New Jerusalem! We begged for complete victory over the old nature, the world and the flesh. We asked people to pray for us that we might enter in right away. But that kind of haste is not God's way. How often I have wondered why it was that after fifty years of walking day and night with God, speaking to Him often and often knowing that He had spoken to me, for all that imperfection still manifests itself on every side. Have you not wondered the same thing? Please remember that, though in walking locomotion is slow, there is no method of travel more safe or sure. Indeed, it seems to be the only progression that is pleasing to God. Mushrooms grow up and perish in a night, but sons of God are of a different order.

In my heart I am sure that Enoch must have caught a glimpse of the more excellent glory of translation, transfiguration and change just about the time his son Methuselah was born. Far off on the distant horizons his eye of faith caught sight of the more excellent glory of incorruption and he started his steadfast walking toward that celestial realm. It may never have occurred to this faithful man at the beginning of his journey that the goal upon which his heart was steadfastly fixed lay beyond such toilsome valleys and precipitous peaks that it would take him three hundred weary years to attain it. So he started his walk with God through moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, his unerring eye fixed on the celestial realm.

Cold blows the blast across the moor;
The sleet drives hissing in the wind.
Yon toilsome mountain lies before,
A dreary, treeless waste behind.
So faint I am these tottering feet
No more my feeble frame can bear.
My sinking heart forgets to beat,
And drifting snows my tomb prepare. But
There is a power whose care
Teaches thy way along the pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,

Lone wandering, but not lost.
He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless coast
Thy certain flight
In the long way that I must walk alone
Will guide my steps aright.

W.C.B.

And yet, on we walk strengthened by power divine. When sinew fails and strength is gone, underneath are the everlasting arms. Then we run and feel not weary; we walk but do not faint. Like Elijah we feel the gentle touch of an angel and hear a kindly voice saying, "Eat and drink, for the journey is too great for thee." **1 Kings 19:5-7** Then on we go for another forty days on the strength of that one meal of angels' food until we arrive at the mount of God.

How wonderful it all is and how slowly we learn to walk without trying to run or fly or hitch a ride on someone else's chariot! The deep valleys that lie before us must be entered and passed through. Then the words of David in **Psalm 23** will become our personal experience. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Yon toilsome mountain cannot be bypassed. It must be climbed. Some grow weary and turn back, but those who reach the summit rejoice eternally, however difficult it was at first.

Sometimes in reflection I have thought of the wonderful events that happened on mountains and hills as recorded in scripture. Abraham offered Isaac on Mount Moriah. Our blessed Lord gave us His life by shedding His blood on wind-swept Calvary. Moses amid fire and smoke received the law on Mt. Sinai and Noah landed his ark on Mt. Ararat. Moses took his last walk up Mt. Nebo to receive his crown of life, and was not seen again until that wonderful day when Jesus climbed an exceedingly high mountain, probably Mt. Hermon, and, praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered as Moses and Elijah appeared with Him in glory. "As the dews of Hermon and as the snows that descended upon the mountains of Zion, there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore." Christ preached the sermon on the mount to His disciples on the mount of beatitudes, and on ascension day our blessed Lord led a little group of faithful saints out to the Mount of Olives and, as He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And, if we read our Bibles aright, our Lord will soon return to that same mountain when He comes again, for thus saith the Lord, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives."

Our progress up the mountains of God may be slow and difficult. We watch mountain climbers clinging like spiders to icy precipitous cliffs and we wonder why they do it. It is because they want to reach the top and are willing to risk their lives to attain that frail earthly glory. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we are incorruptible. For three hundred years Enoch walked up the hills and down into the valleys, but he was not walking alone. God was walking with him.

The heavenly Father must have had some eternal interest vested in Enoch that He would walk with him three hundred years just to accomplish his perfection, and shall we fail to believe that He has an equal investment in each of us? Are we not heirs together with Him of the promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people?" **2 Cor. 6:16** He raises us when we fall, guides us when we are lost, strengthens us when we are weak, and permits us to fall when we imagine we are strong. Ah, yes, it is so! When the Lord plants a redwood tree in the womb of mother earth, He is looking forward perhaps five thousand years to the day when it is a towering monarch of the jungle. Think it not strange, then, that He would spend three hundred years in bringing to perfection a saint who is to rule the world as a son of God, bringing order and cosmos out of all the dreadful chaos that everywhere abides on earth. The wonder is that it does not take much longer. Let us, therefore, not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. At times I have thought, "I shall faint if I reap not," but the truth is the reverse. We shall reap if we faint not.

The Apostle Paul was moved to tears when he wrote, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is

their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." **Phil. 3:18-19** Pages without end could be written and sermons innumerable could be preached concerning this sad state of affairs among Christian people who are ever mindful of earthly things. As Jeremiah was the weeping prophet, Paul at times was a weeping apostle, and here in the text quoted above the manner in which many Christians walked made him weep, and rightly so. So many who name the name of Christ are really the enemies of the cross of Christ and every design and intention of it, for God's intention in the cross was that the world should be "crucified unto me and I unto the world." Meditate for a moment on that text and you will see what a great gulf the cross places between you and the world. The walk of so many Christians is surer evidence of what they really are than the words of their profession, as it is written, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Figs are not gathered of thorns nor grapes of thistles. Minding nothing so much as their sensual appetites, they become enemies of the cross of Christ.

When a man's belly becomes his god, a wretched idol it is, a scandal for any, but especially for Christians, who sacrifice the favor of God, their peace of conscience and aionian happiness that they may satisfy their god of sensuality. Gluttons and drunkards make a god of their bellies and their care in life is to make provision for it. The observance, which good people give to God, others give to their appetites, serving not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, making a glory of their shame and being mindful of earthly things. Minding earthly things, they walk contrary to the cross, having no relish for things that are spiritual and heavenly.

Others walk after the flesh, following the way of Cain, who hated his brother. Others run greedily after the error of Baalam, who, like so many modern preachers, prophesied for the sake of reward. Still others follow the error of Core, who was unafraid to speak evil of God-given authority. I greatly fear that in our day many preachers are following the error of Baalam. Their vast financial ambitions are insatiable. Their life styles are incredible and their manner of living lavish beyond belief, in many cases far exceeding that of kings and presidents, and all done under the pretense that it is the work of Christ. No wonder Paul wept and denounced them as the enemies of the cross of Christ! Well spake our Lord Jesus Christ when He foretold the rise of many false prophets and many false christs. If Christians would but open their eyes, they would see that radio and television programs are alive with false prophets, preaching for reward as Baalam, all clamoring for money, money, money! How unlike Christ they are with all their abominable fanfare, their man-made programs and endless ambitions accompanied by an utter dearth of nourishing, spiritual truth! Seldom among them is there one who does not design his very sermon as an appeal for more money to carry out more lavish programs, and, while all this is being done, the world sinks lower and lower into the pit of despair. Nevertheless, this is what always happens when those who call themselves by the name of Christ walk not with Him, but after their own ambitions. Follow not after them nor waste your reserves supporting them. Learn rather from that illustrious man of whom it is written, "Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him."

The first record we have of God walking was on that occasion in paradise when the ever, living God walked in the effulgent glory and perfumed magnificence of heaven-blessed Eden. I know of no other reason why the voice of God was heard in the evening cool of paradise than that He was calling to Adam to come and walk with Him as he had done every day for perhaps a hundred years or more. But, when Adam was not to be found, He called, "Adam, where art thou?" There was no response in Adam's heart for he had hidden himself among the trees of the garden and the glory of their long relationship had fled away.

Dear one in Christ, the Lord "knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness." **Deut. 2:7** The wilderness of this world is a "waste, howling wilderness," the burning sand of a wild wasteland. God has purposed that it should be so; but, if we will heed the voice of God, we will discover that we are not walking alone. There will be an ever, increasing consciousness that He is walking with us, and, when the way is too difficult for us and we are too weary to continue on, we will be borne up on His mighty shoulder and underneath we will feel the arms that are everlasting. How often during my reflections have I wondered how I managed to get through those dreary, toilsome mountain passes where evil circumstances overwhelmed and temptations lay on every side! There is only one answer. Underneath were the everlasting arms. Where there was no way, He became the way. When there was no truth, He was truth and where there was no candle, He was the shining light. What unwritten history lives in the recollections of the people of God as they remember impossible summits over which they have come and the dreary valleys through which they have passed! We shake our heads in disbelief and smile, "It was Christ who carried me through."

What story has ever thrilled more fainting hearts than the account in Luke's gospel of a little known man named Cleopas and an unnamed companion, who was probably his wife. They were walking the eight mile journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus and; as they walked, their talk was hushed with sorrow because of the heartbreaking events of the last few days. But, glory to God in the highest, "it came to pass" that, while they walked and communed together and reasoned, the resurrected Jesus drew near and walked with them. But their eyes were "holden" that they should not know Him. "And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He, which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but Him they saw not. Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight." They walked with Christ and, as they did, He revealed Himself unto them in an unimaginable blaze of resurrection truth that would shine as a guiding star both for them and for us until the day we walk with Christ into the celestial realms on high.

From the far distant mountain peaks of time the inspired voice of Paul, clear as a vesper bell, rings out the message, "This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh," and from the deepening night of the valleys the voice of the sweet psalmist of Israel is singing, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." And with incredible pride the Master proclaims, "I will dwell with them and walk with them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people." Even among the backslidden Christians of Sardis there were a few saints who had not defiled their garments but were walking with God, and unto this few the Spirit of Christ whispered, "They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." Thus amid the Babylon of confusion that comprises the existing church system with all its flesh, self-seeking and pride, with its food, fun and foolishness which carnal leaders imagine is fellowship, we may still walk with God. We will have to "come out from among them." There is no doubt about it. Christ Himself is outside the camp of the church's "vanity fair" of religions, and to us He calls, saying, "Go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." There He will walk with us and there He will be our God and we will be His people.

Enoch was translated. There need be no question about that. We should not think it strange that our God would do this wonderful thing. Two delightfully captivating statements are made of Enoch from which we might form a conclusion which does not appear on the surface, but which, if we can accept it, will be an inspiring benefit and blessing to our progression in Christ.

In **Genesis 5:24** we read these words: "Enoch walked with God, and he was not," and in **Hebrews 11:5**, "He was not found." Certainly Enoch was translated. To the believer that fact is beyond dispute, but these very statements, "he was not" and "he was not found", appear to me to describe a spiritual process now taking place in every believer who is earnestly pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. You will remember that Paul said, "It is not I, but Christ." The old Saul of Tarsus was not. He was not found. He was dead. He was crucified. He had been laid in the tomb, and a new man, the Christ-man, was standing in his stead. The religious, fanatical, persecuting tyrant that was Saul of Tarsus was not. He was nowhere to be found. It is true that God had not translated him out of the world, but he had been so thoroughly transformed by the power of God that he was able to say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not

I, but Christ liveth in me." He was not, for God took him and He is now taking us. We may rightly say that Paul was not translated out of the world as Enoch was, but his own experience of being removed from all that he once was in his former life was so real to him that in Col. 1:13 he enravishes our spiritual beings with these enlightening words: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Is not that an illuminating statement?

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, I urge this truth upon you. This kind of identity with Christ is the true path of sonship. There should be nothing in your life more important than this: that old things should pass away and all things become new. To some degree it must already be that you, my brother, my sister, can truthfully say, "I am not what I once was - the sinner, the blasphemer, held captive by the old nature and all his vices. I am a new man, a new creature." Day after day, year after year, the Spirit of God is transforming His redeemed and translating them into His heavenly kingdom. In a very real sense we are not, for God has taken us. As you walk with God, make sure that you are relinquishing every old thing that belongs to the old nature and the former realm of corruption. Do not grasp after the world and the trinkets money can buy. Do not cling to this age; it is passing away. Remember, you have been saved, and have "come to Mt. Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." **Heb. 12:22-24** O, beloved saint, you are not, for God has taken you. You are a new man, a new woman. Your life is new. Your hopes are new. Your outlook is new. Christ has transformed you. He has brought you out of darkness, and translated you into His kingdom of light. There is no more / to be found. The old has passed away and, behold, all things are new. Enoch was not, for God took him. Even before his translation he was not, for he had this testimony that he pleased God. You are not if you have entirely yielded yourself to Christ. God has taken you. He has transformed you into a new man and the old person you once were is not found.

Walking with God is a relationship that is cultivated through lifelong experience. To walk with God requires two persons - yourself and your Christ - going in the same direction. We cannot walk with God if we are going the opposite way, nor can we walk with Him if our ambitions are our own and not His. How can two walk together except they be agreed? If we would walk with God, there must come a time when we have no ideas, purposes, ambitions or plans of our own. The pride of life is personal ambition, but to walk with God is to see and grasp His eternal purpose and walk only in it. As for me, I have come to the end of myself. I have no plans for tomorrow. If His presence should say, "Let us now walk out of this world", there would be no moaning at the bar or begging to abide here longer. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Are we not double-minded deceivers of ourselves when we sing, "I'm longing to go", yet fight like tigers to remain in the wasted, howling wilderness of this world when we could go walking arm in arm with Christ back into the presence of Him from whence we came? When the moment comes for God to take us in whatsoever manner He chooses, may we be like the beloved Enoch, who was not, for God took him.

ABRAHAM - THE FRIEND OF GOD

Friendship with the world, saith the scripture, is enmity with God. We cannot serve God and Mammon. A friend loveth at all times. A brother is born for adversity, but there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. My father used to sing:

Comrades, comrades, ever since we were boys,
Sharing each other's sorrow, sharing each other's joys.
Comrades when manhood was dawning,
Faithful what'er may betide.
When I was in danger, my darling old comrade
Was there by my side.

David the son of Jesse and Jonathan the son of Saul were friends. Their relationship was born of God. Though Jonathan knew in his heart that his friend David would one day ascend the throne of Israel in his stead, **1 Sam.**

23:17, the scripture says, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." 1 Sam. 18:1 The friendship that began between them the day Goliath was slain was to continue through fiercest adversity until the day Jonathan was slain in battle. Far too many friends are like shadows. They stick with us while the sun is shining, but the moment the clouds of trouble and adversity come, they disappear. The truest friendships are those that are welded together in the heat of trial even as two pieces of iron become one in the furnace.

Now Abraham was a friend of God. Of all the devout saints of scripture Abraham alone bears the honorable title, the Friend of God. That friendship was born of long-standing relationship with the Lord. Abraham, through a century of wandering as a pilgrim in strange lands and among strange peoples, found God to be a faithful friend at all times and it is equally true that the heavenly Father found Abraham to be a faithful man, who cared for nothing on earth except the mind, knowledge and will of God. Well did the Father in heaven know that Abraham was a man to be depended upon, faithful and reliable even to the yielding up of his son as a sacrifice. With fatherly pride in His friend He rejoiced in the knowledge that in every adversity or success Abraham's fidelity would be forever constant. The love of a man for a maid may wax and wane as the moon, but the love of a friend for a friend is as constant as the stars.

When the great Isaiah spoke of the love of God in forging Israel into a nation for His glory, he said, "Thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, My friend." Isa. 41:8 James the Just, writing of the faithfulness of Abraham, made this beautiful observation: "The scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." James 2:23

The Holy Scripture has a great deal to say concerning the relationships between believers and their Lord. Those who receive truth seriously must often be awed by the declarations the Lord has made concerning the intimate closeness of our relationship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. As the depths of our spiritual bond with the Father are revealed to us and our spirits begin to grasp the force and truth of what the Holy Spirit is really teaching, we become speechless with wonder and filled with amazement. For so many centuries God's beloved people have been led by false shepherds who caused them to see themselves as poor, starving mendicants, begging crumbs that fell from the table of a God who sat far off in the heavens, too busy rolling out the stars to be interested in fellowship with man. How I abhor those demeaning traditions of men that have been passed down through the years, doing despite to God's Spirit of grace and causing believers to pass through life in the shallows, never seeing God as their loving Father and faithful friend, reconciling the world to Himself and committing to faithful men the word of reconciliation!

Have you ever been awed by such statements as these, considering them one word at a time: "Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is?" Oh, what a universe of truth lies in this wealthy mine! We are not children of the flesh, sons of an earthly monarch or president. We are children born of the Spirit into the family of God and we are His children. The moment we believe on the name of Christ, we are sealed with His Holy Spirit of promise. Then and there the Spirit of God enters into that new and living temple which we are. A work of regeneration begins in which the old things of our unregenerate past fade away and all things become new. Our spirit, long dead in sins, is made alive. The life that once raised Jesus from the dead now arouses us from our long, long night of death in trespasses and sins.

Can we wonder that a soul who has come into such an experience of resurrection life should immediately discover that a new life has begun in which all things are new? Christ, finding us dead in our sins, poured in the oil and wine of eternal life and we live because He lives. He found us without hope and in His love He begat us unto a living hope through His own resurrection from the dead. He found us hopelessly bound in sin and shapen in iniquity, so He stretched forth His mighty hand to loose us and let us go. Raised from the dead were all our hopes and joys; gone were our sorrows - gone our doubts and fears. We understood then what once we did not know: "Eternal life is walking through the years." He is that life. "Oh, vision blest! From us, Lord, never part. We find it not beyond the starry skies; we have it when we have Him in our heart."

Children of God, the scripture calls us. Children are a happy lot. They have few cares or burdens and they enjoy every minute of every day. While we are children, it does not appear what we shall be, but years of growth along with life's accompanying trials and tribulations will bring forth sonship at last. "Behold, what

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." **1 John 3:1** The sublime truth of sonship pervades the whole of scripture. As every man hopes to be the father of a son, so our heavenly Father has brought the whole of creation into groaning and travail to bring forth sons of God. If ever a truth was made known to man which should produce humility, sobriety and patience, surely sonship is that truth. During the past thirty years my heart has often bowed down in heaviness to find so many people grasping at the message of sonship with a kind of egocentricity, while remaining devoid of the spirit of sonship.

"Abba, Father," the spirit of sonship cries;
Tis deep calling unto deep.
Far, far beyond the scope of natural man lies
The sons' great eternal realm.
Naught but the spirit of sonship can take the veil away.
Naught but deep calling unto deep will bring in God's new day.
Night and day must the cry go forth from deep down within,
Cleansing, purifying, changing, 'til I am fashioned just like Him.
Then in all His glorious fullness I shall come.
Deep will call to deep, "Abba, Father, I am Thy son.
Father, I am Thy son."

Frances Quantz

Now every man that hath the hope of sonship in him purifies himself - not by self-effort, but by walking in the light, for, "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." The further we walk with Christ, the more He will rid us and deliver us from all that is flesh and sin. All through our Christian lives we will be putting off hindering weights and sins that easily beset us by the power of His Spirit. To every son of God the Spirit is speaking, "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." **Col. 3:8**

In the fifteenth chapter of John's gospel our blessed Lord introduced His disciples to an entirely new relationship with Himself. These twelve disciples were Christ's servants, but the ever, deepening relationship between them and their Lord had increased as the years passed by. They had come to love Christ and to trust Him as their faithful Lord, their Master and the Saviour of the world. Learn this lesson, oh saint of God! Learn it as quickly as you can. Your Lord will always rejoice in your ever increasing love and knowledge of Himself, yet, however far you advance in heights or depths or lengths or breadths of spiritual progress, you will not have reached the ultimate. There is always a further, a deeper and more blessed relationship to be attained, and your Father in heaven will not rest until you have attained it. Whatever struggle may ensue, He will pull you through if you can stand the pull.

What a feast it would be if we could but pause beneath His shadow to consider the relationship of the vine, which is Christ, to the branches, which we are! "I am the vine, ye are the branches," Jesus said, and we abide in Him even as He abides in the Father. In **John 15:11** Jesus led his disciples into a bond with Himself that hitherto they had not known. After telling them, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love", He made this new and wonderful declaration: "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." **Verse 14**

There is a difference between servants and friends. It is a difference in the relationship, which our Lord forcefully taught in **verse 15**. Notice every word of it. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." Can you imagine the inestimable value of such inter-relationship as this? This is a new kinship and one to be greatly cherished. It is an honorable thing to be a servant of the Lord, but, however good this may be, it is still servitude and servants work for hire. They do as they are bidden to do and their master owes them no explanation whatever as to what end their service may be. Soldiers are ordered into

battle and expected to accomplish whatever task they are given, but seldom do they know what relationship their assignment has to the over-all course of the war.

The disciples had been faithful servants of Christ. They had done the things they were commanded to do. They had come to love each other and especially to love Christ above all else. Now, therefore, our Lord begins to take away the first - that is, servitude - that He might raise them to the new relationship - that is, the closeness of friends. "No longer shall I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." They were now to share a new intimacy with Christ - the filiations and affiliation of friends. "A servant knoweth not what his lord doeth," the Saviour explained, "but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you." To men and women who really love Christ and long to know Him and see Him as He is there is sure to come a time when He begins to unveil to their hearts the merciful purposes and infinite secrets of His will, which hitherto were hidden from us. It is the relationship of friend communing with friend.

For many years I worked for Christ as a servant. I struggled to undo the works of the devil and bring about a revival that would sweep millions into the kingdom, but how well I remember where I was standing when for the first time in my life Christ began to open to my heart the secret of His immutable purpose for the government of the universe and the all inclusive reconciliation He had made for all things. It was a shock to me to find that, though I could quote the eighth chapter of Romans by heart and most of the rest of the book besides, for all this I had never once heard what the Spirit was really saying in its pages until my new found friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, whispered these words of wisdom: "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** Then I cried out in my wonder, "My God, do You mean to say that You are taking the responsibility for the fall of man?" For years I taught that Satan alone was the instigator of the fall of the Adamic creation. Unwittingly I had honored him as being able to thwart the wisdom of God and despoil His wonderful purpose and His hope for a perfect creation. But now the Spirit was revealing from the long established word that, "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who had subjected the same in hope." This marvelous hope in the heart of the Creator is designed to one day fill the whole universe with sons of God, who know and understand all the ramifications of sin and of the fall. They would not know good and evil by hearsay, which is useless at best, but by personal experience in its sordid realm - which experience could never be questioned, refuted nor gainsaid. From the dreary shadows of a fallen, benighted creation there would arise the perfection of sonship, for which the whole creation groans. The same creature that was made subject to vanity and utter futility shall be delivered from its appalling bondage into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. **Rom 8:18-23**

How I pity the Christian who walks through life having no understanding of what His Lord doeth! The fresh air of revelation never breathes upon his spirit, but he stumbles along through life doing what he deems necessary - attending his church, listening to oft repeated sermons, singing of a beautiful land on a far away strand, but never being able to grasp the truth that right now, while he lives, an eternal purpose is steadily and irresistibly unfolding before all creation. This is the mystery of His will, the secret of His good pleasure, which He has purposed in Himself and is now revealing unto us, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Him. **Eph. 1:10**. Every man and every woman who comes into Christ in this age is bringing that hope one step nearer to fulfillment, but not until the ages to come will God manifest the exceeding riches of His grace. **Eph. 2:7**. The exceeding riches of His grace that are to be manifest in the ages to come will be manifest through those who in this age have freely partaken of the grace and wisdom of God. Is not this what the Spirit is telling us when He says, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places with Christ: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in (or by) His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"? **Eph. 2:6-7**

Such truth as this is not the understanding of servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but, if it is in our heart to enter into a new relationship with Jesus Christ, the relationship of friends, He will commune with us heart to heart and unfold to us the unsearchable riches of Christ, and will display the extent of God's inheritance in His saints. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." **Rev. 3:20** For too long saints have been wondering what their inheritance will be in God, but it is far more important that we should see that God is

rejoicing over His wonderful inheritance in the saints. His beloved saints will one day fill His universe with His glory and His praise, and eternity itself will not be too long to fill an ever expanding universe with an ever increasing glory. "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends."

Now Abraham was the friend of God. He was God's friend and God was his friend. Their blessed relationship had been forged together through a century of fiery trials. God had been faithful to Abraham and Abraham had been faithful to God.

The touching story of how the Lord appeared to Abraham just before the destruction of the city of Sodom, recorded in Genesis, chapter 18, is too lengthy to quote in fullness here, but it is an intimate manifestation of friend communing with friend. If you will read this entire enlightening chapter, you will be greatly edified by the conversation between the Lord and Abraham, His friend. It is beautiful to notice as you read that, when the Lord appeared in the form of three men, Abraham did not cower in fear nor did he wonder who the visitor was, but, knowing it was the Lord, he ran to meet them, brought water to wash their feet, and prepared a delightful meal for them to eat. Eating and drinking in holy scripture usually indicates some close communion.

The ensuing talk between them is a most enlightening one. The Lord opened the conversation with the question, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" because the promise of a son had much to do with her. Abraham replied, "In the tent." Notice how the Lord begins to make known to His friend certain important things, which must come to pass. The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but Abraham was much more than a servant. He was a friend. The second revelation is this: "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son," and Sarah, hearing what the Lord had said and knowing that it had ceased to be with her after the manner of women, laughed within herself and said, "After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" Then the omniscient Father asked, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" That little laugh was a laugh of unbelief. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" He asked. The questions were, "Where is Sarah?" "Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Then follows the greatest question of all. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?"

The thing, which the Lord was about to do He had evidently hidden from everyone else. Even Lot, Abraham's nephew, who was to be one of the principals in the calamity of Sodom, had not been told what the Lord purposed to do, but He asks, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Can we really imagine the extent of a statement such as this? It seems almost beyond the grasp of our understanding that the Lord of the universe would feel obliged to tell His friend Abraham beforehand of important things to come, but, because Abraham was His friend, He would do nothing without first revealing His plan to him. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" Now give heed to what follows. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." **Gen. 18:19**

We have no need to walk in darkness as we have so often done in the past. On that blessed day of promise when our Lord Jesus gave His word to send the Holy Spirit into the hearts of believing men and women, He included some precious vows, one of which was this: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come." **John 16:13** And again: "Therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." **Verse 15** "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends." Therefore, because you are friends, "He shall take of Mine and shew it unto you." The relationship of friend with friend is an intimate association. Thrice in Holy Scripture Abraham is called the friend of God; therefore the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

Every word the Lord spoke to Abraham in this eighteenth chapter of Genesis is worthy of a sermon in itself, but let us consider now with what awe-inspiring and persuasive statements Abraham besought the Lord, his friend, to have mercy on Sodom. And Abraham drew near and said:

(1) Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

(2) That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked.

(3) Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? **Gen. 18:22**

Oh, what mighty persuasions are these! If ever a man presented his cause to God, it was Abraham the friend of God. His entreaty on this occasion is one of the greatest examples of intercession in the whole Bible, or anywhere else for that matter. "Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked... And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then will I spare all the place for their sakes." Then Abraham reinforced his persuasion thus:

Peradventure there be forty-five!
Peradventure there be forty!
Peradventure there be thirty!
Peradventure there be twenty!
And finally, Peradventure there be ten,
And the Lord said
"I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

O the pure delight of a single hour
That before Thy throne I spend,
As I kneel in prayer and with Thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 12:1-3** These three brief verses record not only the beginning of Abraham's friendship with God but also the beginning of a great and mighty nation. The ninth chapter of Romans is an astonishing revelation of God's plan for Israel, the seed of Abraham. Unto them pertains the adoption, (sonship) and the true body of Christ. From this nation the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, is to come. Rev. 21:19-21. This nation possesses the covenants, the promises, the glory, the giving of the law, and the service of God. Rom. 9:1-5. Against the word of God there can be no argument or gainsaying.

Each succeeding event in the life of this illustrious patriarch brought him into a deeper relationship with his God. His confidence in the Lord and the Lord's confidence in him increased with each successive trial, and every victory gained brought added promise to the covenant the Lord made with him. God is no respecter of persons. He does not have favorites or pets. He just has callings, and every man should abide in the calling wherewith he was called. Oh that people might learn that their calling is more of a pilgrimage - a life-long journey - than anything else. Every trial in life is an open opportunity to victory and spiritual depth, and every temptation reveals another opportunity to become a closer and a more intimate friend of God.

I must speak the truth. It is my opinion - and I think I have the mind of Christ - that, if you desire God's friendship and an ever deepening relationship with Him, the very first command He gives you will be the command He gave to Abraham. "For the Lord had said to Abram, (notice with special attention what He said), "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." However much we may love our country, our kindred, or our father's house, be assured that, if you are going to follow Christ, in all probability you will have to leave your dearest associates behind. "Get thee out!" "Follow Me," the Spirit calls. "Suffer me first to bury my father," says one. The Lord replies, "Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou Me." "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," another affirms, but Jesus warned him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." "Return to thy father's house." Thus pled Naomi with Ruth; but Ruth replied, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." **Ruth 1:16-17** These words must surely be among the

most illustrious ever spoken. Thus Ruth, the Moabitess, evidently a descendant of Lot's incestuous daughter, Gen. 19:36-38, became the wife of Boaz, the great great grandfather of David, from whose lineage came our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely we may say that this specially chosen woman was also a friend of God.

Can any sane person believe otherwise than that we are now living in the last days of this age? Never since the days of Noah has such sin, rebellion, violence and confusion filled the whole earth. Never before has the church system seen deeper degradation. Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, prophesying of our day, summed up our wretched state in these words: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east. They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." **Amos 8:11-12** There are thousands of preachers and people run from sea to sea to hear them, but how little of the preaching we hear is anything more than a famine of the word of God, an explosion of wind and an appeal for more and more money, a thing which is powerless to advance the kingdom of God.

Leonard Ravenhill in a scathing rebuke to the modern Laodicean church made these searching remarks. "Since our pulpits have more puppets than prophets in this crisis hour of history and since the rocks have not yet cried out nor the stars fallen from their places, men of secular interest have become the prophets of gloom and of doom. Here are samples of what the intellectuals are saying. "It is becoming more and more obvious that it is not starvation nor microbes nor cancer, but man himself who is mankind's greatest danger."

"Anthony Storr in his book Human Aggression says: 'We are the crudest species that ever walked the earth.' Paul Tourniers is no less gloomy when he says. The dance of violence goes round and round.' (Ravenhill continues) Against this backdrop of misery I find it bitter medicine to read in the Wall Street Journal, July 11, a front page article with the subtitle, 'An evangelical revival is sweeping the nation, but with little effect.' This in my opinion is like saying, 'An earthquake shook the United States from San Francisco to New York, measuring 9.5 on the Richter scale, and no one felt it.'

"In a recent poll taken of Christians across the United States it found this horrendous condition. Ninety per cent who answered the poll said, 'I am carnal' or 'I am a babe in Christ.' Transfer this to the secular world. It would be something like this: 'We have just taken a poll of the men operating our supersonic fighter planes and our new computerized tanks and the crews of our nuclear aircraft and they are cub scouts.' What a shock the nation would have! But is the church shocked to discover this self-confessed impotence among us? Carnal men and babes in Christ!

"A preacher waving his Bible is featured in many magazines, crying, 'Help me clean up America!' But I dare any preacher to start a crusade to 'clean up the church.' St. Paul, storming the gates of hell, cried, 'I press toward the mark.' Instead believers today have the attitude, 'Relax and be raptured.'

"The New Testament church did not depend on an ethical majority but on a holy minority. The church now has more fashion than passion, is more pathetic than prophetic, is more superficial than supernatural. Events in the early church were amazing; today they are amusing. The early church was identified with persecutions, prisons and poverty; today it is identified with prosperity, popularity and personalities. We lack apostolic power because we lack apostolic piety, and we lack apostolic piety because we lack apostolic purity. We have an adulterated gospel preached by adulterers, and some of them sadly and sickly claim to be Spirit filled.

"In Christ for the Nations magazine, August, 1980, there is a small article on the Third Force in Christianity. It reads like this: 'According to reliable sources,' Dr. Vinson Synan, Pentecostal Holiness, says, There are two and one-half million Protestants who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and are staying in their churches. Another two and one-half million Charismatic Catholics are staying in their churches. This is five million people. This condition has impact.' What impact? Where is it seen? I am puzzled and I get no answer to my question. There were one hundred and twenty in the upper room without all our media and electronics, without a thousand gospel printing houses and a hundred thousand preachers, without all our Bible Schools. They turned the world upside down. Now with five million (supposedly) Spirit filled people mentioned above, plus millions more in the mainline denominations, we have the greatest mass of sin within the nation that we have ever known." Thus writes Leonard Ravenhill and his summation is correct.

Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees, only a few miles from ancient Babylon. God's first command to him was, "Get thee out. Get thee out from thy country, thy kindred, and thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee." This, my brethren, is God's command to you. 2 Cor. 6:17-18. For twenty-two years I have not ceased to warn God's people of the appalling state of this Laodicean system, this Babel of confusion and refuge of lies that dares to call itself the church. The mighty prophet Isaiah said, "The priest and the prophet ... err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts." **Isa. 28:7-9** The Babylon system has no desire for men and women of understanding and knowledge. It requires its adherents to remain babies at the breast. How dreadful is the appalling darkness that now covers the earth!

How often must you, my friend, hear this fearful warning before you obey? "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:4-5** It was with difficulty that the angels persuaded Lot to flee out of Sodom before its destruction. His sons-in-law that had married his daughters refused to go and were incinerated with the city. Lot's wife looked back and became a monument to her error, and even Lot himself pleaded to remain in one of the little cities rather than flee to the glorious mountain as God had bidden him to do.

With a sincere heart and many prayers and tears I have warned God's people to leave the Babylon system with all its pomp, self-seeking and pride, and with its false prophets, of whom Jesus said there were many. You shall know them by their love of money. They have exchanged the upper room for the supper room. The church no longer invades the world. The world has invaded the church. "Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty." With this final exhortation I trust I am pure of the blood of all men.

Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and by it he being dead yet speaketh. Enoch walked with God, having this testimony that he pleased God, and was translated that he might not see death. He was not, for God took him. And what can we say of Abraham that could be better than this text? "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God." **James 2:23**

Ah, we say, these are indeed illustrious men to have attained such blessed relationships with God, but, beloved, these things are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. The Holy Spirit teaches us that no height attained by them is beyond the realm of our own possibility if we, as Abraham, will "get us out" from the corruption of the world system and the confusion and blindness of Babylon and its religious systems, and if we, as Abel, will offer to God the more excellent sacrifice of faith and walk with God as Enoch did. Each of these illustrious men was a called out saint who walked with God while religion in its somnolent state slept on, anesthetized by the false prophets and drugged by the world system it imitates and loves.

CHAPTER TWO MOSES, DAVID, JOHN

MOSES: THE MAN WHO KNEW GOD FACE TO FACE

The glorious Philadelphia period of the church age has passed into history. The brotherly love and the deep, earth, shaking revivals that accompanied that blessed period in time from the days of George Whitefield and John Wesley until about 1930 are gone. We are now living in the sad state of affairs represented by the Laodicean church of Rev. 3:14-22, the time of lukewarmness when nothing is hot or cold, but lukewarm; when nothing is black or white, but only gray; when nothing is good or evil, but a horrible mixture of carnality and spirituality. The wretched situation has become so mingled that the divinely ordered place of male and female has given way to a kind of devilish unisex where no distinction between male and female is recognized. God loathes the situation and He spues it out of His mouth as distasteful evil. Christ would much rather be a friend

to publicans and sinners than He would condone the wretched conglomeration of good and evil everywhere manifest in the lukewarm church system of our day. His only command to the few pure in heart who keep their robes white in this end time abomination is, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins nor receive of her plagues." **"Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear."** **Rev. 3:14-18**

As long as the ages endure and men slavishly walk after the dictates of the carnal mind, the evil that filled the world with woe in the beginning will continue to wither and blight us until the end. God be praised that in every age our heavenly Father has reserved to Himself a people who walk after His mind and after His will - who have ceased to walk after the flesh that they might follow and know the way of the Spirit.

Moses was a man chosen of God, a man who knew God face to face, a man "elect according to the foreknowledge of God" through lifelong sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Holy Scripture records that on the day of his birth his parents saw that he was a "proper child." A proper child! What else could this assertion mean than that his parents knew Moses was born to be a man beyond the ordinary, a man elect according to the foreknowledge of God? Because this blessed understanding filled their hearts, they willingly disobeyed the king's commandment, committing their son to the terrible river in a frail basket of reeds. Yet it was not to the river they committed him, but to the mercy and kindness of God. It was by faith they disobeyed the king and it was by faith they believed and obeyed God. Thus was the wisdom and power of God made manifest, bringing Moses, their son, to no less a place than the palace of Pharaoh to be raised and nourished at the table and in the household of Pharaoh, the king who had sought to destroy both Moses and his people. Such are God's ways, and His ways are past finding out. Oh, that His saints would learn this lesson of faith - that all things are working together for good to those who love the Lord, to them who are the called according to His purpose! Rom. 8:28

So Moses grew, nourished, brought up and educated in the house of Pharaoh, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Because this "proper child" was an elect child, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. In so doing, he refused the throne to Egypt, **"choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king."** **Heb. 11:24-26**

From his childhood he seemed to know that he was to be a deliverer of his people, and when he was full forty years old, seeing an Egyptian smite a Hebrew, the urge to deliver his people rose within him. He smote the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. Then, fearing the wrath of Pharaoh, he fled into the wilderness to feed the flock of Jethro, a Midianite and a descendant of Keturah, the wife of Abraham. There he married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro. Moses during his wandering had indeed married an Ethiopian woman, Adoniah the Cushite queen, who had been given him as a reward for defeating Kikianus, but Moses, knowing that intermarriage with non-Israelitish races was forbidden by the commandment of God, refused to cohabit with her or to turn his eyes to her. "So Moses took the city by his wisdom, and the children of Cush placed him on the throne instead of Kikianus, king of Cush. And they placed the royal crown upon his head, and they gave him for a wife Adoniah the Cushite queen, wife of Kikianus. And Moses feared the Lord God of his fathers, so that he came not to her, nor did he turn his eyes to her." Book of Jasher, chapter 73:30-32 Moses' sons were the children of Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the Midianite, a descendant of Abraham and Keturah.

When Moses was eighty years old, he met God in a new way at the burning bush. This marvelous fire of God that lights and warms, but consumes only our bondages to the old system and all carnality and earthly corruption, was to be the transforming power of his life. Here he heard the soul transforming voice of God and here he saw a manifestation of God's glory that revolutionized his very being, spirit, soul and body. "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," came the command of the Holy One of Israel, and Moses, who knew not until then that it was God, took off his shoes, bared his head and stood bowed in reverence and godly fear in God's holy presence. The Lord, who said to Peter, "Follow Me, and

I will make you fishers of men," was calling Moses from his sheepfold to be a patient and long-suffering shepherd of His chosen people Israel. He was casting off the grimy shoes of earth's toil that he might be shod with the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace.

To every saint of the Lord there must come a moment in time when there is a special meeting with God - a time when we come to know Christ in a new way. There must come a transforming experience when old things pass away and all things become new - a time of breaking the bonds of tradition and coming out to walk in newness of life with Christ. How wonderful are the ways of God, and how sadly few there are who know them! Perhaps the most revealing passage concerning the man Moses, who knew God face to face, came from the lips of David when in that blessed **Psalm 103** he said, "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." **Verse 7** The world is overflowing with people who know about God, but the number of people in each generation who know Him is pitifully few. There are millions in our day who can tell us about the acts of God, but those who know God's ways and are walking in harmony with His merciful purpose for the ages are incredibly few.

Every week the air waves are full of sermons telling about the acts of God, some miracle that was performed, some physical healing that took place in answer to prayer, some financial help that fell from the hand of God. But, beloved friend, it is possible to know and see all the acts of God and still be an utter stranger concerning His ways. It is possible to preach fiery sermons on the law, but never know the lawgiver to have Him in our hearts. The multitudes love to hear of miracles, healings, revivals and deliverances, but how many sermons are preached on the theme of suffering, or how many know that we must through great tribulation enter into the kingdom of God? How many people are aware that the dreadful things at large in the world today are all part of an eternal purpose through which God is bringing forth a kingdom of righteousness and a vast family of sons who know Him face to face and who in ages to come will reign in His mind that the entire universe may come into harmony with His eternal purpose?

"He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts to the children of Israel." The children of Israel could shout the victory and tell of their marvelous deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, but only Moses knew God's purpose in delivering them. The multitudes could take their timbrels and sing with Miriam, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea," **Exod. 15:21**, as they gloried in the acts of God, yet they knew so little of His ways that the selfsame crowd a few weeks later could dance with equal enthusiasm about a golden calf and shout with a shout that could be heard for miles, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." These, the people of God, could tell of the mighty wonders wrought in Egypt. They could speak with incredible eloquence of the opening of the Red Sea and of their passage through it on dry land. They had seen the barren rock open its mouth to fill the desert with rivers of sparkling water to quench the thirst of two million parching tongues besides thousands of thirsty cattle. They could tell their children of the manna, angels' food from heaven that stood like dew in the wilderness every morning. They had seen Joshua's victory over Amalek and they had trembled at the sight of smoke and fire on Mt. Sinai and had heard the voice of God; yet, for all their knowledge of the marvelous acts of God, they knew none of His ways.

Oh, how like the Israelites are the people of this Laodicean age! They can tell of signs and wonders, answers to prayer. They are full of good works, church programs, revival meetings, seminars and all the rest - works and acts in abundance - but the ways of God they know not; and when we speak to them about the eternal purposes, they become as dumb as oysters and look at us as though we have taken leave of our senses. Moses did indeed see God's glory and he knew all the acts of God, but he knew something far more than acts and miracles. He knew God, and the Spirit of God had revealed His eternal purposes unto him in such a way that he understood how every victory and every defeat were working together to produce exactly the result the Lord had designed.

On that dismal, woebegone day when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, they had gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." **Exod. 32:1**. And Aaron, not knowing the ways of God any more than the people he was trying to lead, obeyed their demands and made a golden calf for them to worship, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which

brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Oh how quickly the people who know only the acts of God begin to turn His glory into some shameful thing! How quickly after the most glorious victories the golden head of Babylon begins to raise its image! How quickly the favor of the El Shaddai, the breasted One, is lost when we turn away from His abundant provision to depend on gold and silver as we lust after carnal things!

There was a man by the name of Achan among those valiant saints who invaded and triumphantly overthrew the city of Jericho, but this same man caused the shameful defeat of the hosts of the Lord when they made their attack on the wicked city of Ai. Among the spoils of war he had espied a Babylonian garment and a wedge of gold, both of which are telling symbols of Babylon. The garment indeed was beautiful and the wedge of gold weighty and useful in the purchase of all the things that go with that system of blasphemy, which quickly displaces the glory of God with the glory of man, and the moment that begins to take place, the days of triumph are over and will never return until the Lord raises up a people who glorify Him and have no dependence upon the gold of this benighted age or the garments of the unrighteous.

"Thou art this head of gold," spake Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and verily it is true that gold is the head of all the kingdoms of this world, whether they be silver, brass, iron, or iron mingled with clay, gold is their god. It was Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who made an image of gold and commanded that all men everywhere should worship it. Few indeed of all the hosts of Babylon were they who did not immediately, yea, gladly, fall down to worship this image of blasphemy, and few, pitifully few, there be in our day who do not willingly bow their heads and do obeisance and homage before the image of gold. Everywhere men and women strike and demand more money even while unemployment increases and the world totters on the brink of utter bankruptcy.

Gold, silver, and money, money, money is the plea of almost all the radio preachers. Each one has his own program to advance - programs, which cannot be advanced without incredible and ever increasing sums of money, and before this god of money they fall down to worship. Everything from Hollywood stars to puppets are used to gain this unholy end, but they will find in the end that their wedge of gold will be the loss of the battle and the golden head will feel the weight of the stone cut out without hands, that all its seeming pomp and pride will become as the dust of the summer threshing floor.

There were three men in Babylon who refused to bow down to Babylon's unholy image of gold. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were their names. Oh, how few among the people of the nation were willing to stand with unbowed heads, considering it better to suffer the affliction of a burning, fiery furnace than to bow down to the shameful and cursed image, the golden god, that has captivated and made slaves of the whole earth. As Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were led to the roaring furnace, their spirits must have sung. The flame shall not hurt thee, My only design Thy dross to consume and Thy gold to refine.

Some of the truest and most forceful statements I have ever read regarding the modern Babylonish church system and its worship of gold were written by Gene Edwards of California. Believing his dynamic words, so forceful and vivid, will be an awakening to many, I beg the liberty to quote him here in the following nine paragraphs.

"The era between 1100 and 1400 has generally been considered the most corrupt in church history, an age when the papacy went to the highest bidder, priests were alcoholics, popes bore children, and the church was the most powerful political and financial force on earth.

"But we live in a day when churches look like storybook castles and the servants of God are salaried (a scriptural abomination), live in mansion-like homes, drive the latest automobile, are cushioned by a retirement fund, and are applauded as pillars in community affairs. The present day minister has the same hobby as his cousin the Pharisee - investing in some local money-making scheme - and is so derelict in relation to his faith that the idea of owning nothing throughout his whole life would strike him as cultish. He is quite unlike his father, the early Christian, who was the natural enemy of his community, who fought for the privilege of living his whole life owning nothing but the clothes on his back, and who gloried in dying a pauper.

"So security oriented, so money conscious, the Lord's servant today has a mentality so twisted that he automatically looks upon every new wind of God, every new sermon idea, and every new spiritual experience

as something to get hold of, package up, and sell as a commodity. Whether it be tongues, casting out demons, or getting Bibles into Russia, he can figure out some way to make a living at it.

"We can be grateful the Lord did not choose to first come in our century, for if He had, we would have conjured up a supersonic, guided tour of the Holy Land, sold tickets to the crucifixion, and gone on the national conference circuit armed with slides in living color to tell all about it.

"The Lord's servant today, hands down, has won the trophy for the wealthiest, most commercial, sophisticated, worldly-minded, materialistic, and comfortable man in the whole history of religion. All other ages blush and drop back in awe.

"There is one more trophy to which this century - above any other - can lay undisputed claim, that is, unless a radical change takes place soon. In every century history has recorded the names of a few devout men and women whose hallmark was awesome spiritual depth and utter devotional abandonment. There were such men even during the bleakest days the dark ages ever witnessed. There have always been a few who knew Him in the depths. The age you and I live in has simply recorded no such people. I am both ashamed and infuriated. Historically this century must be categorized as the most universally shallow age ever to parade across the pages of church history.

"It is my studied judgment that some future generation will deem this to be the darkest century in church history.

"More corrupt than the dark days before Luther; more impotently intellectual than during the heyday of Calvinism; more financially perverted than the days that caused John the Baptist to explode; more intoxicated with the drive for spiritual power than any age, yet exercising that outward power with less internal transformation than anyone since King Saul; enamored with the gifts, yet hardly knowing the Giver; this century has produced the most commercial, materialistic, fad-oriented people ever to claim His name.

"Some of you might feel this assessment is just a little too harsh. I would respond to you by pointing to one last trophy this age has won: We seem to be more totally blind to our deprivation than all other centuries lumped together.

"It is true we have built more buildings and founded more religious organizations than all the past eras combined, but this only highlights our immortal ability to raise money and then waste it on utter folly. It is true that today's Christianity has won more men to Christ than all other ages combined, but it is also just as true that those converts have set new records for the short length of time they have followed the Lord. Although the Lord has gained a multitude of new believers, He has netted virtually no blindly abandoned devotees."

These are indeed potent words. My own spirit bears witness to their truth. To them we might add the inspired words which actually fell from the lips of Christ when through John He sent a message to the Laodicean church, which without doubt represents the church of the twentieth century as surely as the church of Ephesus represented the church in the age of the apostles. Thus it is written to the people of our day; **"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thv nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Rev. 3:15-18**

These scathing words of rebuke should be studied with prayer, meditation and fasting; otherwise we will go right on believing that all is well. We will point to the abundance of our church buildings and the multitude of our programs for the good of mankind. We will rejoice in the company of converts we have made and add up the abundance of our financial wealth and, of course, come to the inevitable conclusion that all is well. We have need of nothing. All we need to do is wait for the day when we will be raptured out of all hurt, tribulation or suffering. Scoff if you will, but that is the way things are in our day.

While Israel was shouting and dancing around a golden calf that could neither hear nor see, touch, taste nor smell, a mindless nothing that could neither think nor walk nor understand, and while they shouted and

acclaimed, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of Egypt," there was one man who was meeting with Jehovah Himself, beholding His glory and speaking to Him face to face. And verily, I tell you it is true that even in our day amid the lukewarmness, the temporal riches and satisfaction with the increase in goods, and the multiplication of proselytes there is a remnant who is separating itself from these abominations. They are obeying the urgent, almost terrifying command of God, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins nor receive of her plagues."

These elect people are living by the same faith that flourished in the heart of Abel. They are walking with God as Enoch in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. They are becoming friends of God as Abraham. They, like David, are men and women after God's own heart, and because they are thus walking with God with such devotion, they, like Moses, are coming to know Him face to face.

Oh, brethren, beloved of God, may we cease our urgent plea with a reference to that beloved apostle, Paul, a man who knew the acts of God as few men had ever done - for it is written, "By the hands of Paul God wrought special miracles." Yea, his whole life was a miracle. But now hear him pray as He comes nearer to the end of His earthly journey! He does not pray for more power. He does not plead for more converts. He does not lay hold of God for greater miracles. He does not glory in past accomplishment nor dwell upon the wonders of his life for even a moment; but his prayer rends the heavens and reaches the heart of God as he prays, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." That I may know Him! That is the important thing in all ages. Moses knew God face to face. He was no pet or favorite, for our God is no respecter of persons. He is calling out a people in our day, the age of lukewarm, self-satisfied Laodicea. To them He is saying, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." And may I with all reverence add that this shall be a meeting face to face.

DAVID: THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Of Saul, the son of Kish, it is written that he "was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward." **1 Sam. 10:23**. Physically he was a splendid specimen, but spiritually it is to be feared he was a dwarf. By nature he was retiring. He made no effort to promote himself as king, which was very commendable, and, when the day came for his exaltation, he was nowhere to be found, for he had hidden himself among the stuff. **1 Sam. 10:21, 22** The Spirit of God would have us learn as we journey along through life that we must never judge man or woman by outward appearance. The sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear can be extremely deceiving. Man is prone to look upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the heart. We look upon the stature of a man or the beauty of a woman, deciding from their outward appearance that we have found the person we require only to discover later that the giant in body may be a midget in spirit or the beautiful face may belie a depraved nature, completely unreliable and undependable. Even the great Samuel himself, it would seem, needed to learn this valuable lesson. As the sons of Jesse passed before him, strapping in physique and handsome of face, Samuel said, "Surely the anointed of the Lord is before Him." To this the Lord replied, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; for I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." **1 Sam. 16:7**

Saul, though a good soldier, was rejected as king because he failed to carry out the mind of the Lord in every detail, and as time passed, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him and an evil spirit from the Lord began to trouble him. It was on the memorable occasion of David's remarkable victory over the swaggering, defiant Goliath that the demon of envy began to manifest itself in him. After David's signal victory over the mighty champion of Gath, Saul heard the maidens singing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." **1 Sam. 18:7** He hated the fact that more honor was ascribed to the young David than was ascribed to himself. Thus the evil spirit of envy began to work its destructive power within him, increasing more and more until it slew him.

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones." **Prov. 14:30** The mighty Stephen in his condemnation of Israel's unbelief declared. "The patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt." **Acts 7:9** The wise man Solomon made this awesome assertion: "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" **Prov. 27:4** It was not until the maidens sang, "Saul has slain his thousands

and David his ten thousands," that the green-eyed monster of envy began to lift its ugly head in Saul's spirit. From that day on, it is stated, "Saul eyed David," a statement which in its analysis is hatefully significant. From that day forward David, innocent as he was, could do nothing right in the eyes of Saul and every best intention on David's part was looked upon and judged by an evil eye. Only those who have been beset by envious men can understand the diabolical working of envy. Destroy it, my friend, before it destroys you. Envy will turn the dearest friends into hateful, remorseless enemies. "Base envy withers at another's joy and hates the excellence it cannot reach." (Thompson). "An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." **Psa. 41:8, 9** Thus in his rejection mourned David, for said he, "It was not an enemy that reproached me: then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company." **Psa. 55:12-14** Little did David, the king of Israel, know that in all these things he was being made in the image of Jesus Christ our Saviour, as the sufferings of Christ were being filled up in him and their eternal benefits manifested in his own spirit.

David was man after God's own heart. Never need we imagine that he was a man without faults. The truth is his life was full of them. Never need we think he was without mistakes. "A man who has never made a mistake has never made anything." Like all mankind David was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. There is none righteous, no, not one. He, like all his brethren, had a carnal mind and a carnal nature which would plague and curse him wherever opportunity afforded - a fallen nature which had to be revealed before it could be crucified. When you think you stand, dear brother, take heed lest you fall. When we think we stand, imagining in our own judgment that we are making progress, it is the carnal mind that is telling us so. This awesome lesson poor David discovered to his crushing dismay after his carnal affair with Bathsheba, the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite, and his subsequent fraudulent deception in sending Uriah into the most dangerous field of battle that he might be slain. Such shameful manifestations of carnality at times appear in the lives of God's people that the hidden man of sin may be revealed and the deep-rooted carnality may be nailed to the cross in crucifixion with Christ and the new man "after God's own heart" perfected. Thus, when the awfulness of his hidden sin was made manifest to him by the parable of the prophet Nathan, David, the man after God's own heart, burst forth in bitter repentance, confession and prayer. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blowout m\> transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: my sin is ever before me," **Psa. 51:1-3**. "Purge me with hyssop (bitterness) and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Verse 7 "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Verse 10

Oh that sinners would come to God with such a prayer as this in their hearts, a prayer that bespeaks the utter desolation of the spirit! It was this kind of repentance that Paul proclaimed when he said, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." **2 Cor. 7:10** Sinners do not need a handshake from an evangelist. They need godly sorrow for sin and a real repentance before God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. That will do more in five minutes to establish a man on the road to heaven and sonship than all the sermons and programs the world has ever known. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." **Psa. 51:17** The Holy Spirit has come to convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, and when He has done so, men and women who thoroughly repent of their sins return to them no more. The man who brushes himself up on the outside does so only to return as a dog to his vomit and as a sow to her wallowing in the mire.

The man after God's own heart wishes for nothing outside the will and mind of God. There is a place, which saints may reach in God where the mind of Christ dwells in them and controls their innermost beings. There His mind is their mind. His will is their will, and His purpose is their purpose. That place will not be reached but by trial, tribulation, temptation and suffering. It is the fellowship of His sufferings that makes us conformable to His death. The fact that a man may fervently testify to his devotion and consecration before God means very little. It is the fire that tries every man's work of what sort it is. The proud man is never aware of his pride; therefore the fire must reveal it. The covetous man knows not that he is covetous, but the fire will reveal it. Pride cometh before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction. The envious man knows not that the bitterness and death of envy is cursing and poisoning his soul. He imagines rather that his trouble is not with

himself, but with the one he envies. As Chapman said, "Envy is like a fly that passes all a body's sounder parts and dwells upon the sores."

We may be sure that, when Peter confidently affirmed, "If I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee," he meant it with all his heart. The trouble was he did not know his heart. Paul spoke the truth when, speaking of his persecution of the saints. He said, "I thought I did God a service," but it was his to discover that his rebellion against Christ arose from the "man of sin" within him, who motivated not only his persecution of the saints but also his hatred for Christ.

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." **1 Cor. 11:31** But let us not waste our time commending our own self-righteousness, but rather judging our carnality and sin that we might be cleansed from it. The Laodicean church, that is to say, the church as it is in our day, has smugly settled down commending herself and arrogantly boasting, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," but the judgment of God is that she is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. There is nothing good nor anything commendable that can be said for the church system in our day. Every word spoken in defense of a system that is rich and increased in goods and has need of nothing is a contradiction of God's judgment that the system is wretched and miserable, poor, blind and naked. When a Roman pope wryly remarked, "The church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none,' " well did Thomas Aquinas reply, "Neither can it say, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.' "

David was a man after God's own heart. As we read his beautiful Psalms, we become aware of his intense inner relationship with God. We are led to believe that this illustrious man must have spent the greater part of his life either talking about God or communing with Him. As I have journeyed in my pilgrimage through life, I have discovered that the only person who can talk about God in sincerity is the one who has spent much time talking to Him. Paul once said, "There are many vain talkers whose mouths must be stopped," and John wrote, "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him." The man who communes with God will soon discover that he is becoming a man after God's own heart. There is one thing, however, that is infinitely more important than talking to God and that is listening to God. Communion is a two way street, but the better part is the part dear Mary chose when she sat for hours at Jesus' feet and listened to the living words He poured into her soul.

A. B. Simpson was a man of deep spiritual experience. I quote the following from his article LISTENING.

"A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a book called TRUE PEACE. It was an old medieval message and it had but one thought - that God was waiting in the depth of my being to talk to me if I would only get still enough to hear His voice. I thought this would be a very easy matter and so began to get still. I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some were my own voices, my own questions; some were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the world of turmoil. In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer some of them; but God said, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

"Then came the conflict of thoughts for tomorrow and its duties and cares; but God said, 'Be still.' And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that, when other voices ceased, (or I ceased to hear them), there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness and power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, the voice of wisdom, the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard or pray so hard or trust so hard. That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God speaking in my secret soul; was God's answer to all knowledge and all prayer and all blessings, for it was the living God Himself as my life, my all.

"It is thus that our spirits drink of the life of the risen Lord and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like a flower that has drunk in through the shades of night the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to a restless soul. Oh, the calm! The rest! The peace which comes as we wait in His presence until we hear from Him!"

Be still! Just now be still!
There comes a presence very mild and sweet;
White are the sandals on His noiseless feet.
It is the Comforter whom Jesus sent
To teach thee what the words He uttered meant.
The willing, waiting spirit He doth fill;
If thou would'st hear His message,
Dear soul, be still!

The deep and blessed truth David left as an heritage for the saints of all ages could only have come to him through personal experience. No truth will ever grip us or bring transformation to our lives until it has become ours through personal experience. What blessing and transformation is ours when we come to know experimentally that which the Spirit speaks! "The Lord is my shepherd," David sang fifteen hundred years before our wonderful Christ preached the sermon found in the tenth chapter of John's gospel. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Oh weary frustrated soul, what a blessedness will be yours when you become aware that the Good Shepherd dwells within!

Tis the same dear Shepherd leads me
And He never shall forsake,
For He trod the path before me;
And He knows the way I take.
His guiding touch the touch that points the way before me;
His guiding touch shall lead me till I reach the goal.
I need but trust Him when my weary steps would falter;
His guiding touch shall be the anchor of my soul.
David, the man after God's own heart, taught us not to fret.

Fret is such a descriptive verb. It means to be vexed or annoyed or chafed, to be rankled or festered or agitated. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers... for they shall soon be cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb." **Psa. 37:1-2** So many of God's precious saints spend most of their time fretting. They remind me of a little verse I learned in school.

Among the thistles on the hill
In tears sat Little Sorrow.
I see a black cloud in the west;
Twill bring a storm tomorrow.
And if it storms, where shall I be
And what will keep the rain off me?
Woe is me! said Little Sorrow.

Dearly beloved, learn this: If you worry and fret, you cannot trust.

Then David taught us to trust in the Lord and do good, adding this precious promise: "So shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shall be fed." It was God who ran the world before you and I arrived in it and it will be He who orders the universe after we are gone. Why, then, should we not learn to trust Him to order all things according to His excellent wisdom now that we may live in peace before Him?

Instead of fretting and worrying and living in mistrust David, the man after God's own heart, said, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Those who learn to delight themselves in the Lord must first become devoid of all personal desires. To them the will of God is their meat and drink. They desire only what He desires; thus He gives them the desires of their hearts. God knows our every need and He has promised to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. Are you having a hard time managing your affairs and your future? There is a blessed secret, which all saints should know, and somewhere in his pilgrimage David had learned this transformingly beautiful revelation. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also

in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." **Psa. 37:5** Many years later his son Solomon echoed his words in this manner: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." **Prov. 3:6**

Then this man after God's own heart taught us another precious secret - a disclosure very difficult for most of us to learn. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." **Psa. 37:7** Rest in the Lord! What a beautiful thing to do! But have we ever learned to do it? How often we place a sacrifice on the altar only to snatch it back again! How often we commit all things to the Lord and then fret and worry lest He may not look after it properly!" I know whom I have believed," wrote Paul, "and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him." The song writer sang, "Leave it there! Leave it there! Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there." If we could only learn that Jesus Christ dwells within, and from His throne He is directing our steps, keeping our trust and bearing our burdens, what a different world it would be! Please take note that Paul did not say, "I know in whom I have believed," but "I know whom I have believed." There is a world of difference.

After exhorting us to trust and not fret, to delight ourselves in the Lord, to commit our way to Him and rest in Him, David offered one final blessed word of advice, a word of wisdom, which every saint can learn and practice if he will. Though it is difficult at first, it is a must, an essential, to all deep Christian experience. "Wait on the Lord." Verse 34. Dear Christian friend, to wait is the hardest thing we impatient people have to do. It must have been very difficult for Abram and Sarah to wait long years for the pledge and assurance given by God that their seed would be as the sand of the sea for number and as the stars of heaven for multitude. It must even have been an embarrassment to Abram to have his name changed to Abraham, meaning the father of a multitude, at a time when they had no children at all and when both of them were far past the age of childbearing. We may rush about to fulfill the promise, but God says, "Wait." "Though it tarry, wait for it; for it will surely come." "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard me." Saint of God, begin today to wait patiently before God. It is a marvelous secret.

Psalms 22 and 23 are the Psalms of the crucifixion. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" **Psalm 23** is the resurrection Psalm, the Psalm of the good shepherd. This is without doubt the most familiar passage among Old Testament writings. **Psalm 24** is the Psalm of the kingdom. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." "The kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him." "For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Thus wrote the sweet singer of Israel, the illustrious head of the House of David, the man after God's own heart.

JOHN, THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

Twice in scripture John is called the disciple whom Jesus loved. John 13:23 and 21:20 Unto those who love God the immutable declaration is freely given: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23** The great secret of spiritual illumination, comprehension and understanding is made manifest in this blessed statement of Christ: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him." **John 14:21** John was the disciple whom Jesus loved because Jesus was the Christ whom John loved. Man's love for God can never go unrequited. Our Father in heaven reveals His secrets only to those who love and honor Him. As the years pass by, there is an ever increasing unfolding of the unspeakable mysteries of God. With each and every revelation of His glory the spirit of man bows with ever increasing adoration before the inexhaustible wonder of what He is, what His purposes are, and the majesty by which He carries them through to such glorious conclusions.

"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth, who has set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou has ordained; what is man, that Thou are mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou

visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet." **Psa. 8:1-6** With much adoring reflection the Psalmist admires the wonders of Him who has set His glory above the heavens and owns the earth as the work of His fingers, and who has honored man in that He has called him and ordained him to be placed over the work of His hands.

Men who would learn of God must first learn to love and reverence God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We may assure our hearts that no man will make any discoveries in God until He, the Lord and creator of the universe and all things therein, has become sacred in His holiness, glorious in power, fearful in praises, doing wonders. It is when we see Him as He is that we begin to love Him, and it is when we begin to love Him that He comes to us to make His abode with us. There begins the revelation of His most glorious secrets to our hearts.

It was Mary of Bethany who sat at the feet of the Lord, and she it was who broke the alabaster box to pour the fragrant ointment upon His head and feet; and, when her ointment was outpoured upon Him, the whole house and all that was therein basked in the fragrance of Christ's presence. A penny represented the wages of a day when Jesus was on earth, but Mary lavished three hundred pennies' worth of ointment upon Him, the labor of a whole year poured upon His blessed head, first because she loved Him for whom she knew Him to be and, secondly, to anoint Him for the burial she knew was soon to come.

"This ointment might have been sold and the money given to the poor," chided the covetous Judas, not because he cared for the poor, but because he carried the bag and helped himself to that which was put therein. What good, my brother, would it do to give to the poor and still have no love for God? Has not inspiration wisely spoken, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing?" Oh how much vile hypocrisy has come in these last days under pretense of helping the poor! Hypocrisy that has robbed the widow in the name of the poor, then stolen that which was put in the bag.

Man is always looking on the outward appearance of things, but the Lord ever looks upon the heart. The disdainful heart of man looks on through critical eyes and makes his carnal judgments, never knowing what blessed intention may have filled the soul of the one he judged. He goes on accusing the victims of his malice because he sees them in the same spirit he himself is in. He does not behold the motivating love of the widow who cast her mite into the treasury of the Lord, but because he is rich and can cast in much without concern, his ignorant heart neither knows nor considers that this poor woman, because of her devotion to Christ, has cast in all of her living. But He whose eye beholds the sparrow when it falls has not missed a heartbeat here, and His great mind, so full of equity and right, has judged that she has given more than they all. She had given her all and did not know that she had gained the love of her Lord, whose all seeing eye had seen her humble devotion; and methinks He commanded His angels to abundantly supply her every need.

How often during our lives we have marveled at the miracle of the loaves and fishes and told of Him whose anointed lips blessed the tiny loaves and the little fishes that with the blessing of Christ they should be multiplied to feed five thousand hungry men, besides the women and a multitude of children, that when they were filled and could eat no more, they took up twelve baskets full of fragments! But often in our telling of this blessed story the figure most forgotten is the little lad who gave his five buns and two little fishes, which his thoughtful mother had put up in a basket for his lunch when he asked her permission to go to the desert to hear the preaching of the mighty prophet of Galilee. Little is ever said of this little fellow, who was just as hungry as anyone there, but who gave to the gracious Saviour the lunch he might have eaten himself. Surely the lad's faith must have told him that, should he eat the buns and fish himself, he alone would be fed, but in giving it in love to Christ, the multitude would be fed. I doubt if He whose eyes behold and whose eyelids try the hearts of men would consider the alabaster box of ointment given by Mary or even the mite given by the widow to be a greater act of love than that of the little boy who let kind Andrew know that in his lunch basket he had five loaves and two little fishes that Jesus could have if He wanted them.

O barefoot boy with face of tan,
Blessings on thee, little man!

He who loves with purity considers not the gift of the lover but the love of the giver. It is the will and not the gift that makes the giver. Paul Douglas wrote, "When to the surprise of most people I was elected to the Senate, I was startled to discover the number of new friends whom my wife and I never suspected we possessed. The friends wished to express their deep affection by sending us presents and for almost a week the mailman and the express agents staggered up the stairs to our apartment with their arms laden with packages... My wife and I took counsel with each other and then returned all the parcels, collect." "The best thing to give an enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to a mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity." (Balfour).

If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding (Prov. 9:10), then we have a very simple answer to all the problems of the world and all the problems that beset the children of God in their long journey out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Lord. "Wisdom is the principal thing," the wise man said; "therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." But wisdom is not learned in the schools of men, for that which is highly esteemed among men is foolishness with God. The world by its wisdom can never know God because the wisdom of man is but foolishness with God and the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

LOVE AND THE COMING OF THE LORD

Every hour that passes brings us nearer to the long awaited coming of the Lord. The second coming of Christ was the theme of the prophets, the promise of Jesus, the teaching of the apostles, the hope of the saints, and the answer to the agony of a groaning creation. It will come upon us sooner than we think.

The signs around in earth and air
And painted on the star-lit sky,
God's faithful witnesses, declare
That the coming of the Master draweth nigh.

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. The earth was corrupt then; it is unbelievably corrupt now. The earth was filled with violence then; violence in our day has become a way of life. Eating and drinking, marrying and divorcing was their everyday manner of life, and what words could better describe the extent of our godlessness now? They were lovers of pleasure then; mankind is pleasure mad in our day. Every imagination of their hearts was only evil continually, but who can conceive of or imagine a people more godless than our nations have become?

Amid the abounding iniquity of Noah's generation there came a day when the skies grew dark with lowering clouds. The water poured in torrents from the sky as the fountains of the great deep were broken up. Floods overwhelmed the earth and swept the wicked all away. It is not my intention to do more than mention the fact that at the time of the flood, which is symbolic of the great tribulation, it was not the righteous who were taken away, but the wicked. The righteous were saved and spared and kept through the dreadful flood of waters, but the wicked were taken away from the earth. When our Lord spoke of the end of the age, He said that in that day two should be in the field. One would be taken and the other left. Two would be grinding at the mill. One would be taken and the other left. Two would be sleeping in one bed. One would be taken and the other left. We have always been told that it was the righteous who would be taken to heaven while the wicked remained for the tribulation, but I for one do not think this is the true interpretation. It is the wicked who are taken in judgment and the righteous who are spared for the glorious new age of the kingdom of God, which is to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the Lord.

The coming of the Lord has a tendency to be a consternation to many people and, unless I am mistaken, the vast majority of professing Christians, because of their bondage to the world and the things therein, secretly hope that His coming will not occur in their day. There are also many believers who have experienced regeneration who do not look for the coming of Christ with any degree of anticipation. The reason for that, of course, is that their love for Christ is not a reality. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts our fear.

Because fear hath torment, he that feareth is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18 It is not that such people are not saved. It is just that things other than Christ have filled their hearts. They have lost their first love. They walk afar off. Because of this, the coming of Christ does not fill them with anticipation, but fills them rather with dread and fear. Usually we will discover that Christians who walk in this manner have many things they want to accomplish in this life before the Lord comes. There are things they want to do, places they want to go, statuses they want to reach, and personal ambitions they want to fulfill.

The hope of some that the Lord will delay His coming until the gospel has been preached to more people and a few more souls have been saved is born of ignorance of the eternal purpose of God. It is very shortsighted and manifests a desire to delay the blessed hope until personal ambitions are accomplished. Do those who indulge in such reasoning never realize that, should Christ delay His coming in the hope of saving a few, greater by far would be the number of the condemned? The ungodly always outnumber the righteous many-fold. It is a strange paradox, indeed, that one should claim to fervently long for the coming of the Lord while secretly hoping that He will delay His coming. If that is not being of a double mind, then I know not what a double mind could possibly be.

"Now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John 2:28 Love and abiding are twin sisters that walk happily hand in hand. Jesus made this abundantly clear when He said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." John 14:28 "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7 There is no way that man can abide in God if he does not love God, and the opposite must also be the truth; no man can truly love God and still fail to be abiding in God and God in him.

To abide means to continue in one place; to dwell; to continue in some condition or state; to remain faithful and unchanging. The on again, off again, gone again Christian is not abiding in Christ. He is not loving Christ. He would be ashamed if the Lord should come. There is no constancy about him or his attitude. If he is a believer, he is saved, but he is saved "yet so as by fire." His works, because they are not done in love, are wood, hay and stubble and like them will not withstand the fire of judgment and testing that will try every man's work to discover of what sort it is. But the works of him who loves God and abides in Him, however trivial, are gold, silver, and precious stones, and they will abide the fire in the great day of trial.

It has never been my custom to withhold what little I know of the truth or counsel of God because of fear that friends and relations might become offended and withdraw themselves from me. We are to buy the truth and sell it not. Truth that is bought at such tremendous cost must not be sold for fear of the disapproval or the frown of men. What blessing would it be to either them or me should their works be burned up because part of God's counsel had been withheld from them through fear? Dare we refrain from reminding the people of God that the love of many is waxing cold and that their dreadful slumber like a paralyzing chill is creeping over their souls, producing a numbing torpor and the eventual sleep of death? This paralysis is being brought on by the abounding iniquity that is now in the world, concerning which the faithful apostle stated, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The friendly outstretched hand of the world reaches eagerly to grasp our own, but, if we will look closely, we will find that it is a hand stained with the blood of the Christ of God. The lips of the world drop phrases smoother than oil, but the arrows of death are there to pierce the soul. The house of laughter and merriment may seem to be the place to go to indulge in revelry, intemperance, voluptuousness and epicurism, but it is the snare of the fowler, a trap for the unwary. The toils of death are there to destroy us in the fires of judgment.

In the parable of Solomon (Prov. 7) a loud, stubborn, whorish woman is made to represent the world system with all its entangling ways, offering so much but giving nothing but that which ends in sorrow, disillusionment and death. This whorish woman represents not only the world, but the entire religious system of the world as well. Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, is without question the world's religious systems, portrayed by Christ as a woman drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, and seated upon a scarlet colored beast, who secretly hates the whore, yet endures her abominations. This enlightening truth is clearly stated in Revelation, Chapter 17. Such are the abominable ways of the Babylon system. It is full of promises, abounding in fair speech, and refined in its cruel deception. The unwary

are deceived thereby, following after her as an ox to the slaughter or a fool to the correction of the stocks. When they have partaken fully of everything the world, the flesh and the devil have to offer and the poisoned dart of death has pierced through their liver, they discover that all the fair promises were nothing more than a snare, set by that arch fowler, the devil himself, to capture their souls in his net and cast them down to ruin. Well did the preacher say, "She hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." **Prov. 7:26-27** We are now living in this day of unspeakable evil.

John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, but Christ Jesus, our Lord, places no restrictions upon His love. "If any man love Me. My Father will love him; and We will come unto him and will make Our abode with him."

From J. B. Phillip's vivid translation of **1 John 2:15-17** we have these revealing words: "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man can not love the Father and love the world at the same time. For the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die."

Thus from the illustrious John we learn of God's eternal love for man and the glorious results that ensue from man's love for Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER THREE JOB, NOAH, QUARTUS

JOB - NONE LIKE HIM IN ALL THE EARTH

Concerning the history of this illustrious saint very little is revealed. It is said that he lived in the land of Uz, which evidently was in eastern Arabia and thought by some to have been located near to Ur of the Chaldees, the country from which Abraham came.

The name of Job is mentioned once in the New Testament where he is referred to by the apostle James in these words: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." **James 5:11**. He is also named by Ezekiel as being one of the three most righteous men who ever lived - Noah, Daniel and Job. Ezek. 14:14, 20 As to the period in time in which he lived nothing is said, but, as no mention is made of the law in the book, one might rightly conclude that he lived before the time of Moses. How long before it is impossible to say.

The books of poetry and wisdom are wisely placed in this order; Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. The book of Job, being experiential, is wisely placed first in order. The book of Psalms, being devotional, therefore follows experience in order. The book of Proverbs is practical and thus comes third. Ecclesiastes is largely the reasoning of the natural mind similar to the seventh chapter of Romans, but the Song of Solomon is a spiritual feast, comprehended only by mature saints intimately related to their Lord.

The book of Job begins with this brief but vivid description of the man himself: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." **Job 1:1**. His family consisted of his wife, seven sons and three daughters. He was a very wealthy man, owning seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses and a very great household consisting no doubt of many servants, so that he was the greatest of all the men of the east.

If ever a man was flourishing in prosperity, it was this patriarch of Uz. Not only was he thriving in material things; he was mightily blessed in spiritual virtues as well. He was a man of great wisdom and honor, holding the respect of rich, poor and princes alike. When he went out to the gate of the city, where he sat with the elders, "the young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of

their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." **Job 29:7-11** The greatness of Job far exceeded his temporal possessions, his wisdom and the respect paid to him by the multitude. His pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father was seen in that he blessed the poor and visited the widow in her affliction. To the blind he became as eyes and to the poor that were cast out as a father.

I am convinced that the report this man gave of himself was sincere and spoken in truth, though he was bewildered beyond belief that he could have come to such a wretched and woebegone state. In his sorrowful reminiscing he lamented, "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." **Job 29:12-13** "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause, which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." 29:14-17 "Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain. If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners." **Verses 21-25**

"Blessed is the man," said David, "that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither: and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, or sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." **Psalms 1** "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place?" The answer to that question is brief and beautifully to the point. "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek Him that seek Thy face, O Jacob." **Psa. 24:3-6**

Hearken, my beloved brethren, you who seek to inherit the kingdom of God and share with Christ the administration of righteous government in that day of equity and fairness soon to come, has not God chosen the poor of the world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him? "Blessed be ye poor," Jesus said one day as He preached to the multitude in a plain. Luke 6:20 And on another occasion, as He preached the most wonderful sermon ever delivered - the discourse we know as the sermon on the mount - and His tones rang out in repeated blessing, He uttered this beautiful benediction on the poor in spirit: **"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3**

Job, in befriending the poor, being eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, a husband to the widow and a father to the orphan, became a prince with God and a benefactor among men. He prepared himself in acts of meekness for the kingdom, which he knew was prepared for the meek of the earth. Likewise did his longing eyes behold the far off resurrection day, of which in these sublime words he testified: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another," **Job 19:25-27** What sublime words of faith are these as they rise like a fragrant incense from the troubled heart of a distraught saint as he sits in the dust and ashes of his fearful desolation!

How different was this wealthy man of the east, this man of whom the Almighty testified, saying, "There is none like him in all the earth!" What a contrast lay between the rich and powerful Job and those monsters whom James in his epistle rebuked with these stern words: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the

ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." **James 5:1-6**

Ours is an evil day when riches, luxury and prosperity are robbing millions of Christians of sainthood, thus denying them a place in God's kingdom of light. Christians, like the world, are becoming wanton in their ways. Seeking after prosperity, they vainly imagine that an abundance of temporal things is God's best will for them. They do not accept the truth that God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith. Grasping after the passing things of earth, they gradually lose their grip on the eternal. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." **Prov. 13:7**

One day, while this good man of Uz was ministering to the Lord, shedding his showers of blessing on rich and poor alike, "the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said. From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." **Job 1:6-7** It was the apostle Peter who warned, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." **1 Pet: 5, 8** Satan is the accuser of the brethren who accuses them before God day and night. Rev. 12:10 Little, indeed, do I understand this evil assignment to which Satan in the wisdom of God has been appointed. Neither do I fully understand why it is that in the process of our better making, yea, even our sonship, an adversary should be especially appointed to be the accuser of the brethren, to oppose them in their pilgrimage, and to resist their every advance in godliness. Should we have been permitted to appoint the methods that were to produce spiritual perfection, we would without doubt have chosen some easier path, but God, who in eternal wisdom is creating a Christ body, which is the fullness of Christ, Eph. 1:23 and 4:13, has ordained that both the head and the body of Christ should be tempted and tested in all points. It should be perfectly evident that only those who have endured the fiery trial of testing and temptation will possess the things pertaining to God that the complete reconciliation of the universe may be accomplished.

There will not be one son, one ruler, governor or prince in all God's holy universe save he who has entered his glorious estate through the door of temptation, suffering and tribulation. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Neither you nor I could be tempted by any lust of the flesh if that lust were not already in our members. How then could we ever know that lust exists in us at all were it not for temptation and the fiery trial that is to try us?

From the beginning of the age Christians have assumed that it was their right, if not their duty, to speak evil of Satan, but the apostle Jude warned us that our unwise railing against Satan was not only ignorance, but error. Speaking of the Sodomites, he said, "Likewise these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him in railing accusation, but said. The Lord rebuked thee." **Jude 8, 9** If we bring railing accusations, then we, too, are become accusers, placing ourselves upon the same level as Satan himself, who is the "accuser of the brethren." The very fact that the Almighty in His wisdom permits Satan to exist at all should be cause enough to help us see that his evil work as the "accuser" has an important part to play in revealing the carnality and hidden sins of the saints that we might repent of our frailties and be cleansed from the deep-seated corruption that lies hidden and unrevealed even in the perfect and upright man.

The Lord need not have asked Satan, "Whence comest thou?" Well did He know that in his walking up and down in the earth Satan was considering some diabolical accusation against any and all who love God in sincerity and truth. Though Satan did not mention Job, the Lord, knowing Satan was the accuser of the brethren, asked this leading question: "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" This, you will agree, is a most remarkable statement, revealing as it does the admiration and loving kindness of the Most High toward His saints and toward Job in particular. "My servant Job," said God in approving veneration. "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." **Job 1:7-8** The Lord was justifiably proud of His servant Job as any father might be of a good and upright son. His pride was manifested in satisfaction, pleasure, enjoyment and delight. There was no immodesty, pomp or airs in the gratification He expressed toward this son, who was being brought to the realm of adoption. Beloved brethren, here is a

question worthy of consideration and thought. In your walk with Christ you have sometimes suffered severely, have you not? Has the possibility, nay, the probability, occurred to you that, before ever that trial fell upon you, the Lord had spoken of His great love and satisfaction in you as He spoke of Job? You were unaware that you were under consideration at all. You did not know what good thing God intended to do on your behalf. Neither were you aware that the "accuser of the brethren" had accused you before the Father, sneering at your devotion with snide and disdainful accusations. Job was totally unaware that he was the subject of discussion between his Lord and the accuser of the brethren, nor did he know that a plan for his better making was already far advanced in the mind of God. The Lord needed not to ask the advice of Satan concerning his servant Job, but, because Satan would be used to bring this great trial upon him, therefore the Lord asked, "Have you considered My servant Job?"

Someone will ask concerning Job's perfection, "If he was a perfect man, was it possible for him to become more perfect?" There seems at first to be no answer to this question, but the truth is that all perfection, at least as we know it, is only relative. Perfection can be likened unto size, or smoothness or beauty. I have a friend who stands six feet eight inches in height. He is really a giant of a man, who makes other big men seem small by comparison. But then one day I saw a man whose height was eight foot six. Beside him my friend was almost a midget. So also it was with Job. There was none to compare with him in all the earth - perfect, upright and separate from evil - but dare we for even a moment compare his perfection to that of Him who is perfect in holiness, glorious in power, and fearful in praises? None dare display his ignorance by such a comparison.

No man can see God and live. Exod. 33:20 This statement requires spiritual understanding because it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Did our Lord Jesus ever preach a funeral sermon? Certainly not! Every funeral He came near was broken up by His raising the dead back to life again. When Jesus knew that Lazarus was sick unto death, He remained absent for two more days. **John 11:6. Martha was right when she complained, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Then she hopefully added, "But I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."**

It is not the person who dies when a man sees God. It is his corruption and the carnal nature within him. It is carnality and sin. It is our links and bondages to the world that perish, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. Before we saw God, we bore the image of the earthly. Afterward we bear the image of the heavenly. Then we were in the image of the first Adam; now a transformation has taken place. We have been transformed into the image of the last Adam. There are bodies terrestrial and there are bodies celestial. The glory of the terrestrial is one thing; the glory of the celestial is another more glorious thing. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon and another of the stars. Each star differs from the other in glory. So also it is in the resurrection. The imperfection of the terrestrial passes away. It has been exchanged for the perfection of the celestial. No man can see God and live as he once was, because from the ashes of his dead self a new man arises in the image of Christ. "In my flesh shall I see God," but that will not come until the worms have destroyed this corruptible. **"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:53, 54** This then is the meaning of the statement, "No man can see God and live." He shall no longer live after the corruptible, but after the incorruptible. No more does he groan in this body of death, but delights in the body of his resurrection. Surely Job himself was aware of this mighty truth when in his grief and sorrow, criticized and belittled by men far beneath his stature, in plaintive longing he breathed out his unshakable faith, **"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job 19:25, 26**

Saints of the Lord, how blessed it is to know that the more death there is to self the more life there is in God. "Death worketh in us," Paul said, "but life in you." The truth intended here is that, as long as the self life persists, we can minister life to no one, but when there is death to self, the world, the flesh and Satan, then we begin to minister life simply because the death that once worked in us has been replaced by the life of Christ.

"Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?" the Lord enquired. Then from the lips of the accuser of the brethren came forth this slighting accusation: "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou

hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." And the Lord with Job's eternal benefit in mind turned this man of God over to the power of Satan, but with this one restriction. "Upon himself put not forth thy hand." Never should we imagine that God was going about to prove a point to Satan. This whole dreadful tribulation into which the unwitting Job now entered was designed by the wisdom of the Lord that through suffering and death to the flesh Job would be brought to a level of perfection he had never once imagined as a possibility. This Godly man, who had known only success and prosperity for so many affluent years, was now to learn this hidden mystery: "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." **1 Pet. 4:1-2**

There is a grievous deception captivating the minds of many a Christian, bringing them into bondage to the world and its impermanent and empty glory, thus hindering the spiritual life of many a saint. It is the error being propagated by thousands of preachers, who delight in assuring the people that the Lord wants nothing but prosperity among His saints. They should seek and have the best of everything the world has to offer - the best of homes, the best of cars, the best of furniture, the best of food, together with perfect health and complete absence of sickness. Such pleasing philosophy captivates the natural mind, calling forth wide acclaim, willing consent and agreement. Because it is pleasing to the carnal mind, nothing suits him better, but, if we are going to enter the kingdom, we will discover that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:4; Rom. 5:3-5 I am not asking you to seek suffering, tribulation or persecution, but mark these words! Sooner or later, and that without fail, you will be called to affliction just as Job was. Your suffering will be very different from that which he endured, but it will surely come and you should not be amazed when it does. Then, after you have suffered a while, your Lord will establish, strengthen and settle you. Let no man be moved by the afflictions, which are certain to come, for thus saith the Lord, "For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." 1 Thess. 3:3 Those who have considered that long list of illustrious saints, whose record of suffering and affliction appears in Hebrews, chapter 11, must certainly be mightily convinced by the fact that without exception that great cloud of witnesses entered into their glory through the gates of bitter tribulation, suffering, affliction, condemnation, and misunderstanding on the part of their enemies and even their brethren. Yes, Satan had considered Job, that there was none like him in the earth. He had considered him well and, true to his appointment of accuser of the brethren, he had prepared his bitter accusations both against Job and against God, who loved Job and was bringing him to perfection. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord to destroy all that Job possessed at one fell swoop in a thunderstorm of unbridled violence, and destroy it he did with dreadful suddenness, incredible ferocity and unbelievable thoroughness. How can we better tell the story than to relate its awesome tragedy in the words of infallible scripture? "There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house. And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee, While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." **Job 1:13-22**

We cannot possibly speak too highly of the devotion and faithfulness of this saint of the Lord during this unspeakable trial of affliction. In one evil day Job, the beloved saint, was beset by the devil, bereft of his possessions, bereaved of his family and left destitute and naked as he was the day he came into the world, yet in all the evil that assailed him he proved his faithfulness and did not accuse God in any way. Let us here make this necessary observation: Had he not proved faithful in this first great trial of affliction, the second trial would never have come upon him, and the transforming blessing would have been lost both to Job and to us who have learned by his trial of affliction. It seems almost cruel to make the observation, but we can say with

justification that, though the trial through which Job had passed was severe beyond words and his steadfast faithfulness had been vindicated beyond question, yet Job had not been transformed by the fearful losses he had suffered. He was still the same perfect and upright man who feared God and eschewed evil and of whom the Lord could still say. "There is none like him in all the earth." The righteousness of Job had been vindicated, but he had not been transformed nor had he advanced to any plateau of righteousness he had not hitherto known.

Behind the scenes, all unknown to poor, bereft Job, another trial was shaping up in which the accuser of the brethren was involved. More cruel accusations concerning Job's fidelity were being made by the accuser of the brethren, and the loving heavenly Father had determined in His own mind to eradicate from Job's very life and nature that one and only thing that could hinder him from attaining true sonship and the perfect image of the Lord. That one thing that must be destroyed in Job and in you and me is the flesh. It is the flesh and the flesh alone that lusts against the Spirit and all the works of the Spirit, it is fleshly lusts that war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2:11, bringing the soul into the dust of desolation and even into enmity with God, who is our Father. As heaven is higher than the earth, so the realm of the Spirit is higher than the realm of the flesh; and that higher realm cannot be reached until the flesh has been revealed and crucified and the spirit is released to soar to the realm of God.

Once again the question was repeated. "Hast thou considered My servant Job?" Once again the bitter accusation from the accuser of the brethren followed. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to Thy face." And the Lord replied, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." **Job 2:1-8** "Save his life" was the only restriction placed upon him. Satan could not go beyond that point. Afflict him howsoever he would, but spare his life he must. Let us here recall that upon the first temptation the Lord had said, "All that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself [that is, his flesh] put not forth thine hand." Touch not his flesh. Now let us here once more remember that it is only the flesh, and the flesh alone, that wars against the soul. The flesh, which is nothing more than the physical body of corruption, lusts against the Spirit and wars continually against the soul. To destroy Job's property had not lifted him above the perfection he already had, but now God's purpose is to destroy that one thing which keeps all mankind from coming into the image of God. The flesh must be completely destroyed. In this case, if not in all cases, the vessel used to destroy the flesh is to be Satan himself. If ever a man was delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, it was the perfect and upright man of Uz.

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from his head to his feet. He needed no persuasion to vent the full hurricane of his fury upon him until Job in the torment of his awful physical distress took a potsherd to scrape himself withal as he sat down among the ashes. Then said his accusing wife unto him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." But Job replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." **Job 2:9-10** Oh, to what lengths the Lord will go to deliver us from the power of our own flesh, that relentless enemy that caused our transgression in the beginning and now wars against every soul! Though we pamper and mollicoddle it luxuriously for a lifetime, it has nothing but death to offer us in the end.

It is not the purpose of this manuscript to attempt an examination of the discourse that follows in the next thirty-four chapters of the book of Job, though it undoubtedly is a measure of wisdom we never hear spoken of in our day. Much truth of great value can be learned from the philosophy of these ancient and venerable sages as they present their causes and accusations before each other. Like all worthy reasoning, however, it accomplishes absolutely nothing in the Spirit and brings us not one whit closer to God. True wisdom begins where the wisdom of the world ends. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, who takes the things that are not to bring to naught the things, which are that no flesh should glory in His presence. Thus through thirty-four chapters the philosophies of earth drag on until at last, when every man has exhausted his store of earth's wisdom and has fallen silent, in the prevailing stillness "the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said. Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up thy loins now like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

Thus began the interrogation of the Lord and thus the unrelenting grilling continued through the remaining pages of the book until the Lord had asked Job full forty questions, none of which he dare even attempt to answer. I cannot help but wonder what fools, who in their hearts declare, "There is no God." would say should the Almighty ask them that one question, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Or the second, "Who laid the measures thereof or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the cornerstone thereof? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?" Oh, what fools do men become when they stand before God with their puny reasoning, declaring things about which they know nothing. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." He destroys their wisdom and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

The more questions the Lord demanded of him the smaller poor Job shrank until the balloon of his earthly wisdom was forever deflated and he saw himself as nothing. As grass before the blazing sun he shriveled until nothing was left of that flesh which wars against the soul, for he had withered to dust and ashes. Ashes beloved is that which is left when all that can be burned has been consumed and dust is that useless nuisance which we wipe from the furniture in our houses. Thus it was that, when the Lord ceased to proclaim the wisdom of the eternal realm. Job burst forth in humble repentance and confession. "I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak; I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42:1-6**

How inexpressibly wonderful the transforming vision has been! "Now mine eye seeth Thee!" An experience he had never before known! No man can see God and live. Nothing was left of Job's old self but dust and ashes. In place of the old stood a repentant man transformed into a new man, and that new man was not in the image of Job, but in the image of the Christ of God. Never should saints despise the day of suffering. It may - and sooner or later will - bring us to dust and ashes, but from the dust and ashes of our crucified selves will arise a new man in the image and likeness of Him who created us. There was none like Job in the beginning, and it is doubly certain there was none like him in the end.

"And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then there came unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house." **Job 42:10,11** So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning, and, now that his travail and suffering was over, it could be said in a manner heretofore unknown, "There was none like him in all the earth."

We will never fully comprehend the mystery of suffering while yet we remain in this dark and evil age. Suffice it now to know that the sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, while we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. A lifetime of experience is consumed before we learn to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of our faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 2:2, 3. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." And what a glorious end it was! None but God could have planned such a glorious end. "Think it not strange [therefore] concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." **1 Pet. 4:12-13**

I asked for life and this is what He gave me.
My lot is hard; my tears flow like the rain.
I asked for hours gay with sunshine spattered.
But, lo, my waking hours are filled with pain.
How could I know that crushing brings forth fragrance
Like perfume from some crushed and bleeding rose?
That in the process of my better making

NOAH - THE MAN WHO ALONE WAS RIGHTEOUS IN HIS GENERATION

Noah was righteous in his generation and, since all others were consumed by the flood, we may be perfectly right in assuming that Noah alone was righteous in his generation. The scripture bears abundant evidence that the generation in which Noah lived was wicked beyond all generations since man has been on the earth. In his day the sons of God - that is the Adamites, for Adam was a son of God, Luke 3:38 - were carrying on the forbidden practice of intermarrying with the daughters of men - that is, the pre-Adamic races. No man can read the Bible, and especially the books of Nehemiah and Ezra, and still not know that race mixing is an abomination in the sight of God. That kind must produce after his kind. Gen. 1:11-21, is a law of the Lord which must not be broken to satisfy the lusts and reasoning of men. Even birds, insects and wild beasts have an inborn awareness of this law and faithfully keep it. How much more, then, should man understand God's law? But, as is well known, carnal, corrupt and fallen man must always be overstepping the law and the mind of God.

As a result of this forbidden union giants appeared on the earth, men of renown, great in stature and giants in crime and wickedness. They were not renowned in righteousness as was Noah, but renowned in evil and violence. They wrought havoc in the whole earth, and "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." **Gen. 6:5-6.** "And the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." **Gen. 6:11-13.**

As Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites and as the Son of man was a sign to His generation, so Noah was a sign to his age; but our Lord Jesus Christ plainly placed the truth before us that both Noah and all his evil generation were to be an unmistakable sign to those of us who live in the villainous and vicious days just preceding the coming of the Lord; for "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." **Matt. 24:37** Therefore the days of Noah and the universal evil of that day were especially intended to be a sign to us who live in the last hours of this iniquitous age. We see the evil that filled the earth in Noah's day coming to pass in like universal fashion in our day. When, therefore, we see the wickedness of Noah's day again filling the earth with woe, then may we know for sure that the coming of the Lord is nigh at hand. There will not be a great revival before the end of this age, as so many have taught, but instead evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, both inside the church system and in the Babylon of the world as well. It will not be our purpose here to examine all the evil of the days of Noah, nor could we if we would disclose all the evil of our day. Nevertheless those flagrant transgressions are so outstanding that even the blindest person should understand that we are now eye witnesses of the truth that all the prevailing signs of Noah's day are glaringly fulfilled in our day also.

"As the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Now notice how Jesus fastened upon one sign that is not so much as mentioned in the Genesis record. **Matt. 24:38** states that "in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away." They were eating and drinking, the scripture says. Now eating and drinking are lawful enough. So also is marrying and giving in marriage. But lawful things are our undoing when they are unlawfully managed. They of Noah's day became wholly taken up with their excessive eating, voraciousness and gluttony, and drinking. In their lust for pleasure they went to no end to satisfy their senses. Let us eat, drink and be merry was their attitude. When they should have been weeping for the miseries that were to come upon them, they were nourishing their hearts as in the day of slaughter.

Have you not noticed the incredible building of restaurants and the increase of people "eating out?" Eating and drinking, not only at meal times, but at all times, has become such a craze that it is a waste of time to try to describe it, because it is all too well known to the people of our age. We are inclined to joke about gluttony, but the scripture without hesitation places gluttony and drunkenness in the same evil category. "Put a knife to thy

throat," said Solomon, "if thou be a man given to appetite." **Prov. 23:2.** And again he says, "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness [the result of gluttony and drunkenness] shall clothe a man with rags." **Verses 20-21.** It should not be hard to see that the unbridled trend toward eating and drinking for the sake of eating and drinking is in itself one of the most prominent signs that the end of the age is upon us.

The Book of Jasher, chapter 4, verses 16-18, gives this very interesting and scriptural sidelight concerning the days of Noah. "All the sons of men departed from the ways of the Lord in those days as they multiplied upon the face of the earth with sons and daughters, and they taught one another their evil practices, and they continued sinning against the Lord. And every man made unto himself a god, and they robbed and plundered every man his neighbor as well as his relatives, and they corrupted the earth and the earth was filled with violence. And their judges and rulers went to the daughters of men and took their wives by force from their husbands according to their choice, and the sons of men in those days took the cattle of the earth, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and taught the mixture of animals, one species with another in order to provoke the Lord; and God saw the whole earth and it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, all men and all animals."

Jesus also spoke of marrying and giving in marriage. He was not referring to the ordinary rite of marriage, but of marriage and divorce and remarriage as we see practiced everywhere in our day. In my childhood days here in Canada divorce and remarriage was almost unknown. In all our community I knew of no home that had been broken by divorce, nor were there any retarded or insecure children in our school. Probably there were some unhappy marriages, but they had married "for better or for worse" and so with that in mind they faced the issue. Please do not tell me there are no unhappy marriages today. Divorce and remarriage has only succeeded in adding fuel to the conflagration until the homes of our nation are filled with woe. What result may we expect when men and women pledge fidelity to each other, marry and bear children, then at the first sign of difficulty or stress they decide to dissolve their sacred partnership and divorce each other? Not only are the mother and father divided by this unseemly tragedy, but the family as well. But the tragedy does not end there, for in all probability they will both remarry, often times to someone who is in a situation similar to their own, until today it is not uncommon to find children who honestly do not know who their true parents are. The days of Noah were noted for this sort of marrying and remarrying till their world was filled with turmoil and woe. Lamentable as their dilemma was, their state of affairs did not exceed this same wickedness in our day. No lesser an authority than Jesus Christ Himself left this faithful witness that as it was in the days of Noah, so also it would be in the day when the Son of man should come.

Add now to divorce, remarriage, and second and third divorces the incredible increase of intermarriage among the races, blacks mixing with whites, Orientals intermarrying with occidentals, and we will see that our world is fast becoming an unseemly adulteration where nothing is pure and nothing is as God made it. The sons of God marrying the daughters of men and the daughters of God marrying the sons of men! God commanded that kind should be after his kind whether it be grain or bird or animal or man, and the moment we overstep that mark, we create sorrow, not only for ourselves but a thousand-fold more for our mongrelized children. There is never any thought in my mind of belittling or speaking evil of any of the races, but the whole thought of scripture and the whole plan of creation is that kind should bring forth after his kind, and all other than that is adulteration, because adultery is the mixing of seeds.

Now in the days of Noah this marrying and giving in marriage brought forth a race of people that filled the earth with violence. Surely it would be a waste of time to start pointing out evidences of violence in our day. Read one newspaper or listen to one newscast and we are brought face to face with the unspeakable and uninhibited violence of the hour in which we live. The earth is literally filled with violence - violence in the homes, violence on the streets, violence on the highways, violence in labor unions, violence on the screens, and violence in the schools. Nations continually resorting to violence are filling the world with gloomy despair. The people have become prisoners in their own homes to shield themselves from the brutality, the bestiality of the ferocity of this savage lawlessness. Even the locked doors of our homes are no guarantee against its outrage.

The earth also was corrupt in Noah's day, but could its corruption possibly exceed the graft, greed, shady dealings, immorality, sinfulness, decadence and looseness everywhere rampant in our day? Is corruption not found everywhere? In business, in morals, and in governments that "frame mischief by a law?" See Psa. 94:20 Is there no corruption in radio or in TV? Or when did the theatres and movies abandon the obscene? Corruption has become a way of life until it is literally true that the earth is corrupt. Even the lakes, the streams, the oceans, the air and the earth itself are polluted with man's corruption.

Of that iniquitous day it was also stated, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." As modern man considers the daily news with its violence, its spoil and inhumanity, together with the corrupt events that never reach the news, we are forced to the conclusion that the thoughts and imaginations of many hearts are only evil continually. Surely the reader must have noticed that some folks never think of any good thing that they can do. They delight in drugs and marijuana. They lay clandestine schemes to snatch the purses of old ladies whom they have seen cashing their meager pension cheques. They take wanton delight in entering a home to vandalize the life's work of the industrious, or, if they can, they will torture some innocent person to death. Never do they think of anything good. Their imaginations are only evil continually "Soon it is not enough for them that their knowledge of God is at fault. In the great struggle to which ignorance condemns their lives, they next give such massive ills the name of peace. With their child-murdering initiations, their secret mysteries, their orgies and outlandish ceremonies they no longer retain any purity in their lives or marriages, one treacherously murdering the next or doing him injury by adultery. Everywhere a welter of blood and murder, theft and fraud, corruption, treachery, riots; perjury of decent people, forgetfulness of favors, pollution of souls, sins against nature, disorder in marriage, adultery, debauchery. For the worship of unnamed idols is the beginning, cause and end of every evil." From the Jerusalem Bible, Book of Wisdom, chapter 14:22-27

All this lawlessness could be cured in a week were it not for the fact that evil men and seducers have surreptitiously withdrawn law and order from the statutes of the nation to such an extent that the criminal gets all the considerations while the innocent is held to ransom. "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" **Psa. 94:20** As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man - eating, drinking, marrying, divorcing and remarrying, and a world filled with the most unspeakable violence and corruption on every hand. Surely our day is a repetition of the days of Noah. Certainly these are days when the Son of man will come! Yea, except these days of poisonous gas and hydrogen bombs be shortened, there would no flesh be saved.

When our Lord was speaking of the days of Noah, He added one more dreadful sign, which has become widespread in our day. It is the sign of the sodomite. The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. The city of Sodom was noted for the sordid crime of homosexuality. It is from Sodom that the word takes its meaning. Under the law of God, sodomites were to be put to death. Lev. 20:13 This abomination has so spread over the nation in our day that more and more its defiling evil has become an accepted thing. The sordid condition and low estate of the men of Sodom is stated clearly enough in Gen. 19:1-11 People of this caliber are prone to violence. They are not sick; they are demon-possessed and God has given them a reprobate mind. This fact is clearly taught by Paul in Rom. 1:26-32. Let no one on earth think lightly of such evil. God will judge it and that right soon.

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. In the days of Noah it was the wicked who were taken away and Noah was left to enter into the new age. In the days of Lot the wicked were destroyed and the righteous Lot preserved. So shall it be in the day of the Son of man. The wicked shall be taken away to judgment, but the righteous will enter into the kingdom age. When Jesus said, "Two shall be sleeping in one bed; one shall be taken and the other left", I think the meaning should be clear that it is the wicked one who is taken away and the righteous who is left to enter the glories of the kingdom of God. Let us therefore walk in righteousness that, whether we wake or sleep, we may be accepted of Him. No saint of God need trouble himself about the things which are coming upon the earth, for it is certain that all who live and move and have their being in Christ will find themselves rejoicing and acceptable in His presence when He comes. I never trouble myself about the intricate details of eschatology, knowing that our heavenly Father will have prepared His people for each glorious event as it comes.

Noah was righteous in his generation. We may be reasonably sure that except for him no other family lived righteously when the flood poured its waters on the earth. According to the fifth chapter of the Book of Jasher all the righteous had died before the flood came that they might not see the evil that was to come. In studying the genealogies of Genesis, it is clear that Methuselah, who was a righteous man, died the same year the flood came.

There were but few who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal in the days of Elijah, but there were some - seven thousand in all. Noah alone and his family were righteous when the flood overwhelmed the earth. Only Lot was righteous when the Lord rained fire and brimstone on Sodom. The Dead Sea now rests where those evil cities once stood. When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth? Will He find the faith? We can answer that question for no one but ourselves. Settle it therefore in your heart that you will walk with Christ in obedience to His will. The church system will continue on and on with its pitiful song and dance, but do not you go with it. Come out from among them and be separate. Come out that you be not partaker of her sins. Let us go unto Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach.

We cannot expect many Christians to heed the call to separation unto Christ. To romp along with the church crowd is far too easy and pleasing to the natural mind. But, if you will heed the voice of Christ and forsake these idols of gold and silver, of wood and stone and earth, this tower of Babel that men are building - all of which will be soon thrown down - and open the door to let Christ enter in, then He will sup with you and you with Him. Then God will be your Father and you will be His sons and daughters.

Our admiration knows no end for men who, like Noah and Elijah and a host of other saints, walked alone with God amid all the raging turmoil of unbelief in others, but we seem to think it strange when the Lord calls us away from the noisy, restless crowds of the church system to walk with Christ and fellowship with Him. You say, "We must have fellowship with the people," but how much fellowship have those people with Christ? I am sad to say that for the most part thousands of these "church people" are quite adept in avoiding any discussion about the rich things of God. They often leave you with an empty stare as though they wonder why you have nothing better to talk about. One of the great lessons to be learned in life is to refuse to follow the crowd. The crowd is usually, if not always, wrong. It was wrong in the days of Enoch, wrong in the days of Noah, wrong in the days of Moses, wrong in the days of Samuel, wrong in the days of Elijah, wrong in the days of Jesus, and the crowd will be wrong in the day when the Son of man cometh. Well said the mighty Stephen, "**Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did. so do ye.**" **Acts 7:51**

Learn then not to be a follower of men. Learn from the illustrious Noah to live in communion with Christ. When all the world is worshipping at the shrine of some strange god, be ye walking with God far from them. You may not be called upon to stand as the only righteous person in the earth, but you may well be called to be one of a city or two of a family. Jer. 3:14 The Lord has many righteous scattered across the world and He knows where all of them are. The day is at hand when He will send His elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other, for that is where they are scattered. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Son in His likeness.

The Lord will always have a witness in the earth. In every generation He has His righteous saints. In every age the wisdom of God passes into holy souls. She makes them friends of God. Over wisdom evil can never triumph. She deploys her strength from one end of the earth to the other.

Let us therefore, "put on the whole armor of God, that ye [we] may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," that we may be found righteous in a generation such as was in the days of Noah.

QUARTUS, A BROTHER

The vast array of illustrious men and women of whom the Bible speaks is far too great to consider further under this heading. The beloved Paul, after naming such mighty heroes of faith as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Moses, finally abandoned the effort to include them all, saying, "**The time would fail me to tell of**

Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." **Heb. 11:32-34** Thus his inspired pen continued naming in the briefest possible manner that heroic cloud of witnesses who for their faith were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; who wandered about in destitution, were mocked, torn by wild beasts, were afflicted and tormented, but who through their faith obtained a better resurrection.

Time would certainly fail us to tell of Moses, who, though he exercised absolute power over a great nation, was "meek above all men which were on the face of the earth." **Num. 12:3** He was kind, not easily provoked, willing to yield rather than cause trouble, but not servile. He is the man who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, thus despising and abandoning the throne of Egypt and choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. **Heb. 11:24-25**

Time would fail me to tell of Rahab, the harlot, who through faith hung a scarlet cord in her window and perished not with those who believed not, or how this woman of low estate, because of her faith in God, came to be named among the progenitors of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a reward! Or what eloquence is sufficient to describe the faith of Ruth the Moabitess, who in her devotion uttered these never-to-be-forgotten words: "Whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God: where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried." **Ruth 1:16-17** "Thy God shall be my God" was her word of devotion to the God of Israel, and through her faith in God this blessed woman, a descendant of Lot's oldest daughter, **Gen. 19:38**, entered that noble line of mothers through whom our Saviour came.

Time would fail us to tell of Isaiah, whose transforming vision of the Lord changed him into a new man, a mighty prophet with a message that has burned as a flame of fire through millenniums of time. Or Daniel, that man greatly beloved of his God; or Samuel, that mighty prince among the prophets of the Lord.

And what shall we say of that blessed and honored John the Baptist? Could words, be they ever so numerous or fitly spoken, excel the one statement of commendation uttered by Jesus Christ? "Of men born of women, there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." Here in the words of the Master John is placed as second to none among men of all time. The greatness of this man's ministry becomes clearly evident as we see towns and cities emptying themselves of their inhabitants as they make their way to the wilderness to hear his flaming message of the kingdom of God, and to be baptized of him in the river Jordan.

Great and mighty as was the ministry of this peerless man, in my opinion nothing he ever did manifested his true greatness so much as the fact that all who listened to his burning message left him to become followers and disciples of the Son of God. At last our eyes are treated to the pathos, yea, the plaintive sadness of the scene as this mighty prophet stands with two of his disciples - perhaps the only two he had left. He raises his arm and points a finger toward Christ and speaks: "Behold the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples, one of them the gentle Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, leave the old warrior standing alone as they go to follow Christ. The greatness of a man's ministry cannot be judge by the number of hearers who are following him, but by the number of his hearers who are following Christ. "He must increase, but I must decrease" was the theme of his whole life; and when the executioner's swishing sword severed his noble head from his body, it was that Christ Himself might become both Lord and Head of that true ecclesia, which is His body.

There is one man in scripture of whom two words are spoken. His name was Quartus, and he was said to be "a brother". **Rom. 16:23** Among the more notable of Paul's acquaintances, such as Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, Quartus is referred to only as "a brother." We take it to mean he was a brother in the Lord. From time immemorial the disciples of Christ, though no relation to each other in the flesh, have been honored as brothers and sisters in the Lord. The first words ever spoken by a Christian to Saul of Tarsus were "brother Saul." **Acts 9:17** The expression is frequently used in the New Testament, and it is both right and proper that we who are sons of God and brothers of Jesus Christ our Lord should recognize each other as brothers and sisters and it is right and proper that we should address each other as such. Jesus Christ Himself is the first

born of many brethren. Rom. 8:29 Jesus was begotten of God. We also are begotten of Him and are members of His family. Christ is our brother and we His many brethren.

King Solomon said, "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." **Prov. 17:17** A friend may be a friend at all times while a brother may seem afar off, but when adversity strikes, a true brother will be at our side. The brethren of Joseph were in fear and trembling as he stood before them as the austere ruler of the land of Egypt, but when he drew aside the curtain of mystery with the words, "I am Joseph, your brother," even though they had done him wrong, wonderful assurance must have comforted their souls in the knowledge that all would be well.

It is probable, dear friend that neither you nor I will ever climb the noble hill of fame or get a long and lasting name. I for one have no desire for such a thing, but, if I may look upon you as a brother or a sister in Christ our Lord and you can look upon me as a brother and a member of that vast family of brothers of whom Christ is the eldest, the firstborn and the Head, what can we think of more desirable or blessed than that? Our relationship to Him is a blood relationship - not the blood of man, but the blood of God, which is the life of God. Ours is also a spirit relationship, because we are born of His Spirit. It is a body relationship, because we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

I do not know who Quartus was, but he was a brother. His name is not in the Who's Who book nor has it gone down in the pages of secular history, but Quartus was a brother. He may not have been a preacher of righteousness, a deacon, an elder, a door keeper or a janitor, but he was a brother. Divine inspiration has introduced him to the world as such, and will it not be a glorious moment if, when we enter the portals of the eternal realm, our elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, introduces us to the heavenly hosts as His brother? Most all of us smiled with pleasure when we heard of the boy who, when carrying his little brother on his shoulder, said, "He's not heavy; he's my brother."

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHRIST LIFE GREATEST PARABLE OF THEM ALL

When our Lord Jesus Christ ministered here on earth, His sayings and sermons were filled with parables insomuch that the scripture states, "Without a parable spake He not unto them." This is a notable characteristic of the ministry of our Lord, for, though the use of parables was common among the eastern peoples, it would appear that no one ever employed them to such an extent as He. The use of parables in teaching is a vivid, expressive manner of portraying the truth to God's elect. We are quite wrong, however, when we say that Jesus filled His sermons with parables so that all His hearers could understand His message. The real truth is the exact opposite to this. According to His own statement He spoke in parables that seeing, they might see but not perceive and hearing, they might hear and not understand. Luke 8:10; Matt. 13:10-15. Would you not say that this scripture teaches us that Jesus employed parables to hide the truth from those whose ears were heavy and whose hearts were engrossed with the cares of things material and temporal, but to reveal truth to those whose hearts were athirst for spiritual things?

There will be disbelief in the hearts of some when I affirm that God actually hides His truth from people whose ears are heavy and whose hearts are gross, but it is a true statement. Never will He cast the pearls of heaven before the swine of earth. He fills His word with dark sayings, concealing His truth in mystery, shrouding His purposes from the wise and prudent men of this age, and revealing them to babes in Christ who diligently seek them. It is written: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." **1 Cor. 1:18-19** Then, having stated that He will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the question is straightway asked, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" Well, where are they? There are plenty of men flaunting their worldly knowledge and disputing the very existence of God, disowning Him as their Lord and Creator to embrace the untenable humbug of evolution from nothingness, disputing the accuracy and inspiration of the Bible, though they may never once have read its message, and stating as facts things which cannot be proved. Where are all these disputers and vain talkers, these spiteful, proud haters of God? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Has He not declared that it shall come to naught? In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God (verse 21).

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; therefore the world's wisdom cannot lead us to Christ. But, when man by wisdom could not find God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching of the cross of Christ to save all who would simply believe. 1 Cor. 1:20-22

To the Greeks wisdom was everything. They debated and discussed wisdom on every street corner and in the public places from morning till night and spent their time in nothing else than to hear or see some new thing. Acts 17:21 Yet they could not find God by their wisdom. The Jews on the other hand thought little of wisdom, but they required a sign. 1 Cor. 1:22 They were quick to demand of Christ, "What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee?" **John 6:30.** The gospel of Christ is the wisdom of God though it be foolishness to carnal men. Therefore the Holy Spirit declares, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." **1 Cor. 1:23-24**

There is something that reaches far beyond all of earth's wisdom and all the might of her power, transcending the reasonings of man and every demonstration of potency or sign or wonder. That something is faith, born of the Holy Ghost, implanted in the spirits of men and women. Faith reaches out and grasps salvation from the hand of God while the wise, the influential and the strong of this world go empty-handed away. While wise men are proving that death ends all, faith lays hold of the resurrection of the dead. While the flesh is rotting on the bones, faith cries, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." **Job 19:25** When the body is wracked with pain, the skin is being destroyed, and the flesh is in a state of corruption, faith pursues the prize of incorruption and, should we die without attaining, even then faith rests assured that God hath reserved some better thing for us that we might reach perfection together in a glorious resurrection unto life.

By faith Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproach of Christ to be greater than the abundant treasures of Egypt. By faith we understand that God made the worlds and perceive how He made visible things out of things we cannot see. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain and received witness that he was righteous. By faith Enoch was translated that he might not see death, when all men around him were dying. It was by faith that Noah built an ark to preserve his household, when all men around him were scoffing and declaring that it could never rain, for hitherto rain had never fallen.

Faith is a spiritual entity. It is a creation of the Spirit of God. From no other source can it derive or come. Faith sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, comprehends the incomprehensible, grasps the impossible and makes that which is not to be that which is. Faith laughs at unbelief and turns a deaf ear to the carnal reasonings of the wise of this world. Faith cannot be explained even by those who have it. It is born of God and has its anchor fastened to "the Rock" within the veil. Faith itself is the substance of things hoped for; faith is the evidence of things we do not see. When faith abounds in the human heart, all our steps are sure and certain, while dashing waves become a pavement beneath our feet. Here in faith God is our refuge and strength. Here He is a very present help in trouble. Faith has no fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. When the waters roar and are troubled, faith sings of a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God and the habitations of the most high. When the whole world is in a clamor of distress and turmoil even as we see it in our day, faith clearly whispers, "Be still and know that I am God. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge."

I have written these things concerning parables and faith because the things that follow are of utmost importance and cannot be received except by faith. As the years in their perpetual succession have passed as ghostly shadows away and the ever increasing wonder of the glory of God's Christ has come to blaze as a mighty sun in its strength, I have come to realize that not only did our Lord speak in parables, but His whole life from the time of His lowly birth to His ascension into heaven was in itself a parable and a mighty sign of wonders which were to come in the lives of believing men. The paramount theme of all Christ's sermons on earth concerned that glorious kingdom which is soon to come. Even His pattern prayer has as its first petition, "Thy kingdom come." The blessed coming of His kingdom will usher in the aionian day when God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven and His mind will direct all things and bring every nation under the blessedness of heaven's perfect order.

The first miracle performed by Jesus was a parabolic wonder, setting forth the more excellent glory of the kingdom of God. By it He manifested how the truth of all preceding dispensations would become the life-giving wine of the kingdom of God, the living truth of that glorious age. If with meditation and prayer we seek to understand the many miracles and healings of Christ throughout His ministry, we will soon become aware that each in its turn unfolds a truth concerning that blessed age soon to come.

In Mark 1:21-28 the record tells how a man in the synagogue was delivered of an unclean spirit. It would not surprise me should I find that this man was the leader of the synagogue. We have no certainty that this was so, but it could very well have been. Many unclean spirits were in the synagogues in Jesus' day just as many unclean spirits are in the professing churches now. False prophets abound on every hand. They have existed openly throughout the centuries. Christians have become so accustomed to their smooth talk that they fail to recognize deception when they hear it. God's people have become so accustomed to being tossed to and fro and carried away with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, that they no longer have a genuine consciousness of what is right and what is wrong.

When the kingdom of God comes, Jesus will deliver the world of all falsehood. False prophets, false apostles, false pastors and false evangelists and teachers will be no more. He will deliver the synagogue of the unclean and the demon possessed by curing them and setting them free. His miracle in the synagogue on that long ago Sabbath morning was a parable of things which are to come in the great kingdom Sabbath, when nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

When Jesus healed the lame man. He was actually demonstrating to the world and all therein that in the day when He shall reign all lameness of every sort will be healed and the lame made strong throughout His universal domain. His gospel was the gospel of the kingdom. Not only will the literally lame be made to leap as an hart, but in that day all lameness of spirit, soul and mind, so appallingly evident in our day, will disappear forever. Then will the scripture be fulfilled, "The lame take the prey. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." **Isa. 33:23-24**

Many blind were healed as Jesus preached His gospel of the kingdom of God, and many were the deaf ears that were unstopped. All through the dispensations of human government the eyes of mankind have been closed and their ears made dull of hearing lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and should be converted and healed. Isa. 6:9-10 His healing of the blind and the deaf as part of the glorious gospel of the kingdom clearly bears witness to the truth that, when His kingdom comes, the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. The lame man shall leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

We shall not attempt here to seek the spiritual meaning of all the miracles and wonders Jesus performed, but if the earnest seeker after truth will consider His miracles and healings one by one. he will see that Christ's gospel of the kingdom of God clearly demonstrated that a wonderful new age is coming, the glory of which man cannot possibly at present imagine, when not only will man be delivered from his physical woes, but every spiritual infirmity as well, of which blindness, deafness, lameness, dumbness, leprosy, withered hands, impotency and death are types. There is a new world coming in which all that Jesus began to do and to teach will be completed. The marvelous miracles of His ministry on earth are a parable in themselves of the wonders to be accomplished by the sons of God in that age when the curse is destroyed and the supernal glories of His kingdom are revealed to the world.

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH

The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ was a miraculous birth. In all the history of the world no other than He was ever born by such direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Lord in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, dividing the light from the darkness and bringing forth a magnificent creation, so now to bring forth the Son of God, the author and head of a new creation, the Spirit moved upon a pure, chaste virgin who had never known a man, placing within her virgin womb the seed of the last Adam, the Christ, and author

of all that is spiritual and eternal. In the birth of Jesus Christ the natural processes of conception were eliminated that God might be the Father of this blessed Son, not the father of His physical form alone, but the father of His soul, which He poured out unto death, and the father of His spirit, which in the hour of death He committed into the hands of God.

I believe the Bible to be the word of God. Its Author is divine. Its words are true, each and every one inspired by the Holy Ghost. When its sentences were written, holy men of God spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Its pages contain no errors, no scientific mistakes, no historical blunders, and no contradictions. Though for centuries the Bible has often stood alone against the error and miscalculations of men, in the end, when the mists of ignorance have cleared away and the light of truth has shone, its statements were vindicated and its word forever established. There is not one mistake or incorrect statement in it. The entrance of its words is life and its light shines brighter than a thousand suns. When heaven and earth are passed away and visible things have disappeared, that word will shine forth in the glory of its eternal truth. It will abide forever because it is the word of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. The Bible is the only book ever written that dares to portray the future. Its portrayal of things yet to come has been and continues to be so accurate that unbelieving men are helpless to find an answer for its exactitude. The prophecies of Daniel have proved so free from error that unbelievers attempt to prove that this inspired prophet must have lived many, many years after the date recorded in Bible history. Where could we find an account so accurate as the words of Jesus concerning the last days in which we now live? Matt. 24:37 Or the inspired words of Paul as he describes the perilous times that will usher in the last days? 2 Tim. 3:1-5 May God grant grace to all His saints to reject every watered-down version of scripture, together with the confusing paraphrases of the Bible now pouring off the presses like a Niagara of deception to turn men and women away from the true faith and destroy the trust of boys and girls, whose nature it is to have faith in God.

The birth of Jesus was a miraculous birth. Thus the scriptures teach. His life-giving ministry was but a few months old when a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, approached Him by night to enquire the way of the Lord. It was to this earnest heart that Christ our Lord first broke the news of another miraculous birth, which was soon to be the heritage of every believing man and woman. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," He told the ruler of the Jews, and Nicodemus, gripped by astonishment and wonder, demanded in his incredulity, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Like millions of others the only birth he knew or understood was that natural birth by which natural parents bring forth natural children after the flesh. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," said Jesus. That birth is a thing of the past. We can forget about it. But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The spiritual man that died in the first Adam was now to be made alive in the last Adam, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. From that time forward the Holy Spirit would begin to move on man's lifeless spirit, touching it with life eternal that it might be born from above. Millenniums before, as that same blessed Spirit moved upon the face of the icy waters, God had said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

The most miraculous things that ever happened to you, my believing friend, occurred in that wonderful day when on bended knee you confessed your sins to Christ and, believing on Him, you were moved upon by the Holy Spirit to give you the knowledge of forgiveness. You felt forgiveness. Your life was changed. It was not a reformation; it was a transformation. It was not a confirmation; it was a conversion. It was not a new start; it was a new birth. Old things faded away into the past and all things became new. It was a new life, a new world, a new experience in God. You were born from above. You were born again.

There 'neath His cross Jesus gave me His pardon.
Lifting my burden. He brought me into rest.

Through the endless procession of the centuries, advancing as they do only to drift like shadows into the past, Jesus Christ, God's blessed Son, miraculously born of the Holy Ghost, has by His almighty power brought forth a new creation of twice born men, an entire new race of sons of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood, joint heirs with Christ Jesus, members together with Him of a spiritual temple destined to be the eternal habitation of God through the spirit. This great spiritual household of twice born men is "My Father's house of many mansions." This is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. God is not building a mansion in the sky for you, my brother. He is building you into an eternal habitation for

Himself and you, together with millions of other twice born men, are that holy temple, that glorious, celestial habitation of God through the Spirit. Let us then conclude that the miraculous birth of Christ Jesus our Lord was itself a parabolic miracle portraying the miraculous new birth of all the sons of God.

HIS MIRACULOUS LIFE

No life that was ever lived was like the life of Jesus Christ. No man spake like Him. No man had such wisdom, such power, such compassion and understanding. His life is the central theme of the ages. Every date we know is either B.C. or A.D. Even ungodly, communist nations reckon their time from the date of His birth and atheistic lawyers mark their documents, "In the year of our Lord." He was the beginning of the old creation and He is the beginning of the new creation. All things were made by Him and for Him. All things exist through Him and all things end in Him. All other christs are false christs. He alone is true. Mohammed is dead; Buddha is dead; Confucius is dead. They have no power to transform or change any who believe in them. But Christ is alive - alive forevermore. He lives His miraculous life in the hearts of believing saints, both transforming them and making them new creatures in Him. Only eternity itself will disclose the endless procession of saints that have been transformed by His almighty power. Multitudes that no man can number will stand at last by the crystal sea of life, praising to highest heaven the Christ who redeemed us by His blood, and the battlements of heaven and earth and all the universe will echo and re-echo as a multitude without number from every nation and kindred and tribe bless Him that sits on the throne and join in praise to the Lamb for ever and ever.

No might and no power that has ever existed has been able to diminish, crush or destroy the glory and gentleness of the Christ life and God's word declares that eventually that mighty Prince of Peace will gather into Himself everything in earth, everything in heaven and everything under the earth. Eph. 1:10

His glorious life was a miraculous life and those who have been born of His Spirit and washed in His life blood are kept by the power of God to live miraculous lives of purity and faith, shining as eternal lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation whose only trend is downward. In the light of this truth I now declare that the miraculous life of our blessed Lord was in itself a parable, vividly portraying the transformed lives of all those sons of God, whom He has redeemed by His blood and in whom He lives and moves and has His being.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

On Calvary's brow my Saviour died;
Twas there my Lord was crucified.
was on the cross He died for me
And purchased there my pardon free.

No words ever spoken were more certain than these. It is infallibly true that our Lord died on the cross. It was there that He shed His blood, and that blood is the life of the world. Through the blood of His cross all who believe have life today. Never was Jesus able to give eternal life to any man while life eternal flowed as blood in the veins of His own body; but when through marvelous grace that life blood was shed, eternal life was poured forth as fountains of living water upon the parched and thirsty souls of earth's repenting millions to such an extent that whosoever believeth on Him, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake Christ of the Holy Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost had not yet been given.

I would be amiss if I failed to tell you that the cross of Christ was not a cross of wood. The cross of Calvary was no doubt a wooden cross, but the cross of Christ was something far more than a wooden beam. When in loving kindness our Lord exhorted the young seeker, saying, "Take up thy cross and follow Me," He was not making reference to a gibbet of wood, but to a cross that would identify his life with the life of Christ. The death of the cross is in some strange and wonderful way the gateway to the life of the cross. The cross of Christ had its beginning that day in heaven, when the Son of God, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The agonies of Calvary
Could not His love dismay.
He would not yield though God revealed
The price that he must pay.

Fierce as was His trial at Calvary, that fearful hour of agony and blood was but the final act of a life of the cross as step by step He descended from the majesty and glory of equality with God to the fearsome moment when He cried in anguish, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" All the books in the world, though written with pens of gold, could never fully describe the everlasting accomplishments of His cross, nor could all the silvery tongued orators explain to the mind of man how He, who was rich, for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Eternity itself will not be too long to sing the praises of such a One, who came from the bosom of God to shed His life blood that all creation might find life eternal in Him.

And now doth He say to you and me, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The way up is down. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, but the haughty shall be brought low. Listen to Paul as in the glory of Christ's triumph he gives this divine pronouncement: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, I unto the world." **Gal. 6:14**

Every man and every woman will have to face the cross. If there be no cross, neither will there be a crown. We will have to face it in our own lives and, if I am not mistaken, we will have to face it every day we live. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." **Phil. 1:21** Death to ourselves will be the greatest death we ever die. That death will never be accomplished by our vain struggling and trying, but it will be accomplished in that blessed hour when the Holy Spirit reveals to our hearts the truth that he revealed to Paul: "I am crucified with Christ." The world itself cannot contain the full truth of this precious statement, "I am crucified with Christ." We will never get crucified nor will we ever have faith to crucify ourselves. We will never go to an altar and accomplish this act by faith. The lesson we must learn, my earnestly seeking friend, is simply this: Before ever there was a world or a sinner in it, God Himself by His almighty power placed all men in His Son Jesus Christ and then, having done so, He crucified Him and, when He crucified Him, He also crucified me, because I was in Him. When He crucified His Son, He crucified you, because He had placed you in Him. All this took place before the foundation of the world. All men died in Adam and, because all men died in Adam, all men live in Christ, because God has placed all men in Him. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." **1 Cor. 15:22**. "But," you ask, "why is it then that all men are not saved?" The truth is that all men are saved, but all men have not yet believed, because God has not yet opened their eyes. All Christians are crucified with Him, but few, oh so few, have ever been told that crucifixion is an accomplished reality - accomplished by God Himself and left for us to accept and believe. Once the believer grasps this truth and seizes upon it by faith, then he understands that all of the old carnal realm with all its terrifying specters was a paper tiger, an alarming, petrifying panic, a phantom, a dead lion, no more real than a nightmare.

My brother, my sister, in that good and glorious moment when you see God by His almighty power placing all men in Christ, yea, even before the world began, and, having done so, He sent Him to the cross to be crucified, then you will know that, when Christ was crucified, you were crucified, for you were in Him. Then you will join with Paul and every participant of the revelation, saying, "I am crucified with Christ." Then you will be able for the first time in your life to reckon yourself dead unto sin, but alive unto God.

Cold is nothing but the absence of heat. Darkness is nothing but the absence of light. Death is nothing but the absence of life. Sin is nothing but the absence of righteousness. It is with these nothings, these no things that man is always battling. Wake up, my brother, my sister, to the realm of reality and life! His cross was a parable, a foreshadow of our own.

THE BURIAL OF CHRIST

Very few sermons having as their theme the burial of Christ have ever been spoken or written. Of this hardly credible omission I have been as guilty as others. Though we have carelessly overlooked its truth, it is a cardinal fact that the burial of Christ actually lies at the very heart of the gospel. That the very heart and hub of

the gospel might be indelibly impressed upon our minds, let us ask ourselves the question, "What is the gospel?" It is possible that we may get a hundred different answers to this question, all of which may contain part of the truth, but Paul with the brevity and thoroughness always so evident in his inspired writing portrays the three principal and most outstanding facts of the gospel in these words: "Moreover, brethren, I declared unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved... how that (1) Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; (2) and that He was buried, and (3) that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:1-4. This statement of truth, every particle of which is according to the Old Testament scriptures, is the heart, the pith, the core and quintessence of the entire gospel by which we are saved. It is the center of all truth. It is the mighty hub from which every spoke of truth proceeds and without which the universe of truth would certainly collapse as a wheel falls in pieces when its hub is taken away. The preacher who preaches a gospel without the cross is a fool. His idle words contain no heart of truth. His supposed gospel, which is no gospel at all, can never be more than a creed of reform that can never do more than wash the sow that will presently return to her wallowing in the mire. The preacher who preaches the cross, yet fails to identify himself and his people with the burial of Christ, inadvertently leaves both the Christ and the people in eternal relationship to the old Adamic life, and thus their connection with the first Adam is never fully broken. They are never quite done with the world and the flesh and the devil as we have known them, whose abominable power we have wrestled all our lives. Burial, my dear friend, is the last act of our present existence. It is the consummation of our old life, our old man, our old self, our Adamic nature. Here in burial the dust of our corruptible returns to dust and the green bay tree of our carnality is reduced to ashes, for "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Here in burial ends the old creation and all that pertains to it. Burial ends all our connection with the old Adam, the old man, the old corruptible. In burial the stinking, rotten carcass of our old self is buried out of sight. It is the end of all that is old. When your friends and relatives walk away from your tomb, they know full well, if they know anything at all, that they will never again see you in corruption, but only in resurrection. Burial is the end of all that has been in the past. It is the kiss of death to all that pertains to the first Adam, the old man, the old nature, and all deceitful lusts. This is the terminus, the culmination and the climax. Here old things pass away in their entirety. They are buried and forgotten.

Now, just as the scripture forcefully shows that we can be completely identified with the cross of Christ, crucified with Him, so also the same gospel teaches our complete identification with Christ in His burial. When I tell you that before the foundation of the world the Father saw you and placed you in Christ and, having done so, He crucified Him, does not that fact shout the message that you are crucified with Him? Here in this wonderful knowledge faith grasps an accomplished fact and, believing, seizes the truth of our identification with Christ, shouting aloud our new found experience, "I am crucified with Christ," all because we see and understand by revelation what Christ has done. It was when God revealed that fact to me, that I felt the old realm vanishing away, even as a dying man, knowing that the past is forever gone, fixes his hope on the resurrection side of the tomb.

I greatly fear, my brethren, that far too many saints have embraced the cross, but have left the smelly, Adamic body of sin lying around to spread its foul corruption. They are completely unaware of the vital necessity of burial and the tomb. We have already stated that it is in burial that all connection with the old realm is forever done away. Shall a man who has been identified by faith with the burial of Christ continue in sin? God forbid! If his faith is pure, that would be impossible. Does the drunkard crave his drink after he has gone to the tomb? Does the heroin addict writhe and crave for a shot to calm his torment? Is it not true that in the grave all ties with the past are broken insomuch that even one's wife or husband is free to marry another simply because we no longer exist as we once did? "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted (buried) together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." **Rom. 6:3-7.** See also. Col. 2:12-13. Do you see, my brethren, how completely we have missed the significance of the truth displayed in water baptism? This ordinance is above all else an act of identification. In it we are first identified with Christ in burial and, secondly, we are identified with Christ in rising from the dead. Though Christ sent Paul "not to baptize," (**1 Cor. 1:17**), Paul more than any other man taught us the vital significance of water baptism. Baptism indicates burial. It is

identification with Christ in the tomb. Burial not only indicates but is a complete severance from our old life and the old realm. It is the finish, the finis, the fait accompli, the finale, the denouement, the conclusion, and the ultimate. It is the farewell to all that is old, the good morning to all that is new, If, as we have stated, the very heart of the gospel is this, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures," then it should not be difficult to see that of these three statements burial is the heart or the center. See yourself identified with Christ's burial as you have seen yourself identified with His cross and your old life will fade away into the silence of the tomb and into the voids of emptiness, and you, being now raised from death by the Father's glorious power, will lay hold upon newness of resurrection life. For, if we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. I shall venture here to say, for I know it cannot be contradicted, that the reason we are so grossly affected by all the concerns and affairs of this present evil realm and find ourselves so distressed about the welfare of our "body of death" is that we have not yet taken it to the burial. We have not wrapped our old Adamic man in grave clothes and cast him into the tomb, but our fingers still firmly clutch the weak and beggarly affairs of this present life. Naught that man or devil can ever do will affect you in the tomb, for that is the end, the omega of all that pertains to the realm of the first Adam.

It is this vital fact that Paul is announcing, yea, declaring, when he so clearly states, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." **Rom. 6:3-11.**

Oh what a realm of victory lies hidden in these inspired words! Oh what a termination is made to the world, the flesh and the devil in that we were first crucified with Him and then buried with Him, putting our old Adamic man both out of sight and out of existence forevermore! How sadly have the preachers failed by their presentation of a moral gospel, a gospel of do's and don'ts for the old man instead of bringing the glorious message that our old Adamic man and all that concerns its sinful self, together with all its works of the flesh, were first nailed to the cross in crucifixion, after which the dead carcass of our old self was taken down, wrapped in the cloths of the dead and buried out of sight in the tomb. Here identified with Him in burial we bid farewell to the old creation, farewell to the first Adam, farewell to carnal ordinance, and farewell to the flesh and all its lusts. This heart of the gospel truth is both indicated and clearly demonstrated in the act of water baptism. We will not be likely to hear baptism preached in this manner, but lay hold upon its truth. It is with the heart that man believes unto righteousness, but it is with the mouth that confession is made unto salvation.

In Christ we are circumcised. The flesh is cut away. This is "the circumcision made without hands, inputting off the body of the sins of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." **Col. 2:11-12** If ministers of the gospel would halt their man-made programs and their abominable clamor for money, together with all worldly show and preach instead that saints can be identified with Christ in death, in burial and in resurrection, it would be a short season until the fields of God would be waving with ripened and mature saints. We shall come, therefore, to the conclusion that as in all other events in Christ's life and ministry His burial and entrance into the tomb are in themselves parables of events which may be accomplished by faith in every saint of God.

THE RESURRECTION UNTO INCORRUPTION

It may not be hard to convince mankind that Jesus died and that He was buried, for who among men does not die and who will not be buried? But when we speak of the resurrection of the dead, we enter a new realm entirely, for no man other than Christ Jesus our Lord has until now experienced the glory of the resurrection. Lest this statement should be misunderstood, we must explain here that there is a difference between being raised from the dead and resurrection. There are those who were raised from the dead as Lazarus was, or the

widow's son or Dorcas, but these good people were raised again to resume their lives in their corruptible bodies. They all died again, but in resurrection the corruptible body puts on incorruption; neither does it die any more. Luke 20:35,36. Being raised from the dead, though a remarkable miracle, is in fact little more than the healing of leprosy or cancer or any other mortal ailment. The leper, though healed of his incurable disease, will presently die of old age or some other disease. The person healed of cancer or tuberculosis will also die or go to the grave because his healing was in reality a short new lease on this corruptible existence in the body of flesh and blood. But Jesus was the first fruit of the resurrection. He was not raised in corruption, but in incorruption. He was not raised in weakness, but in power. He was not raised a natural body, but a spiritual body. This corruptible had put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15:54), and eventually the incorruptible would put on immortality. Reference will be made to immortality later in this article.

Every reader should make himself as familiar as possible with the treatise on the resurrection found in 1 Cor. 15. No other chapter in the Bible so completely describes the glory of the resurrection. Here the writer displays its meaning, emphasizes its necessity, and clearly manifests our identification with Christ in resurrection. In seeing the wonder of it, we should never lose sight of the ever, prominent place the resurrection of Christ had in Paul's own teaching. The message of the apostles was full of the glory and power of the resurrection. The apostles were not men who walked about like priests in drab attire and with mournful faces, with crosses dangling from golden chains about their necks. Above all else they were witnesses of the resurrection. 'Tis true they preached the cross, but the glory of their message was that Christ was neither dead nor upon a cross, but alive forever more. He had been seen alive by the women, by the apostles, by the men on the road to Emmaus. In a special manner He had revealed Himself to the dubious Thomas and again to the disciples after their disastrous fishing expedition. Then He was seen by over five hundred brethren at one time. Later still He was seen by Paul in a special revelation and still later He was seen on Patmos by the beloved John, who, beholding His more excellent glory, fell at His feet as one dead. Christ proved Himself both resurrected and alive after His passion by many infallible proofs. Acts 1:3 I suppose that not least among those infallible proofs is the undeniable truth that in our day, even while this message is read, Christ Jesus is alive, bearing vital witness within our spirits, transforming our lives and giving us the spirit of sonship.

Let us give ear to Peter as his lips pour forth resurrection life in his tremendous sermons after Pentecost. Notice that his message was not only Christ crucified, but above all else Christ risen from the dead. "Ye men of Israel," he cries, "hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." **Acts 2:22-24** The apostle then goes on to show how the prophecy of David, **Psa. 16:8-11**, is a prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. "For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shall make me full of joy with Thy countenance." Acts 2:25, 31 Again, in his sermon after the healing of the lame man at the temple gate. Peter attributed that marvelous miracle not only to Jesus Christ, but to the resurrected Christ, for he said, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Acts 3:14-15 "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." **Acts 3:26** When Luke wrote to the governor Theophilus, in the very introduction of his letter he makes this remarkable statement of fact: "To whom also (the apostles) He showed Himself alive after His passion (crucifixion) by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." **Acts 1:3**

If my purpose here was to give proof of the resurrection, I would continue to give more of those infallible proofs, but the intention here is not so much to give proof of the resurrection as to show that the resurrection of Christ from the tomb was in itself a tremendous demonstration of the manner in which all His beloved saints will be raised on that great day when all who are in their graves will hear God's voice and come forth in life.

When Christ our Lord arose from the dead, He was raised not in corruption but in incorruption. That which is incorruptible is beyond the power of corruption, decay or death. God Himself is said to be incorruptible and we

are said to be born of incorruptible seed by the word of God that liveth forever. Death has no power at all over the incorruptible. Thus of the resurrection of the dead it is written: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. 15:42-44 This corruptible must put on incorruption. The body of the corruptible man is the body of death, but the body of the incorruptible man is the body of the resurrection, a body beyond the power of death. When our Lord rose from the dead, He arose incorruptible. He had no blood as we know blood. The blood and water which had ebbed from His body in death was now manifest as life, the life of God, life incorruptible and eternal.

In the incorruptible body of His resurrection, our Lord often communed with men. For forty days He spoke with them concerning the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3 Though He no doubt hid His glory from them, the glory of His resurrection and His incorruption was the glory He displayed to them on the mount of transfiguration. This body of glory and incorruption is the body of the resurrection. When the kingdom of God appears in the fullness of its glory on the earth, the sons of God will be manifest to the world and the living nations of the earth in the glory of their resurrection. Being children of the resurrection, they will be seen as incorruptible beings and they will rule the world and all the nations in it as resurrected and incorruptible men. Just as Jesus had power after His resurrection to appear or disappear, to manifest Himself or to hide His identity, ascend to heaven or to return to earth, instruct concerning the kingdom or even eat and drink if He wished, so also will these resurrected and incorruptible sons have power. I have already stated that all things that were done and accomplished by our Lord were vivid manifestations of those things which His sons will do, for said He, "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father."

The church in its hour of corruption has been claiming to have done "the greater works", but this is not so. The greater works will appear when this corruptible puts on incorruption and the sons of God are manifested in their resurrection glory. When we consider how marvelous and powerful is the glory of the resurrection unto incorruption, it seems to be but little wonder that these mighty sons will introduce a world wherein dwelleth righteousness. If the lone Jesus of Nazareth, while yet straitened by a corruptible body, so marvelously affected the entire world, what then may we expect when a vast family of brothers in the image of His resurrection appear to reign in righteousness over all the earth?

HIS ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

The resurrection from the dead, glorious beyond description, was, however, not the final act of our Lord's ministry nor the end of that wonderful parable of His life as He by example unfolded the surpassing radiance of heavenly things to come. Beyond the realm of incorruption and resurrection one more scene was yet to unfold before their wondering eyes as He passed from the excellent realm of incorruption to the more excellent glory of immortality. Jesus Christ ascended into heaven into the unapproachable light and into immortality. I shall not be able to prove this to the satisfaction of prying minds and unbelieving hearts; nevertheless, to the believer the truth is forever settled that beyond the glory of incorruption lies the more excellent glory of immortality. As surely as Paul has said, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," so it shall be accomplished in its time.

It was a glorious day beyond compare when the incorruptible Jesus Christ led His disciples out as far as Bethany and there, while speaking to them, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. "And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24:51 Up and up He went, ascending, ascending, ascending into the light which no man can approach; ascending far above principalities, far above all power, all might and all dominion. Unto the Father's right hand He went, ascending into the light of immortality of which supernal realm Paul wrote, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Tim. 6:16 No man hath seen nor can see, for flesh and blood cannot enter that realm; but, my brethren, just as surely as Jesus our Lord ascended beyond the realm of incorruption into the light which no man can approach, which is the light of immortality, that light which is God Himself, so this mortal must put on immortality. The scripture is loud in its marvelous proclamation of this truth, and so shall it be. 1 Cor. 15:53

In the book concerning the precious blood, I showed as clearly as I was able that the blood of Christ is the life of God and that the life of God is the light of God. Thus plainly did our Lord progress upward from the blood of His mortality to resurrection life, and, having been seen of men for forty days in incorruption, He ascended into the light of immortality. The Son, who had come forth from the Father into the world, had now left the world and gone to the Father, and thus it shall be for us all when at last our orbit and our journey is complete.

You are the body of Christ. You are the temple of the Lord. You are the sons of God. You are the habitation of God through the Spirit. You are the temple that has been in meticulous and laborious building since this age began. One day as I read the exceedingly marvelous description of the New Jerusalem, which is a description of the bride of Christ, to my amazement I read these words: "And I saw no temple therein." Said I to myself in consternation, "What has become of the beautiful temple which for two thousand years God has been building with such infinite care?" Then, reading the passage further, I found these words: "For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple."

Rev. 21:22. My friends, can you grasp a little of the glory of this statement? Dare to believe it, for it must be true. The temple, which we are has ascended into the light of immortality to be absorbed in God and made one with the light which no man approacheth. Thus it is written, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." **John 16:28** That which has borne the image of the earthy shall certainly bear the image of the heavenly. Amen.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 19
SEVEN BASKETS FULL
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-7

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INTRODUCTION

The seven chapters of this book are not intended to complement each other in the development of one theme. Each chapter has its own theme and we hope it will present the reader with much food for thought and meditation. Thus the title, Seven Baskets Full, is borrowed from the miracle of the loaves and fishes as recorded in Matt. 15:37.

It is of great importance that the multitude be fed, but the throng is always inclined to leave as inedible those precious fragments that are in truth strong meat to the maturing sons of God. We are living in an hour of great importance. Let us cast no fragment away nor neglect anything that we know to be truth. No word from God is unimportant; neither is it the right of any man to pick and choose between truth he likes and truth he dislikes. Those who eat what they like and discard the fragment can never be called either people of faith or lovers of truth.

CHAPTER ONE
THE SIX STATEMENTS OF MALACHI

The prophet Malachi was sent by God to preach to the remnant of Israel who had returned from the captivity of Babylon. It was indeed a grave and troublesome time for them, for, though they had followed Ezra and Nehemiah out of the bondage, sorrow, and night of their captivity, even the blindest men can see that there was not a spirit of national revival among them by any means. The Spirit of God had burdened many with a great longing to leave Babylon and return to Israel now that the opportunity was afforded them, but though many had willingly left behind all they possessed in that kingdom of captivity to return in hope to their native land, the evidence suggests that only a very few of them had any true understanding or delight in the things of God. Perhaps it is too much to expect that a people who had been in captivity for a period of seventy years, deprived of their worship and forced into the corruption and idolatry of the Babylonians, would have much understanding of the plans and purposes of the true God. Those brave souls who follow the true God regardless of Baal or the gods of Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar are always in the infinitesimal minority. God never leaves Himself without a witness. He always has His remnant who has never bowed a head nor bent a knee either to Baal or to any of earth's systems. We may have to spend days in travel to reach them, for they are always scattered to the four winds, unrecognized by the world and frequently unknown to each other as were the seven thousand in Elijah's day.

As literal Israel in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah returned from literal Babylon, so today spiritual Israel is returning from a spiritual Babylon to that Zion, which God is now preparing for His own. The parallel is this: As they returned in much blindness and misunderstanding, so also today there is much lack of understanding among the many who are now leaving the dreary traditions of the past with all the slavish forms of religion and monotonous ceremony. When Israel came out of Egypt, they were not ready to enter the land of Canaan, but with rebellious minds they groped in the wilderness and in their hearts often turned back to Egypt. So also it is now. But he who putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God. When Jesus said, "As it was in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man," He added these significant words: "Remember Lot's wife." Let none of us be like unto her who turned her eyes from the mountain before her to look with longing and regret toward that city of destruction from which she had so recently escaped. It is not the fact that we start the journey to the celestial realm that is important. It is not that we continue in the way for a week or a month or a year. The thing that really counts is that we continue year after year pressing on through mists or rain, o'er crag and torrent, through darkness and troubled seas, through misunderstanding and resentment until we reach the goal and seize the reward, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The world is full of spiritual "drop-outs", people who ran well or "also ran", but because of adversity were hindered in the race and turned back as a dog returns to his vomit or a sow to her wallowing in the mire. Let us look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble us, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane (worldly) person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, for we know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. Heb. 12:15-17

The prize that lies before the saints of God who are leaving the blinding traditions of the past and who are on the march to Zion is much greater than the hope of the Jews who returned to Zion with Nehemiah or of their forefathers who left Egypt with Moses, for "ye are come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. 12:22-24 Therefore, let us be sure we do not refuse to hear the voice of God, for, if those who refused to hear those who spoke on earth did not escape, how little chance of escape is there for us if we refuse to hear the One who now speaks from heaven? Then His voice shook the earth, but now He promises, "Yet once more I will make to tremble, not the earth only, but also the heaven." This means that in the final shaking all that is not permanent, that is, everything that is merely "made", will be removed and only the unshakable things will remain. Since, then, we have been given a kingdom that is unshakable, let us serve God with thankfulness in the ways, which please Him, but always with reverence and holy fear, for it is perfectly true that our God is a burning fire. Heb. 12:25-28

If we are going to turn back at the first sign of difficulty, it is best never to start at all, for it is better never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us. It should not matter a straw to us how other men walk in their heavenly pilgrimage. We must be unmoved though all men forsake us, yet for all this steadfastness we must all admit that our hearts are made sick with remorse and our hands hang down when we see a man or a woman begin to run well, only to halt his pace and turn back again. It is always a test to our own endurance and a sad and bitter disappointment to hear that someone has returned to Egypt or to Babylon, for by so doing they prove that they were vacillating in the beginning. It is not enough to say, "Though all men forsake the Lord, yet I will not." It is better far to be silent, yet still pursuing, than to make great boasts and afterward return to the bondage of the weak and beggarly elements of the world.

In the days of Malachi the spiritual state of Israel was mediocre in the extreme. Though they had turned their backs on Babylon as many are now doing, they needed a personal relationship with God. They needed to be prepared for the coming of the Lord, for that, after all, is the true purpose and the principal reason why the Spirit of God is now with great care separating a people unto Himself. The true church is not a sect, a denomination, or a group of any kind, organized or unorganized. The true church is a people who have heard God's voice and have separated themselves unto Him. You and I are not wise enough to know wheat from

tares or sheep from goats in the spiritual realm; therefore, to circumscribe any group of people either small or great, saying, "This is the true church and these are the members of His body", is but to deceive oneself and indulge in the idiocy of believing that tares are wheat and goats are sheep. As good and evil have mingled together throughout the entire dispensation of grace, it is small wonder that we do not discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. Think it not strange that this separation is now going on in our midst, for Jesus forewarned us, saying that He would send His angels in the end of the age to divide the wicked from among the just.

The whole prophecy of Malachi was given to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" is the burden of his message. It is remarkable that in his prophecy he referred to John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way for the first coming of Christ, Mal. 3:1, and then later to Elijah, the prophet, who is to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord to prepare for the second coming of Christ. Mal. 4:5. In the message of Malachi six withering accusations were made against the people of God. These same six cardinal sins are found everywhere among Christians in our day. All of these faults need our prayerful consideration and our earnest repentance, for we, as they, have come out of captivity bearing much of the image of Babylon upon our souls.

There is a great fault among the people of God, which could be corrected merely by earnest thought and resolve. It is this: We are ready and anxious to hear all manner of wonderful things; we are all willing to embrace the great and marvelous promises of God; we present ourselves among the crowd that is hoping for sonship; we anxiously wait for the glories of the coming kingdom, but we hate to have the gross disorders of our lives pointed out to us. We loathe to be called upon to change our ways or to order our lives after a different fashion that we may be worthy of the kingdom of God, for which we also suffer. There is not a more wonderful chapter in all the Bible than the sixth chapter of John. It holds within its storehouse the glowing hope of eternal life and incorruption, yet in verse 66 we are treated to the pitiful sight of seeing men who had walked with Christ now turning away and walking no more with Him because of a truth that He gave them. As long as these men were feasting upon loaves and fishes, they were zealous disciples, but the moment Jesus exhorted them with these words, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth", they began to be offended. Then, when He explained that He Himself was the true bread from heaven, they sulked, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" They then began to engage in arguments, asking all manner of impertinent questions. They made foolish comparisons between Christ and Moses and, when He finally told them that no man could come to Him except it were given him of the Father, then from that time they went back and walked no more with Him. **John 6:65-66** Oh, how badly they needed this truth: **"Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."**

Our besetting trouble is that, when we follow God out of an old order as Israel followed Moses out of Egypt, we, as they, expect everything in the new realm to be very much as it was before. We rejoice in new-found liberty and deliverance from the hated bondage of the past, but, when we discover that our ship must sail through stormy and uncharted seas and our path is thorny and fraught with grave difficulty, we begin to surmise, imagine, and complain and wish we had never started the journey. We have put our hand to the plow but we have looked back and judged ourselves to be unworthy of the kingdom of God. We cannot plow a straight furrow by constantly looking over our shoulder. We must disregard the past and keep our eyes on the marker at the other end of the field. The Israelites who followed Moses with joy and gladness through the waters of the Red Sea did not know that in a few hours they would be parching with thirst in a waterless desert, nor did it ever enter their minds while they ate abundantly of the flesh pots of Egypt that they would soon faint without food in a dreary, treeless wilderness. It is when these unexpected things happen that men begin to imagine that they have made a mistake. Then either in heart or in reality they turn back to the bondage from whence they came. How often in my life I have seen men and women start well. For a few weeks or months they show encouraging signs of fortitude and understanding only, alas, to weakly turn back when the unexpected happened and the blessings they so earnestly expected were long delayed.

Do we indeed think that we are doing something great and wonderful to be still clinging to the same spot we were when God found us twenty or thirty years ago? Do we boast that we are just the same now as we were then? Have we never read, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands and of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment"? These

truths should have been experienced and passed by many years ago, and "this will we do, if God permit," **Heb. 6:1-3** There is a fearful warning to all God's people who undertake the journey into the deeper experiences in God to become partakers of the Holy Spirit, the good word of God, and the powers of the kingdom age, for if, after partaking of these wonderful realms of truth and experience, they fall back again, there remaineth no more repentance, but they like Esau, having missed the blessing, will never again in this age be given the opportunity to re-enter. Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it, and let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Heb. 4:1,11 I for one am all delighted to see men and women start their journey to the richer and deeper things of God, but it is much better never to have known the ways of righteousness than, having known it and walked in it, to return as a dog to his vomit and as a sow to her wallowing in the mire.

Let us therefore fortify ourselves against all shock and become immune to offence. Let us be like the hardy pioneers, who find a way where no way exists to become the very founders and fathers of nations. All that we are and all that we ever were and all that we ever shall be must come under the supreme reign of Christ that we might bow to His will and authority in all things. Let us not therefore be offended, but rather with earnestness and devotion prepare the way of the Lord.

STATEMENT (1) "I HAVE LOVED YOU"

To each of the following six statements from the prophecy of Malachi the people impertinently reply to God as though they were the very quintessence of innocence. The prophecy begins with these words: "/ have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?" God is continually manifesting His great love toward us, but so often His love goes unrecognized and unrequited. Even while He is bestowing His great love upon us, we are inclined to imagine in our unbelief that He has forgotten us altogether. Oh, how long will it be before God's people can see the wisdom and kindness of God in long delaying the answer to our prayer? If the Lord answered every prayer we pray, we would be naught but spoiled children, knowing nothing of true faith or hope or trust, understanding the value of nothing, demanding only those things our carnal minds desire. Our hearts would be devoid of any thought for the will or purpose of God and our lives would manifest no love for Him at all. We would be like those ne'er-do-well sons who, having wealthy fathers, are granted their every demand, who value nothing, respect no one, love none but themselves and come to their end behind the bars of judgment.

Now in answer to the ungracious question, wherein hast Thou loved us, please notice the answer of the Lord. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness," **Mal. 1:1-3** At first thought this appears to be a simple case of favoritism on the part of God, but it is not so. Esau, the first born, was a man of the earth, a man of flesh, a man who was much more concerned with the emptiness of his belly than with the birthright of the Lord. Now that is not first which is spiritual but that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual. Jacob was opposite to Esau in every respect. He greatly desired the birthright and he was perfectly willing to go to any length to get it. He cared nothing for the red pottage that was prepared for dinner. He was more than willing to endure an empty stomach if only he could possess the birthright. Though Jacob has been soundly condemned by multitudes as a conniving crook, it was his desire of spiritual things that God loved. God cared not a whit for the crude methods of this man but, looking upon his heart, He saw there his burning desire for eternal things. Therefore God loved Jacob, even before he was born.

Jacob and Esau were two different men in nature, but their two natures exist in every man. They are called the flesh and the spirit. They war continually with each other. The flesh lusts (wars) against the Spirit and the Spirit wars against the flesh. They are contrary the one to the other so that we can never do the things we want to do. We cannot do the carnal things that we would do because of the Spirit, and we cannot do the spiritual things we want to do because of the flesh. One or the other must be conquered and subdued. If the Spirit is subdued by the flesh, or the Esau nature, we become completely carnal men, caring only for the things that concern the physical body of flesh. If the flesh is crucified by a walk in the Spirit, we become spiritual men, caring only for the will of God.

The love of God is manifested toward us in that He longs with great desire to lay waste the strongholds of the Esau nature. He loved the Jacob nature, for, all its imperfections notwithstanding, it is the beginning of the

Israel nature, which is the nature of sons. He hates the Esau nature and has made every provision that it may be conquered and put to death. It is during this death process that we are so likely to forget the love of God and misunderstand His judgments toward us. We will be inclined to think that, because God allows many failures and misfortunes to befall us, He has forgotten us. Christians will be at pains to tell us that our suffering is a sure sign of God's displeasure with our life. Nothing could be further from the truth. He has forgotten nothing, but while we in our ignorance are trying to build up and establish the mountain of Esau, which is the flesh, God's purpose is to lay it waste and leave it to the dragons of the wilderness, or to the realm of Satan. The natural man wants to build up the natural, the visible, the audible, and the tangible. In short, we want to build up Esau, but God has purposed that we should become princes with God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Therefore in love He lays waste the mountain of Esau within us.

We must learn that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things that are seen but on the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal. When God is permitting great adversity to dog our steps, it is because He loves us and is laying waste the mountain of Esau within us. When financial difficulties beset us, it may be He is delivering us from the very love of money, which is the root of all evil. When illness comes, it is that we might see the frailty of the flesh and all that is physical, for those who suffer in the flesh learn to submit themselves to God who judgeth righteously. Thus they flee from the realm of the visible and temporal to lay hold upon the invisible and eternal. When trusted friends forsake us, it is that we may learn never to trust in man, whose breath is in his nostrils, but in the living God who sticketh closer than friends or brothers, holding us fast when mothers and fathers forsake us. *Psa. 27:10* Thus then saith the Lord, "I hated Esau and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever, and your eyes; shall see and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel." **Mal. 1:3-5**

Our heavenly Father never, never does anything without well-planned and eternal reasons. Therefore there is omniscient wisdom hidden beneath His determination to subdue and crucify the Esau nature within us. The reason is this: There is coming a day when the sons of God will subdue all things and bring everything into subjection unto the Father. Christ must reign until all enemies are under His feet. *1 Cor. 15:24-25* Let us therefore face this solemn fact that all who will reign with Him must first of all be subject to Him and be ruled by Him. Those who will be used of God to subdue all things must first of all be subdued. Those who are to subdue the enemies of Christ must first of all have all the enemies of Christ subdued within themselves. Never let this truth depart from you either day or night, for, if God should give men power to subdue who have not themselves been subdued, they would not be one whit superior to all those tyrannical dictators of the past, who in their lust for power trod their enemies under their bloody feet, rejoicing only in their bombastic and dictatorial spirit and the groveling servitude of the people.

The following quotation from Dr. George Watson, entitled "Subdued," will plainly illustrate what our true position should be. "Before God can launch us into the breadth and sweetness of His service and entrust to us great things for Himself, we must be perfectly subdued in every part of our nature to His will and the disposition of His mind. We must be subdued in our hearts, in our minds, in our words, in our tempers, in our manners: subdued through and through so thoroughly that we will be flexible to all His purposes and plans. We must be subdued that harshness, severity, criticism, sluggishness, laziness, impetuosity, and all wanting our way, even in religious matters, must be subdued out of us. Conversion will not finish this work and perhaps not in one case out of a thousand will the second work of grace produce this complete condition of teachable subjugation to God's will. Being able to preach strong sermons on sanctification will not do it, or having charge of camp meetings, or conventions, or Bible schools, or the writing of books and editing of papers on Christian holiness will not prove adequate for this.

We must be subdued, not merely in our own opinion, not merely think ourselves subdued, not only in the esteem of our friends and fellow-workers, but subdued so perfectly that the all-seeing eye of God can look us through and the omniscient One knows that we are subdued. God must conquer the man that He can trust with His great thoughts and plans."

There is infinite difference between the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar, who demanded that all men dance to his tune and at the sound of his music fall down to worship his abominable image, and the spirit of Moses, the servant of God, who, though he stood in the place of God before the people, Ex. 4:16, yet stood between God and the rebellious people in agonizing intercession so that the fierce wrath of God was turned away and the nation spared from being consumed from the face of the earth. (See Exodus chapter 32.) This man, who had power to rule with a rod of iron, was himself ruled by the slightest breath of the wisdom of God. Nothing but eternal love dominated his life. He needed no sword to deter him. He demanded not the groveling servitude of his people nor rejoiced in the helpless pleading of his enemies. The true spirit of those glorious sons of God who shall reign with Christ in the kingdom of the Father may be clearly seen in these words: "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." **Isa. 11:3-5**

No greater hope was ever set before the ransomed of the Lord than the hope of being members of His body of sons to reign with Him in the great regeneration. But even Jesus Christ Himself sweat great drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane that His own will might be subdued that only the will of the Father might exist in him. Let us therefore lay aside every weight. Let us seek to be rid of self and self-will. Let us lay waste the mountain of Esau until day and night the Spirit speaking within us continually repeats, "Thy will be done, Thy will be done."

STATEMENT (2) WHERE IS MY HONOR?

"A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is Mine honor? And if I be a master, where is My fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise My name. And ye say, wherein have we despised Thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee?" **Mal. 1:6-7**

Our long years in captivity in Babylon have erased the sense of true righteousness from our minds. They were offering polluted things upon God's altar, yet they had become so blind that, when accused of God, they replied with surprise and injured feelings, "Wherein have we polluted Thee?" Though they had good animals in their flocks, they offered to the Lord the things they wanted to be rid of - the blind, the lame, and the sick. Verse 8 They had become respecters of persons. Verse 9 Like the preachers and people of our day, they had become so money-minded that none of them would kindle a fire upon the altar or shut a door for naught. Verse 10 They did not serve God with a willing heart nor because of an indwelling love. They said, "Behold, what a weariness it is! And ye snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn and the lame and the sick: Thus ye brought an offering: Should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord." **Verse 13**

We can readily see from the above quotation how halfhearted all their worship was, how weak and sickly their devotion to God. What a weariness it was to their fleshly minds to have to serve God at all! They snuffed at it, the prophet declares, just as an unwilling donor would who gives to charity out of a disgruntled heart. God was a dead issue with them and all their feigned worship was only because it was required of them. Their worship of God was on a level with their willingness to pay income tax. They did it, not from an overflowing heart, but from a grudging, stingy, and unwilling spirit that was hateful in the sight of the Lord.

With apologies to the writer I would like to quote a paragraph from a recent letter, which puts this attitude of mind about as concisely as possible. "Dear Sir: I just wanted to write you a few lines to tell you what a blessing your books have been to me. For so long I have been content with just going to church every Sunday and telling myself that God should be thankful I take out that much time for Him. Now, thanks to the love that God has for His creation, He has seen fit to open my eyes and show me myself and to show me that there is no life outside of trying to live daily in God's will." Signed B.C.

The thought so aptly expressed in this paragraph could be written by any one of millions and millions of professed Christians. Must I do this? Do I have to do that? Why can't we do the other thing? What a weariness it is to serve the Lord! Polluted bread upon the altar is the symbol of this "half-hearted form of godliness, this

luke-warmness that has spread like a specter over the professing church. It is a form of godliness, but it denies the power of godliness. So-called Christianity has so crowded God and His glory off into a corner that they have shoved Him right outside the door of their hearts. John saw a true picture of our day when He saw the blessed Lord standing without and saying to the individual, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to Him and will sup with him and he with Me." **Rev. 3:20.**

Polluted bread upon the altar is the result of worshipping God with a heart that is more interested in things than it is interested in Him - things of life, things for the house, things for the body, innocent delights of youth and things we cherish so! The general testimony of millions is this:

I cannot give it up, this little world I know;
The innocent delights of youth and things I cherish so.
'Tis true I love my Lord and long to do His will,
But, Oh! I can enjoy the world and be a Christian still.

Yes, I think that last line may be very true. You can enjoy the world and be a Christian, but you will be a worldly Christian. All that is in the world is lust of the flesh (appetite), the lust of the eyes (avarice), and the pride of life (ambition), and "the world passes away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." "Never give your hearts to this world or any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions, and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all but is from the world itself. The world with all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent, and cannot die." **1 John 2:15-17** (Phillips).

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Worship polluted by the carnal mind is not pure and does not come from a pure heart. The carnal mind is perhaps the most religious thing in the world, but it never worships the true God. It only makes a god out of things. Its worship toward God is feigned worship to which it only consents because of the insistence of the spirit within. Thus it corrupts and pollutes the worship of the Spirit. Under the Law of Moses people were not permitted to wear garments of wool mingled with linen. Not that there is wrong in either one, but the type is real, for wool is derived from animals while linen comes from a plant. They were not to plow with an ox and an ass in the same yoke, for an ox is a clean animal, but an ass is unclean. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is the New Testament parallel. We may hate to hear it said, but the deplorable, undeniable truth is that the existing church system is packed with unbelievers. This we discover the moment we venture one step beyond their stagnant philosophies.

To be pure is to be free from mixture or contact with that which impairs or pollutes; containing no foreign or vitiating material; free from adulteration; clear, clean, genuine, and stainless; free from defilement, innocent, chaste, and unsullied. Pure is a strong word denoting positive excellence of a high order. One is innocent who knows nothing of evil and has experienced no touch of temptation; but one is pure who with knowledge of evil and exposure to temptation keeps heart and soul unstained. Virtue refers to right action, purity to right feeling. Therefore blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, for they are called to an inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away. Let there be no more polluted worship, but let us honor God with a pure heart.

STATEMENT (3) "YE HAVE WEARIED ME"

"Ye have weaned Me, saith the Lord, with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them." **Mal. 2:17** The Lord fainteth not, neither is weary, yet here is a place where the Lord says, "Ye have wearied Me." God's people have indeed sunk very low when in their blindness and darkness of heart they call good evil and evil good. In our questionings of God's judgment we have become a weariness to the Lord.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is ever before us. It has been in the garden of our hearts for six thousand years that we might learn to choose the good and refuse the evil. But have God's people really learned? Only a few, I fear, for even now the vast throngs of the church system still think evil is good and good is evil. "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put

bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight... which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" **Isa. 5:20-23**. At this very moment men are acclaiming denominationalism and sectarianism as good, but it is evil in that it turns the hearts of men away from God, causing them to take refuge in traditions that have been handed down from age to age until in this age of grace men have repeated the gross and damning error of Pharisee and Sadducee in that they have made the truth of God of none effect by their tradition. When the children of the Lord should be grown to the full stature of spiritual manhood, they are still weak and insipid children.

When they should be partakers of strong meat, which is for men, they are still sucking the breasts for the milk of babes. When they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat, for every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. Did not Paul say that, while the sectarian spirit remained and one said, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ", they are still babes? 1 Cor. 1:12 It was for this very reason that he found it necessary to feed the Christians milk and not meat, for their sectarianism had kept them in spiritual infancy. 1 Cor. 3:1-4 If you want to remain a spiritual baby, an infant, and a child, all you have to do is remain among the denominations, for you will still be feeding on the same old milk, the same old sermons, the same old songs, and the same old ritual until the day you die. This is a weariness to the Lord; yet ye say, "Wherein have we wearied Thee?" Ye have thought that evil is good in His sight.

The world and the church system are at this very hour lauding and acclaiming to the skies the rapid and almost unbelievable growth of the Ecumenical Movement. Roman priest and Protestant preacher are enfolding each other in an embrace of death as they benignly extend their arms, not only to each other, but to Moslem, Mohammedan, and any other cult that will drunkenly gulp the wine of fornication from the golden cup in the hand of the swaggering harlot of Babylon. Why, the picture, which John saw in vision is now becoming vivid in reality before our very eyes. Just look and see! "He carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns; And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." **Rev. 17:3-6** This rising hellish tide of evil, full of all names but His, men call good. The goodness of it is acclaimed by the man on the street, the preacher in the pulpit, and the pope in his palace. It is acclaimed by cardinals and world-renowned evangelists. No wonder God is weary and even now has turned His head away from this seething melting pot of human traditions and doctrines of men and has set His eyes of love on a people who know each other only by the Spirit and whose only communion is found in their mutual oneness and unity with the Father.

Thus man goes blindly on, acclaiming evil as good and calling good evil, delighting in huge crowds, international conventions, fabulous church buildings, gigantic programs, world-wide efforts, great preachers, mighty healers, sign and wonders. Everything must be large, giant and super and nothing small or meek or lowly. What a weariness it is to God and how His soul adhors it!

STATEMENT (4) "RETURN UNTO ME AND I WILL RETURN TO YOU"

"Return to Me and I will return unto you. But ye say, Wherein shall we return?" **Mal. 3:7** This fourth point in the prophecy has been left without much elaboration. Whatever their need may have been in the dark days of Malachi, our need today is to return unto the Lord. The greatest need of this hour is that Christians should be brought to realize that they have wandered far away from God. They need to discover that, like the prodigal son, they have spent all. They have become worldly minded, not only in acting like the world, but in thinking like the world. Almost all Christians have spent the years of their Christian lives living in riotous fornication with either the mother of harlots or one of her daughters until the church system has become full of the names of blasphemy, but the name of Christ they know not, neither do they know Him.

Men and women must abandon this mad rush of religion and come before God in quiet meditation and prayer, looking to God and looking to His word that they might clearly see how far away from God this sectarian

religion has led them. God has no pleasure in it. He has pleasure only in those who love Him and seek to know Him. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, and My people doth not consider." **Isa. 1:3.** How dreadful a statement that is - that even a dumb ox should know his owner and a dumb ass should know his stall, yet God's people, the sheep of His pasture, know not the voice of the Lord! They know the doctrines of denominations. They can recite the records of great men or rhyme off their litanies and creeds, but, if they met Jesus on the street, nothing within them would respond or bear witness to Him. Oh, how we need to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering! Oh, how we need to say with Paul, "That I may know Him!"

Listen to that blessed apostle as he recounts in detail his illustrious religious past. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." **Phil. 3:5-6** This is indeed a very impressive array of first class religion, but it was worth nothing, even less than nothing, when it came to knowing Christ. Hear then as he continues his story. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." **Phil. 3:7-10** I do not want to unchristianize anybody, but God grant that millions may see that there is a vast gulf of difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ. Millions know about the resurrection, but few know aught of its power. We have preached the death of Christ but have never ourselves been conformed to it. Never have we died to the world or its systems, to the flesh or to earthly loves that we might live in newness of life with the risen Christ. We are far too much like Mary and Martha who amid their tears of sorrow said, "I know that He will rise again in the resurrection at the last day", but who knew not that the lowly man who stood weeping by their side was Himself the resurrection, nor did they know that the tears He wept that day were shed, not in sorrow for Lazarus who had died, but for the living who knew not that He was the resurrection and the life. He longed to dispel the darkness of their hearts that they might see that all who would believe on Him, though they were dead, should yet live and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him should never die. Oh, Thou blessed and wonderful Christ, who wept for man's unbelief and slowness of heart, Thou shall soon weep no more, for there ariseth a people in the earth who crave no more for theories and traditions, but only to know Thee. They have returned from their lost wonderings in the forests of traditions that they might know Thee who art both the resurrection and the life. Of them it shall be said, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." **Mal 3:16-18**

STATEMENT (5) "WILL A MAN ROB GOD?"

We have probably noticed by now that each accusation made by the Lord against these erring people is consistently followed by a question calculated to show their injured innocence in hope of justifying themselves before God. "Ye have wearied Me," saith the Lord, "yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Thee? "Return unto Me; but ye say, Wherein shall we return?" "I have loved thee; but ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?" And now, "Ye have robbed Me; but ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? Mal. 3:8. The answer is swift and clear: "in tithes and offerings."

It will not be our purpose to go over the whole history of tithing from beginning to end, vainly striving to answer the questions of every dissenter. The people of the church today are just like the people of Israel of yesterday. All those who wish to evade their duty will find a clever way to circumvent every command of God. Our blessed Lord continually faced this wretched hypocrisy in his day and with scathing denunciation rebuked the Pharisees with these words: "Howbeit, in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, for, laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them. Full well ye reject the commandment of

God that ye may keep your own traditions. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, (or, I have given God what I owed you), he shall be free." **Mark 7:7-11** It is simple and pleasing to the carnal mind to seek a way to avoid all the commandments of God to one's own satisfaction at least, but I greatly fear the story will be different later on when we discover that obedience to all God's will was in reality a test of true stewardship. We are always writing our examinations without knowing we are doing it. We are taking our tests for kingship and authority all unawares. Do not hide behind the cunning teaching so pleasing to the carnal mind that tithing belongs only to the dispensation of law, for tithing did not begin with Moses. It began with Abraham, who lived four hundred and thirty years before the law, who was justified by faith even as you are, Rom. 4:3, and who himself gave tithes to Melchisedec, Heb. 7:10, Gen. 14:20, after whose order Christ Jesus came.

Tithing is positively the only method of giving authorized by the scripture. What some call giving in the Spirit is in most cases "Corban". It is a modern excuse for disobedience to God. Surely, if a man gives in the Spirit, his giving should at least exceed his tithe, but of all those who make this claim it will generally be found that their so-called giving in the Spirit is always much less than their tithe would have been. Just as the Pharisees of old evaded their duty to their parents by saying, "It is Corban," so Christians of all ages have evaded their duty to tithe by their own personal way of saying, "It is Corban." Tithing is a business partnership into which God freely enters with His people. God does not need a cent of my money, for the silver and gold are His possessions together with the cattle of a thousand hills, but by this blessed partnership, the fairest and noblest ever devised, I receive ninety percent of the increase and God receives the remaining ten percent. As if to challenge all men to prove His worth in a partnership, He says, **Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive. I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the fields, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed:" Mal. 3:10-12** Some with evil intent have started tithing in hope that they would immediately find riches, but this is not the spirit of tithing at all. The hope of personal gain should never enter the picture nor corrupt the heart. God will take care of that as it pleases Him when He sees sincerity and faithfulness in your heart. I know for certain that many men who make no profession of salvation whatever have been temporarily blessed by God because they have faithfully tithed.

Now should someone reply that, since God has called us out of the church systems, he has now no place to put his tithe, I think we might well reply that in a world as needy as ours where two billion are hungry and ill-clad and millions are starving and naked, where multitudes are blind and sick and helpless, having none to care at all, it should never be difficult to find a place for God's tenth, which is His share of the partnership. To deny Him what is His is to rob God. Jehovah Himself has declared it so. Christians should avoid all the grandiose schemes promoted by high, pressure preachers, for in most cases they are a farce and a ruse designed solely to get possession of their money. There are, however, worthy organizations who attend continually to the work of mercy and who do a great good in relieving the distress of many. My own experience has been that God will give direction where we are in darkness in any of these things. It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful, not successful, but I do not believe any man can be found faithful who puts in his own pocket the tenth that belongs to his partner, the Lord.

STATEMENT (6) "YOUR WORDS HAVE BEEN STOUT AGAINST ME"

"Your words have been stout against me; Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" **Mal. 3:13-14** Indeed, there are times when it seems that it is the proud who are happy and well off. They that work wickedness are set up and they that tempt God are delivered. (See verse 15) But here is the patience and faith of the saints. It takes patience and faith to know that our reward does not come in this age, but in the age, which is to come. It takes patience and faith when we see the righteous cut off with no man laying it to heart, while the wicked grow strong and spread themselves like the green bay tree. It takes patience and faith to keep on walking, when others are turning back and seem to be prospering in their rebellion. It takes endurance to keep climbing, when others are heedlessly, carelessly sliding back. This is the patience and faith of the saints. **"The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His**

temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap: And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . And I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts." **Mal. 3:1-5**

CHAPTER TWO "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN"

Many centuries ago Solomon said, "Of the making of many books there is no end", **Eccl. 12:12**, and it was John the apostle who stated, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." As surely as the Lord is omniscient, there is no end to His understanding and the revelation of His truth. Month after month and year after year truth flows like an ever widening river of life making the words of Jesus literally true: "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given." **John 7:38** In this natural world "all the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full." **Eccl. 1:7** But in the spiritual world the opposite is true, for the boundless ocean, which is God Himself flows into all the rivers, filling them to the brim with an inexhaustible supply of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and reverence for the Lord. This is exactly what Jesus told us, for the rivers of living water that were to flow forth from the belly of believing man were to be the direct result of the indwelling Holy Ghost which was given to man, for He spoke of the Spirit, which had never before been given in any measure of fullness, and even unto this day we have received but the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

We felt it to be the mind of the Lord to turn aside from the many subjects that should be considered to write a simple exhortation to all whom it may concern that by God's grace we might better find our way in this most important hour when all the diseases, both physical and spiritual, of a sick, confused world are swelling up like a painful, malignant boil to fester into one diabolical head - antichrist himself, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is of God or that is worshipped so that he, as God, sitteth in the very temple of God, showing himself that he is God. **1 Thess. 2:4**. Any man today with an ounce of understanding must certainly be able to see that the systems of this world, both political and religious; have been caught in the throes of an irresistible force that is sweeping them relentlessly on like dust and corruption caught up in a cyclone, that all the world might worship the beast that had the deadly wound and did live, and that no man might buy or sell except he has the mark of the beast or the number of his name. This dread climax is sure and unalterable. No force of arms can stop it nor prayers of saints delay it, for God, in whose hands the nations of the world are but dust in the balance, has declared that thus it shall be. Let us not, then, waste our time trying to delay and hinder that which omniscient wisdom has declared must be, but let us rather take fast hold on that calling and election to which we are ordained that we may have one head, even the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath appointed the heir of all things, whose kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

We have lived so long as natural men in a natural world with a natural environment that to be converted and begin to live as spiritual men requires nothing less than a birth from above, for, if we have spoken of earthly things and men believe not, how shall they believe when we speak of heavenly things? Nevermore shall we enter the womb of our mother to be born a second time of the flesh, but the Spirit of God, that bloweth where it listeth, moveth even now upon the face of the deep, rousing men to resurrection and life, unlocking the closed mind, and giving the mind of Christ to those who adore Him that men might speak the wisdom of God which none of the princes of this world know and dispel the dim shadows of night from men's eyes that they might see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Then the lips of them that sleeps shall speak, for from the cocoon of our death comes forth a new creature that no longer crawls as a worm upon its belly but, borne up on the winds of the Spirit, it inhabits a new and heavenly realm henceforth to live as spiritual men spiritually and not as natural men naturally.

Though some may disbelieve it, the truth is that all spiritual men must and will appear to be mystics. It is not because they try to be so, but it is because they are so. They cannot help being oddities and misfits here

because they do not belong to this world, Jesus said, "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." Therefore, because we are not of this world, we will always be strangers to it. We are foreigners and wanderers in a strange country. Our speech will always betray us. Our actions and customs will always reveal us. Our communications with the spiritual realm will mark us. The things we love will unmask us. Our lack of interest in all that belongs to this present realm will give our identity away. We will always feel that we do not belong in this realm and that we neither can belong nor wish to belong. "They that speak such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." **Heb. 11:14-17**

There are several definitions of a mystic, but the one I like best is this: One who has been initiated into a mystery. Now when we realize that a mystery is something incomprehensible in its nature, something that can never possibly be understood apart from divine revelation, then consider how wonderful a thing it is to be "initiated into a mystery." Blessed be the man who has thus been enlightened by the Spirit of God! But such a man has no ability to disclose the truth revealed to him until the Holy Spirit in loving kindness draws aside the darkening veil and reveals the hidden truth that those who hear might understand. It is said of Jesus, "Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." **Luke 24:45** The heavens are closed because our minds are closed. Thus we grope in darkness and thus we remain until by the miracle of divine revelation our understanding is enlightened. We have tried to teach, educate, instruct, and explain, but, whether we know it or not, we miss the mark, for nothing is revealed until the Lord reveals it and nothing lives until the Lord makes it live. We may earnestly preach that man should repent, but no man can feel his need of repentance until God reveals his sin to him and grants him a spirit of repentance. We have tried to make men believe, but a man cannot believe unless God gives him believing faith, for faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. Eph. 2:8 We have been exhorted to turn our faith loose, but we have no faith to turn loose unless and until it is given of God. Then nothing can withstand it.

A spiritual man will always be an oddity in this world, not because he tries to be so as some have foolishly done, but because he is different from all other men. While the world and most of the Christians walk after the dictates of the flesh, the spiritual man walks after the dictates of the Spirit. His whole life on earth clearly testifies that, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Such a man no longer seeks to please himself as others do, but his constant prayer both night and day is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He does not have a multitude of requests to continually present to God, for he knows that even the prayer that sounds best may have come from the selfishness of human desire, but, having brought himself into complete harmony with God's will, he prays, "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

The natural mind does not know what is good or what is evil. It does not know that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting, or that sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. If such an evil as pain or sickness brings us nearer to God, then it is no longer evil, but good and is no more worthy of rebuke. To the spiritual man the will of God is not a cross but a crown, for it is his daily delight. It is his meat and drink, his joy and satisfaction. Withhold such a man from the will of God and he would die of utter longing. He has learned the meaning of the text, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, Oh God." He has found that the soul who thirsts after God's will does literally pant after God. He thirsts after the fountains of living water and hungers for the righteousness of the Lord. His soul is often sick with longing and he breaks out into all manner of exclamations even as Solomon who cried, "Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love (love sick)." **Songs of S. 2:5**

As a spiritual man progresses in the will and understanding of God, the realities of Gethsemane are borne in upon him. No longer with eloquent oratory does he describe the crushing hour Jesus endured in the garden but, having himself borne some of its agonies, he is loath to speak of it at all except to those who understand, for, if he ventures to speak of such sacred things to those who understand not, his words will seem but idle tales and his voice, echoing from the hollow emptiness of their stony hearts, will return void in his face. Few men know the bitter agony of the crucifixion of the human will, and neither do they see that from its dead and crucified self has one in the very image of God risen within henceforth to love and embrace only those things that belong to His divine purpose. Well did Paul say, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Let not those who enter into the secret of God's presence imagine even for a moment that other Christians will understand, for they will not. Tell them ever so earnestly, but they cannot hear. From this day forth the spiritual man will be a speckled bird. Jer. 12:9. Even while he tells them, their eyes will be heavy with sleep and he will seem to them as one who has taken leave of his senses. This in a measure is true, for the celestial realm is beyond the realm of time and sense. The people who listened to Paul cried. "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." To this he replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." **Acts 26:24** Perhaps Paul had this same accusation in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians, "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God." **2 Cor. 5:13**

It is undeniable truth that all the world lives after the flesh. The flesh and the flesh alone is the motivating power of the present world order. Everything from pins to battleships is for the sake of the physical body of flesh and not one thing devised by man exists except for the satisfaction of one or all of the five senses of the human body. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of the lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not. Ye kill and desire to have, and cannot attain." The banquetings, feasts, and abominable idolatries of the earth are all for the sake of the five senses of the body, and who is so foolhardy that he would dare to deny that the physical, corruptible body is a body of flesh?

All the gold on earth is not enough to buy a spiritual experience. Therefore, all the wealth possessed by man is laid up for the flesh and the flesh alone. Wealth can cater so much to the comfort of the flesh and the poverty of the spirit that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. All the diamonds of Africa could not atone for one sin nor bring one moment of the peace that comes from faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

Let us not imagine that it is only the unbelieving world that lives after the flesh. The undeniable truth is that the vast majority of believers live far more after the flesh than after the Spirit. They hate to hear it and the majority of Christians refuse to admit it, but it is so. They sing "Sweet hour of prayer", but most believers neglect to even hold family worship. They are conversant with their business affairs and even church affairs, but strangers in communion with God. They sing, "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my Saviour's praise", but their minds are filled with the latest hits, and, while they sing, "Blest be the tie that binds", they allow the least offence to sever them.

A man is not spiritual because he has quit all worldly pleasure. The reverse is true. The natural, the carnal, and the sinful have departed because of the abundance of his spiritual life. When his time becomes absorbed in the realm of reality, which is the realm of the Spirit, he does not have either stomach or heart for the weak and beggarly things of this life. If he tries for a moment to enter into them, he finds his heart drifting away from them because he belongs to a different realm and a different country, even a heavenly country. These light and frivolous things of the passing fail to interest him because they belong to the natural while he belongs to the Spirit. All his hopes and aspirations have fled from this world to lay hold on the things that belong to the realm of reality where he shall abide forever. Both the world and worldly Christians will think it strange that he runs not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of him, but they must give an account to God, who is ready to judge both the living and the dead. Even the memory of the days in which we did the will of the flesh should be sufficient for us, for then we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. See 1 Pet. 4:1-4 People who spend their time feasting their minds, their eyes, their stomachs, and their ears on the sordid things of this passing age are unaware that the man who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. The worldly minded find much of their transient pleasure by dishonoring their own bodies in every possible way, in eating and drinking to excess, by enflaming the body with strong drink, by doping it with foul-smelling tobacco, or by adventuring upon all manner of sex orgies. These are all enemies of the soul that endlessly and unremittently war against the Spirit. The man of God must purge himself from all these that he may be a vessel fit for the habitation of the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual man is peculiar because he has meat to eat that others know not of. So real was that heavenly meat in the experience of Jesus that, when weary and hungry He sat on the well in Samaria, He refused natural food, for His communion with God had supplied His need for both food and drink, and, when at last they offered Him food, saying, "Master, eat," He needed it not, for hunger, thirst, and weariness had departed

from Him as the indwelling Spirit of God quickened His mortal body. The life-giving Spirit was to Him both food and drink, though other men had still not discovered the truth of the words, "My Father giveth the true bread from heaven." **John 6:32**

The hour is coming and now is when the sons of God, who are coming into the image of the firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, will find themselves living in a spiritual realm completely independent of the bondage of all that is earthly. It is clear to be seen that Jesus, even while He lived among men being found in fashion as a man, proved that sons of God are in all things independent of the bondage and power of this present world system. Always after the hour of His baptism in the Jordan the heavens were opened to Him and all the lasting and eternal benefits of that realm were His, never to depart from Him. When He ministered, the angels of God ascended and descended upon Him. Is it any wonder that no power of man or devil could stand before Him? He manifested His authority over every disease known to humanity. The might of the most terrible demons was overcome with no more than the touch of His finger. Cf. Luke 11:20. Howling winds were calmed to gentle breezes at His rebuke, and violent raging seas whimpered like babies and fell asleep at His bidding of peace. He paid not His taxes by the labor of His hands. The wild beasts of the wilderness were as pets in His presence. The soldiers who were sent to fetch Him returned without Him, saying, "Never man spake like this man!" The violent mob who accosted Him in the garden fell helplessly before Him, obeying His command to let the disciples go free. John 18:2-9. And, when at last Pilate demanded, "Know you not that I have power to crucify Thee", He made him tremble with the words, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above." John 19:10, 11. Of death also he said, "No man can take My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself," and, though death was permitted to hold Him for a little moment, He arose in exaltation, bearing in His omnipotent hands the keys to both death and hell. Now with triumphant voice He cries, "I am He that liveth and was dead and, behold, I am alive forevermore!" Was there ever a question He could not answer? Was there ever a cunning plot He did not discern? Did ever thoughts live in the hearts of men unknown to Him? No! He knew them all, for He was the Son of God. This, then, is the heritage of sons, and it is high time we ceased to grovel about as other men, living in bondage to all manner of corruptible things. It is time to realize that there is an heavenly realm where sons of God may live far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come.

The unspiritual Christian struggles to keep alive all the things that God has ordained must die. He lays fast hold on the temporal things of this passing world. He hates to be reminded that his years are passing and that age is increasing because he unconsciously knows that each passing year will mean a shortening of his stay in the realm of the flesh, which he dearly loves. He hates the thought of death because to him death is the end and not the beginning. Even Solomon himself could not convince such a man that the hour of death is better than the hour of birth. Neither could such a one be persuaded that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting. Eccl. 7:1, 2 His life after the flesh has convinced him that youth is better than old age and folly is better than wisdom. Eccl. 7:3, 4

In meditation I have come to the conclusion that the spirits of all men were with the Father before they came forth from the womb. When a tiny baby is born into this world, his spirit has recently come forth from the presence of the Lord, but he remembers it not because a veil has been drawn over his mind. Heaven has been closed to him by his incarnation or en-flesh-ment and he sees the realm of spirit and reality no more until his days of travail in the flesh are done and his spirit through death returns once more to God who gave it. Eccl. 12:7. See then how much better is the hour of death than the hour of birth, for in birth we come forth from God's presence, but in death we leave the world to go to the Father. John 16:28

As long as our eyes remain closed to the celestial realm, we will always lay fast hold upon the fleeting things of this temporal world. Seeing nothing beyond this realm, we will struggle to hold fast to it. We will dread the appearance of every gray hair, knowing not that the hoary head is evidence of increasing wisdom and that the wrinkled face is the evidence that we have borne His yoke upon us, having passed through our wilderness, our Gethsemanes, and our Calvaries. The afflictions of this life leave upon our flesh and our spirits as well the marks of the Lord Jesus. The beloved Paul knew they were the marks of the Lord Jesus and he made no effort to hide or to erase them, but, bearing them with great pride, he said, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." **Gal. 6:17**

When king Solomon described the heavenly bridegroom, he said His hair was as black as a raven, Songs of S. 5:11, but, when John beheld His glory on Patmos, he said His hair was white as wool. Rev. 1:14 How glorious that is, for between the vision of Solomon and the vision of John lay Gethsemane and the cross, a life of sorrow and acquaintance with much grief. Recently in our journey we stopped for lunch at a restaurant. Three women sat at a table nearby. From their appearance we judged that they were a mother and daughter, and grandmother. The daughter looked young because she was only about eighteen. The mother looked matronly because she was, perhaps, fifty. But the grandmother looked ridiculous because she was evidently trying to look as young as the grand-daughter. Her wrinkled face was smeared with rouge and lipstick to simulate youth, her gray hair was dyed, she had plucked and arched her eyebrows and used eye shadow in profusion. The clothes she wore were suitable for a twenty-year-old lass, and her efforts at animated and youthful conversation were sickening to behold. She deceived no one but herself, poor lady, and I am sure she did not deceive herself either. But that is what I mean. Not knowing the realities of the Spirit, mankind, believers and unbelievers alike, are loath to see the visible and unreal slipping away. If indeed there were any truth to the frequent tales of ghosts that inhabit cemeteries, I suppose it would be because these spirits, having known naught but the unreality of the flesh, desire to return to it again. Even the flesh of swine was more acceptable to the demons at Gadara than no flesh at all.

A wonderful experience awaits the child of God when for the first time in life he sees that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." As long as a man sees every difficulty, every adversity, set back, sickness, bereavement, or failure as nothing more than the wicked hand of the devil hindering his progress in life, that man will always be a disconsolate, miserable, faithless, and unbelieving Christian. But, when he learns that these afflictions are sent in mercy and love from the hand of God and that they are not against him but for his eternal benefit, then the golden gates of a whole new realm of spiritual understanding and experience are wide open before him. There was a vast difference in the understanding of poor sorrowing Jacob and the oft stricken Paul. While Jacob mournfully wailed, "[Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away also and bring down my gray head with sorrow to the grave; all these things are against me.](#)" **Gen. 42:36** Paul, who knew affliction as few other men have known it, triumphantly exclaimed, "[All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are the called according to His purpose.](#)" **Rom. 8:28**

To see that our affliction is working for us and not against us is a most valuable revelation of truth. It is something that all people should learn and especially those who are the called in this particular hour. I suppose that many Christians were dismayed that such an indispensable man as Paul should spend years shut up in a dingy jail. Then, as now, no doubt the people thought this a master stroke of Satan to hinder the gospel, but it was not so. Paul's frequent imprisonments were from the hand of God and not from the hand of Satan. It was from these dank prison cells that his choicest epistles were written to bless and enlighten the saints and leave a heritage of spiritual truth for all ages to come. Paul did not fear his years in prison, for he well knew that, when evil men fastened him securely in the inner prison, binding him with chains and putting his feet in stocks, the angel of the Lord would bring him out if that were God's will, or that, when men left him for dead, God could raise him up again.

It is the visible things that are temporal. It is the invisible things that are eternal. Things, however thin, have two sides to them - the visible and the invisible. The visible side is what we see now - the pains, the tribulation, the distress, affliction, sickness, persecution, misunderstanding, and a thousand difficulties. But the invisible side, the thing that is hidden from us now, is the thing that affliction is producing. The invisible things are eternal things. While the outward man is suffering wear and tear and pain, the inward man is receiving fresh strength from God every day. The transitory troubles which we suffer are winning for us a permanent, glorious, and solid reward out of all proportion to our pain, for those who understand are looking all the time, not at the visible things, but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory, passing, and unreal, but the invisible things are permanent, enduring, and real. The man who spends his life bemoaning his afflictions is a loser, but the man who has learned that this affliction is producing an eternal weight of glory is a victorious winner indeed.

Evil cannot come to a good man either in life or in death. Evil only seems to come. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." The damning condemnations that men of ill will intend should do him harm, God intends for good. By His hidden and eternal wisdom God is ruling over all the forces of darkness, making the

wrath of man to praise Him, proving to such a rebel as Pharaoh that even he was raised up by the Lord for his ignoble task. Exod. 9:16 "What can ever separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? It is for God's sake that we are killed all the day long and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay! In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." **Rom. 8:35-39** Phillips Translation

Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed to him again? For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends; glory to Him forevermore. Amen and amen!

It should not be necessary at this hour to have to prove to any man that we are living in momentous days. All men instinctively know this to be true whether they be men of God or men of the earth. As the stirrings of spring come to the trees of the wood and as the urge of migration comes to the birds of the wild, so the awesome sense of a coming age is settling down upon all mankind. The feeling that, "something is going to happen" is expressed so often by many who make no profession of godliness whatsoever. It is like the troubled feeling that gripped Jerusalem at the time Jesus was born in the manger of Bethlehem. Matt. 2:3 Turmoil is everywhere. Like some phantom and evil spirit it has crept into all phases of life on a universal scale. The individual is confused. The homes are confused. The governments are confused. The United Nations is confused and has no more true unity than oil and water. Distrust, intrigue, and suspicion are rampant among them as they sit together and tell lies at one table. Dan. 11:27

The present visible church system with all its vast confusion of sects, denominations, ists and isms is not the true church at all, but is the confusion and disorder of Mystery Babylon, into which confusion the saints of God have been carried captive even as Israel was carried captive to Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon long ago. As the end of this age draws near, more and more efforts will be made to unite all religious systems. The so-called Protestant denominations will find a confused and unholy union with Rome, that mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. This union is taking shape with ever increasing haste before our very eyes. Day after day new innovations will come until the day the sordid union is complete. Almost every day now one may read of united meetings, ecumenical councils, or papal pilgrimages in which countless throngs bow before this modern Belshazzar of Babylon. Small wonder Jesus said, "I have come in My Father's name and ye received Me not. Another shall come in his own name; him ye shall receive."

Not only do we hear of united gatherings, but already the harlot and her daughters are building temples together. Only recently I received a clipping through the mail which we here quote in full: "Britain's first inter-religious church with facilities for Anglican, Free Church, and Roman Catholic congregations will be dedicated next June at Keele University in Staffordshire. A similar "Unity Church" for the three bodies is also planned for London Airport at a later date. The Keele University church will have three chapels grouped around a central altar. The work is already well advanced on the building, which will cost about \$235,000. Each church will contribute toward a university special fund which will finance the project." We are not only to see union between Protestants and Catholics, but already overtures are being made to bring in the other religious systems of the world that they all may drink from the same cup of confusion and all commit fornication in one unholy bed.

Many Christian people who have had a real experience of justification and many more who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit are deceived into believing that their little group will escape the arms of this great octopus. But this is not so, for the whole visible religious system is going to be swept into the seething cauldron. Many of the so-called full gospel people will enter into this union because they will soon hear of high-ranking churchmen laying claim to all manner of miraculous power. They will profess to speak with tongues, heal the sick, and perform miracles. Bishops, cardinals, and perhaps even popes will make all manner of apostolic professions so that many thousands will be deceived, thinking a great revival has come, and thereby, if it were possible, even the elect themselves would be deceived. Christians, alas, have become so miracle minded that they imagine that anything supernatural is necessarily of God. Do not be deceived by this, for,

when antichrist is revealed, he will be a miracle worker, and he will come with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they did not love the truth. 2 Thess. 2:7-12

We are living in an hour of great deception. We are in a time when the world and the professing church system is stacked full of false prophets, false teachers, false apostles, false evangelists, false shepherds, and false miracle workers. Men with false gifts, claiming to be some great ones, are abroad everywhere. There is no end to their abominable claims. False prophets are forever predicting things that do not come to pass or prophesying in such a way that they would appear right whatever may transpire. False deliverers, who are themselves helpless captives of some besetting sin, are professing to deliver people from all manner of evil.

Did not Jesus tell us that in the last day there would be false prophets and false christs and that many would come in the name of the Lord, saying, "I am Christ"? Did He not tell us that they would say, "Lo, here, and lo, there"? Did He not warn us that they would say He is in the wilderness, or He is in the desert or in the secret place? And did He not say, "Go not after them?" **Matt. 24:23-26** I am frankly amazed that during the last year I have heard of at least four different places being prepared in the deserts of the United States for a refuge for people in the great tribulation. The strange thing is that many are preparing to go to such places. Go, if you wish, but you will find it a farce in the end and no refuge at all. David had the true secret when he said, "God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (tribulation); therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed..." **Psa. 46** And again he said, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." That is where no evil will befall us nor plague come nigh us. That is where ten thousand will fall at our right hand and a thousand at our left. That is where the terror by night will not alarm us nor the arrow by day slay us. Only with our eyes shall we behold the reward of the wicked. **Psa. 91.** Elisha knew this refuge when the hosts of the Assyrians came to take him. Jesus knew it, too, when he said, "Know ye not that I could now pray to My Father and He would send more than twelve legions of angels?" This is the refuge we must have. Learn to dwell in the secret place of the Most High God and you will not be running to some false refuge in the desert when trouble starts. Remember the words of Jesus! When they say, "He is in the desert," go not forth.

In spite of all the years we have been in the church system, strangely enough very, very few people even remotely understand what the true church really is. We have been writing concerning the visible and the invisible, and we have considered at some length the words of Paul when he said, "The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." This same truth applies to the church. Man has been prone to see the visible thing upon which is inscribed the letters C-H-U-R-C-H. This he divides into endless segments, giving each segment a different name until there are so many names that we would be hard put to it to count them all. This vast visible confusion man calls the church. But the thing which man calls the church is by no means the thing that God calls the church, for, while man is looking at some visible temple he has built, God sees the true church rising on the foundation stone which is Jesus Christ Himself.

The true church always has been a mystery, invisible to the eyes of man but clearly seen by the eyes of God. The word 'ecclesia', from which the word 'church' is derived, simply means 'called out'. It is called out of the world; it is called out of sin; it is called out of Babylon; and it is called out unto Christ. When Jesus said, "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me", it should be perfectly clear that the ones who are the 'called out' are the ones who know His voice and who follow Him. The true church consists of the called out ones, the people who know the voice of Christ and are following Him and Him alone. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Even so they are not all church who appear to be church, but those who are disciples of Jesus Christ. Until we see the church as a wheel within a wheel, we will never discern the true church or the true body of Christ. The visible system means nothing. It is our hidden relationship to Christ that really counts. Man has placed tremendous emphasis on his association with sects, which erroneously call themselves the church. To be joined to them means absolutely nothing. If you could make yourself a member in good standing with every one of them at once, it still would mean less than nothing. The only thing that counts for anything is your union with Christ in the Spirit. Make certain of this above all else. Those who are united to Him, whether still in bondage to a system or whether they be free men, are the one true ecclesia, the one true church.

Jesus said, "I know My sheep and am known of Mine." It is to them that eternal life is given. They alone have the promise that "no man can pluck them out of the Father's hand." Great blindness has come over the world in that only a very 'little flock' discerns that the true, mystical, and invisible body of Christ is a separate entity from all the man-made systems that parade under the banner of the church. So degenerate has the understanding become that it is commonly believed that, if a person is not a member of one of these organizations, he is no better than a heathen and is completely outside the pale of the church. My spirit, soul, and body fiercely rebel against all such crude and uninspired understanding, for the opposite is the truth. All who are made free by the Spirit of God, who know His voice and are joined to Him in the Spirit, are the church of God in truth. These are moving farther and farther away from the confusion of all human systems and human understandings which bind men in chains of tradition and blind their eyes with scales of unbelief.

Whether we wish to receive it or not, the hour is coming and now is when even the angels of God will proclaim through the heavens, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues." While man is building great Babylon on the one hand and her mysterious power is rising to hitherto unheard of heights, God on the other hand is preparing her terrible judgment. All nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. It is in this tremendous hour of her great triumph, when the religious leaders of the earth imagine in their carnal minds that they have at last solved the religious differences of the whole world by casting them all into a common melting pot, that God is calling to His people even as He called to Lot in Sodom, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she has rewarded you and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her for she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." **Revelation, chapter 18**, deals with the fearful destruction of the system that is so rapidly coming to its fullness in our day.

In the world system and the existing church (I fear the two are wed) the day of the individualist is gone. Everybody, every nation, every religion, is being thrown into one melting pot to be either melted together or frozen together in one vast sea of humanity from which the Beast himself shall rise. But let us not forget that, while all this is going on, God has a chosen people, a peculiar people, an elect people who are joined to Him in perfect unity of spirit and mind, and who are joined to each other, not by physical presence, but by this omnipresent Spirit. Most of these people have never seen each other's faces, yet they are one, for spiritual unity does not depend on the close proximity of physical beings but upon the unity of the Spirit in Christ. All who are one mind with Him are one mind with each other, regardless of distance. Paul once said to the Colossians, "Though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith." **Col. 2:5**

In the days of Elijah, the prophet, all Israel was following the prophets of Baal, but unknown to Elijah and all unknown to each other there were seven thousand people who had never bowed the knee to Baal, but were sincere servants of the Lord. With which one of these two companies did Elijah belong? Was he one with that vast, visible, confused religious system which was preaching and prophesying all about him, or was he one in heart and soul and spirit with that hidden seven thousand whom he had never seen nor heard of before? Well do we know the answer to that question. Elijah was one heart and one soul with that invisible number in whose presence he had never been, for they were one spirit with the Father and therefore one spirit with each other. The physical unity of crowds and congregations means nothing. The unity of the spirit means everything.

There is an election today in the four corners of the earth. There is a spiritual body of Christ forming. They are like Jonah, who could not be assimilated by the monster of the sea. They are like the three Hebrew children, upon whose bodies the raging fires of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace had no power, or like Daniel, who stood unharmed in the den of lions. They are like those oppressed and afflicted Jews who, though scattered among all the nations of the earth for thousands of years, have resisted assimilation, remaining always a peculiar people unto God. As the Jew cannot become one with the nations that surround him, neither can we spiritual Jews become one with the denominations which surrounds us, for they, too, are nations.

Let none fear to be an individual before God.
Let us not fear to be individuals in our community.
Let us not fear to be sheep among goats or wolves.
Do not be afraid of being different.
All who are one with Him must be different because He is different.
New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth.
They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth;
Lo, before us gleams her camp fires.

We ourselves must pilgrims be, Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly Through the desperate winter sea, Nor attempt the Future's Portal With the Past's blood-rusted key.

CHAPTER THREE "LET US"

The Epistle to the Hebrews is a book of books for this vital hour, which immediately precedes the universal splendor of the kingdom of God. The devout, inspired reader of this sublime truth is carried by the spirit of revelation into fathomless depths and precipitous heights as the unfolding revelation, like the rays of the morning sun, comes stealing o'er the meadows of the heart, melting away the winter snows of death that glittering streams of life might flow in desolate places, bringing forth food to him that eateth and flowers to perfume and gladden the heart of man. None but the omniscient Holy Spirit, full of all the wisdom and understanding of the universe, could take the whole purpose of God toward man and blaze it on a written page as clear as the noonday sun that all who have eyes to see may see, yet hide the whole plan as in thick darkness from those who have eyes but see nothing save those weak and beggarly elements that belong to a passing age. They know not that man's life in this realm of death is but a vapor that appears for a little time and is gone. It is like a flower of the field that for a moment sends forth a sweet perfume, but whose petals fade on the morrow, or like the green grass that shows its beauty today, but tomorrow is withered with the east wind.

It will not be our purpose now to attempt to unfold the wonders of this book, but rather to present twelve of its most important exhortations. Though no book in all the Bible contains greater depth of truth, it is a most solemn fact that, because of this, no book in all the Bible is so replete with exhortations to steadfastness. The reason for this must be clearly understood by us all, for it is better never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn from the holy commandment and return as a dog to his vomit or as a sow to her wallowing in the mire. God requires very little of the heathen who never has heard of the one true God, or that He gave His Son a ransom for all, but it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and of the powers of the age to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them unto repentance, seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame. That which bears fruit is blessed of God, but slack, half-hearted, and back-slidden devotion bears only thorns and briars and is rejected of God. Let none of us who have escaped the bondage of the harlot church system be like those Israelites who, having escaped the slavery of Egypt, in their hearts turned back again, nor yet like those who, fearing the giants of the promised land, perished in the sickening wilderness of their own inexcusable unbelief. Those unbelieving ones who partook of the corn, the wine, and the grapes of Canaan, (see Num. 13), yet turned back into the wilderness, were not in an hour as important as the hour in which we now find ourselves, for they were but types and forerunners of us who, having escaped sin's slavery, have partaken of the first fruit of the Holy Spirit and the power of the kingdom age to come. Those who partook of grapes and then turned back can scarcely be considered so wretched in their state as those who have partaken of the Holy Spirit, the good word of God, and the power of the coming age, yet have turned back to the old ways for fear of the unknown lest they become a gazing stock. Beware of unbelief, the deceitfulness of riches, or the lust of other things entering in, for these choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.

The first exhortation - let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it, Heb. 4:11, - follows quickly the revelation given in chapter one, and we may

say that Hebrews, chapters two and three, both concern themselves with mighty exhortations lest by any means the glorious things disclosed to us in chapter one should slip away from us. For this reason he says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip." **Heb. 2:1** The things which we have heard are the awe-inspiring things spoken of in chapter one, which we must now pause for a moment to consider, for, if we miss the truth of chapter one, there is little object in reading the rest of the book at all, for its message will be lost to us.

The man who opens his heart to God's eternal purpose will find himself sailing away on a limitless ocean of eternal truth, for God will open His mind to him, but the man who steadfastly abides by the blinding and studied traditions handed down from generation to generation by pope and priest and preacher will find himself stalemated in the sucking quicksands of human tradition from which there is no escape. Human philosophy has fast closed the gates of spiritual understanding, blinding the eyes and darkening the minds of men, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and be delivered from the net in which their feet are taken. The doctrines of men have made the word of God of no effect. Thus men live and die, never daring to believe that limitless understanding awaits them just beyond their confining horizons of human traditions.

During the past many years my heart has developed an ever, increasing love for God. It is not that obnoxious, sickening sentimentality that human beings call love, but a love that has its foundation in understanding. We can never love God simply because we are told to love Him or taught that we should love Him any more than we can love a person just because we are told to do so. I sincerely doubt that we can truly love God because He first loved us or because He delivered us from death or hell; but of this I am certain, that once a man begins to understand the fathomless depth of God's purpose, a new appreciation will fill his life. Then he will begin to understand the meaning of all things. He will see the purpose of the fall, the meaning of redemption, the reason for temptation, tribulation and tears, for "when wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee and understanding shall keep thee." **Prov. 2:10**

It is the unfolding of His eternal purposes that fills the heart with love for God, for by His purposes come understanding and appreciation. "What is man that Thou are mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownest him with glory and honor and didst set him over the works of Thy hands." But some will say, "Are not these promises made with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father?" Yes, indeed they are, but have we not learned that He is the firstborn of many brethren? The glory that God gave Him He has given to us who are joint heirs and sons of the Father. Is it not clear that the first begotten Son of the Father, who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, is the head of all the sons of God who by infinite grace shall come into that same image throughout the ages, that they might share His glory and reign with Him in the kingdom of His Father? Did that first begotten Son pray in vain, "Father, I will that these which Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am"? Did He say in vain, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me"? Oh, no, these were not idle words nor vain prayers. These were the outspoken purposes of God purposes, which He held in His divine mind before the ages ever began. This is the wisdom that the Lord possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. "I (wisdom) was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth, or the fields, or the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there. When He set a compass upon the face of the depth; when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the foundations of the deep." **Prov. 3:22-28**

It was by wisdom and knowledge that all the plans of God were formed. Nothing was ever left to chance. All things work according to the counsel of His omniscient mind and hasten to do His will. Thus even the wrath of man praises Him. The rebellious man in his vain imagination thinks to thwart God's purposes only to find in the end that he was but a senseless tool in the hands of the Almighty to accomplish a purpose whether noble or ignoble. Was it not so with the wicked and rebellious Pharaoh of whom God said, "For this cause I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee and that My name should be known in all the earth."? **Rom. 9:17**. And even Michael the archangel brought not a railing accusation against Satan, knowing full well that he, too, was a

necessary part of God's plan. He railed not against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee," **Jude 9** Man in his blindness and ignorance is forever judging other people, never learning that in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and earth. Some are to honor and some to dishonor. 2 Tim. 2:20 Who are we, therefore, to judge another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth, for God is able to make him stand. Rom. 14:4

If you will prayerfully read the first chapter of the book of Hebrews, believing with all humility that everything there spoken of God's glorious Son, Jesus Christ, is also spoken of that vast family of sons who by infinite grace are coming into that same image of Christ, then for the first time in your life you will begin to understand the book of Hebrews. Then you will also understand why the apostle repeatedly warned and warned again to steadfastness, exhorting over and over again to walk in great fear before the Lord.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." He is speaking, not in prophets, but in Son. God's beloved Son consists of Christ Jesus, the head of the sons, together with that many, membered body of sons, of which we in the last days are the beautiful, anointed feet. Mary of Bethany anointed both the head and the feet of the Son of God, for both belong to the one body. John the apostle saw the head (Jesus) as white as wool and the feet (the many sons) as brass burned in a furnace of fire. Rev. 1:14,15. It is of this complete Son he speaks, and it is in this Son that God is now speaking in these last days and will speak in that glorious age that lieth at the door. God has appointed Him (the Son) to be heir of all things. For Him He made the worlds and formed the ages. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!

The sons of God have inherited a greater glory than angels, for unto which of the angels said He at any time, "Thou art My son; this day have I begotten thee?" And again "I will be to him a Father and he shall be to Me a son." **Heb. 1:4-5** Of the angels He saith, "Who maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire, but unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, oh God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." **Heb. 1:6-9**

In the light of such glorious hope is it any wonder that David said, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownest him with glory and honor and set him over the works of Thy hands." **Psa. 8:4-6, Heb. 2:6-7** And is it any wonder that the apostle, seeing all these glorious truths by the Spirit, said in solemn warning to us, the heirs of this glory, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip"? And again "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both by signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His will?" **Heb. 2:1-4.**

It is not unto angels, glorious in wisdom and strength, that God has assigned the glory of the coming age, but unto the sons of God. We do not at this moment see all things under the feet of the sons of God. Quite the opposite, to be sure! But we do see Jesus, the head Son, the first begotten, crowned with glory and honor, and seeing Him, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, for we know of a certainty that as sure as He is crowned, we shall also be, for He who sanctifieth (Jesus) and they who are sanctified (the sons of God) are all of one, that is, they all have one Father. For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the church (the called-out) will I sing praises unto Thee, and again - here am I and the children (sons) which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:11-13** With such glorious hope in view what manner of persons ought we to be?

Let us therefore fear. Heb. 4:1 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God because there is no fear of the Lord in it. The fear of the Lord is not terror or dread; neither does it imply being afraid, but the fear of the Lord is founded on deep and reverent respect for all that God is and does. The wicked make a mock of God and His awful power. They joke at sin and belittle righteousness. There is no fear of God before their eyes. "Eat, drink, and be merry," they say, "for tomorrow we die", caring not at all that after death men shall be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. It is with

deep regret, however, that we must confess that lack of fear and open disrespect for the promises of God are not confined to the ungodly. Their wickedness can be understood and often overlooked because God has never spoken to them nor opened their darkened minds. Well we might say with Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But the glaring fact, which causes me endless concern and untold groaning in the Spirit is that among the professing Christians, unbelief is rampant. Christians do not stand in awe of the mighty promises of God. There is no fear in their hearts that through unbelief and just plain carelessness they will come short of the promises of God.

Is it any wonder that Paul, after having explained the eternal hope of sonship which is so great a part of God's plan of salvation, said, "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip; for, if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation"? **Heb. 2:1-3** I tell you the truth out of a heavy and continually burdened heart, I greatly fear that many who read the truths contained in this book are merely given a nodding mental assent to them. Many have a tiresome way of trying to incorporate these glorious truths into their theology without the slightest effort to have their lives transformed by the truths they read. It is only a condemnation to a man to learn of the mind of Christ if he is unwilling to put away his own carnal mind that the mind of Christ may dwell in him. What, indeed, is the value of learning of the greatness of God's will if our own will remains uncrucified? It is only condemnation to learn of sonship if we do not lay hold of that very spirit of sonship, which continually cries, "Abba Father!" and yields to God as His obedient sons in everything. It is those alone who are led by His Spirit that are sons of God, not those who play with spiritual gifts and all manner of pretended ministries, for one may speak with the tongues of men and angels and still be no more than sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Sonship comes to none without dreadful loneliness and much chastening, for the Father scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

Many, I fear, are learning the truth of Mystery Babylon, yet, like men beholding their natural faces in a mirror, they go away and forget that the mirror showed them the need of cleaning up. It is better never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn from the commandment delivered unto us. Would God that we prodigal sons, who have devoured our living with the harlots of Babylon, would now all arise and go to the Father, leaving forever the swine pens of organized religion, the husks of human theology. Then would God say, "Bring hither the best robe and put it on him, for I will be to you a Father and ye shall be My sons and My daughters."

The hour is at hand when the last call to sonship will be given. Those who have not treated with respect each revelation that has been given them will find their lamps have gone out. Then will the doors be shut against them for the age. Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it.

Let us labor. **Heb. 4:11** "Let us therefore labor to enter that rest." It may seem peculiar to be asked to labour to enter rest, but it is an undying truth.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount its summit round by round.

If any man thinks he can attain the great and precious promises of God without applying himself to them, he will find himself doomed to bitter disappointment, for it cannot be done. The path to sonship is a steep, uphill climb. You will find yourself groaning while other Christians shout. You will be weeping while others are laughing. You will be heavy while others are light and gay. You will suffer adversity and shipwreck while others sail through peaceful seas. You will be friendless and alone while other Christians are the life of the throng. The folly of pursuing such a toilsome path will be vividly pointed out to you by friend and foe, for there are much easier ways and much good company to cheer you along. But forget not that it is the way of the cross that leads home. It is the strait gate that leads to life, but the wide one that leads to destruction and loss. When the journey becomes almost unbearable with the difficulties, the crosses, and the heat of the way, then

consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds; for ye have not yet resisted unto blood in your strife against sin. Heb. 12:3

The important thing is never to flag nor fail, faint nor grow weary, for it is infinitely better to be found laboring to enter into His rest than to take the easy way with the crowd only to find in the end that it leads irretrievably to destruction. Refuse not, therefore, to labor, for it is the very thing, which is used of God to eliminate the half-hearted.

Let us hold fast. **Heb. 4:14** "Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession without wavering." "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he will receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." **Jas. 1:6-8** God has no pleasure in the man who, like a wave of the sea, is tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight (meaning sleight of hand) of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. He is interested only in speaking the truth in love that in all things we may grow up into Him who is the head, even Christ. Eph. 4:14-15

The visible church system, which is not the true church at all, is holding fast to many things that should have been discarded centuries ago. The Pharisees of Jesus' day held the doctrines of men for the commandments of the Lord. So now Christians adhere to many things, which in reality are only hand-me-downs from the papal throne. Tradition would not be so serious if it were not for the damning fact that these doctrines hold the people in spiritual infancy and immaturity, forbidding them to ever attempt to leave the cradle of immaturity and go on to perfection. We have said before and now repeat that the man-made term Full Gospel is one of the most crippling terms ever devised. Those who use it vainly pride themselves with the notion that they have received every blessing God has offered to man in this age. How often I have heard them say, "There is nothing more; we believe in justification by faith, the baptism of the Spirit, the coming of the Lord, and divine healing." This they call Full Gospel. Why, the truth is that these blessings belong in the very nursery of Christian experience. They are only the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Heb. 6; 1,2. Perfection is far beyond them.

It is not enough for a man to give mental assent to the Bible revelation of sonship, or the mind of Christ, or the will of God. We must hold fast to such a confession, laboring continually to enter it, proving ourselves in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, in honor or dishonor, in face of evil report or good report. Though looked upon as deceivers, yet our sole defense is truth. 2 Cor. 6:4-8.

It is better never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn from the holy commandment. Therefore, let us hold fast, unshakable and immovable, to the hope that is set before us whether it be the hope of sonship, the hope of the kingdom, or any joy that is set before us. There is an anchor that reaches within the inner veil, which takes fast hold of Christ, the forerunner who has already for us entered heaven, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

It is always easy to drift along with the crowd, but the crowd is never right. Never, never have confidence in the acclaim of the crowds. They will carry you on their shoulders today and carry you on a cross tomorrow. These things I speak with truth and soberness from knowledge born of experience. Jesus never had confidence in man, for "He knew what was in man."

Do not hold fast to reputation, fame, traditions, doctrines, or crowds, but, proving all things, holdfast to that which is good. 1 Thess. 5:21 Holdfast to sound words. 2 Tim. 1:3 Hold fast in confidence firm to the end. Heb. 3:6. Above all let us hold fast our profession (confession) without wavering.

Let us come boldly. **Heb. 4:16.** "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." There is an unholy boldness, which is founded upon ignorance, that presumes to step where angels fear to tread. It is a boldness not founded on wisdom or godly fear, but on presumption. It is ready to boast of its laurels, to stand before God with its demands, pretending to be on excellent terms with the Lord. It is obviously rampant in prayer, especially among those who delight in long public prayers, who

loudly present a multitude of demands before the Lord with neither respect for His divine will nor knowledge of His purpose. This thing God hates. There is a holy boldness, which has its foundations in the wisdom of God. It stands praying, "Not My will, but Thine be done." It takes its firm stand with respect and fear, knowing by holy faith that Jesus Christ has entered for us into the very presence of God, having obtained eternal redemption for us through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Nothing can bring so much boldness to our prayers as the knowledge that we are approaching in the divine will, that the promises we claim are not only written in the word of God, but have been made real and living to us by His indwelling Spirit. When the inner man witnesses to the rightness of a cause, there is not only holy boldness before the throne of God, but also holy boldness in the presence of our enemies. The boldness that comes from the knowledge of God's will is like the holy boldness displayed in the hearts of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who refused to bow down to the Babylonian image, though they knew full well that the burning fiery furnace awaited them. Thus with boldness and assurance they answered the enraged king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image that thou hast set up."

Dan. 3:16-17

When anyone embarks upon the ocean of God's eternal promises, he is questioned immediately by friend and foe, but it is not to men he owes a satisfactory answer. It is before God he stands. Let us therefore come boldly and walk boldly without faltering or consenting to do things occasionally to please some carnal friend who sees naught but his childish tradition. Let your sincerest testimony be, "I do always those things which please the Father."

Let us go on to perfection. Heb. 6:1. The prize of the high calling of God is "in Christ Jesus." Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. To be found in Him, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, is the ultimate prize. This in itself is the high calling. May the Spirit of God open the eyes of all who read to see that the oft repeated expression, in Christ, is not merely an all-embracing term including within itself all professing Christians. Of all God's callings the in Christ calling is the high calling, for to which of the angels said He at any time, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee"? **Heb. 1:5** But of the Son He saith, "Thy throne, oh God, is for ever and ever; the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom; Therefore God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." **Vs. 8-9** Sonship is the hope of all creation. Bringing many sons to glory is the eternal purpose hidden in the heart of the heavenly Father, but now revealed in the last times for us who by the power of God are reserved unto so great salvation.

Perfection has nothing to do with outward show or even outward testimony. It is a condition of the heart that is ever forging forward o'er mount and glen, o'er crag and torrent, completely oblivious to every thought except to gain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us lay aside every weight. Heb. 12:1. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a remarkable panorama of men and women who, in their search for perfection, were willing to lay aside every weight and the sins, which beset them. We are living in an age which is cursed with many weights that not only impede our progress to the distant peaks of God's high calling, but stop us dead in our tracks. Many a man has begun to run well who, after making a good start, has become involved, not with sin, but with weights. He becomes so involved in the affairs of business that he has no time for prayer and meditation. No new inspiration floods his soul. He becomes business minded, money minded, and consequently worldly minded. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. Thus he trades a mess of pottage for a birthright. The little dialogue, which took place between Jacob and Esau long ago is taking place in the lives of Christians every day.

There is another weight that is no less damning and even more deceitful. Many have started the long journey toward sonship, but have turned their eyes aside to behold the glamour of the harlots of Babylon. They become more and more involved with the backslidden church system. They fill their lives with her activity and embrace the bosom of her doctrines until the hope of the high calling of God vanishes from their spirits. When will men learn that the swaggering thing that calls itself the church is not the church at all? Every day we live

the evidence becomes clearer that all the religious systems of earth, whether pagan or Christian, are openly flirting with each other. They are even now preparing to give all their power and authority to the beast who had a deadly wound in the days of the Reformation, but whose deadly wound is now healed. That is why all the world, both pagan and Christian, is wondering after the beast, and falling down more and more to worship at his image even as they worshipped the image of Nebuchadnezzar.

Committing adultery with this harlot system is an enormous weight that will drown men in perdition and blind their eyes to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Be not deceived by this lecherous woman. "Let thine eyes look right on and thine eyelids straight before thee." **Prov. 4:25**

Let us run. Heb. 12:1. Laying aside every weight naturally precedes running with patience, for what man can run a race who has not first stripped for the race, laying aside his garments and every encumbrance that he may press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? They who run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. In the races of earth only one can win, but the race we run is not a race for any earthly prize. It is a spiritual race for a spiritual prize. Therefore, the prize is not confined to one, but many may win, even all who have heard the call of God. So run, therefore, that ye may obtain.

There will come times when our running will seem more like a slow walk, but, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we shall have fellowship with all who are thus pressing on. Then again even our walk may seem to have to come to a standstill, but did not Paul say, "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth"? The race we have entered does not depend on speed but upon faithful plodding. Never look back to see what others are doing, for he who putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God. In this hour when the world is turning into a literal Sodom, preparing itself for dreadful destruction, let us who are fleeing to the mountain of God's high calling remember Lot's wife, who ceased from her fleeing, her running, and her walking to look back with longing eyes to the city of destruction, for she became a pillar of salt, preserving for all time the ghastly testimony that all who look back have judged themselves unfit for the kingdom of God.

Let us go forth. **Heb. 13:13.** "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Let us go forth! What tremendous words are these! Perhaps this exhortation is more applicable to our times than to any other time in history. It was outside the camp of the world's religious systems that Jesus suffered. As Israel put Him forth outside their camp, crucifying Him on Calvary's hill, even so now He stands without. Within the camp you may find religion, but without the camp you will find Him. The confining walls of religious systems have never been able to confine Him. The fools of earth have thought to build their walls high enough to contain Him, but they are like the men in the legend of the wise men of Gotham, who built a wall to keep a lark in their garden. No sooner was their wall finished than the lark had flown away, and no sooner have men built their denominational walls than Christ is to be found, not within their narrow confines, but without the camp.

It is always a reproach to go without the camp unto Him because those foolish religious bigots think they have Him cornered within their walls. Without exception they imagine that they have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but He who is the truth has departed from them and stands without their camp. They have become like the frog who lived in a well who firmly believed that he possessed all the water in the world, refuting all arguments that without were ponds and lakes, rivers and oceans. So these vain dreamers have taken up their position behind the high walls of their sect, reproaching all who, in their longing for Him, have climbed beyond the wall whether it be denominational, undenominational, or interdenominational, and have gone without unto Him, bearing His reproach.

The visible church system is crucifying Christ every day. It is staggering like a drunken man in his own vomit. Isa. 16:14. The tables they spread are full of vomit. Isa. 28:8 Will men forever return as dogs to their vomit and sows to their wallowing in the mire? 2. Pet. 2:22 The hour has come when we must heed the call, "Come out of her, My people?" **Rev. 18:4** Why do men and women insist that they must assemble together with a system that has dethroned Christ? Why in their ceaseless quoting of **Heb. 10:25** - "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" - do they close their eyes to Paul's exhortation, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and ye shall be My sons and

daughters?" **2 Cor. 6:17-18** Sonship is promised only to the come outers, the people who separate themselves from harlot systems and go without the camp unto Christ. If you must assemble, then assemble with the ones and twos, for where two or three are gathered in His name He is in the midst. There is today & first fruit company heeding God's warning and leaving Babylon, but the hour is at hand when even the angels will fly through the heavens, proclaiming this message to all who dwell on earth: Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues. Rev. 18:1-4

I am stricken with utter amazement when I see how willingly Christians pass up their hope of the high calling of God that they might be sitters at ease in Zion. It is so easy to pause in the race to listen to canned sermons, to hear people sing, or to enjoy the inspiration that comes from being with any crowd, but, after it is all over, the face of Christ has not been seen, for He abides without the camp. Let us, therefore, go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

Let us consider. Heb. 10:25. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. There is in the heart of every true child of God a delight in seeing other people making progress toward sonship. We should always be ready to stir a man up both to love and to good works. Paul in his day saw a great value in assembling together for the purpose of exhorting one another. Please do not try to convince me that the modern type meeting where people continually repeat their prepared acts of worship, singing hymns and listening to sermons, is the assembling of which Paul speaks. How much exhorting one another have you ever seen in this modern merry-go-round? You know as well as I do that this was not what Paul had in mind. The early church did not indulge in the farce and fanfare we have today, which is a disgrace both to the intelligence of man and the wisdom of God. Church meetings have become a place for the propagation of human programs and the gathering of huge offerings, a convenient place to rob the poor of his mite, to devour widows' houses in the name of some ambitious scheme to evangelize the heathen or to buy a gospel tent. Innocent and well-meaning people foolishly trust these money-mongering monsters, never dreaming that their gifts are fattening the bank rolls of these covetous men who deceive people with pretended dreams and visions, prayer for the sick, and promises of financial blessing to those who give generously. Well did Peter say, "**Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not.**" **2 Pet. 2:3** Furthermore, if you will lift the deceitful curtain of religion, you will discover that these so-called places of fellowship are hives of discontent and distrust, places of bickering, backbiting, strife, jealousy, and envy. Just as surely as God called His people out of Egypt and out of Babylon, He is now calling, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues."

Well did Isaiah the prophet speak of this evil day when he said, "From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores? They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment... Except the Lord of hosts had left a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons, and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting... And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood... Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy Princes (preachers) are become rebellious and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards. See Isa. 1. This whole picture is a true portrait of the existing church and the greedy vultures who cunningly divest the people of their money in the name of their programs, which for the most part are deception.

This is not the assembling of which Paul spoke. All such assembling is wrong and nauseating in the sight of God. If you must assemble, find some man or woman who loves Christ, for they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. Have we forgotten the words of Jesus when He said, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them"! There can be far more pure edification and exhortation when two or three earnest souls commune than where a thousand people are gathered to listen to robed choirs and prepared addresses. Men have thoroughly lost the simplicity as it is in Jesus Christ. Well did Jesus say, "In vain ye worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Let us not only give the word of exhortation, but let us hear it as well, provoking one another, not to anger, but to good works, to love and devotion to the Lord.

Let us have grace. **Heb. 12:28** "The grace of God has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." **Titus 2:11-13** Let us have grace, even the grace of God, for the grace of God teaches us how we are to live in this present age, causing our hearts to look for that wonderful and blessed hope, the appearing and revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let the grace of God dwell in you richly, for grace is of God. The indwelling Christ is in reality the grace of God; apart from Him no grace is offered unto man. It is His abiding presence within that transforms our lives into His image and likeness. The more the life is controlled by Christ, the more His grace dwells in us; and the more grace dwells in us, the more His grace is manifested to all mankind. Grace is not only the unmerited favor of God, but grace adorns the heart of man with beauty and honor, dignifying the life with harmony and serenity. It is the regenerating and sanctifying power of God within, keeping our hearts in the love of God that we might serve Him with reverence and godly fear.

If there was ever a time when men should avail themselves of the grace of God, it is now. May we like Abraham, Noah, and Lot find grace in this darkest hour of the world's night? Let us look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble us, and thereby many be defiled, or lest there be any fornicator, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know that afterward, when He would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears. Heb. 12:15-17 There is abundant grace available for us all in these difficult days when God is trying the hearts of men, separating them as sheep from goats that His sheep might follow Him to green pastures and still waters of His kingdom.

Let us draw near. **Heb. 10:22** "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" is the word of the Lord. To stand without may seem humility to some, but when Christ has opened wide the door into the sacred presence of God, humility bids us enter in. The Father has given many exhortations bidding His children draw near unto Him, but there is also the unholy readiness in the carnal heart to accomplish some other thing first, to covet greedily that which belongs to this visible realm of death and unreality. The vast majority of Christians are exactly like those men who were bidden to the feast. "Come," said the Lord, "for all things are now ready." But they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first, intent on pleasure, said, "I have bought a piece of ground and I must needs go to see it." The second, intent on business, said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them." The third, presenting the family excuse, arrogantly slammed the door against the invitation saying, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." **Luke 14:16-24** These three excuses — pleasure, business, and family connections - have robbed more people of the hope of sonship than all else combined. In fact, these three things are so all-embracing in this present world that nothing lies outside them. Because men love the visible, they never behold the invisible, and because the visible is tangible to their physical senses, their spirit is never permitted to dwell in the realm of reality.

The Lord, being angry at their paltry, rude, and arrogant refusal to enter in, sent to the streets and lanes for the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind - people who had neither business nor pleasure nor earthly ties. In they came from byways, streets, and hedges, maimed and blind to the things of this present world, but capable of seeing the invisible, Publicans and harlots came, cleansing their hands and purifying their hearts, turning their backs on the visible and unreal and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the Father.

We are without doubt in the end of the age. Everywhere great Babylon is rising in greater power. Protestants and pagans alike are looking with wondering eyes toward Rome, that great mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth. Even now all the world is wondering after the beast, the beast that had the deadly wound (in the days of the Reformation) and did live. All those who would draw nigh unto God must come out of her, for she is drunken with the blood of the saints and strewn with the bones of the martyrs of Jesus. Let us then draw near to Christ, making Him our Lord and Head, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us offer praise. Heb. **13:15** "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." Praise is comely. It is like martial music to foot-weary soldiers, inspiring the soul with faith, filling the heart of God with love and admiration for His faithful ones. What greater lesson can any man learn than to praise the Lord for all things and in everything to give thanks? Honest heart-felt praise to God is a sure sign that we are learning that "all things are working together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose." Rom. **8:28**. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord," said faithful Job. "Oh, that men would praise Lord for all His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men," said David. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content," said Paul. "I have learned how to be full and to be hungry, to abound and suffer need; I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Let us speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, for this is a tremendous source of spiritual victory and progress. By so doing walls are broken down, the mouths of lions are stopped, the violence of fire is quenched, and enemies are scattered.

In this awesome hour of the world's darkest night when unspeakable insanity abounds in high places, when religious systems are looking with covetous eyes toward great Babylon, let us who are of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus come out of it all unto Him.

Let us fear lest we fall short of the promise He made us.

Let us labor to enter into that blessed rest.

Let us go on to perfection, leaving the initial doctrines behind.

Let us draw near in full assurance of our faith.

Let us consider one another to provoke each other to faith and good works.

Let us lay aside every weight and the sins that so easily beset us.

Let us run with patience the race set before us.

Let us go forth unto Him without camp, bearing His reproach.

Let us have grace that we may serve God acceptably.

Let us offer the sacrifice of praise, giving thanks to His name.

CHAPTER FOUR IF ANY MAN

The Lord our God is the Lord of all the universe. Beside Him there is no God. From Him everything comes; by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. "God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation". Acts **17:24-26** In Him we live and move and have our being. We also are His offspring and ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven with the art of man's device. Likewise He has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by that man, Jesus Christ, whom He has ordained, and He has given us assurance that He liveth in that He raised Christ from the dead.

It should not seem strange to discover that God, who made the world and all things therein, should have a secret purpose, wise and glorious, for every man on earth, seeing He has given life and breath to all things. "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Psa. **139:15-16** If, therefore, God fashioned us in His own mind and wisdom when we did not yet exist, like an image in a piece of stone before the artist has cut it out, then we have perfect assurance that day after day the gradual but eternal fashioning is proceeding as it pleases Him. At times our souls cry out in despair at the grotesque and horrible image of self we see before our eyes, but, while we betimes sink into gloom and almost despair, the heavenly architect and master builder is fashioning with fierce heat and telling blows a vessel of His own choice.

Nothing useless is or low;

Each thing in its place is best,
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

"I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." **Isa. 45:5-7**

Once the believer embraces the truth that God almighty and all-wise controls the world and all things therein, his heart will find rest in the majesty and faithfulness of the Lord. I know of nothing that will bring such peace as the perfect knowledge that before all things, above all things and in all things is the faithful, all powerful, all merciful God, full of loving kindness and tender mercies. His eyes behold, His eyelids try every thought and act of man. Eternity itself will not mar His patience or cause His loving kindness to cease.

In every creature God has made from the enormous blue whale, weighing one hundred and thirty tons, to the most infinitesimal speck of an insect He has placed the law of self-preservation, and we would not be wrong to say that even the law of reproduction, inherent in the animal kingdom and in the plants as well, is largely based on the law of self-preservation. The law of self-preservation is a divine law. By it the Lord not only preserves Himself but expands Himself through the vastness of the creation He has made. Even the formation of the body of Christ, that many-membered body of God's sons, is an expansion of the Godhead. Together with man's desire to preserve himself the Lord has placed a thirst for God and an inexpressible desire to know Him and return to the glory of His presence within him. God, who made the worlds and all things therein, is at present dealing in particular with one special part of His creation. In the beginning the Father said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness." He prepared the earth as a dwelling place for the man He was about to make and placed all things and all creatures in that earth at the disposal and behest of man. That man might be in the image of God, he must first be brought to an experimental knowledge of good and evil. Therefore the creature was made subject to vanity before he was created. Likewise also the full plan of redemption was laid. Rom. 8:20. Thus, when the human family was brought into being, the Creator knew full well that after centuries and millenniums of time He would present all mankind faultless before the throne of His glory to take his place in Christ as ruler and lord of the universe.

Now, just as the Lord has placed the instinct of self-preservation in every creature, so has He placed in man the desire and instinct to worship God and come at last into His image. However far a prodigal may have wandered, his thoughts continually return home. That which we call conscience is nothing less than the Spirit of God following man whithersoever he goes. Not only is it with him, but in him. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb." **Psa. 139-7-13** Oh that men might learn, whether they be saints or sinners that the almighty Father continually possesses our reins! As a rider reins his horse with bit and bridle or a pilot guides an ocean liner with a very small helm, so the Lord holds our reins, guiding us through life's fearful tempest safely into His desired haven.

Many are the precious promises our Lord has extended to mankind. His promises are as limitless as Himself. Who could ever comprehend the vastness of His love or fathom the prodigality of His tender mercies? Who can grasp the extent of His wisdom or measure the expanse of His immutable purpose?

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but He has revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For centuries His loving call has been to "any man" and every man. It is undoubtedly true that special promises have been made to chosen vessels, but faith placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit reaches over every obstacle to grasp the richest promise. Did not the Queen of Sheba come from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon? And

the harlot Rahab - did she not believe and perish not? The Syrophoenician woman, too! Can we not hear the beautiful words of Christ, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt." Did not the Roman centurion find deliverance for his demoniac son? And Cornelius also - did not God hear his prayer and send Peter to him that he might be saved and filled with the Holy Ghost? Well might we once again repeat the words of Peter, spoken on that glorious Pentecostal morning, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." **Acts 2:39**

IF ANY MAN THIRST

There was a feast in Israel well known as the Feast of Tabernacles. As the Feast of Passover found its fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ, the Lamb of God slain to take away the sins of the world, and as the Feast of Pentecost found its fulfillment in the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so the Feast of Tabernacles will find its fulfillment in the second coming of the Lord. First He comes secretly to believing men. We see the sign of His secret appearing in **John 7:10**. "Then went He also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret." Then He entered into the temple and taught. **Verse 14** Finally, on the last great day of the feast, He revealed Himself publicly to all the people, crying in the temple, "Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am." **Verse 28**. Later during His mighty sermon He stood and cried with a voice that arrested the attention of all around, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given..." **Verses 38-39**.

There is a thirst in the heart of every man for the fountains of living water. The vast majority of mankind has mistaken the thirst they have for living water to be a thirst for some temporal thing. Vainly they imagine that thirst can be satisfied by partaking of the stagnant waters of earth's cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Place after place they roam in their pitiful search for the fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to Christ. "I will give unto them the water of life freely" is His promise to "any man". He becomes all in all to every searching heart. When Jesus comes, the thirsty soul finds the fountain of living waters. There his thirst is slaked forever. Henceforth the river is in him, springing up unto eternal life.

David in his longing mused, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" What a tremendous cry this is for the water of life! That cry is as much in the heart of a king as in the heart of the man in the gutter. The abundance of temporal possessions dismally fails to satisfy the longing of the spirit. Christ alone can satisfy the inner man because the inner man is not natural or physical, but spirit. When deep calls unto deep, then all his waves and billows flow over our thirsty souls and we are satisfied with the water of eternal life.

If lost and hopeless man, stained with the vilest sin, will call on the name of the Lord, saying, "My soul thirsteth for Thee; my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is," then he will experience His power, His loving kindness and tender mercy and his lips will worship Christ for His unending joy and peace. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." **Isa. 55:1** Poor, sin-laden mankind, impoverished in spirit, is forever spending money for that which is not bread and laboring for that which satisfieth not. They queue up before the liquor stores to buy wine and strong drink that can do no more than dull their senses. They throng the places of pleasure or traipse sadly to the harlot's house in their unending longing to satisfy the thirst that is within them. They fill their lives with the vanity of things and more things, only to find that all they have attained rises to mock them in the end. How often of late I hear folks speak of the Shah of Iran — a man in possession of billions of this world's wealth, but sick unto death, homeless, without a country and unwanted by all except those few who think his presence may add somewhat to their own storehouse! This is the way of the world. No satisfaction can be gained from its fountains, for all its potions are libations of death. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

Our Lord had been preaching in Judaea and, as usual, He had met with the suspicion and mistrust of those perennial, unbelieving Jews. He therefore left Judaea, John tells us, John 4:3, and departed into Galilee. I have often wondered at the statement, "He must needs go through Samaria." Probably we may advance a dozen

reasons why He must needs go through Samaria, but I like to think His omniscience told Him that a woman was there who long had thirsted for satisfaction, but had never found it though many a time in her searching she drank of the broken cisterns of this sad world only to find her thirst unslaked and her longing unsatisfied.

The day was hot and the journey long. Both Jesus and His disciples were weary and thirsty as they approached the little city of Sychar. On this spot, centuries before the patriarch Jacob had bought a plot of ground for his son Joseph. Here he had dug a well and drank thereof, himself and his cattle. Centuries had come and gone since then and now Jesus had come, weary with His journey and athirst from the burning heat of the noonday. It was, we are told, the sixth hour of the day. Tired and thirsty and having nothing with which to draw water, He sat thus on the well until presently there came a woman of Samaria with her water pot to draw water. I have often been filled with admiration just to see how Jesus wisely unfolded the deepest truths to congregations of one or two. It was to an earnest man who came to Him by night that Jesus disclosed the eternal truth, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It was to a sobbing Mary and a heartbroken Martha that He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." To Peter and James and John He showed the vision of the Son of man coming in His kingdom and it was the solitary John on lonely Patmos who saw the surpassing glory of the Alpha and the Omega. Now again the Saviour stands, talking to a woman who is thirsting for living water, but knows not it is living water she needs. Ah! He thinks this may be the reason He "must needs go through Samaria." No one ever thirsts for Christ without His knowledge of it, or will they call upon Him for bread and their hunger not be satisfied.

He satisfies the longing soul;
He fills the empty place.
His love is over all;
I'm enraptured by His grace.

"Give Me to drink," He requested, knowing as He did that a request for help often turns the most grudging stranger into a condescending friend. But the woman, poor soul, more concerned with her petty cavil than with the need of this weary man, objected, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?" Though she knew it not, this was the very question Jesus was expecting; therefore He replied, "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken it. Human efforts to enlighten men to their need of God will always fail. Only to Christ is power given to open the blind eyes of sinful men even as the scales fell from the vision of Saul when Jesus purged them away. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," He was telling her, "**but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**" **But the woman, seeing no ray of light through the darkness of her understanding, replied, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."** **John 4:13-15**

Perhaps you have wondered why Jesus left off speaking of the water of life to say, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." It was because she was not yet fully awakened to her spiritual need. She knew not that she was a sinner in need of a Saviour and those who are not awakened to their need can never understand beyond the natural realm. All she had seen until the present was the possibility that she might somehow avoid the task of trudging to this well for water. "I have no husband," the woman replied. It was when Jesus told her, "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband," that conviction of sin began to be awakened in her and with it came the spiritual knowledge that this man was no ordinary man, but a prophet of the Lord. When at last her debates were at an end, with the wistfulness of a rising hope she ventured, "I know that Messiah cometh, and, when He is come, He will tell us all things." To this our Saviour replied, "I that speak unto thee am He." The woman, seemingly dumfounded with amazement, forgot her errand, dropped her water pot and ran off to the city, saying to the men, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

I know not how the Spirit moves, convincing men of sin.

Nor how, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for His own; But I do know that, if any man thirst and come to Christ for drink, the water He will give will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Unto thirsting souls who now read these lines, to you the word is spoken. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

About 1733 the Spirit of the Lord began to deal with a young man by the name of George Whitefield. Whitefield had been taught, like many others, that God's favor could be gained and salvation earned by doing many good works. From the writings of one, Henry Scougal, he learned that works were of no account in God's sight. What he needed was to be born again. In search of this experience he gave up everything of any pleasure to him. He even left the fellowship of the Holy Club. Nothing he tried was of any avail. In his search for God he drove himself harder and harder until his health began to break. In the end, when nothing he could do or pray was of any help to him, he threw himself upon his bed and cried aloud, "I thirst." According to John Pollock in his popular biography of George Whitefield, it was the first time in his life that he had ever called out in utter helplessness. Pollock goes on to describe what happened next:

"He became aware that he was happy, as he had not been happy for nearly a year. Instinctively he knew why. He had thrown himself at long last, blindfolded and without reserve, without struggle or claim, into God's almighty hands. And Someone seemed to say, "George, you have what you asked! You ceased to struggle and simply believed - and you are born again!" The sheer simplicity, almost the absurdity, of being saved by such a prayer made George Whitefield laugh. At that laugh the flood-gates burst. "Joy - joy unspeakable - joy that's full of, big with glory!"

IF ANY MAN LOVE ME

"If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23**

When any man thirsts after God, coming to Him in penitence, humility and faith, a very definite work of regeneration takes place within him. Because the penitent has believed, he is washed from his sin by the power of the life blood of Jesus Christ. Paul in his epistle to Titus speaks of this experience as "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." **Titus 3:5** When a soul dead in trespasses and sins is touched and renewed by the Spirit of God, this is the new birth. That newborn soul is both regenerated and renewed. In the words of Jesus, he is born again. We are born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Paul has so well said, "By grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." **Eph. 2:8-9**

There are thousands of people today claiming to be born again who have never really believed on Christ nor experienced the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit within, making them new creations in Christ Jesus. The frequent and careless use of the term born again among loose living and totally unregenerate people in our day is nothing less than a wicked attempt by Satan, that enemy of all righteousness, to belittle and annul the reality of the born again experience and to bring it into the dust of disrepute. When ungodly entertainers, together with men and women of corrupt lives, claim to be born again, they bring disgrace and disrepute on one of scripture's holiest terms so that unbelievers will say, "If he is born again, then I don't want the experience."

Nebuchadnezzar, that lofty king of Babylon, carried the holy vessels of the Lord's house in Jerusalem to the temple of his mindless, heathen gods in far away Babylon, and his wicked grandson, Belshazzar, in his debauchery and drunkenness brought those same holy vessels into that voluptuous carousal known as Belshazzar's feast. There his indulgent wives, his dissolute lords and his intemperate army generals drank wine from the Lord's holy vessels as they praised their gods of gold and silver that can neither hear nor see nor talk. That night Babylon fell and Belshazzar himself was slain. The new birth in all its regenerating purity is far above the principalities and powers of this godless world. Though evil men and seducers, waxing worse and worse, would surreptitiously drag its glory in the dust, that holy experience, remaining pure as God is pure, belongs wholly to men and women who are washed from the filth of this present age in the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

"If any man love Me, he will keep My words," Jesus said. Are you having difficulty in your Christian experience? Do you lose the victory and fall into the same old pit from which you were dug? The secret of your victory, or lack of it, is in loving Christ. In whatsoever degree your love for Christ is manifest, in that degree, will your victory also be. In scripture we are told that John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, but I'm sure Christ's love for John was not a matter of favoritism. Our Lord was simply requiting the love John had for Him. Jesus loved Lazarus and Martha and Mary, but, wherever mention is made of that blessed trio, there is indisputable evidence of their personal love for Christ.

"If any man love Me, he will keep My words" John 14:24 Is that not exactly as we would expect it to be? Could we, in fact, expect anything less or anything else than this? Would we not rightly conclude that, when men and women love God, they will be faithful to Him and express their fidelity to Him in every test? Yea, verily, it is so. Those who love Christ long to be with Him where He is, not that they are anxious to die or even leave the body, but rather because they know they will be completely satisfied when they see him as He is. "Every man who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure."

He who is born of the Spirit has already tasted of the resurrection. Resurrection comes first to our spirits and finally to our physical bodies as well. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," Paul said. What words could better express a resurrection from the night and death into which we had fallen and into which Adam fell in the Garden of Eden? "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Neither the flesh nor any of its works will ever avail to draw us nearer to God. The same Spirit that raised up Jesus must also dwell in you and me. And, says Paul, **"If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His ... but if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."** Rom. 8:9, 11 Here is a promise of physical resurrection from the dead at the end of the age and of physical healing at the present time.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," that is to say, a new creation. Old things have passed away and, behold, all things are become new! There is no fact concerning the new birth more pertinent than this: It must remain forever true that, when Christ comes into a life, the world with its affections and lusts loses its grip and an entirely new life ensues. If one who professes conversion continues in sin and unclean habits, there is good reason to doubt that he truly repented in the first place. There is certainly no reason to believe he is born again. If there is one thing above all else that must follow the new birth, it is a complete change and transformation, not only in the manner of living, but in spiritual attitude and outlook. The chains fall off, the power of sin is broken, the heart is free and love for Christ rules the life.

Once you were dead in sin. Now you are alive in Christ. Once you were lost. Now Christ has found you. The sinner does not find Christ. It is Christ who finds the sinner. It is He who seeks the lost until He finds him. Man never thirsts for God until the Lord creates the thirst. Man will never come to Christ until the Father draws him. The grace of God must be received by faith. Saving faith is not your faith. It is God's. That is why Paul said, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." It is of faith that it might be by grace.

This resurrection life in Christ must never be buried and consumed in the world and the things of earth. So many Christians even in old age seek with dogged tenacity to establish themselves in the affairs of this passing life. The more they seek the things of earth the colder grows their love for Christ. The word of God is very pointed in its instruction here, stating with definiteness and emphasis, **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."** Col. 3:1-3 We have died to sin and the passing show of earth, and have been raised to a new life in Christ. Because of this we should turn our attention, and above all our affection, to things above, and not to the things on the earth. Mortify - that is put to death - the things that are of the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Put off all these: Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, and lie not one to another seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds. It is not our putting off of these evil things that saves us, but we put them off because we are saved, as James so pointedly said, "I will show you my faith by my works." Men who continue in their sin have never truly

repented and never truly believed, but as a dog returns to his vomit and a sow to her wallowing in the mire, so these, being unwashed and unregenerate, return to their old sins. We, having repented and believed, have put on the new man, which is Christ. In Christ we depend on neither circumcision nor uncircumcision nor any other work. His grace has made us new creatures. Christ has become all in all.

Since, then, we have put off the old man and his nature, together with all his deeds of uncleanness, and have risen with Christ, put on therefore as the elect of God mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering and such other beautiful graces as belong to the resurrected life. Col. 3:12 Above all things, the Spirit bids us, put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness. Col. 3:14

We have now come again to our starting point. If love is the bond of perfection and perfectness, we can see with clearness why Jesus said, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words." We cannot gainsay that. If, therefore, we are not living victoriously, we must conclude that we are not loving Him as we ought. Our love for God is manifest in a love for all the things of God. If we saturate our lives with corrupt reading, profane stories and worldly associations, we will become exactly like these same corrupting influences. Evil communications corrupt good manners. The reverse can never be true. If on the other hand we saturate our lives with the word of God, seasoning it continually with prayer, we will become like Christ, because Christ and His word cannot be separated.

Behold the book, whose leaves display
Jesus, the truth, the light, the way.
Read it with diligence and prayer;
Search it and thou shall find Him there.

"If any man love Me, he will keep My words." But how can we keep His words if we have not first hidden them in our hearts? Beautiful is the promise, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words," yet I think no promise can excel that which follows: "My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23** The precious promise continues: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. ... He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit... If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you... As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love... These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." From **John 15** The promises proffered the man or woman who loves God are simply endless. Christ, having said, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you," promised an entirely new relationship when He said, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." **John 15:14-15** Verily, verily it is true! "If any man love Me, him will My Father honor."

IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." **Rev. 3:20**

Towering truths appear throughout the Bible, standing as beacon lights to guide our footsteps and illumine our pathway as we walk this celestial way. No other book ever written has the inherent wisdom to disclose the future with unerring accuracy, giving light to the wayfarers and understanding to all who reverence and receive it.

When John wrote to the seven churches of Asia, he sent the prophetic message, which Jesus Christ had given him. It appears that at the time of his writing there were only seven churches in Asia. The spiritual condition in these churches and their standing with God differed greatly. We may be sure that the message sent by Jesus to these churches applied to each of them personally, but we may be equally certain that the message was prophetic and was intended to portray the spiritual condition of the church throughout the age of grace. If the things written there were intended only for the local churches of that day, then it would be difficult to see any

reason for their being included in scripture at all. The message does, in fact, portray all the great events of eschatology. The truth is that these seven churches, each in its turn, represent the spiritual condition of the church throughout the age of grace. The last church, Laodicea, represents the spiritual condition of the church in the end of the age. Very little of good was spoken to this lukewarm church of the last day. She prided herself in that she was rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing, but she knew not that she was wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked.

One cannot imagine words that would more exactly describe the church system of the twentieth century. Like men in a dream the church imagines herself to be full, but will awake to find herself empty. The thirsty man dreams he drinks, but awakes to find himself parched. The blind man dreams he sees and the naked man imagines himself clothed. Those who believe the world is now in the midst of a great revival are deceiving themselves. Scripture bears abundant witness that in the end of this age it will be difficult to find faith anywhere on earth. Darkness will cover the earth and gross darkness the people. There will be a famine, not of food or water, but of hearing the word of God. In our day Bibles can be bought in the dime store and sermons can be heard any hour of the day or night, but practically no one, the preachers in particular, is hearing the word of God. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man comes. Few were listening then; few are hearing now. As it was in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, so shall it be when Jesus comes.

Never in the history of the world has there been so much preaching and so much human effort, or so many multi-million dollar steeple houses on the street corners, or so much church membership, or so much effort to convert the world, but Christ, locked out of their grandiose schemes, stands outside.

When Jesus came to Kensington,
They would not give Him pain.
They simply passed Him on the street
And left Him in the rain.

It is not my purpose here to explore in detail the present condition of the church system, but when Jesus sent His message to the wealthy church of Laodicea, which boasted that she was rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing, He portrayed Himself as one standing outside and knocking at the door. He was not within, as He should have been, but on the outside. Behind the doors that were locked against Him they were preaching about Him and singing about Him and building for Him, but He himself they had left outside. My dear friends, if our Lord Jesus Christ were to come into the churches of our day, there would be a revolution. The first thing he would need to do would be to drive out the money changers, overthrow the pulpits and chase out the puppeteers, cast out the human programs, and clean out the basement kitchens, recreation rooms and gymnasiums. The whole church system of our day is built on the programs and efforts of the flesh rather than the glory of the Holy Spirit. Many will dislike me for saying these things, but that is of little consequence. The truth is that Christ is outside the church system and His Spirit is not in its works. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so." **Jer. 5:30-31** When therefore the message was sent to the church at Laodicea, which represents the church at the end of the age, Jesus Christ is seen standing outside. The message of Christ at the end of the age is not to the church as a whole, but, because the church as a whole has rejected Him, to the individual believer. With His patient but challenging message He calls, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

When the glory of the Lord departed from the temple in the days of Ezekiel, it did so after this manner. The shekinah, which was the glory of God's presence, dwelt between the cherubims in the house of the Lord, but, after Ezekiel was shown how the house of God was profaned, he saw the glory of the Lord remove from between the cherubims and stand over the threshold of the house. Ezek. 10:4 Next he saw the glory remove from the threshold to the door of the east gate, Ezek. 10:19, which was in the midst of the city. Then finally the Spirit removed from the city of Jerusalem entirely and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city. Ezek. 11:23

This picture is so relevant to our day! All that ever happened in Israel was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope. Rom 15:4. In this we have a picture as exact as anything could be. The glory and power of God has been replaced by human effort and organization.

Preachers vainly think that money and programs will suffice, but they will not. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The temple worship in Israel carried on as before. Though Ichabod was over the door and the glory of God had departed, Israel neither knew nor cared. This same unspeakable tragedy is now in evidence in the Laodicean church of today. Because she is lukewarm, she is being spewed from the mouth of the Lord. Christ is no longer within. He stands without. Programs have pushed him aside. The glory of God has been changed into an image, fashioned after the design of men. They have discarded the upper room in favor of a supper room. They have rejected the power of the Holy Spirit and adopted education and oratory in its place. They have forgotten that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. They imagine God to be such an one as themselves.

If Jesus Christ is on the outside of the system, is it any marvel that His elect saints should be found there, too? You can bring in your money and wealth and human talent, but don't bring a revelation from heaven. It just won't be tolerated. In this day of Laodicea Jesus Christ is calling, not to the crowds but to the individual, whether he be saint or sinner, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man will hear my voice, I will come in to him." I do not want to make the scripture say something that it did not intend to say, but it is not unreasonable to state that, when Jesus comes in to a man, the real truth is that He comes into the man, for He, who once dwelt with men, shall be in them. John 14:17 The mystery hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest to His saints, is that Christ "is in you" is the hope of glory. Col. 1:26-27 In the wilderness God dwelt in the tabernacle, but not in the people. The message of the New Testament is that the Holy Spirit dwells in the people and not in a building made with hands. "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." **Acts 7:48** We are now permitted to experience what the prophet foretold: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:16**

In the mad and often frantic rush to build bigger and more elegant buildings and introduce more sophisticated social programs Christians compromise more and more, hoping to hold the worldly-minded young people, under-toning all that is true so that no one will be offended. The church of Laodicea has left no room for Jesus, but has pushed Him and His gospel right out the door. This will naturally be vociferously denied. Nevertheless, it is true to the pattern clearly defined in Rev. 3:14-22. "Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?" **Isa. 42:19** Not too long ago a worldly-minded woman with whom I am acquainted, having attended one of these grand gospel meetings, enlightened me thus: "You see," said she, "They don't preach from the Bible any more. They preach on topics." I did not reply, but she was right! I do see, and the deduction she made was for the most part true. When you listen to the vast, expensive T.V. or radio programs, how much truth do you hear? A little bit about healing, a few threats of hell and damnation, promises that, if you come to the Lord, He will save you, and the rest of the time concerns John Doe and his program and how badly he needs your money to carry it on. Is it any wonder that the glory has departed?

Though the lukewarm church of Laodicea has no room for Christ and His glory, the promise given here to the individual is matchless, priceless and incomparable. No more exalted promise could have been given to mankind. If any man hear my voice, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." To sup with Christ is to commune with Him. It is to fellowship with Him and to freely partake of His Spirit. "I am the bread of life," Jesus said. **John 6:48** And again, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." **Verse 50** "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." **Verse 51**

There are so many things written in God's word that beggar description, defy understanding and challenge explanation, but their mystery can be revealed and made shining clear by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The heavenly truth, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day", cannot possibly be explained to the satisfaction of the natural mind. The natural mind will collaborate with the unbelieving Jews to scornfully argue, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" But, while their dispute rages and their vociferations become more clamorous, the believing soul carries off the victory, partaking of Him by faith, dining at His celestial table and slaking his thirst at the fountain of living waters. That heartbroken pair who at eventide trudged wearily from Jerusalem to Emmaus were bowed down with despondency, heartache and unbelief until Jesus the Christ came to sup with them. The moment He blessed the bread and broke it for them, their eyes were opened and they knew Him.

alone when Jesus dines thus with us? I exhort all God's saints in this lukewarm age of Laodicea to open wide the door that Jesus may enter in to fill our beings with light and understanding.

We have already briefly considered the text, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words." This is a most wonderful truth. However, the remainder of the verse reads thus: "And My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." It is gloriously true that, "if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him", but happy indeed is the man who has learned that, if he loves Christ, He will come in to abide with him forever. No longer will He be a guest in his heart, but he will honor Him as the Host of that spiritual temple which he is. He will take the crown of honor and glory and place it upon His worthy head that He may reign as King of kings in the kingdom within him, shedding His light, teaching His ways and sanctifying him through His truth. This Lord of humility, who so gently knocks at our door, is to become our first and greatest love. Our heart will burn within us as He opens His eternal truth and reveals the purposes, which were in His mind before anything was.

He tells me of the years that went before me
When heavenly plans were made for me to be;
When all was but a dream of dim conception,
To come to life, earth's verdant glories see.

In this evening hour of the age, in which Laodicea, swelled with carnal pride, proclaims, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing", knowing not at all that she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, let him who would be wise open the door that Christ may come in to abide, bringing with Him all the fruits and graces of the eternal realm to adorn the temple which he is forevermore.

"If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if a man love God, the same is known of Him." **1 Cor. 8:2** The man who knows the most is the man who best understands his own ignorance, but the man who thinks he knows is the man who will discover in the end that he knows nothing as he ought to know. The gross imperfection of human knowledge is always evident. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" **1 Cor. 2:14** "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11** Never, never try to pry into the things of God with the natural mind, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Never enter into an argument concerning the things of God. God will not be present in your argument, but will leave both you and your adversary in darkness. But, if you will say, "Lord, open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law", then the Lord will open your eyes. If you will pray, "Lord, reveal the truth of this difficult text", presently you will find its mysteries unfold and your understanding will be enlightened.

There is much subtle truth in these words of Jesus: "For judgment am I come into the world, that they which see not might see; and they that see might be made blind." *When the Pharisees, who thought they knew just about everything, asked, "Are we blind also", Jesus replied, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."* **John 9:39, 41** Had these people been willing to say, "We know nothing yet as we ought to know", and so confess the darkness of their human understanding, then would the Lord have removed the scales from their eyes and the truth would have been made known to them; but because they said, "We are not blind. We see", then the Lord had no choice but to leave them in darkness. Many blind were healed by the power of Christ, but only those who knew they were blind and asked that their eyes be opened. If, therefore, we confess our blindness and lack of wisdom, the Lord will give us the wisdom that is from above, but if we say, "I see; I know; I understand", we will discover in the end that we knew nothing as we ought to know.

We love the preaching of the cross because we have found it to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. For this reason we glory and exult in it. But to them that perish the preaching of the cross is foolishness, because there seems to be no wisdom in it. The corrupt and carnal mind will often ask, "Why could God not have saved the world some other way?" They cannot grasp the truth that "except a com of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." Neither do they

perceive that only by death could Jesus Christ "shed forth" eternal life to all creation. Acts 2:32,33: Titus 3:6. Never did Jesus give eternal life to any man before His blood was shed. The life is in the blood, but when He died, eternal life was shed abroad with the promise, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

The preaching of the cross is foolishness to the natural man, but thus saith the Lord: The wisdom of man is foolishness with God. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart. Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preached to save those who believe. For the Jews demand signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God stronger than men." **1 Cor. 1:18-25** R.S.V.

The sermon preached by Paul on Mars Hill and recorded in Acts 17:22-34 is believed to be the second most eloquent speech ever made, but it accomplished very little and made but few converts, because the whole sermon was an appeal to the wisdom of man. It may have been a difficult lesson for the apostle to learn, because he, too, was a man of great learning; but when Paul left Athens and came to Corinth, he abandoned forever all dependence upon human argument and the wisdom of this world. "I came NOT with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." **1 Cor. 2:1-2** That, beloved friend, is the wisdom of God. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," he wrote, "and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." **1 Cor. 2:3-5**

In verse six Paul begins to introduce a further wisdom. It is the wisdom that comes by spiritual revelation and can be imparted only to those who are coming to perfection and who walk in humility with Christ. It is not for the proud or the scornful, nor is it for any kind of public display. "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." **Verses 6-8** Here is an exceedingly great truth. Here is wisdom, which the world has never learned; neither can they ever know it or learn it. Furthermore we must confess that the wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory is a wisdom, which only a handful of Christians ever come to know. So many Christians are like little children playing with their toys. They become so involved with their activities, their doctrine, their experiences, their joys and sorrows that they never become acquainted with the eternal wisdom which God ordained for us before the world was. The things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man are never revealed to them, because they are inclined to imagine that they know all there is to know and understand all there is to understand. Because they say, "We see", therefore they remain blind.

Though I loved God from the beginning of my walk with him and rejoice greatly in the salvation He imparted, I must confess that it was not until the Holy Spirit began to unfold the hidden mysteries, ordained before the world began, that I really became enraptured with an ever deepening, ever widening love for the Father, who purposed all things from the dawn of creation and who now manifests His power in gathering all things into Himself. When He revealed by the wisdom of His Spirit that "of Him and through Him and to Him are all things", **Rom. 11:36**, or, as Goodspeed translates it, "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends", then my love became ever increasing and shall know no bounds at all.

From his storehouse of spiritual understanding Paul says, "Among the pure we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those that love Him, God has revealed to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." **1 Cor. 2:6-10**. R.S.V.

Not many saints have been wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised by the world to bring to nothing the honorable and the mighty that no man might boast in His presence. Jesus Christ is the source of all true wisdom and understanding; therefore let him that boasts boast in the Lord. If any man love God, the same is known of Him. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. The wisdom of the world puffeth up, but the love of God buildeth up. Knowledge with conceit fills the mind with wind, so that it is puffed up, and often tends to be hurtful to others as well as ourselves, but love edifies ourselves and seeks to build up others. He that knows most best understands his own ignorance and grasps the imperfection of all human nature. He who thinks himself a man of knowledge and is vain about it has reason to suspect that he knows nothing aright or as he ought to know. The man who loves God is taught of God. He drinks deeply of His Spirit and the Spirit in turn reveals the things, which eye cannot see, nor ear hear, neither can enter the heart of man.

A wise old owl sat in an oak.
The more he saw, the less he spoke.
The less he spoke, the more he heard;
God make us like that wise old bird!

Here within the confines of one text we have the true secret of understanding. First, "If any man thinketh he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know", and second, "If any man love God, the same is known of Him."

In all the world there is no greater darkness than that which encompasses the man who is ignorant of his Maker and his Maker's purpose. All the dreadful turmoil and strife in the world in our day has come upon us because practically none of the leaders knows anything of God's will. God is not in all their thoughts, nor is He in any of their actions. While they profess to know God, in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient and unto every good work reprobate. The solutions to the world's problems are actually exceedingly simple. There is nothing complicated about our problems if we would take God's way, but, because man is intent upon dethroning the Lord and Creator of the universe and putting Babylon's god of gold on the throne, all becomes confusion. Because carnal man does not want to retain God in his knowledge, the Lord has given him a reprobate mind to do the things, which are not convenient. You wonder continually why the politicians make such utterly stupid decisions about almost everything? It is because God has given them over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not convenient. Rom 1:28.

But, if any man love God, that man is known of God. Centuries ago there lived a man, Abraham by name, who loved God and walked with Him. We know him as one of the patriarchs, but in everyday life he was, in fact, a very successful rancher. The Bible tells us of the great herds of cattle he possessed and of his herdsmen and riches. Many times, no doubt, he himself rode the range and branded the cattle, doing the many other menial chores that always accompany the life of cattlemen. We conclude, then, that even Abraham, the great father of the hosts of Israel and the recipient of the everlasting covenants of God, was in fact a very ordinary man, who in his daily life loved God and walked with Him. Paul has just told us that, if any man love God, God knows that man, and this is a statement of complete truth. It was true in the case of Paul. It was true in the case of Abraham; and it is equally true of you and me.

Hear the record concerning Abraham: "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" **Gen. 18:17-18** Consider what a great and all encompassing statement that is. Take time to meditate upon it, for it is wonderful. But also hear the words, which follow and see the true reason why the Lord placed so much confidence in this man. We have already said that Abraham loved God and walked with Him. Therefore, the Lord says of him, "For I know him." Is that not exactly what Paul is telling us when he says that, if we love God, He knows us? On the occasion of the destruction of Sodom, Lot is placed among the righteous. He too was very rich and powerful, but Lot, alas, had far more love for the well, watered plains of Jordan than he had for his God. Of Abraham the Lord said, "I know him", and this is what He knew about him: "He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." **Gen. 18:19** "If any man

thinketh he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." "If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

IF ANY MAN SAY

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christ, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not." **Matt. 24:23-26**

Our Lord, in this passage, is warning all mankind and His elect in particular of the ever increasing power of deception that will darken the earth at the end of this age to deceive, if possible, even the very elect. Many among us are puzzled as to whether or not the elect can be deceived, and I am by no means certain, but whereas Peter wrote, saying, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure," would this not indicate that, should we become slack and indolent concerning our election and thus fail to run the race with patience and diligence, we as others may find ourselves deceived? There is one correct state of mind and only one for every saint to maintain. It is this: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." **Phil. 3:12** The parable of the ten virgins gives proof enough that many grow careless about their walk. They allowed sleep and slumber to take over their lives to such an extent that they neglected to have the oil of the Spirit in their vessels. Then, when the bridegroom came, they were unprepared and tried hastily to buy oil to replenish their dwindling supply.

Perhaps we are wasting words by reiterating that we are now living in the end of the days, foretold by Daniel the prophet. Desperate days are upon the world and, by the time this writing is read, there will be ever increasing sorrow. There is only one place of true safety. It is not among the blind multitude of Laodicean Christendom. It is not in the temple, the church building or the tabernacle. Neither is it in the dens and caves of earth. It is in the secret place of the most High. It is where saints abide under the shadow of the Almighty. There in that holy habitation our spirit can abide safely. There none need fear, though earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. There the Lord is our fortress. He is our God; we may safely trust in Him. He will deliver us from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He will cover us with His feathers, and under His wings shall we trust. His truth shall be our shield and buckler. We need not fear the deadly arrows by day nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at our side, but it shall not come nigh us. Only with our eyes shall we see the reward of the wicked. "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." See **Psalms 91**

Learn to dwell in the secret place. Find time when the day is young to wait on the Lord. Place the word of God before you as you kneel before Him. Let Him unfold His mysteries as you read. Feel His overshadowing power and know the blessing of His abiding confidence within yourself. Should our Lord Jesus tarry longer, the darkness without will greatly increase, as evil men and seducers, already thick about us, increase more and more.

Concerning the statement, "This know also, that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived", you will notice that such people are not only intent on deceiving others but are themselves deceived, and as a natural consequence of their deception they forge confidently ahead, endeavoring to deceive all who will heed their deception. They have, in fact, come to believe they are right. There are few people in all the world who actually believe they are deceived. It would be presumptuous here to attempt to write down numerous guidelines against error. There is something more important than that. Jesus told us that false prophets would come and that their coming is to be a sign of the end of the age. Do not go to your neighbor or some preacher to get a human opinion. You will probably get the wrong answer. There is a much better way than this to know good and evil. Instead of seeking human opinions, go directly to your Father in heaven. He will make the truth known to you.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." **1 John 4:1-3** Every Christian has, or should have, an unction from the Holy One. The word unction really means anointing. As one would anoint our head with oil for healing, so Jesus Christ has anointed us with the Holy Spirit, who is here likened to oil. This anointing is that we might know all things. Therefore the apostle by the Spirit says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." **1 John 2:20**. John did not mean that we would know everything in the world. The Holy Spirit shows us and makes us perceive only those things that are necessary for us to know. If we will keep in union with the Holy Spirit, depending on Him for instruction, He will give us an inner witness as to whether the spirits are of men or Satan or God. All who read should take solemn warning that in these days of darkness and deception there are many who seem to be saying the right thing, but whose spirits are altogether wrong. They may be likened to the soothsayer who, in the days of Paul, called out in public for many days, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." What this young woman was saying was true enough, but her spirit was wrong and her heart was not right with God. After several days of this Satanic advertising, Paul was so disturbed by the spirit that motivated the girl that he turned to her and cast the spirit from her. Here surely is an excellent example, showing us that the unction from the Holy One does teach us all things that we may know in our spirits what is right and what is wrong, and thus discern both good and evil. Never permit a man or a woman to sell either themselves or their programs to you. You will be deceived if you do.

The Holy Spirit must always be our teacher. We have no need that any man teach us, "but the anointing (unction) which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:27**

There is a world of spiritual truth in the word abide. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." **John 15:4** We must therefore conclude that every work that is begun outside the purpose and plan of God is a useless program. Like a dead branch it is cut off from the vine to wither away. Letter after letter comes to my desk with a gift envelope enclosed, begging shamelessly for help to carry on some grandiose program. Many of these people are working themselves breathless with one man-made scheme after another. May I ask you this: If Christ sent them to do the work, why did He not supply its needs without their begging and pleading for human aid? Why would the Lord not lay the need of His work on the hearts of the faithful if the work is of Him? Has His word not told us that the Lord will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus? Phil. 4:19 If the Lord sent these messengers, would He not supply their need as He did for His disciples? Luke 22:35. The Lord never intended that His ministers would be mendicants, beggars, and bums. If He will not supply their need, would they not be perfectly justified in laying down their tools and quitting? I certainly think so. If God is going to tell me to do a work and then leave me to my own resources, to beg and plead with men, and often sinful men, to accomplish it, then there is undoubtedly something wrong somewhere. God's people should never be deceived by the reasoning of these self-appointed promoters of God's work. The whole thing smacks of human fraudulence and hocus-pocus trickery. This type of work is carried on outside of the plan of the Lord. It may appear good, but it is of the flesh and smells of the flesh. How often I have heard preachers describe their great work of soul-saving, healing, missions, Bible schools, ad infinitum, and then have them say, "This is a work of faith, and unless you people get behind me with your finances, it will go under. God is depending on you." How sad a statement that is and how well it reveals their fraud? "In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." **Jer. 23:20-21** Never depend on what men say. Depend on the Spirit to guide you and teach you all things. He is truth and will guide His people into all truth.

Jesus said, "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." If they shall tell you that Christ is in the wilderness or the desert, go not forth. If they say He is in some secret chamber, believe it not. In these dread days it is of ever increasing importance that the elect should separate themselves from the Babylon of the church system. This confused harlot, drunken with the blood of the saints, rich and increased in goods and having need of nothing, adorned with gold and silver and costly array, lounging in plush pews and

entertained by elegant choirs, eloquent orators and super-star entertainers is the greatest deceiver and false christ in the world. If we are to be received as sons of God, our first command and obligation is to sever all relationship with her. Rev. 18:4,5. The effect of revelation and newly discovered truth flourishing in the heart of the believer is often lost to him, simply because he will not separate from this harlot system and come out from among them and be separate. How, you ask, can a system that is so attractive from without be so evil within? Do you not know that harlots are always unclean, no matter how beautifully they bedeck themselves? Go their way at your peril and the same rotting disease that curses them will soon be devouring you also. The promise of sonship is only to those who come out from among them. "Be separate," Paul says, "and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17** Such challenging promises are not to those cushioned believers who delight themselves in plush churches and interesting programs, who keep the program afloat with gymnasiums, food, fun, and fellowship, and a hundred other fleshly notions. This promise flings down the gauntlet, challenging saints to heed the voice of Christ: "Come out! Be separate! Touch not the unclean thing!" To all such the promise is sure, "I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters."

Disobedience to the call to come out from among them constitutes rebellion against the Lord. In scripture the word iniquity means rebellion and disobedience. Many who have been called have not been chosen simply because they walked in disobedience, heedless of the voice of the Spirit calling them to abandon the harlot system and abide in Christ. It is the Holy Spirit, the anointing, the unction that teaches that which is right and that which is wrong, that which is of Christ and that which is not.

Beware, then, of what men say in these evil days. Remember that Jesus warned us that there would be false prophets. False prophets are always saying, saying, but beware of what they say. Do men ask, "Where are these false prophets?" Don't look for them on the street or in the desert. The existing church system is full of them. You will find them standing in the pulpits Sunday and week-day. They are highly thought of and highly paid. They are as sure they are right as were the prophets of Baal. They are also positive that the solitary Elijahs are wrong. As evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, these prophets with their false gospel add to all manner of delinquency. Consequently the world sinks deeper and deeper into sin and, while it sinks, these men imagine we are in the midst of a world-wide revival. We are, but it is not a revival of faith in Christ; it is rather a revival of the very sins that caused Sodom to be devoured with unquenchable fire and that brought the flood on the world of the ungodly in the days of Noah.

"Let no man deceive you, for that day shall not come except there be & falling away first." That falling away is here now. It is everywhere. It is in the government, in the palace, in the courts of law. It is in the universities and colleges. It is in the homes, on the streets, and worst of all it is in the church system. It is in the pew and in the pulpit. It is in the hearts of the populace. The man of sin, the Antichrist, is very evident in the world, but few see him or recognize him. He who opposeth and exalteth himself above God and all that is worshipped so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is Vicarius filii Dei - that is, vicar of Christ or instead of Christ - is not recognized for what he is, but is lauded as the greatest religious leader of our day. Beware lest any man deceive you, saying, "Here is Christ," or "Lo here," or "Lo there," or "Lo, He is in the secret chamber."

Paul taught us that in the last days there would be many lying signs and wonders. 2 Thess. 2:9. He taught that these signs would be with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they did not love the truth, and, because they did not love the truth, the Lord sends them strong delusion that they all may be condemned, who loved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Beware of what men say in these last days. Beware of things that look good and are not. Beware of false christs, false prophets and deceivers. There is one mediator between God and man - the man Christ Jesus. If, therefore, any church says that theirs is the one way to God, it immediately becomes a false christ. Believe them not.

In these perilous times such as the world has never known, if any man thirst or hunger or if any man lack wisdom, guidance or perception, let him come to Christ, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

CHAPTER FIVE WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

The Lord has purposed to create through His Son Jesus Christ an entirely new race of men. The first Adam was made a living soul and all his children are like unto him, but the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, was made a life, giving Spirit, 1 Cor. 15:45, and all who are partakers of Him are like Him, for "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (that is, his innermost being or his inner man) shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:38-39** Just as surely as He is a life, giving spirit, so also shall they be who, believing on Him, forsake the deadness of Adam's race to become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Every man will partake of this glory in his own order or in his own company. The initial company is called the first fruit, the members of Christ's body. The second will be those that are His at His coming, and the third company will appear at the end, when Christ has delivered up the kingdom to the Father. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:23,24

It needed neither faith nor grace to become members of the family of the first Adam. We were born into that family without any choice that we know of, partaking freely of its death and bondage, its carnality and its proneness to sin. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin (rebellion) did my mother conceive me", was the tearful lament of the Psalmist, **Psa. 51:5**, and it may be truthfully said that every writer of the inspired Bible echoes the same refrain. "All our righteousnesses are filthy rags," says Isaiah. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," says Paul. "When He (the Spirit) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," said Jesus. And so on and on goes the condemnation teaching us beyond all doubt that in Adam all die.

Let no man vainly think that by refining or reforming the old nature he can make himself acceptable with God. There must be a birth into a new family, even the family of God. There must be a rebirth of the spirit and this will be followed by a rebirth of the soul and finally a rebirth of the body as well, for even this corruptible must put on incorruption. And when this corruptible has put on incorruption and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Then shall every voice in that new creation joyfully sing, "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." **1 Cor. 15:55-57**

Faith unites the soul to Christ as a wife is united to her husband. As she becomes bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, a member of her husband's body and through him a member of his family, so also all who believe into Him become members of Him, being bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, and spirit of His Spirit. For by (in) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13 The God of all grace in His mercy and loving kindness has made this great redemption to rest upon His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the grace of God that brings salvation to the individual and it is the same grace of God that brings the individual to salvation. There is no desire in man to serve God, for his nature grows ever more corrupt and wicked, but God in His loving kindness undertakes the work of conviction and places in the unregenerate heart a desire for forgiveness and unity with God. It is not man but God who puts within the penitent heart the prayer, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." **Psa. 51:1-3**

I would to God that the clearness of understanding that filled David's heart would possess all God's people today as he continued, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest and be clear when Thou judgest." The wisdom of God leaves no stones unturned to convince us that we are sinners indeed and that God is clearly right in pronouncing judgment upon us. The fall of a righteous man into some beggarly iniquity is often permitted of God to convince him that there is none righteous, no, not one.

I am sure that many sermons have been preached on the kindness of God, but I must admit that I have never yet heard one. Perhaps such woeful lack and omission is due to the fact that tradition has taught us to regard

God as a sort of stern bookkeeper, never so delighted as when He finds some evil which He may mark down against us. But God is full of kindness and His mercies endure unto every generation. His kindness is the kindness of love, full of grace and pity because it is full of all wisdom and understanding. It is from His loving kindness and tender mercies that the grace of God flows, bringing salvation through Jesus Christ to all the world and to all the universe as well, for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Luke 6:35

The kindness of God appeared when the world was in its direst need. Before ever judgment falls, the God of all grace and kindness remembers mercy. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly..." **Titus 3:3-5**

It was at the time when one would think that the judgment of God should irrevocably fall that His kindness toward us was manifested. Even in the days of Noah the longsuffering of God waited while the ark was preparing. And in the days of Sodom the angels of the Lord were sent to retrieve all that could be called righteous, and others besides. Even so it is now in this the end of the age when every sin of Noah's day is manifest among us and unto them are added the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrah, together with the sins of the Canaanite and the Amorite. Yet God in loving kindness and tender mercy manifests His grace and longsuffering toward the earth, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

"... Thou art a God ready to pardon," said Nehemiah, "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. Yea, when they had made a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; Yet Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness." **Neh. 9:17-18**

Men in their distress have howled against God, saying, "Surely I don't deserve such chastisement as this!" Ah, ignorant man! Charge not God with foolishness, for the smiting of the righteous Lord is an excellent oil and a great kindness. Our trouble lies in the fact that we are setting our affections upon gaining a little earthly kingdom for ourselves. We are determined to accomplish the desires of our own hearts, and we have forgotten that we are not our own; we are bought with a price. We who are being prepared for His body, for His sonship, and for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it must have no ambition but His purpose, no love but what He loves, and no kingdom but His kingdom. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties. Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head..." **Psa. 141:3-5** The calamities that come upon us come from the kindness and love of God, for when calamity comes, earth recedes. Our love of the passing begins to fade away like mists before the rising sun, and we relinquish our hold on things that are not enduring to lay hold on life that it may be our joy and crown forever.

There is a moment in the springtime of our lives when we foolishly imagine that we have the world by the tail with a down hill pull. Life, the world, and all things in it seemed to be a glittering plaything, a bowl of cherries, a lovely bunch of coconuts as we greeted each new day with new health, new life, new strength and new ambitions. But every man in his own order soon begins to discover that the thing he thought would be the glittering prize brought only momentary satisfaction. Gradually we awoke to discover that things are not as we thought they were. Something had gone wrong with our little glittering world of make-believe. Things were not going to go as we had planned. The world was not going to dance to our will as a yo-yo in our hand. God had higher thoughts than that we should live after the world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind. He has greater and much more enduring things in store, for "Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself and we are restless until we rest in Thee."

Thus it is a great kindness that God should smite us with the smiting of correction that He should correct us with the rod of great affliction and spare us not at all for our crying. Full well He knows that ancient truth, "If thou beat him, he will not die, but thou shalt deliver his soul from hell." For "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If we receive not chastisement, whereof all are

partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. The man who cannot receive the chastening rod without charging God foolishly is a bastard and not a son. He is a man without a wedding robe, one who has climbed up some other way, but has not entered through the door, which is Christ. God is far more concerned about preparing us for sonship and our particular place in His body than He is in momentarily pleasing us with the trinkets of our own choosing. I am fully aware that the mushrooming, snowballing delinquency of our present day with its ever increasing sin and violence must be laid at the door of parents who are delinquent and lax in authority and chastening, who have discarded the instructions of Solomon to embrace the stupidity of psychologists. Let none ever imagine that God has yielded to the demands of men, for His method of producing sons is ever the same. "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

"Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou has wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of men: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord; for He hath shewed me His marvelous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes: Nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee." **Psa. 31:19-22** From the loving kindness of God for all His creations flows forth His grace in unmerited favor to all creation; for after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward all men appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

O soul, tossed by the tempest of life, frustrated by the oft repeated chastenings of the Lord, for His sake "killed all the day long", suffering temporal loss, and bereavement too heavy to bear, forsaken and grieved as a widow in her youth, behold the loving kindness of the Lord as He speaks these words to your heart! "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." **Isa. 54:7-8**

The grace of God has a teaching all its own. We have perhaps listened to carnal minds propounding the grace of God as opposed to the law of Moses, but I fear greatly that many of them have received the grace of God in vain, knowing neither what they speak nor whereof they affirm. The apostle Paul, to whom the entire dispensation of grace was given as a gospel which he calls my gospel, Rom. 2:16, gives us the precious heart of the teaching of grace in these inspired words; "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." **Titus 2:11-14**

That happy soul who is made partaker of the grace of God, so far from hoping to use such infinite grace for an occasion to the flesh and thus receiving it in vain, has found that by the grace of God all that Christ has becomes the property of the believer. Just as He is, so are we in this world. The believer becomes an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. When Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, He willed to us all the possessions of heaven and eternity. He made us partakers both of the divine nature and of all the graces and virtues of that blessed nature.

Christ possesses every blessing of eternal salvation. This by grace He bestows upon the believer. The soul possesses every vice and sin as a member of the family of the first Adam, but these by God's grace become the property of Christ the redeemer, being atoned for by His blood and swallowed up forever in Him. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." **2 Cor. 5:21** Thus he who receives God's grace is not only delivered and cleansed from all sin, but is made a partaker of His glory, His majesty, and His honor. The strange paradox now ensues that he who has been made free, being delivered from the slavery of sin, by God's grace now voluntarily becomes a love slave of Jesus Christ, serving freely, joyfully, and gratuitously. "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace; to the

end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." **Rom. 4:16**

Instead of grace teaching that we, being free from the law, may now live as we please, the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Ungodliness has increased many fold during the last years, not only in the world, but in the church system as well. We are now living in the day of which Paul was speaking when he said that men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. 2 Tim. 3:4. Was there ever an age during the last six thousand years to which such a saying would be more applicable? The whole world, especially the western world, is pleasure mad, and even Christians for the most part love pleasure and the things of this present life more than they love God. All too often conversation is filled with the affairs of this present life, their books, their pastimes, and their friends, their business, their homes and their dress, but how often they become dumb as oysters at the very mention of the eternal things they ought to know. While the names of the stars of the sport and entertainment worlds are household words with them, the Bible is a back shelf book and its life-giving truth is scarcely known.

But for all this these people have a form of godliness and forms of godliness are greatly increased. Ever since the beginning of the Ecumenical movement belonging to a church has become the popular thing. As one society woman flippantly said, "It's chic to be born again." Such frivolous talk is as a jewel of gold in the snout of a swine or the crackling of thorns under a pot. Pseudo revivals seem to be the order of the day, for, wherever the limitation of truth is rampant, both force and power are stolen from reality. Whenever a true prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, Satan raises up false prophets that their very existence will annul the truth. There was one prophet of God in Israel in the days of Ahab, but there were four hundred prophets of Baal. The average is not dissimilar today in this wicked Babylon of confusion in which we dwell. For every man today who speaks the pure truth from God there are four hundred who prophesy lies to please the pleasure loving throng. Long ago the weeping prophet Jeremiah lamented in these terrible words: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will we do in the end thereof?" **Jer. 5:30-31** How often I have heard prophesies flowing from the mind of man, effusing words of butter and honey intended only to please the person or persons to whom they were directed! How often sermons were preached to curry the favor of the rich or honor those who have greater prestige! "Therefore hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it." Cursed be the lips of him who thus turns the grace of God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Lasciviousness (wanton desire) is but the work of the flesh and has nothing to do with the grace of God, which teaches us to deny both ungodliness and worldly lusts as well.

Furthermore the grace of God teaches that we should live soberly. The word of God has much to say about sobriety, which teaches us to realize the importance and seriousness of life as opposed to those who are immoderate, impassioned, and intemperate. It is not without purpose that Paul fervently exhorted the Christians, saying, "Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober." **1 Thess. 5:5-6** And again in **verse 8**: "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." To the bishops he wrote, "A bishop must be sober." **1 Tim. 3:2** He exhorted the wives of the deacons, saying that the deacons wives must be sober and faithful. 1 Tim. 3:11 The aged men also were to be both sober and grave. Titus 2:2 "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end." **1 Pet. 1:13** "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer." **1 Pet. 4:7** Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour; therefore, be sober and vigilant. This, then, is the message of the grace of God, that He appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Furthermore the grace of God teaches us that we should live as people who are looking for that blessed hope and for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13 Many have been the inspired warnings concerning the hour in which we live, for we live in an hour when men can say with a measure of truth, "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world." We are living in a day when it is easy for the heart to become engrossed with the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in. It is easy to allow the heart to be overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness and all the ways of the world. But it is in just such a time as this that our blessed Lord will come. Therefore let your lamps be burning and your loins girded with truth, and be like

those who wait for their Lord, lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. Thus the grace of God has appeared to all men, teaching us to deny all fleshly lust and ungodliness, to live soberly in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation, all the time looking and waiting for that blessed hope that cannot long be delayed.

We are without doubt living in one of the most awkward and distressing periods of human history. The prophet Daniel spoke of the wearing out of the saints of the Most High. Dan. 7:25 Possibly we do not yet understand the fullness of his meaning, but surely every man who is pressing toward the kingdom of God must have found that his very path seems to be paved with quicksand, and, were it not for enduring faith and patience, all would be engulfed in the sucking whirlpool that is the spirit of this age.

A worldly saying readily upon the lips of almost all people is this: "I couldn't care less"; and in this saying they speak the truth, for there never was such a careless age as this. It matters not in what direction you look, you will find rampant carelessness and indifference. While once men preached the gospel at the risk of their lives, now people "couldn't care less" what you preach. If you speak the truth, who cares? If you preach error, that is your privilege. Whereas under the law of Moses a necromancer was put to death, today they interview him on the radio, and nobody cares. Men couldn't care less about your political beliefs and they couldn't care less about your spiritual beliefs. This, of course, is supposed to be a good thing, but be fully warned that, good as it may seem, it is a dangerous thing, because without opposition we become easy prey to indifference. We grow careless and cold, and the Lord at His coming finds us sleeping.

It was tragic when martyrs were burned to death for the truth's sake, but such trying persecutions proved that divine metal was in their souls. They knew where they stood. Their hope was in God alone. Their spirits were not in bondage to the pleasure god of the day. Either men were out and out for God or else absorbed in the wretched and sordid doctrines and errors of the day. But in this age in which we live, the most deceptive of all times, indifference fills the very atmosphere and people couldn't care less what we think or teach or preach or believe. Whether we worship God or the devil, the indifferent of this age couldn't care less. Is it any wonder that the congregation at Laodicea, which represented the church at the end of the age, was described as lukewarm, neither hot nor cold and ready to be spued from the mouth of the Lord?

Let us therefore watch and be sober. Let us learn to know God and fellowship with Christ, for herein lies our only safety. If men know what hour the thief will come, they will watch and not suffer their house to be broken into, and if men know from what direction the thief is approaching, they will also watch and be ready. But in this present hour falsehood parades in the garments of truth. Wolves are ever present in the garments of sheep. Even devils are being transformed into angels of light. There are false apostles, false miracle workers, false teachers, false evangelists, and false pastors. People are preaching without a message. They are writing things not worthy of the paper on which they are printed. There seems to be a craze, an insanity, in the hearts of people to purport to speak in the name of the Lord. Everyone has a doctrine, everyone has a program, and the vast majority are filled with a desire to gather a group about themselves in hope of personal gain.

Let us steadfastly refuse to become followers of men. Rather be ye followers of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ has loved us. There was a day when men felt they could not be saved at all unless they belonged to the Pope's church, however dissolute he may have been, but the Reformation changed the minds of millions, teaching them that they just live by faith, for it is by the grace of God that we are saved through the merits of the precious blood of Christ, which was shed for the sins of the whole world and without which no man can be saved. But time has taken its fearful toll, for God's people have become entangled with the multiplied harlots of the Babylon system until today they are more entangled and ensnared by denominations, sects, religious leaders, and religious rites than they were in the dark ages of Romanism, that debauched and unchaste mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth.

The bondage of tradition has so captivated the minds of Christians that they know not that a man can walk with God separate and apart from doctrines of men and traditions that make the word of God of none effect. Not only can we walk apart from them but being apart from them is our only hope of spiritual progress. The law of retrogression is at work in every religious system as surely as the rock decays and the dead tree returns to dust. How then do you ever expect to progress with God while your life is buried in the retrograde traditions you have embraced so long? I know of a truth that, the moment the chains of tradition begin to fall from your

ankles, your feet will begin to tread in the paths that Jesus trod. No longer will you plead, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" But you will hear Him saying to your deepest spirit, "I am the way! I am the door! I am the shepherd! I am the truth! I am the life!" Search no longer for truth, but come to know Him apart from all systems and sects and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free, for he whom the Son makes free is free indeed.

Old things are rapidly passing away and, behold, all things are becoming new. As the dispensation of law passed away with the coming of Jesus and the outpouring of Pentecost, so also this present age of grace is now waxing old and is almost ready to vanish away. He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. As the days die and fade away into each other, so the dispensations also die and fade into each other as noiselessly as the evening comes back when day is done. When the age of the law came to an end, all the things of the law had to be put away -the priests and the high priests, the assemblings, the gifts and the offerings, the sacrifices of sheep and goats with the wave offerings and drink offerings. Even the glory of the temple had to be done away as our Lord said, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down", and even the beautiful veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

The dispensation of the grace of God is also ending now and the glory of the kingdom morning is at hand. This age has waxed tired and old and is ready to vanish away. Its ministers must all disappear. Its buildings, maintained with so much pride and expense, are to be done away with, not one stone left upon another. The song services and the Sunday Schools together with the foolishness of preaching, 1 Cor. 1:21, will soon disappear and in its place will come the righteous government of the precious sons of God, for the law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

As I was earnestly looking to the Lord for the truths to be written in this chapter, a tried and trusted friend from another city appeared unexpectedly at our door. During the hour at our disposal he poured into my heart a message so true that I felt it to be the will of God that I should pass the gist of it on to you in conclusion.

"Have you ever noticed," he said, "that, when we were first saved, the Lord did almost everything for us? He saved us and filled us and kept us. But now that we are growing older in Him and becoming more mature, the Lord does nothing for us without our co-operation and we become workers together with Him." For many years we have taken the attitude that to work together with God was merely a matter of working as a missionary or a minister, and having God work with us and we with Him. But that, it seems, is a very small part of the truth.

In the long process taken by the Lord to bring His people to perfection and to chasten them in sonship, we are thrown into many, many difficult circumstances, for what son is he who receiveth not chastisement? Therefore, when God's people fall upon times of great difficulty and trial, they should immediately recognize this as a fiery trial and plan of testing into which God Himself has brought them. Instead of our fighting to escape the trial and cursing the day that such a thing ever came upon us, we should realize that this is the hand of the Lord preparing our heart in some special and peculiar way to bring us into the image of Christ. It is here that faith teaches us to **"think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."** **1 Pet. 4:12-13** This, then, is the time to work together with God and co-operate with Him that His work in us may be accomplished for our eternal betterment and His eternal glory.

Many manifestations of such co-operation with God shine forth from the experience of God's people in all ages to brighten our path and enrich our understanding. No passage of scripture should be more familiar to us than the story of Paul's thorn in the flesh. For centuries theologians (if there are such) have debated bitterly and long as to what Paul's thorn really was, but in so doing they have missed the true lesson the Spirit of God was teaching. Because of the abundance of Paul's revelation, there was given him by God a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure. 2 Cor. 12:7-10 It seems very clear that Paul did not at first understand the fierce trials that continually beset him, (see 2 Cor. 11:24-33), and like all Christians he reasoned within himself, concluding no doubt that this tiresome messenger of Satan was something he could well do without, for it was a hindrance to his ministry, and, so far from being a blessing, it was, he thought, an embarrassing restriction and a curse to him. For this reason he says, "I besought the Lord

thrice that it would depart from me", but the Lord, pitying his ignorance, revealed to him that it was for his good that this evil thing was ever present with him, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Now the moment Paul understood in the spirit that this great affliction, the buffeting of the devil, was in the purpose of God, he immediately changed his attitude and, crying with joy, he said, "Most gladly therefore will I take pleasure in distresses, in necessities, in afflictions, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak then am I strong."

See now how quickly this great apostle cast aside his doubts and his fervent, useless prayer to begin a lifetime of understanding co-operation with God, working together with Him in the full knowledge that God's strength is made perfect when man is the weakest. Would that all God's people would understand their afflictions thus. Then would they cease from continually pleading for deliverance from the buffeting of Satan and the infirmities of the flesh, and, bowing in understanding before Him, they would humbly inquire of God that He would acquaint them with His infinite purpose that they might co-operate with Him in it. What infinite lessons would be learned! What depths of understanding would be ours if we would recognize the hand of God in all things that all things might work together for good to them that love God without being continually hindered by our lack of understanding! God's people have become pitifully dull of understanding. The blinding tradition of an apostate church system has divorced them from the truth to such an extent that only a paltry few ever see God's hand working for His glory in our distress of our affliction. So warped and withered has their understanding become that times without number they bring God's people under condemnation by convincing them that their adversity in business, their illness in body, their bereavement or loss, was proof of God's disfavor and displeasure, but such dwarfs have never learned that "when I am weak, then I am strong."

Well may we imagine the cries of distress wrung from the hearts of Christians when the apostle Paul was cast into jail, his life and ministry denied to the church, and himself shut away in a dank cell where he appeared to be of no value to anyone. But in the course of life God had taught this man many lessons, and here in the prison cell, shut away from the world, separated from Christians, but ever in the presence of God, he spent his time writing letters to the churches. What would we do without the epistle to the Ephesians or the epistle to the Philippians, which were both written from his prison cell? What would we do without the epistles to the Corinthians, which were written in weariness and painfulness and with the added spiritual burden of all the congregations? If Paul had done nothing during his lifetime but preach sermons, which people think are so important, we would not know much of him today and little indeed would be the teachings of the dispensation of grace. But, because of his afflictions, he wrote epistles, and, because of the awkwardness of travel, he wrote letters to the congregations and, because of his imprisonments and separation, he wrote the marvelous messages of God which we have readily at hand today. What a loss the whole world would have suffered had this man not learned to co-operate with God in his afflictions as well as his abundances, being a worker together with Him that the blessing of the Lord might flow out and out through all the ages!

These lessons had to be learned by Paul just as they have to be learned by you and me. Have you not read this verse? "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." **Phil. 4:11**. Have we learned this lesson? It is a lesson of vital importance, especially to those elect ones who must delight themselves in the understanding that all things are working together for their good. But to those who separate their affliction from the plan of God there is no such thing as working together with God, neither is there true co-operation with God.

After this the apostle continued, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." **Verse 12, 13** We cannot possibly overestimate the vital importance of thus working together with God and going along with Him in the eternal purpose He is working in us. If all things are working together for good to them that love God, then, when sickness comes, there must be some good in it and its effects must be working some eternal good in us that we might be tried in the fire, receiving the exact heat that will mould us and make us after His will. Dare we say that no good can come to us through sadness and bereavement? The Lord has said, "Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." **Eccles 7:3** Sadness and tribulation wean our hearts away from this age, fixing it to the eternal realm where reality dwells without alloy and that forever. King David in his bereavement uttered these marvelous words. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." **2 Sam. 12:23**

There are things other than suffering, affliction, and poverty with which God tries His people. We have known people who were faithful and true to God while they remained under extenuating circumstances, but afterward, when their sickness was exchanged for vibrant health or their poverty exchanged for riches, they no longer served God with the love and fullness of consecration that they had known before. Therefore the Psalmist has said, "If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them". **Psa. 62:10** I see nothing wrong with God's giving a man riches and honor if that man will recognize that this, too, is a circumstance into which God has brought him for a definite purpose and so, co-operating with God and working together with Him, he will seek to know what God will have him do and what God will have him learn.

It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom. But I do not think that this will apply if that man recognizes his abundance as a trial of his faith, a condition into which the all-wise God has brought him. If he sees this great truth, he will refuse to use his wealth for an occasion to his flesh, but will humbly work together with God that God's divine purpose might be revealed in him, and that he might be faithful and just in his abundance. Men who are faithful in poverty are often unfaithful with riches, for those who are in poverty make God their source and supply, but they who are rich are inclined to trust in uncertain riches, forgetting that "he that trusteth in riches shall fall". **Prov. 27:24**

We think of the beauty and wonder of the life of the patriarch Joseph, but we would also do well to think of the things he suffered that he might be thus perfect before God - the unreasonable hatred of his brethren, the bitter hate and envy that sold him into slavery, his being auctioned off in the slave market and his purchase by Potiphar, his temptation at the hands of the amorous and passionate wife of his master, his unjust imprisonment where his feet were hurt with fetters and he was laid in irons, and finally the greatest of all temptations when he was elevated to be the second ruler in the land with all its riches at his disposal, the people bowing the knee before him. In all these things he was faithful, as in poverty so also in riches and honor. Surely he had learned to be a worker together with God. As he stood before his brethren, who had sold him into slavery but now trembled in fear at his feet, he was able to say, "Fear not. You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." **Gen. 50:15-21** This is the kind of co-operation and understanding that is required of God's sons.

Hear further as the apostle enlarges the theme of working together with God, saying, "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain ... but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distress, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings: By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." **2 Cor. 6:1-10**

It is certainly high time for the saints of God to quit playing religion and come instead to the understanding of the Almighty. It is time for saints to work together with God, working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. It is time to believe that all is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do His good pleasure. Therefore do all things without murmuring and disputing that "ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life: that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." **Phil. 2:12-16**

CHAPTER SIX PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING

When men seek the face of the Lord with fasting and prayer, He sends His Holy Spirit to dispel the darkness of the natural mind that ever hangs as a cloud about us that He may reveal to our wondering eyes the things that are nearest and dearest to His great heart. In all matters of revelation and spiritual understanding it is impossible to overestimate the intrinsic value of the Holy Spirit, who comes to take the things of God and show them unto us. Two worlds exist all about us - the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural realm is the

realm of man, but the spiritual realm is the realm of God. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

Men of the world have told me that the Bible sounds silly, and I suppose to them it does, since God has said it is "foolishness unto them". The truth of the matter is that the Bible could be read a hundred times twice told without shedding a ray of light on a skeptical and unbelieving mind. In fact, many atheists and skeptics have read the Bible many times over, yet, because they read in unbelief, banishing the help of the Holy Spirit from their hearts while depending entirely upon their carnal minds, the Lord withholds His light and understanding from them. Thus they find themselves more in the dark and more unbelieving afterward than they were in the beginning.

It is "when He, the Spirit of truth has come" that men are guided into all truth. It is He who convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. He it is who takes the things of God and reveals them unto us. Furthermore it is He, the Holy Spirit, who, after revealing truth to our darkened hearts, miraculously transforms the believer into the very truth he sees. The Spirit of God reveals to the believer's heart what the truth of God is and what the mind and will of God is and, having done so, He makes him partaker of that truth so that he, by beholding the truth, actually becomes the truth he beheld. He reveals salvation to us and we become "the saved" He reveals His plan of redemption and we become "the redeemed" He reveals His eternal purpose of sonship and we become the "sons of God's These things concern His heavenly calling. As a flower opens to the light of the sun, so eternal purposes unfold in the light of the Holy Spirit and we, seeing and believing them, embrace them and become partakers of them. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him... By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise... Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky for multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." **Heb. 11:6-12** When we behold truth by the Spirit and begin to fervently believe it and move irresistibly toward it, though at first it appeared to be a long, long way off, eventually the arms of our spirit embrace it and we become partakers of the heavenly calling, actually changed into the very image of the truth we saw.

In my opinion Heb. 11:13 is one of the most remarkable verses concerning faith that ever was written or spoken. It displays as nothing else can how fervently saints must follow truth and revelation by faith before they actually become partakers of the glory they see.

"These all died in faith,
Not having received the promises,
But having seen them afar off,
And were persuaded of them,
And embraced them,
And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Oh what eloquent words of trust and fidelity are written here! To see the promise of God afar off, to be persuaded that what was revealed is truly our inheritance, to embrace that promise with a grip that even death itself cannot unloose, and then to confess it to ourselves, to our God, and to all with whom we associate! Confession of such eternal verities cannot be made by mere say so or by some momentary confession or trip to an altar. Credence is not added to our testimony by our loving the world and all that is in it and building for ourselves treasures on earth as though we hoped to remain here forever, but confession is made that we have embraced these hopes when by our lives rather than by our words we testify that we are strangers and pilgrims dwelling in tabernacles, passing as transients through the earth, looking as Abraham did for that beautiful city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God - the New Jerusalem of which we have hitherto fervently spoken. While we dwell in this world, we walk in a strange land. We can neither sing its songs, rejoice in its activity, nor weep at its fall.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
Yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
For they that carried us away captive required of us a song;
And they that wasted us required of us mirth,
Saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue
Cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."
Psa. 137.

We are today in the climax of the ages. The ragged ends of all previous dispensations are come down to us who live in this hour just preceding the coming of the Lord. Now is the hour when promises kept hidden from the foundation of the world are to be fully revealed and entered into by the saints of the Lord.

We are seeing the climax of man's rule. The next thing in order is the reign of Christ with all His sanctified sons. There is an election according to the grace of God who will be made partakers of God's heavenly calling, and that elect throng must give diligence to make their calling and election sure. There are millions of people who are saved, yet see nothing whatever beyond the simple fact of their justification. To them, to be saved is sufficient. To press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus has never once crossed their minds or stirred their hearts to deeper consecration. Never once have they fervently laid aside every weight nor joyfully entered into the fellowship of His sufferings that they might be made conformable unto His death in hope of obtaining a better resurrection. It is not to such as these that I now write, but rather to that little flock of elect folk who, seeing the promise afar off, have embraced it, confessed it, and laid hold upon it. It was unto these our Lord Jesus spoke when He said, "Fear not, little flock: it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The world today is full of that shoddy, lukewarm Laodi-ceanism. Everywhere we look we see it. False teachers, false prophets, and false christs abound. Hollywood singers and entertainers make themselves rich by crooning and recording our beautiful hymns, which once were written in the shadow of the cross. Preachers are making themselves millionaires by their flamboyant deception, using charity and mercy as a pretense to rob the widow, the simple, the well-meaning. I hate it all, with all their conniving, and cast it far from me. Such deception is not of the truth. It is no nearer to light than darkness and no nearer to Christ than Belial. It is the dread confusion of Babylon from which every saint is obliged to flee. Amid all the confusion of the hour there is a little flock standing as sheep among wolves. They care not for the flamboyant humbug of the hour, but, having seen the promises afar off, they are pressing through the surging waves of humanity toward that heavenly mark, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They lean hard upon Christ. His Holy Spirit dwells in them. They are partakers of His mind.

They know His will. They have laid aside every weight and the sin, which does so easily beset them. They are running the race with patience. They rejoice in the hope before them. They are patient in tribulation that strikes them. They continue instant in prayer to God, and He comforts them and upholds them by the right hand of His righteousness. To them the Spirit speaks in words of everlasting comfort, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The Spirit of the Lord has been speaking to my heart. He is urging me to become a true partaker of the heavenly calling. It is never easy to explain in the words of men the glories we see in the Spirit. Earth's languages are totally inadequate to explain spiritual things. Furthermore, it is an indisputable fact that, though the world's most devout teacher should explain the things of the Spirit to the world's most diligent student, that student could never see the truth except the Holy Spirit took the truth that was spoken and revealed it to him. I know for certain that there are some Christians who could write a book about sonship and receive one hundred

percent for their effort, and yet those same people have not seen the truth of sonship nor do they possess the Spirit of sonship, which is so essential. We may have all the technique of a truth, but if we lack the Spirit of that truth, our words become idle tales. Many people have told me that their group is in the sonship message, but somehow their words leave me cold. They leave me feeling that to them sonship is nothing more than another message to be bandied about from one carnal preacher to another, but a few days ago I received a letter from an old, old lady. The writing on the page was shaky and difficult to read, but the message and the spirit of the letter spoke clearly of one who was becoming a partaker of the heavenly calling. Her letter was not a masterful composition, but the Spirit bore witness that the glory she had seen afar off she was now becoming.

I pray that the Spirit of God will grant me help to expound the thing that is in my vision and that He, being doubly gracious, will take these things of God and reveal them unto every believing heart. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, made this wonderful statement: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18**. In his masterful way Paul is telling us here that we become what we see — that is to say, whatsoever glory may be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, we who by faith earnestly lay hold of that truth and press fervently toward it will actually and truly be changed into the very image of the truth we saw and, beholding, we will become exactly what we saw. Now I know that this may seem an incredible statement, but the verse we have read and quoted above is as definite a statement as can be made, declaring that we, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Why, brethren, this statement is true even in the natural realm, for is it not certain that evil communications corrupt good manners? And do people not tend to become like those with whom they associate? How much more, then, must this be true when saints, beholding the glory of the Lord, are transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of that glory they see!

Our Lord Jesus Christ was not merely a man who always spoke the truth. Neither was He a man who had come to the knowledge of the truth because He had burned the midnight oil as He pored over old manuscripts and documents of the law. Jesus Christ was different from all other men in this regard, for, while some others had learned truth and been taught truth, Jesus Christ was truth; and because He was truth, it was absolutely impossible for Him to ever speak in error. Thus, when His disciples asked Him a hard question, His answer came not from His years of learning, but from the very fountainhead of truth itself. And when doctors of the law, with scribes and Pharisees, were gathered together to entangle Him in His words, they were utterly demolished before Him — not because of His intensive studies, but because He was truth and all the truth that ever existed dwelt in Him. That the truth that He Himself was came not by learning finds remarkable confirmation in the astonished question of the learned men, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Learning has its benefits, undoubtedly, but spiritual verities do not come by learning; they come by revelation. That is why I insist that many thousands of Christians who rather flippantly talk about the sonship message often know nothing about it, for while their knowledge of it has come by letters and learning, its glory has not been revealed by the Holy Ghost.

Only last summer the marvelously sacred hymn, Amazing Grace, became number one on the hit parade. Is it not a shameful thing that those unsanctified Hollywood professionals with their lilting voices and their sound effects, who were responsible for degrading this holy hymn into a hit, were actually men and women who knew nothing at all of amazing grace? So, you see, it is not enough to speak of a sonship message or amazing grace, but what we see must be revealed by the Spirit of God or we do not truly see it at all. "I am the truth," said Jesus; thus the truth He spoke flowed from that holy well of truth, which He was. To speak one word in error was impossible to Him who is the truth.

Long centuries ago, when our Saviour stood on trial before Pontius Pilate (though it was not He who was on trial, but the whole world), Jesus came forth after His scourging wearing a purple robe and a crown of thorns on His innocent head, and Pilate said unto the people, "Behold the man!" I wonder if perchance he understood the significance of the words he spoke? It would seem to be certain that he did not. Yet in those words lie hidden a secret so great that properly understood will form a gulf as far removed as heaven is from earth between those Christians who behold Him and those who do not.

"Father, I will," prayed Jesus, "that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me:" **John 17:24** Oh that we might behold the Lord, for "we all, with

open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." No man can see God and live, the prophet says; yet surely even the blindest man must know that no man can see God and die. So what takes place when men behold the Lord? It is the old, the corrupt, the carnal, the sinful that perishes and dies while the beholder himself is changed into the same image of the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah is not the least among the prophets. In fact, it would appear that he was among the greatest. We may not know for certain how many years he prophesied, but we do know that after many years a great transforming experience came into his life. It happened in the same year that king Uzziah died. Uzziah seems to represent something in the life of this great prophet. Perhaps Isaiah had depended upon the king far more than he realized just as you and I lean heavily upon things and people instead of casting all our weight of care upon the everlasting arms of the Lord. So it was that the prophet wrote, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." **Isa. 6:1-4**

Now see the effect this vision of the Lord had upon this great man of God and see how in the light of God's glorious face his own glory became wretched and undone. Thus he continues the account of his vision. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Thus shall it be with any man who beholds the glory of the Lord. He will find his own glory "turned into corruption" and he will cry from the bitterness and disappointment of his own soul. "Woe is me, for I am undone! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Surely the godly Job, whom the Lord Himself said was a perfect and an upright man, one who feared God and eschewed evil, must have been very disillusioned and disappointed with himself when, after affirming through almost forty chapters the story of his own righteousness, he finally beheld the Lord. Then from the misery and repentance of his own disillusioned heart he cried out, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I repent in dust and ashes."

And what shall we say of Daniel, that man whom God placed with Noah and Job as the three most righteous men of all time? Ezek. 14:14,20. What, I ask, shall we say of him, who in fasting and prayer for three weeks ate no pleasant bread, nor allowed flesh or wine to enter his mouth, said, "In the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." **Dan. 10:3-8**

The thing that is woefully lacking in our day is true repentance of sin, and men do not repent of sin when they have no vision of the glory of the Lord. I do not hesitate to say that most of the preaching in our day is poppycock. Sinners do not turn to the Lord just because we tell them they should do so. Neither do they see a transforming vision of Christ because a few "kids", clad in jeans and laden with mops of hair, surrounded with blasting loud speakers, wiggle their hips and scream into microphones, "You don't know what you're missin'." Cursed be their hard rock! Should heaven be filled with such raucous racket as that, the saints would all beg to be excused. If anything could be hell for me, it would be so if I were obliged to listen to that unholy racket forever! My ransomed spirit longs to dwell eternally where angels harp with their harps and heavenly voices fill the universe with transforming harmony forever. The glory of God is more revealed in the thundering of

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS?

In these perilous times of declension and apostasy that now cover the earth in thick darkness, it is well that the heart of every faithful saint should become increasingly aware of the unspeakable holiness, the greatness, the omnipotence, the faithfulness and truthfulness of that one true God who humbles Himself to behold the earth. The apostle Paul spoke of an awesome day of deplorable declension that would come upon the church in the last days, a falling away unequalled in the annals of the church. It would be an apostasy so completely deceptive that none but the very elect would be able to discern its Satanic mystery.

The saints at Thessalonica, like all other true saints, were longing with a very deep and earnest desire for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is right that this fervent longing should be the burden of every saint of the Lord, but it cannot be denied that sometimes our earnest desire may give rise to an expectation that is not altogether scriptural. The hope becomes father to the interpretation. Thus teachings arise that are born of the desire of the natural mind rather than the inspiration of the mind of God. Unless we walk softly, our patient waiting for Christ becomes impatience and we are inclined to grasp upon events, which appear to be indisputable signs of His near coming, only to find that our signs were not as well founded as we had hoped. Well do I remember when the world staggered beneath the weight of the great depression of the 1930's. The planet and all things on it seemed to suddenly fall apart. Thousands of earnest and well-meaning saints believed that this was the certain herald of the coming of Christ. I still believe it was one of the sorrows to come at the end of the times of the Gentiles. This was indeed the beginning of great tribulation. Preachers became busy picking men such as Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin as antichrists, and indeed they were, but these tyrants, like so many before them, perished and the world continued on its tremulous course because God's appointed time had not yet fully come.

The precious saints at Thessalonica, like true believers of all ages, were looking through the distress of their tribulation with earnest longing for the kingdom of God and the coming of the Lord. No doubt these afflicted saints of long ago, even as we, believed they saw indisputable signs that the end of the age was near at hand. They did not know that centuries had yet to pass in wearisome succession before the end of the days, spoken of by Daniel, would come and the saints would stand in their lot triumphant. For this reason the apostle Paul by the wisdom and inspiration given to him wrote to the saints of his day warning them that they must not believe that the day of Christ was then at hand. I am positive that Paul himself did not know when the end of the age would be, nor did he know the time of Christ's appearing, for that knowledge is kept from men, but he did have knowledge of certain events that were to transpire before that notable day could possibly come. Therefore he wrote to those waiting saints in the following words: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:1-12.**

Among the many signs, which in these last days point to the near coming of the Lord there are two that are most outstanding. Unfortunately these two go largely unnoticed. We hear a great deal about violence, the break down of morals, the rampaging divorce rate, the appalling murder of unborn infants, which far exceeds the criminal slaughter of babies carried out by either the frightened Pharaoh or the brutal Herod. We see the rise of corrupt and evil men in government, refusing to uphold the law and introducing all manner of corruption. We see the rise of Communistic dictators and many other ominous things, all of which are perfectly obvious. These can scarcely be placed in the category of deception. Even the most unthinking Christian should recognize such abominations as evidence that the end of the age is at hand. These terrible crimes have come

upon us as a direct result of the great falling away from the faith. When Paul wrote this message to the saints at Thessalonica, he spoke of two great deceptions, which would arise in the last days, both of which are deep mysteries only perceived by serious minded people who are living close to God. The mystery of iniquity, spoken of in chapter 2, verse 7, is the mystery of lawlessness and rebellion. This unspeakable lawlessness is rampant in the world, but it is equally rampant in the church system. The two great mysterious happenings are these: (1) A great falling away from the faith and (2) the revealing of that man of sin (verse 3) or that Wicked (verse 8), the lawless one. (Verse 8 margin).

An incredible apostasy such as is here described arose in the church about 300 A.D. with the rise of the papal system. The papal system with its succession of popes fulfilled this image of lawlessness as one after the other they sat in the temple of God showing themselves to be God, claiming themselves to be Christ's representative on earth. The rise of this system gave birth to the gross apostasy of the dark ages, but, terrible as this period was in which church history records the martyrdom of millions of saints, it was not the complete fulfillment of the apostasy of which Paul speaks in his epistle to Thessalonica. The spirit of iniquity or lawlessness was in the world even in the days of the apostles. It was at work then and its iniquity, like leaven, has increased down through the ages. It has yet, however, to come to its final great and terrifying climax. We are now seeing a falling away from the faith, a falling away from the Lord, which I would think must certainly be unprecedented in church history. I listened in disbelief on the morning of Feb. 9, 1978, to a CBC news report that told of a gathering of bishops and other high authorities of the Anglican church in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The report indicated that they threw a wine party, openly declaring that they no longer believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, blasphemously affirming that there was insufficient proof for this doctrine. Then on Feb. 19, on the program "Concern", one of the high, ranking authorities from London explained to the world how Christianity could get along without Christ. According to him, we would have to recognize Buddhism, Mohammedanism and other pagan religions and take the best out of them all.

When a nation like Great Britain, who at one time was world leader in defense of the faith and whose greatness was built upon the word of God, openly allows her state church to deny not only God's written word, the Bible, but the living Christ of God as well, then this is certainly apostasy on a very grand scale and it is no wonder that since 1945 she has lost her Empire and has shrunk to a third rate power. This is a falling away to such an incredible degree that there are no words written or spoken that can adequately describe the enormity of its scope.

Now you surely have noticed how Paul clearly made this statement: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let (hinder), until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed..." The question we must settle in our minds is this: Of whom is the apostle speaking when he says, "He who now hindereth will hinder until he is taken out of the way"? This question should not really be difficult to answer. Our Lord Jesus Christ once told the saints, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Among the important uses of salt is its use as a preservative. A second function is its ability to savor. A very few grains of salt will savor a whole meal and change it from a bland and unpalatable meal to a gourmet's delight. That is why Jesus said, "If the salt (which is the saints) has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted."

It is the life of Jesus Christ in the saints that makes them the salt of the earth. These blessed saints of God, who for centuries have lived and moved in the Holy Spirit, are the salt of the earth and the preservative of the church. It is they who have given the church its savor. It is they who have preserved it from decay and rotteness. Those precious elect ones have been a light shining in the darkness of the world. Their doctrine and their teachings have kept the professing church from complete apostasy throughout the darkness of the ages. Just as the prophets of long ago rebuked the apostasy of Israel and Judah and time and again turned the nation back to God and the paths of righteousness, so the presence of these elect saints in the church system has been the salt of the earth, the savor of Christianity and the preserver of all that is good and right. They have defended the faith, upheld righteousness and kept the professing church from utter apostasy and desolation through the ages. These blessed ones have exalted the word of God, translating it into many tongues and sending it forth to be a light to all nations of earth. It was they who through gross darkness sought for light. It was they who prayed for revival when all was lost, and God answered their prayer, sending showers of latter rain to revive the earth and bring life and light to millions. It is they who have hindered the Satanic mystery of iniquity and workings of Satan. It is they who time and again have withstood the jeerings of athiests

and overcome the carnal reasonings of evolutionists, together with the oppositions of science falsely so called. No antichrist or mystery of iniquity could rise to its full stature while these elect of God remained in the church system. Did not the presence of Lot in the corrupt city of Sodom preserve that city from destruction until that one righteous man dwelling among them was taken out of the way? Can you not hear the angels as they urge Lot to depart from Sodom, saying, "Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither?" **Gen. 19:22** Is it not remarkable that, as long as God permitted Lot to remain in the city, even the angels were powerless to overthrow it? And did not God keep back the flood in Noah's day until this elect man and his family were safely in the ark and the doors were shut? As long as he was among them the fearful waters of tribulation were stayed, but once he was removed, the desolating floods immediately devastated the earth. Paul in this epistle spoke of a day to come when he who hindered the working of Satan would be taken out of the way, and after their removal "that Wicked" would be revealed, and the system we know as the church would become utterly corrupt and utterly deceptive.

During the past years a call ever increasing in its intensity has been going forth to the true saints of these last days. The trumpet call has been, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins." God's people have heard the Spirit's call, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17-18** In response to the Spirit's call men and women, feeling the spirit of sonship burning in their hearts, have obeyed and have fled from the bondage of the denominational system, which has now become a spiritual Babylon. They have gone unto Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach.

The church system of our day is a deafening confusion of voices, a trumpet giving an uncertain sound. Her sermons more often than not are without a God-given message and have become as meaningless as the speeches in Hyde Park or the rantings of Pershing Square. The Babylon system is a harlot system. The city wherein righteousness once dwelt has become a harlot. Stationed on every principal street she calls to passersby to join her in her adultery. Long centuries ago king Solomon by inspiration described her activity in the words of this strange parable. I shall quote from Prov. 7:1, 6-27, every word of which seems to apply to the modern church system as in our day we see her compassing land and sea to make a proselyte, presenting her persuasions on every street corner. Her husband, who should be her head, has departed from her, but, usurper as she is, she brazenly continues without his headship or leadership. The further she goes the more wretched she becomes. Addressing his thoughts to sons, Solomon spake thus: "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee... At the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones; I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. (A picture of the present day.) And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtil of heart. She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now she is without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner. So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the good man is not at home; he is gone on a long journey: he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

It is true that this picture of the harlot woman aptly describes the common street walker who has plied her trade for centuries, but this is merely the primary interpretation. The true significance of the passage goes far beyond that. The harlot in question here is firstly that adulterous nation known as the house of Israel, who for centuries played the harlot against her God. Hosea 4:1-2 In the second place this harlotish woman represents the church system of the last days, represented in the book of Revelation as the church of Laodicea. Christ, her

head, has gone on a long journey into a far country to receive a kingdom and return. Luke 19:12 The heavens have received Him until the times of the restitution of all things. Acts 3:21 The church, no longer honoring Christ as her head, plays the harlot with her lovers and becomes Mystery Babylon the great, mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Notice the following likenesses. This encounter took place between the harlot and a young man. Now a young man in scripture represents a son of God. See 1 John 2:14 The word of God (Christ) dwells in him and he has overcome the wicked one. But this strange, church woman is lurking near at hand, neither knowing nor caring about sonship. She flatters with her words, seduces with her beauty, attracts with the odor of her perfume, and, beguiling the silly ones, she leads them to her house. You will note further that the time this seduction takes place is in the twilight, in the evening, and in the black and dark night. I know of no descriptive terms that would more aptly describe the present hour, in which darkness covers the earth and gross darkness all the people. Surely verse nine is prophetic of the hour in which we live.

It is the evening of this present age. It is the twilight of man's degenerate day. A church system that has rejected Christ as its head has entered into the black and dark night. Let there be no mistake about that.

There met him a woman with the attire of a harlot. Verse 10 The story of such a beguiling deception as this would be headline stuff for the newspapers or for one of Hollywood's corrupt movies. Nothing would be so entertaining to carnal audiences or give them so much pleasure as would the story of how a harlot woman beguiled this promising young man, a son of God. Fools make a mock of sin and gloat over its corruption, but wise and good men regard it as a melancholy story and mourn for the loss it entails. This mistress of all the arts of wheedling understood only too well how to use her caresses and fine words to win her convert. She lies in wait at every corner. She has decked her bed and herself, not with the simplicity of the gospel truth, but with the coverings of the world, the tapestry, and the fine linen of Egypt. She does not own Christ as her Lord and Head, but speaks of Him merely as the good man of the house. Verse 19.

Perhaps it would be wise to leave the interpretation of each of these powerful verses to the prayerful mind of the reader. Suffice it then to say that the truths being brought to our attention here are the true facts easily observed in the present day church system. That I will be accused of bitterness and harshness I have no doubt. I care not for this. My true concern is for those elect people who are under continual pressure to again become entangled with the yoke of bondage. The strong net of sectarianism and denominationalism condemns the saint to bondage with little growth in grace or in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Would God that you, my brother or sister, would take time to consider whether or not you have grown in grace and in the knowledge of Christ through the years! Have you been condemned to feed on a few stock sermons from paid preachers who have never placed any real goal before your eyes or set forth that all encompassing purpose in God's dealing with men? If this is the case, then it is time to awake and obey God and come out where you can tune your ear in to the Holy Spirit and learn the unspeakable things of Him, which are unlawful for a man to utter.

We are now seeing the final great falling away in the church system. Two dreadful forms of apostasy are rampant in the earth. One is an apostasy that denies the veracity and inspiration of the word of God. It denies the virgin birth and the true Sonship of Jesus Christ. It preaches evolution, higher criticism and social reform, and even provides vast sums of money to promote rebellion and revolution against all established order. Under this category appear many of the adherents of the old, line denominations, the World Council of Churches, and the entire Ecumenical Movement.

The second kind of apostasy and the more deceptive of the two is found in that vast hodge-podge of individuals, sects and denominations from Protestantism and Roman Catholicism who claim signs and wonders, speak in tongues, worship the virgin Mary, raise millions of dollars to build guttering buildings, and in general fulfill the pattern laid down for them in Paul's sermon on the great falling away of the last days. **2 Thess. 2:9,10.** "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish ... and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

It is neither my manner, my custom, or my delight to spend my time in words of condemnation. I am old enough and should be wise enough to know that buried deep in the most paganized pile of corruption

imaginable some true believer or son of God may be found. It is also true that even corrupt prophets such as the money hungry Balaam can often pour out words of truth as their rebellion is overruled by the Spirit. I shall not therefore take further time to make comparisons or to refer to groups or individuals, but instead we must allow God's word to speak for itself and let the Holy Spirit likewise speak for Himself.

There are three classes of people in the world today. There are the many who are called, the few who are chosen, and the vast multitude or the majority who are neither called nor chosen. This may come as a shock to many of God's people who still believe that all the world can be won to Christ in this age, but what I have just stated is the truth. In all ages from the very beginning of time this fact stands out as indisputable. From among the teeming millions of earth the Lord in all ages has called many. Never in human history do we have any indication that He ever called them all. The truth may have gone to them all, though there is very little evidence that it did, but only a small number heard the call of God's Holy Spirit and actually responded to it. To the truth of this fact the word of God bears abundance evidence, for it is written, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29,30.** Step by step and with indisputable wisdom the wise apostle shows how God in His eternal wisdom chooses and separates His people according to His grace and the calling given them before the world began. Of the teeming millions of earth there are first those comparatively few who are foreknown. From these there is a predestination. From these predestinated ones He calls many to sonship. Of these many proceed to justification and of these others proceed to the glory of the image of His Son. It must seem evident to any earnest reader of this passage that at each new advance into truth and revelation referred to here some go forward to the next grace and some remain where they are. Among the billions of earth a certain company who was foreknown was selected and attained the first step. Out from among them a certain company was predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ. From this multitude the Lord calls many and the rest remain as they were. Out from among the called He chooses another company, for many are called, but few are chosen. These went on to justification and finally to glorification, or the image of Christ.

These are God's elect. We would not be wrong in saying they are the very elect. In all ages and in every dispensation the Lord has had a people whom He calls the elect. The word elect is used concerning certain angels. 1 Tim. 5:21. It is used concerning God's chosen nation Israel. Isa. 65: 9,22. It is used concerning Jesus Christ. Isa. 42:1. Finally it is used to describe those blessed saints who have been both called and chosen to sonship, who by the grace of Christ achieve supreme triumph, having passed from death to life and from the power of sin and carnality unto God. Peter describes this blessedness in these words: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied." **1 Pet. 1:2.**

In the first part of this chapter we have been considering the spiritual condition of the Laodicean church system, which according to scripture and according to fact has in these last days sunken so low spiritually as to become one with the world system. The glory and power of God has become a thing lightly esteemed. Mankind in general, together with the church system, has lost its sense of awe and godly fear. This deplorable loss of respect for God and the noxious weed of impiety that has flourished by its side has become the father of a thousand lesser evils until a whole new and evil philosophy of what a Christian is and ought to be has sprung up world wide. As soon as a Christian loses his sense of the incomparable majesty and holiness of God and his consciousness becomes devoid of the divine presence, he can no longer walk in the fear of the Lord. He begins to imagine God to be such an one as himself, as the scripture has said. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." **Psa. 50:21.** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Therefore, when the fear of the Lord departs from the human heart, then even the beginning of wisdom has also departed. To prove to oneself that the fear of the Lord has departed from the church system nationally, all one needs to do is walk into a large congregation on a Sunday night. Listen and you will hear a babble of voices as the people chat about every imaginable thing from gardens to ball games while waiting for the minister to announce a hymn. They do not know that the presence of the Lord has departed from them nor do they know that He has no interest whatever in their forms and ceremonies of worship. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to

deliver. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." **Psa. 50:22-23**

Long ago the prophet mourned, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me." **Matt. 15:8** This sad condition, you must understand, arises from the tragic loss of the sense of the majesty, glory and power of the Most High God. We cannot walk blithely and irreverently into God's presence. We dare not come before Him rough shod. He will not accept the worship of our lips when our hearts are far removed from Him. "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" should be the reverberating echo in the heart of every saint. The continual consciousness of the divine presence, not only at given times of special worship, but at all times day and night should ever abide with us. Redeemed men, realizing the greatness of God, the majesty of His power, and the glory of His presence will walk in reverence and godly fear before him.

God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. When Christians lose their sense of the majesty and holiness of God, they lose their spirit of worship and, when they lose their spirit of worship, they are no longer able to withdraw inwardly and shut themselves in with the Spirit. They no longer know what it means to walk in the Spirit. The self-confident, bustling worshipper has lost all understanding of the meaning of the words "be still and know that I am God." Such marvelous phrases do not ring the bell of worship in their hearts. The adoring utterance, Abba, Father, no longer escapes as holy incense from their hearts because the consciousness of the majesty of God no longer holds them in awe. They are far too concerned with bustle and noise. To be up and doing, they imagine, is what the Lord demands. They visualize God to be someone like themselves and fancy that God is overjoyed that they are prophesying, casting out devils, and doing many mighty works. Little do they know or care that this unspiritual bustle of activity may one day evoke the words of Christ, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

At the present time the existing church system appears to be making significant gains all over the world. Probably more people go to church than ever before in history, but, while numbers increase and costly buildings are erected in ever increasing and lavish profusion, while world wide efforts costing billions are the thing of the day, the people for the most part have lost their sense of the majesty of God. Presidents talk glibly about being born again; they speak with tongues, honor the pope, and even join their voices with those who hail Mary as the mother of God. Full well do they fulfill the words of Jesus, spoken to the church of Laodicea, the final church of this age. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." **Rev. 3:17**

Long centuries ago the Corinthian church had fallen to a very low spiritual ebb. Though they were exceedingly zealous of spiritual gifts, 1 Cor. 14:2, especially prophecy and speaking with other tongues, some of them were indulging in sin which was not even named among the Gentiles. 1 Cor. 5:1 Amid all their zeal for outward show, they had become puffed up with spiritual pride, chapter 5:2, losing completely their sense of the majesty and glory of God. The wise apostle knew that their dreadful spiritual loss spelled disaster and judgment. Therefore he wrote this grave and somber warning: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." **2 Cor. 11:3-4** Another Jesus! Another spirit! Another gospel! Are not these very solemnizing words? Is it possible that in some instances in our day the Jesus that is being preached is another Jesus and not the Jesus Christ of the Bible? Yes, indeed, it is possible. It can be so, it has been so, and many cases it is so today. If the Jesus you preach is not the holy, harmless, undefiled and only begotten Son of God, then he is another Jesus. If your Jesus was not the Jesus who was born of a virgin, he is another Jesus. If he is not the son of Abraham and the son of David, he is another Jesus. If the blood he shed is not the only remedy for and cleansing from sin, he is another Jesus. If he did not die, if he was not buried, if he did not rise triumphant from the dead, if he did not ascend bodily into heaven and if he is not coming again, then he is another Jesus. If your preacher denies all or even some of these cardinal truths, then the Jesus he preaches is another Jesus, and not the spotless Christ of God. Furthermore his spirit is another spirit and not the Holy Spirit.

Long ago the apostle John wrote, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." If one receives another Jesus, how simple a matter it is that he should also receive another spirit. There is a spirit rampant in the church system that is causing abominable confusion. The Holy Spirit's message for the last days is, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." **Rev. 18, 4** But there is another spirit in our day seeking to unite in one vast conglomerate all the harlot daughters of Protestant denominationalism with the mother of harlots, which is Rome. The whole thought is not born of holiness and purity nor is there any desire for a pure personal relationship with Christ. The burning ambition of the hour is to unite all as one at all costs. The godless great men of the world are bending every effort to bring all mankind under a one, world government. The rich men of the earth are determined that it shall be so. Even now, as you read these lines, they are skillfully maneuvering all nations into financial collapse through rampaging inflation and, having accomplished this end, they will introduce a dictator of their own choosing. Political Babylon is determined to establish a godless one, world government, but they are no more determined to be one than religious Babylon is determined to be one great united harlot system. For a little moment they will both succeed and in that moment the religious harlot will sit astride the beast of the political system, Rev. 17:3, but her abominable triumph will be short lived and of small duration, for the beast will hate the whore and burn her with fire. Rev. 17:16

The specter of world government draws nearer by the hour. Even now the ten nations of the European Common Market are preparing to establish their first government. It cannot be by mere chance that at the same time the Anglican Church, together with many other Protestant denominations, is feverishly seeking ways and means of uniting with Rome. Even at this moment the Ecumenical Movement is sweeping the lifeless churches of Protestantism into union with each other in anticipation of eventual union with Rome. While this effort is progressing among the lifeless denominations, the eloquently named Charismatic Movement with its imagined gifts and spiritual excitement is successfully uniting the evangelical Protestant denominations with the mother of harlots.

In spite of all the signs and wonders of which they speak, I cannot believe this move to be a true spiritual revival. In every great spiritual awakening since Pentecost there has always been an accompanying increase in law, order and morals, even among the ungodly. During the great revivals of George Whitefield, Benjamin Franklin, who was not a believer, remarked, "It seems as though the whole world has become religious." Such is not the case with the spurious revivals of our day. The world continually sinks lower and lower into sin and ever increasing degradation, guzzling its strong drink, sucking its cigarettes, committing adultery, sodomy and incest, marrying and divorcing, murdering its unborn infants, blowing its mind with drugs, increasing daily in violence and murder until it has become a seething mass of godless corruption and immorality. All the while the professing church declares, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. I have wealth. I have riches and honor. I have billions in property, all tax free. I have spiritual gifts and signs and wonders." But she knows not that she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

God's counsel to all those who are joy-riding along with the system is: "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." **Rev. 3:18** The gains of the church system have practically all been external gains and the fearful loss has been internal. The beauty of the life in the Spirit has been exchanged for the luxury of fine temples with comfortable pews. The songs, which once swelled from hearts filled with God's Spirit are now on the hit parade, being popularized by unsanctified professionals from Hollywood or Las Vegas. It is an enormous, degenerating calamity! It is an abomination that maketh desolate! The prayer of saints, "That I may know Him", is precious to the listening ears of our Father in heaven. Though all the riches of the world were ours to own and hold, we are poverty stricken and naked if we have lost our personal relationship with God and are no longer awed by the sacredness of His presence. If in our minds we hold all the wisdom and knowledge of the world, yet, being devoid of the fear of the Lord, we are pitifully ignorant and destitute of all true wisdom, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding. It is impossible to keep our hearts right and our spirits sound if our heavenly Father is not to us "glorious in power, fearful in praises, doing wonders." "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work

of Thy hands: They shall perish: but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." **Heb. 1:8-12]** It would be well for every reader to meditate on the purifying transformation that becomes the heritage of all men who begin to see God as He really is. Is it not a most remarkable thing that Job, the greatest man in the east, one who feared God and eschewed evil, a man of such character that the Almighty God Himself spoke proudly of him, Job 1:8, should, after receiving a great revelation of the holiness of God, cry out in the agony of his soul, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42:5-6** Such abhorrence of oneself is always the result of a true revelation of the holiness and majesty of God. When a man beholds the glory of God, all his own righteousnesses become as filthy rags. When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss And pour contempt on all my pride. A. W. Tozer in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, made these weighty assertions: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

"For this reason the gravest question before the church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true, not only of individual Christians, but of the company of Christians that composes the church. Always the most revealing thing about the church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech. She can never escape the self-disclosure of her witness concerning God.

"A right conception of God is basic, not only to systematic theology, but to practical Christian living as well. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple; where it is inadequate or out of plumb, the whole structure must sooner or later collapse. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God. It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity. "Perverted notions about God soon rot the religion in which they appear. The long career of Israel demonstrates this clearly enough and the history of the church confirms it. So necessary to the church is a lofty concept of God that, when that concept in any measure declines, the church with her worship and moral standards declines along with it. The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God." End of quote.

How dread are Thine eternal years,
O everlasting Lord!
By prostrate spirits day and night
Incessantly adored!
How beautiful, how beautiful
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power
And awful purity!
Oh, how I fear Thee, Living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope
And penitential tears!

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 20

MYSTERY BABYLON

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON

There are many mysteries spoken of in the word of God. They are called mysteries because no other word would adequately describe them. We read of the mystery of godliness, the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of the translation of the saints in Christ, the mystery of the kingdom, and many others. Again we read of "Mystery, Babylon the Great, Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." It has always been a trait of human nature to want to delve in mysteries, but there are many mysteries, which have scarcely ever been noticed. Indeed, it is completely impossible to fathom them in any degree except by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

It is my purpose just now to write about that one great mystery which is called Mystery Babylon, but for the sake of making ourselves acquainted with the thought of mystery, let us consider briefly one or two of the other mysteries, which perhaps are more readily understandable.

"Great is the mystery of godliness," wrote Paul. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, received up into glory." There are many mysterious things about godliness that even godly men can never understand. What strange mysterious element is there to godliness that keeps a man pressing relentlessly on toward an invisible mark when both friend and foe tell him he is a fool to continue thus wasting his life and his time, when his manner of living brings him nothing but persecution, tribulation, lone-someness and friendlessness? The inner urge of godliness that makes him endure a cross, despise shame, go to prison or to the stake, scoff at tribulation, and count every loss to himself a gain for Christ is in itself nothing less than a fabulous mystery, a mystery that can never be explained in this world and scarcely in the world to come. The glory of this mystery is worthy to be written on pages of silver with ink of gold, but none of earth's philosophers could trace with a golden pen such sage, deathless truth as lies hidden in the "mystery of godliness." Only with the finger of God can such truth be written and then alone on pages not less worthy than the incorruptible heart. Great is the mystery that God was manifest in the flesh, that God was justified in the Spirit, that God was preached unto the Gentiles, and that God was received up into glory.

The mystery of iniquity, the mystery of lawlessness and rebellion - what a mystery it is! As we cannot explain the mystery of godliness, neither can we explain the mystery of ungodliness. Lawlessness has been in the hearts of men ever since the day in Eden's lovely garden when Adam fell. What is this mysterious thing that is called rebellion against God? Who on earth can understand or explain it? Why did Cain kill his brother? Why did Ishmael mock Isaac? Why was Joseph hated of his brethren? Why were the prophets slain, the Christ crucified, the apostles murdered, and the saints martyred? Why is it that four times in the annals of history bloody mysterious men - Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, and Hitler - arose on the world's gloomy horizon with a diabolic, barbaric, bloody plan to systematically destroy from the face of the earth the people God had chosen? What mysterious lawlessness is it that makes boys destroy the nests of beautiful song birds, or throw stones through the windows of vacant buildings, or scratch the paint on a new car, or a thousand other mischievous things? It is a lawlessness that has its root in mystery and none can explain the reason for it. How very often have delinquent young men and women, arraigned before a court, been asked to give their reason for committing some senseless crime, only to reply with a foolish look on their faces and a ridiculous shrug of the shoulders in the senseless words, "I don't know." In that, indeed, they spoke the truth, for they themselves do not understand the strange working of the mystery of lawlessness within them.

Rev. 17:2-6. While the beloved John was exiled on lonely Patmos, the very breath of the Spirit bore him forward over two thousand years of time to disclose before his wondering eyes the glories and the desolations that were to climax this age in which we live. John, who fell as one dead before the feet of Him who stood arrayed in resplendent glory in the midst of the seven candlesticks, now found himself standing in wonder and amazement before the great Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. This mysterious woman is given the full and complete title of unrighteousness, Mystery Babylon the Great, Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

How great must have been the wonder of this man of God when his eyes beheld the great whore, sitting astride many waters. (The waters signify people: see Rev. 17:15) The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. He was carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. "And the woman was arrayed in scarlet and purple color, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written; Mystery, Babylon the Great, Mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." **Rev. 17:2-6**

Gen. 11:1-9 Long, long ago when man was still young and the earth was one language and one speech, the people wandered into a plain in Shinar near the mouth of the Euphrates River. In this place was Ur of the Chaldees from which Abraham was later called, Gen. 11:31, and in which still later the mighty kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius, were to reign in splendor in Babylon. Centuries previous to this Adam had basked in the glories of Eden in this same region of the rivers Euphrates and Hiddekel. What an historic region this was, indeed! Perhaps no other spot on earth has had more to do with the destinies of man than this region, and history with its types and shadows that had its cradle there will one day rock the earth as its mysteries unfold.

So the inhabitants of earth wandered to Shinar, the land near the Persian Gulf, and these people, lest they become dispersed from one another on the face of the earth, decided to build a city and a mighty tower that would reach to heaven. With adobe brick baked and burned and slime for mortar they set about the impossible task of building a tower which would reach right up to heaven itself. With what zeal they set about their task and with what labor and travail they inched their weary way toward the skies! Poor little earth-bound man with his feeble trowel and unstable mortar will never reach those realms immortal. Not by sweat of face and labor of hands can such glories be attained, but only through faith in blood incorruptible, speaking better things than that of Abel, can we rise on the omnipotent arm of the Spirit into the realms that are eternal.

It was in mercy that the gracious Father came down from His throne to see the work they were doing. Gen. 11:5. Well did He know that the tower, which they struggled to build that day, was but the harbinger of many, many more such similar and fruitless attempts through succeeding ages. Indeed, they would not build again with slime and brick, but with vast and varied means of self-righteousness would man in future years try to span the gulf between himself and God and seek to rise by his own effort from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies. And so God came down to see their work and what He saw displeased Him greatly. Therefore with one stroke He garbled and confused their language so that none understood the speech of his neighbor. Every man went about babbling sounds unintelligible to all but himself and his own family. All work was disrupted; everything was deranged. Discomposure, disturbance and de-organization reigned unchallenged. Disconcerted and perplexed people shuffled about amid the topsy-turvy insanity of the hour and sought with haste to scatter themselves abroad on the earth to free themselves from the demented and chaotic throng. When the confusion and disorder had died away and the whole of humanity was scattered abroad, God Himself gave the place a name - Babel (or Babble) - a name that would fitly describe for all time the age-lasting confusion that would exist for the world of mankind who would henceforth try to bring unity and a way to the realms of God by the efforts of the carnal mind.

Here at Babel, which means confusion, we have the beginning of the great mystery of Babylon, which is to follow through each succeeding generation, ever widening its scope of power and influence until it sits astride the whole earth, full of wealth and swaggering in drunkenness from the blood of the saints, still as religious as

ever, still seeking to build a tower to heaven, but still the eternal mystery of confusion and disorder, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the whole earth. Here at Babel, then, began the idea of trusting in some visible work of man's hands to bring unity and oneness of speech.

Full forty years Israel had wandered in the wilderness, but at long last they had passed over Jordan and were now in the glorious land promised to Abraham in the long ago. The manna of the wilderness ceased as soon as they passed over Jordan and they rejoiced in the fruit of that wonderful land of promise. From here on they were to have a new Captain, even the captain of the Lord of Hosts. The directions for capturing the city of Jericho were simple, indeed, and without the loss of a man the city fell into their hands. Greatly did they rejoice over their victory, and it was with joyful confidence that they sent a small army of men the day following to capture the little city of Ai. But their joy was short-lived, for the men of Ai came out and fought against them and beat them back, and thirty-six men of Israel fell before them. There was a reason for this defeat, and with what breath-taking interest is the story told in Joshua, chapter 7. "Israel hath sinned," said God, "and therefore cannot stand before their enemies." So lots were cast to find the sinner and Achan of the tribe of Judah was taken. And Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give, I pray, glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession unto Him, and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel and thus have I done: When among the spoils I saw a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver and wedge of gold, I coveted them and took them, and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent."

So here it is so very soon! A goodly Babylonish garment, together with the other two things that always go with it - silver and gold. Here is the garment of Babylon throwing confusion and disorder into the ranks of the people of God and making them lose the victory and flee before their enemies. Five times in this **seventh** chapter God spoke, saying, "**Israel hath sinned in the accursed thing.**" **Verses 11, 12, 13, 15**

I must speak with the utmost solemnity here. I must invite all men to sober thought. Did you ever see it fail? The moment God begins a mighty work of grace and power and unity, someone begins to covet the Babylonish garment. He secrets it away into his tent to hide it there. The very thing that was to have been destroyed he secretly saves, and with it he starts to build another tower, another language, and another nation to add to the universal confusion and disorder that is manifest everywhere in the church. It is difference of language above everything else that makes the many nations of earth. It is literal Babylon that separates brother from brother and makes them more hateful than a foe. It is spiritual Babylon that separates Christian from Christian, destroying unity and dividing purpose and making all speak a different language. It is spiritual Babylon that divides the people of God, making them foreigners and strangers, none speaking intelligibly to the other.

Some years ago I learned with indelible thoroughness the great distress and confusion that comes from difference of language. We had driven into Paris at evening just when the streets were thronging with people bent on getting home from work as quickly as possible. The broad ways buzzed with noisy cars and buses and the sidewalks thronged with pedestrians. I was a stranger and a foreigner in the city, a man of different speech. I did not know where I wanted to go nor did I know how to get there. I could not speak French nor did I know how to make myself understood. While thousands young and old waved and chatted, laughed and talked, asked their questions and received their answers, I might as well have been on Mars or the moon for all I could understand. While I contemplated my first move, I realized that even the color of a man's skin cannot divide him from his fellow man as hopelessly as the language he speaks or does not speak. There will always be divided nations as long as different language exists. There will always be denominations, sects, and confusion as long as men hide the accursed Babylonish garment in their tent. The denominational (sectarian) spirit that always seeks to build that which is visible and the Babylonish (Babel) spirit are one and the same thing.

In reading the story of Achan, how for his sin both he and all that appertained to him were stoned with stones and burned with fire until Israel was completely ridded of both the Babylonish garment and those that had a desire for it, one is reminded of the final destruction of that great system as recorded in **Rev. 18:9** "**And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her shall bewail her and lament for her when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her torment saying, Alas, Alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.**"

I do not believe there is any way to explain, imagine, or understand the many ways this mystery of Babylon works. Even before the apostles of Christ had gone to their eternal reward, the sectarian system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of many others. The Babble had begun and the mysterious harlot was raising her ugly head.

But the spirit of Babylon goes much deeper than sects and denominations. It is a mystery, the spirit of which seems to be deep-rooted in the heart of man. It is like an octopus with many arms reaching in all directions. If it cannot catch us with one of its arms, it will enfold us with another. It is like a demon, which, being cast out, will return with seven other demons more powerful and cunning than itself. We do not have to look for the spirit of Babylon in some great and powerful denomination; we will find it in our hearts if we look close enough. Mystery, Babylon, is in the forehead.

If any man will follow God and walk in the glorious light of revelation and truth as it falls on his pathway, it will not be long before he finds himself at odds with his fellow Christians. We can follow this thought from the death of Abel at the gate of Eden to the present day. Follow the memoirs of the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the reformers right down to our day and the story is always the same. We cannot walk with God and walk with men, too. It is impossible. When the whale could not assimilate Jonah, it vomited him out. When the system, the sect, or denomination cannot assimilate and digest us and make us a part of itself, it will vomit us out as sure as God is in His heaven.

This is not the thing that frightens me, however. The thing that fills my heart with consternation is this: no sooner has the revelation of God delivered us from the power of Babylon than we begin to cast our eyes about us, and count noses to find out who is with us and who is against us, and what material we can find to build another tower of Babel. This in itself is the Babylonish, sectarian spirit reaching out another of its octopus-like arms to enfold us and bring us back to itself. We wake up to find we have not come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, but have just wandered down another street in Babylon itself. We have changed one Babylonish garment for another and we are still part and parcel of the same devouring monster. To call ourselves undenominational is not enough. We must have the name of Babylon erased from our foreheads by the mind of Christ and a new name written there, even the name of the City of God.

You must have noticed that Mystery, Babylon, is described as the mother of harlots. Now it is only sound reasoning to say that, if a certain harlot is the mother of harlots, she must have a number of daughters all of whom are harlots like herself. When John saw this great mystery, Babylon, he saw her sitting on a scarlet colored beast, having seven heads and ten horns. John stood and wondered with great admiration at what he saw till the angel spoke and asked, "Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath seven heads and ten horns." **Rev. 17:4-7** Then in **verse 9** he says, "And here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." As far as I know, there is only one city in the world situated on seven mountains and that city is Rome. Rome, which in 316 A.D. made Christianity the state religion of the entire Roman Empire, and began to wed Christianity with paganism. Though many are loath to believe it, I do not believe anyone can successfully deny that all Protestant sects sprang originally from this one mother. Though this is all a great mystery, I declare these harlotish daughters are being born every day and the kings and priests of the earth are committing fornication with them. A royal priesthood is made up of kings and priests, and it is the kings and priests that are involved with this Babylonish woman and her daughters.

The call of the Lord today is, "Come out of her, My people, and be not partaker of her sins." But verily I say to you that we will need much more wisdom than the wisdom of man to be set free from this octopus that holds Christendom in its many entwining arms. The wisdom of man will praise God for its deliverance from one of the harlots of Babylon even while it is fondly embracing another. While men are praising God for deliverance from one arm of the octopus, they are being enfolded by another, and while they rejoice that they have found their way out of the darkness of one of the streets of Babylon, they awaken to find they are walking down another.

Forgive me if I boast a little, for this boasting is not the kind that savors of pride, but rather brings great sadness to my heart. There may be many men in the world qualified to speak of these things, but few have been more qualified by experience than I both to see and discern the many ramifications of the Babylonish

system. I was born into the system many years ago. I walked its streets and wore its garments before I ever knew Christ as my personal Saviour. The denomination was everything. It mattered little how men lived or whether they had any personal experience with God. The thing that mattered was whether or not they were church-goers. They did not hide the Babylonish garment in their tent; they wore it with pride. Neither did they hide the talents of silver and the wedge of gold. The more they contributed to the organization the better Christians they were. Then one day I found Christ and my heart was filled with joy because of a love I had for Him. I wanted to be near Him and point other men to Him. He was to me the center of all things and the most important person in all the universe. It was not long, however, before I saw that I was falling into another sect. They wanted me to speak their language and help to build their tower. Was I going to join them? Was I going to preach for them? Was I going to wear their garments? Was I going to be distinctly theirs? But God was leading me on, delivering me from the prisons of Babylon, opening the rusty gates, and leading me out into the broad ways of His grace divine.

Perhaps it was a miracle. I do not think it was chance. I learned that men could be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So I sought and found this blessed new experience in God, and joys flowed like a river as the Comforter came in. But here again the arms of another daughter of Babylon began to enfold me. Was I going to join their Church? Was I going to preach for them? Was I going to take out papers and credentials? This time I was persuaded, and I did, and for seventeen years thereafter I was a faithful slave of the organization, speaking its language and building its visible tower. But I was never fully satisfied, though I loved the work, I loved the people, and I loved the students of my old Bible School. Many dozens of them went out to minister far and wide and many found their way to distant and foreign lands. I am sure their rewards will be many, indeed.

All the while there was a longing for a freedom which I did not know, a relationship with God that I did not have. Many times I taught the people that some day God would send a revelation of truth, but the very denomination we had so faithfully built would not be able to receive it. When finally that revelation did come, they were not able to receive it, and those of us who did receive it were vomited like Jonah from the belly of the denominational whale, thrown up upon dry land, for we had sickened his stomach.

God does not leave us in a dry land for long if we are bound to be one with Him. Should my life be very long on earth, I shall never be able to forget the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power that came to our class room as we waited on God that glorious 13th of February, 1948, when God began to do a new thing that was destined for a time to shake the church system all over America. How we sang the songs of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and re-echoed among the battlements of heaven! Music of heavenly choirs of earth went sweeping up the sky steeps while angels stood at heaven's gates and swept their harps of gold. Day after day, month after month the celestial wonder continued. Heaven came down our souls to greet and glory crowned the mercy seat. People came for thousands of miles to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life and it looked for a time as though the walls of Babylon were to be broken down and the whole church would come marching to Zion.

But the Babylonian captivity was not yet over. As I look sadly in retrospect now, I can see with clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head and men began to hide the Babylonish garment in their tents, together with the silver and the wedge of gold. Much as we may despise the Babylonish garment, let me use this pun: The moment the gold gets its wedge in, we are on the way back to Babylon. It is true that we vociferously denied that we had become a sect. Oh, no! Not we! We had no name; we were not registered with the government as a sect and never would be. We had done away with many of the institutions that had characterized other sects. Gone were the Bible Schools. Gone were the church buildings. Gone were the hireling pastors. Gone were so many things that would have identified us with either the Mother of harlots or any of her daughters. The old Babylonish garment was well hidden deep beneath the earth of the tent, but it was there none-the-less, and the whole move was becoming more and more enfolded by another tentacle of the great octopus. Stricter and more rigid became the teaching and the discipline. There was to be no fellowship with anybody who was not within the confines of our ever, narrowing circle. We were the true church. We were the elect. We stood on the foundation and all other men stood on sinking sand. No man must cast out a devil unless he followed us. No teaching was worth the time it took to tell it unless it originated with us. We were the most spiritual people in the world. We were

going to reign in the kingdom and even now we were beginning to reign. We had the gifts of the Spirit, and we were going to "call the shots" in the tribulation.

We had been taught that we were journeying back through the churches of Revelation, journeying back from Laodicea to Ephesus. But we did not know that like Ephesus we had lost our first love, and must repent and do the first works over again. We did not remember that one of the dreadful marks of the church of Ephesus was that it was characterized by false apostles, Rev. 2:2, who were not apostles at all, but liars. We did not know that through the years false apostles had crept in among us, men who were apostles in name only, who had never founded anything in their lives but were building on the foundation of others. We did not know that the doctrines and deeds of the Nicolaitanes (which God hates, Rev. 2:6) were prevalent among us. The word Nicolaitanes is formed by two Greek words: nikao which means to conquer and laos which means the people or the laity. This doctrine had reared its ugly head to the extent that the people had no voice in anything. The elders were no longer fathers, but men who were to carry out the will of those who were lords over the heritage of God. Everything was cut and dried and firmly enfolded in the arms of another of the harlot daughters of the Babylonian system. We boasted of the gifts of the Spirit, but what had become of them? Where were the healings? Where were the miracles? Where was the faith, the gift of languages, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge? The only thing that was left was prophecy and it became a weariness to the flesh, flowing continually from the mind of man and scarcely ever having any fulfillment. Prophecy that has no fulfillment comes from one of two sources: from the mind of Satan or from the mind of man, but never from the mind of God. How often I have listened to people fumble for words as they prophesied, thus giving the lie to their words having been inspired of God. How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Isa. 1:21

I shall never cease to thank God that I was vomited out of the belly of this whale also, for we never know the depths to which we have sunk until we are able to view Babel at a distance. Then and then alone our hearts give thanks to God for deliverance from another of the harlot daughters of Babylon. My heart can sing with David, "My soul is escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler, the net is broken and I am escaped." Nevertheless, one is scarcely delivered from his bondage until another arm of the Babylonian octopus lies waiting to enfold him again. Therefore we may well ask, "What are we to do?"

The natural mind is ever seeking something visible and tangible. It loves to look around and say, "This and that belongs to me and I belong to it. This is in my circle, that does not belong." It loves to be able to count noses and number the people. It loves to be able to circumscribe a certain group and say with evident pride, "This is the church. All who stand on this foundation are the church. All who do not are not the church." I often wondered why it was that God was so angry with His servant David, for his transgression in numbering Israel. I do not wonder about that any more. David wanted something he could see with his natural eyes, something he could circumscribe, something he could count as his, something he could depend upon for safety. He had forgotten that only God knew who were really his. He did not remember that God saves not by many or few. The dreadful anger of God against his action brought destruction to many of those whom David had counted and great was the slaughter among the people of the Lord. 2 Sam. 24

The hour has come for us to realize that only the Lord knoweth them that are His. Only the Lord can gather the tares out of the wheat. Only the Lord can separate the sheep from the goats. Only the Lord can call His sheep by name and lead them out. Only the Lord can look into the four corners of the earth and call forth His elect. Who, then, am I to circumscribe anything? I must learn to know men, not by what they say, what they believe, where they are, or least of all because they are members of a certain group, but by that strange witness that made Jesus say to Peter, "Thou art Peter," and by that same spiritual revelation that made Peter say to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". How often we have been shockingly disappointed in men! It was because we knew them only after the flesh and we did not know them after the Spirit. We accepted them because they were inside a certain circle and said they belonged to "the move". Yes, indeed, they may have been inside the circle and they may have been in the move, but where were they in God's eyes? That is the important question.

During the last few years I have become increasingly aware that many who appeared to be in the move were not in it, and many who appeared not to be in it were chosen and elect of God. Paul gave us the inside picture

of a wonderful truth when he declared, "Henceforth we know no man after the flesh; yea, if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more". If Samuel had gone by outward appearance, he would certainly have chosen one of the brothers of David rather than David to be king over Israel. Fine men of stature and character though they were, he rejected them all because he had no witness of the Spirit that they were the elect of God, but when David passed before him, he poured the oil upon him because the Spirit of God witnessed that this was one of the elect of the Lord whom He had chosen to kingship. Because this is a spiritual thing, it cannot really be explained in words; it must be spiritually discerned and understood. But of a truth I tell you that there is no other way on earth among men whereby we can escape the clutching arms of the harlot daughters of Babylon except to flee away from all that is visible and natural and be joined eternally to that blessed company who are imbued with the mind of Christ. Oh, if only I could explain that to have the mind of Christ dwelling in us has nothing whatever to do with any sort of reformation, imitation, impersonation, representation, semblance, or copy. Rather it is death to the old and resurrection to the new. The mind that dwelt in Christ was the Father's mind, and the mind that we are to "let be in us" is the very same mind that dwelt in Him. There and there alone is the "body spirit". We will never escape from the multitudinous confusions of Babylon until the mind of Christ dwells in us and we are joined in spirit and in mind to those who have the spirit and mind of Christ. Physical and visible unions can never be real, much less permanent. That glorious company of Zion are those who have the Father's name in their foreheads.

Our personal association with the lovely and wonderful Jesus is the one and only thing that is important. Our association with visible towers no matter how strong, how high, or how numerous means nothing at all, but serves only to associate us with mystery, Babylon, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. After years of association with the visible church and after a ministry of transcending greatness, the beloved Paul prayed from the depths of his soul, "That I may know Him." Let human voices repeat it. Let angels mighty in glory and strength shout it from the gates of Paradise - our personal association with Jesus is the one thing of transcending importance. As long as the age abides, no group of people will ever be found, all of whom have God's name in their foreheads. Mystery, Babylon, will always be found among them. Concentrate on your personal relationship to Him. Know no man by the size of his stature or the multitude of his words. If we are not knit together in Spirit, we are not one at all.

Many years ago, before Christ became Lord of my life, I became a member of a secret order. They taught us secret signs and ways by which we were to identify ourselves to strangers who were also members of the same order. We had a sign which we could pass to a stranger which given, meant, "I am; are you?" If the stranger was a member of the same order, he returned a sign, which meant, "I am." This may well serve for the secret societies of the earth, but it is not by the flashing of secret signs that we know Christ or those who have His name in their foreheads. It is by an inner revelation to the heart that the glad answer is given, "I am."

How my heart thrilled with glory and praise as I read the blessed account in John 1:35-49. That passage must have been written as a definite example for all those who have made their personal relationship with Christ the object of supreme importance. It reads: Again the next day after John stood and two of His disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. It was not conversation, teaching, association, or study that forced the inspired words from the lips of John, but rather the same Spirit that made him leap in his mother's womb when once, thirty years before, the salutation of Mary had sounded in the ears of Elizabeth. And now in full-blown manhood this rough dweller of the wilderness, standing with girdle of skin and bearded face, thrills with the witness of the Son of God while his lips move with prophetic exactness, "Behold the Lamb of God." And the two disciples who stood by his side, feeling the same impelling witness, strode off to follow Jesus and be His disciples. "And Jesus turned, and saw them following." Not a word had He uttered and yet they followed. They followed not from outward persuasion but from a witness born from within. That is the personal association I mean - one born of an inner light, an inner witness, a knowledge that He is the Son of God. Many a one has been taught the story of Jesus and can repeat from memory the account of His miracles, His death, His resurrection, and even speak of His coming again, who has never had an inner witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"Then Jesus saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, where dwellest Thou? He saith, Come and see, and they abode with Him that day." Though foxes have holes and birds have nests, where does this man dwell who has nowhere to lay His head? He dwells in God and God

dwells in Him, and They abide in the hearts of men and women like you and me whose lips have uttered the exultant shout of the Spirit as He witnesses within, "Behold the Lamb of God."

One of the disciples who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who went to seek for Peter and tell him of Jesus. Sing, O my soul, and shout, O ye heavens, for the inward assurance of his words to Peter. "We have found the Messiah." And he brought him to Jesus. Wonder of wonders, the Spirit witnesses again, for Peter is the man who in the face of the fallacious misconception of the multitude declared, "Thou art the Christ; Thou art the Son of God." Jesus replied, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in heaven." **Matt. 16:17**

"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee and findeth Philip and saith unto him, "Follow Me!" Philip findeth Nathaniel and saith unto him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathaniel saith unto him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip saith unto him,

"Come and see." Jesus saw Nathaniel coming and saith unto him, "Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathaniel saith unto him, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathaniel answered and saith, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel."

The above passage deserves pages of explanation, but can we not see that it is filled with the spirit of revelation? Can we imagine our reaction should a stranger meet us on the street and command us to follow him as Jesus commanded Philip? It would need much more than a command to make me follow. It would need a revelation, and a revelation it was that made Philip leave all and follow this stranger. It was revelation that made him say they had found Him of whom Moses wrote, and it was the same inner witness that filled the tongue of Nathaniel with the eager words, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."

Our association with a system means nothing. Our association with Christ means everything. Our association with Jesus means order and eternal life. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. It is only Babylon that can be observed. The kingdom of God is invisible to all fleshly eyes, but it is visible to the eyes of the Spirit.

Since the hour man became separated from the glories of the invisible realm, he has sought to put his confidence in the visible realm. When man could no longer see God, he made gods out of wood and stone and bowed down to them. It mattered not that they could neither speak nor hear nor see. He wanted something that he could see with his eyes of flesh, and of which he could say, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." "According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah, and according to the number of streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal." **Jer. 11:13**

But the mystery of Babylon is more deep-seated than visible things like images, sects, and denominations. It is something that has become apart of the mind. The name, Mystery, Babylon, was written in the forehead of this woman that sat on many waters.

Rev. 17. It was something in her mind and in her heart. It was her name. It was her constitution and make up. She could not think nor live without it. To have the name of God in the forehead is to have the mind of Christ. Therefore to have the name Mystery, Babylon, in the forehead is to have the very mind of this mysterious system that loves the visible and loves to point to some earthly thing and say, "This is the tower that leads to heaven."

Babel! Babel! Babel! This strange mysterious realm of confusion, multiplied languages, tongues, sects, denominations, organizations, ists and isms has so thoroughly become part and parcel of the thinking of the whole Christian world that nothing makes sense without it. If we must go to the hospital, we are asked for the name of our denomination. If we join the army, we are asked for the name of our denomination. If we mention religion, someone will ask us what denomination we adhere to.

John saw the great harlot sitting on many waters. Rev. 17:1. Then in verse 15 he said, "The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." It only takes half an eye to see that this is a universal system that sits astride the whole earth. "For all nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." **Rev. 18:3.**

This mysterious system is to be finally and irrevocably destroyed. In David's prophecy of the Babylonian captivity of Israel, Psa. 137, he says, "O daughter of Babylon who art to be destroyed." The destruction of the earthly system is sure, and has been in the heart of God Himself from the time of its beginning at Babel. Isaiah by prophetic vision also saw the destruction of this mysterious system. "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth. - And behold, there cometh a chariot and a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods hath he broken to the ground." **Isa. 21:6, 9** See Jer. 51:8. But the climacteric of her fall comes in the vision of John. The great fall actually takes place at the moment of the sealing in the foreheads of the second one hundred and forty four thousand, elect and chosen out of the whole earth. When this glorious act is complete, then the system, which has in its forehead (mind) Mystery Babylon, comes to a cataclysmic destruction. Rev. 14:8. See also verses 1-8. The importance of the destruction of Mystery Babylon is emphasized greatly by the fact that Revelation 17, 18, 19:1-6 are taken up with the fearful destruction of the system, the mourning of those who are part of it, and the rejoicing of the saints and the heavenly hosts.

While the destruction of this great harlot system is the cause for dreadful weeping and remorse to those who loved her, Rev. 18:16-19, it is the time of jubilation for those who know nothing but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. "Babylon is fallen," shout the prophets. "Babylon is fallen," cried mightily the angels. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you of her. "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people saying, Alleluia; Salvation and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God; - For He hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up forever and forever. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne saying, Amen, Alleluia. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." **Rev. 19:1-6.** And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

There is no truth, which concerns each one of us more vitally than the present truth regarding "Mystery Babylon". I have not written at length on this subject for the sake of condemning someone else or of heaping disrepute on the heads of denominations and sects, calling them Babylon, disorder and confusion while at the same time trying to justify myself. Babylon as I see it today is not the same picture I saw ten or twelve years ago. Then I saw just the outward form of sectarianism. Now I see it as something far more deep-seated than that. Today I see it as Mystery Babylon, something that is written right in the forehead of all Christendom, something so deep-rooted and so deep-seated that Christians are unable to think except in terms of established orders, sects, denominations, creeds, assemblies, doctrines, meetings, communions, baptisms, programs, campaigns, preachers, missionaries, tracts, healings, gifts, personal work, radio and television programs, offerings, drives, invasions, publications, Sunday Schools, Bible schools, alms, church buildings, special numbers, special speakers, etc., etc., etc., etc. But after they have finished a whole lifetime of this feverish church activity, how many people are there who have ever taken time to wait on God long enough to hear Him speak and to have Him divulge His will to their seeking hearts? I tell you of a truth that any man or woman who will take time to wait on God in fasting and prayer, seeking God's mind and God's eternal will—that man will find himself drifting away from all these aforementioned things and from there on the mind of Christ will be his program, his quest, and his eternal joy.

Our Lord Jesus Christ painted a parabolic picture of our present Babylonish system when one day He summed it all up in these words: "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? Then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." **Matt. 7:21-23** Just imagine that! After such a list of plausible works these people still do not know God and God does not know

them. Is not this a perfect picture of the church system today? Men and women everywhere are absorbed in their Babylonish program, but the mind of Christ they possess not; the will of God they know not.

There is a very great error in the earth that is keeping men in the bondage of Babylon. Let me put it as clearly as I can in these words. It is abundantly evident to both Christian and non-Christian that the enormous, iniquitous, calamitous confusion of sects and activities by which the existing church is held in captivity is in truth Mystery Babylon the great. The confused sinner on the street will tell us so and the confused Christian in the system will admit it as well. But it is not enough for us to point to the system and call it Babylon. The important thing for us is to see by revelation that we too, are bound and chained by that mysterious harlot, Babylon. Do you realize that the great holy man, Daniel, was once the third ruler of Babylon? The wonderful thing was that he knew he was in Babylon and his heart ached and longed for the time when he would return to beautiful Zion. Even when the decree was signed that no man should make any request of God or man but of the king only, Daniel went to his house and three times each day he raised his window toward Jerusalem and kneeled down and made request to God that he might be delivered from Babylon, its king, its system, and all that pertained to it, and that he might return to Jerusalem, that/ree city which is above and is the Mother of us all. Dan. 6:10 Gal. 4:26

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were also among the chief princes of Babylon, but they, too, realized where they were and would not bow down to the image of that system. They would gladly go to the burning fiery furnace rather than bow down their knees to the Babylonian image. Even while the great Nehemiah delivered the cup into the hand of the king, his heart was crying for Jerusalem because the gates of that city were burned with fire, Neh. 1 and 2, and he requested of the king that he might return and rebuild them.

Now the thing that distresses me is this: Thousands of people who call the existing system Babylon still do not know that they are dwelling there themselves and that the name, Mystery Babylon, is in their minds. Few teachings I have ever been privileged to give have provoked more comment than the teaching regarding Mystery Babylon. Some of the comments and testimonies I have received were a great help and encouragement to me, but I am sad to say that others, who were loud in their praise of the truth of the message immediately proceeded to tell of their association with the system in some form and this proved that they had missed the real import of the message and the truth it was to convey. That is the great error that is binding Christians to this system and keeping them away from the mind of Christ. With their heads they know it is Babylon, but they have never seen it with their hearts by a spiritual revelation. Once you see by a revelation from God what I am talking about, you will find yourself obliged to separate yourself from the Babylonish woman and be joined unto Christ in the Spirit. It would do us all abundant good to meditate on these words, "He that is joined to a harlot is one flesh, but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." **1Cor. 6:16** The harlot is the system and is of the flesh; the Lord is Christ, and union with Him is a union of the Spirit.

As soon as the truth of this revelation dawns upon you, you are immediately thrown into a turmoil of frantic wonder, trying to imagine where you are going to find fellowship, where you will find a church home, what will your children do, what will you do for activity, what will happen to the sinners and to the heathen, and what about a thousand other questions that will fill your mind. But that, my friend, is because you have been married to the system so long that you cannot think in any terms but its terms. You have been joined by the carnal mind to this woman so long that you don't know how you can live without her. You are like a man who, after being married to a woman for many years, finds that his marriage is illegal. You have been joined to a harlot, but you must forsake her to be joined to Christ in the Spirit. After all, the true church consists of those who are one with Him in the Spirit. In the world today there are approximately nine hundred and twenty-five million church members. Most of these dear people are married to the church and have its name written in their foreheads, but I gravely doubt that from Pentecost until now there have been one hundred and forty-four thousand who have been joined to Christ and have His name in their foreheads. Is it any wonder then that the angels of God cried to the saints, "Come out of her. My people, and be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities?" **Rev. 18:4-5** The whole system is doomed to destruction. As sure as God is in heaven, Babylon is going to fall. Nothing can be done to save her, redeem her, or help her. We must come out of her or we will receive her terrible judgments.

It is not against Christians themselves that the dreadful anathemas of the Book of Revelation are proclaimed, but against the harlotish system that has captivated our minds and made us bow in worship at its idolatrous

shrine, binding us in slavery to a thousand activities, demanding of us tithes of rue, anise, and cummin, while forgetting judgment and truth. Christ is truth.

We have been spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, the traditions of men, the rudiments of the world, and we have forgotten Christ. Please read Col. 2:8 The church system has stolen our minds, put its name in our foreheads, and made us think that gain is godliness and that to be devoted to the church makes one a man of God. We have got the whole thing backwards and there is nothing to do but forsake it and seek to be joined to Christ and Him alone. Let His mind dwell in you. Let the other mind be erased and cleansed away by the blood of Jesus and purged by the eternal Spirit. You will discover a glorious thing when for the first time in your Christian life you find your ear deaf to the seductive voice of the harlot and her many daughters, who have made all nations to drink of the wine of her fornication, and find your ear open to the eternal wisdom that flows from the lips of Jesus Christ saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

No one realizes better than I do that to teach these things is to cut away the very ground from beneath my feet, for it would seem to leave me without a church, without a congregation, and without a ministry; and I suppose it will leave you in the same predicament. But have we forgotten that "that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die?" Have we forgotten that the ministry of John the Baptist had to decrease so that the ministry of Christ could begin and increase? Have we forgotten that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit?" Do we not know that the stinging breath of death is followed by the excellent glory of the resurrection just as surely as day follows night and spring unfolds her leaves of glory when the icy bitterness of winter's death is past? Why are we so fearful to obey God and come out from among it all and separate ourselves unto Him? One man who has partaken of the mind of Christ could do more to transform the world and bring in the kingdom than the combined efforts of all the carnal Christians on earth. The carnal mind can never bring in the kingdom because its ways are enmity against God.

I do not want to "hedge" nor "beat about the bush" in what I am saying, but I want to speak my earnest convictions with clarity and assurance. After months of meditation and separating myself unto God, putting my life and my frail ministry on the altar, I have come to the conclusion that to be Joined to Christ in sonship demands our separation and divorce from every last vestige of the Babylonish church system. It should be abundantly clear that the true church is, after all, composed only of those who are joined in unity with Christ, and has nothing whatever to do with denominations, systems, sects, creeds, groups with a name, groups without a name, crowds, congregations, or anything else. Many Christians are inclined to point to Rome and call her Babylon. Others will go so far as to include apostate Protestant denominations; others can see that even the so-called fundamentalists are actually snared also by the Babylonish system and they, too, have the name of Babylon on their foreheads. But this is not enough. We must go right down the line and include all groups large or small, both with a name and without a name. Indeed, we must include any group or activity whatsoever about which our spiritual life has become centered.

What a universe of truth is contained in the words of Col. 2:8. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Let us notice these statements one at a time. Beware lest any man spoil you. Spoil in this instance means to rob or plunder. Spoil us of what? Why, they rob us of our personal, intimate wholehearted relationship to Jesus Christ. They rob us of His mind and plunder us of His blessed will so that we become taken up wholeheartedly with things, things, things, a thousand things, but our personal relationship with Him is forgotten in the feverish excitement of accomplishing these things for God. Tens of thousands of Christians have a less intimate relationship with Christ today than they had thirty or forty years ago when they first came to know Him. They have been spoiled; they have been robbed of even their first love because things, things, things that concern the existing church system have taken His place in their lives. Let us look still closer at this scripture. Let us ask a second question. We have noticed that we have been spoiled of OUT personal relationship with Him, but how are we robbed? What method is used by Satan to rob us so that we do not know Him? Paul gives us the answer by naming four things we have followed instead of Christ: philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world.

Practically all sermons preached today are merely the philosophy of the preacher, and practically all the philosophy of the preacher is the tradition of men handed down from one generation to the next. These

philosophies and traditions of the church become the established doctrines of the sect and men become so zealous in propounding them that they fail to seek His face, come to know His will, or be partakers of His glorious mind. Thus through a lifetime men go on preaching, propounding, contending, and arguing their traditions, which have become their doctrines, until they become like the Pharisees of old. They make the word of God of no effect by their traditions. They become thoroughly spoiled and robbed of their vital association and relationship to Him.

I suppose tens of millions of sermons have been preached to show people how they ought to live, what they ought and ought not to do, what they should wear, what they should eat, where they should go, and just about everything that can be imagined. But there is a simple remedy for all this that is utterly contrary to the multitudinous traditions and the idle philosophies and teachings of our day. It is found in **Psa. 119:2-3** "Blessed are they... that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways." That is a simple answer to all godliness, for men who seek Him with all their hearts will never need to be told how to live righteously. They will do no iniquity and they will walk in His ways.

During the past years a desire has come into my heart that has filled me with longing to see a remnant of God's people in this, the end of the ages, put the Babylonish harlot away and be joined to Christ in the Spirit and joined to Him alone. Everywhere I have advocated that even small groups of people should drop their usual church meetings and spend the time in coming to know Him, partaking of His mind, seeking His will, and growing in Him. Perhaps some have been greatly afraid that this course will give opportunity for an occasion to live after the flesh. No doubt it will in the lives of some, if that is where their treasure lies, for if a man is a spiritual goat, his goat nature will show up sooner or later and in my opinion the sooner the better. But if a man is a spiritual sheep, then he will follow Christ, for "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me and a stranger will they not follow." The traditions of the centuries have taught us to keep sheep and goats, wheat and tares together, but in the end of the age they will be separated.

Many of us have the false notion in our minds that by years of coddling, cajoling, persuading, training, and discipline we can transform a goat into a sheep. After many years of trying to do so we may think we have succeeded, but some day, just when we think we have him trained to be a gentle sheep, he will see his opportunity when our back is turned to show himself as much a goat as ever he was. Dogs return to their vomit because they are dogs, and sows because they are sows return to their wallowing in the mire. There is every evidence in the New Testament that at the end of the age these elements of good and bad, true and false, wheat and tares, sheep and goats are going to be divided one from the other. Nothing can stop this process. The lines are being drawn closer every day. The only thing we need decide is whether or not we are living in the end of the age. We would have to be very blind, indeed, not to know that we are in the last hours of this dispensation. Even the man on the street will tell us that the end is near, even at the doors. The nations of the world are knowingly speeding their own destruction, yet, while they know they are preparing their own dreadful doom, they are being impelled forward to their destruction by powers they cannot explain.

Some will be very quick to point out to me how unscriptural I am in advocating fewer church meetings and more communion with Christ. They will be quick to quote the scripture, "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day (end) approaching." Now there are many things we should say about this:-Firstly, there is only one true basis for assembling ourselves. Our Saviour gave us this basis when He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The vast majority assemble, not in the name of the Lord, but because of tradition. All their lives they have assembled at certain times and to them it would be sacrilege not to do so. Others assemble for the sake of making proselytes and others for the sake of furthering their particular doctrine. If honest confession could be made, we would find that almost all are assembling in the name of their particular denomination whether they have a name or not, and most certainly all are assembling for the sake of building up their particular work. God commanded Israel to offer sacrifices, but when it became a form and a tradition, He afterwards told them that their sweet savors were a stink and that He would not accept their offerings. He said their solemn assemblies were iniquity and, when they lifted up their hands to praise the Lord, He hid His eyes from them; and when they made many prayers He would not hear them. Isa. 1:15. What could be more direct than this statement? "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is

iniquity, even the solemn meeting." **Isa. 1:13** Does not this description of Israel's gatherings and assemblies perfectly fit the existing church today? Read all of Isa., Chapter 1. It is a perfect picture of our modern Babylon.

Yes, it is true that Paul told us to assemble ourselves, but he never imagined that the church would make a religion out of assembling themselves as Israel had done of old. Yet thus it is. We are continually drawing nigh to God with our lips, but our hearts are far away from God. We try to praise, but our minds are not on God. They are wandering over the face of the earth.

They try to prophecy, but their prophecies are coming out of their own heads and find no fulfillment because God has not spoken.

I feel I have the mind of God when I say that it is perfectly right to forsake all such assembling. It is a weariness to the heart of God and He does not delight in it at all. With my whole heart I believe that once we have forsaken this Babylonish tradition and have given ourselves over to true unity with Christ, then and then only will God show us how to gather in the name of the Lord in spirit and in truth. When our minds are one with Him and all earthly program and tradition has vanished away and He takes His royal seat upon the throne of our hearts, then we will be able to assemble in His name. Any other kind of assembling is an abomination to the Lord. It is not His will; it is not His command; He has no delight in it. Why should we assemble for the sake of assembling? Why preach because it is the custom to do so? Why prophesy because it is expected in every meeting, or sing when there is no song from the Lord? This is confusion and disorder. But as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Let us make the mind of Christ our quest. Let us become one with the will of God, for that is the ground and the foundation of the kingdom. Let us divorce ourselves from the harlots of Babylon, for the angels of God with trumpet voices are proclaiming, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:4-5**. We are being asked to come out of a system in which there is everything for the flesh and nothing for the Spirit. Read the following list, **verses 12-13**, and be convinced. "The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels and ivory, and cinnamon and odors, and ointments and frankincense and wine and oil, and fine wheat and flour, and beasts, and sheep and chariots, and slaves and souls of men." All this belongs to the visible and natural and cannot enter into the realm of Spirit.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:1-5**.

CHAPTER TWO BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

THE LAST DAYS OF BABYLON

Many centuries ago the apostle Paul, speaking of the end of the age and the resurrection of the dead, wrote these awe-inspiring words: "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." **Thess. 5:1-5**

It is most significant that the apostle warned that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night, verse 2, but in verses 4 and 5 he states with assurance that, because certain ones are not of the darkness nor of the night, but are children of the light and of the day, therefore the day of the Lord need not come upon them as a thief. So also did our Lord Jesus Christ exhort His disciples to beware of surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life lest that great day should come upon them unawares. Luke 21:34.

The Lord is a God of great kindness, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, who does not always chide nor keep His anger forever. Terrible as God's judgments shall be as they fall in justice upon the earth, yet before judgment He always remembers mercy, warning with indisputable signs that His wrath is about to fall, for there may be some who will be wise and repent and give Him glory.

Jesus warned us of surfeiting and drunkenness, and Paul said, "They that are drunken are drunken in the night and they that sleep, sleep in the night." The drunken stupor into which the professing church has fallen is not the drunkenness of him who is inebriated with wine, but the drunkenness that comes by being carried away with the cares of the world and the spirit of the age until men are stupefied and intoxicated with the thing the world calls business and the whirl of trash they call religion.

The signs that portend the end of this present age are so numerous that one knows not where to begin to enumerate them. New and startling events so quickly replace the old that the ink on the page is not dry before all that has been proclaimed is out of date and pushed off into history to make room for the rapidly developing drama. It will not be our purpose now to enumerate or call attention to the startling events of the hour in which we live, for they are for the most part already well known. They glare from every headline and blare from every radio. Things thought impossible months ago have now taken place before our eyes and many more will transpire in the coming months. The last days of Babylon are now upon us. The great image seen in vision by Nebuchadnezzar is about to fall. For thousands of years it has cast its awesome shadow over the whole earth, and now it rises to the greatest height ever known. But vast as is its power and authority in the world, men seem to have forgotten that it is standing upon feet of clay. Just one tap from the stone cut without hands from the mountain and the whole mighty structure will fall to become as the dust of the summer threshing floor. Dan. 2:34,35. Then shall heaven and earth resound to the joyful cry, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," and the smoke of her burning will go up unto the age of the ages. Never more will she be rebuilt and never more will her image overshadow the nations, but the stone cut from the mountain, the Lord's Christ, will fill the whole earth. Thus shall a kingdom be set up that shall never be removed.

The wonders of the book of Daniel have intrigued men, women and children for hundreds of years and, though the things written therein have been sealed until the time of the end, its pages have been a refreshing delight to men of all ages. But now, as the end approaches, the seals that kept its wisdom hidden from our eyes are being torn away. The charming bud is bursting into a flower of revelation, unfolding to our wondering eyes the things long hidden from our sight.

The great Nebuchadnezzar, under whose rule Babylon had risen to unbelievable heights of power and glory, had long since passed away and now his dissolute grandson, Belshazzar, sat on the throne, basking in the glory that had fallen to his lot. Daniel, the aged prophet, ninety years old when Babylon was captured by the Medes and Persians, had outlived its kings, his life resembling that of the sons of God who, though journeying in the very heart of Babylon, are never defiled by it nor become a part of it. In like manner as he lived through the reign of these Babylonish kings unto the reign of Cyrus, the anointed of God, Isa. 45:1, so shall those undefiled sons do who now walk amid the confusion of this age, ready to pass into the glory of the kingdom ruled and governed by Jesus Christ.

Historians have it that, at the very moment the great feast of Belshazzar, Dan. 5:1-4, was at its height, the Medes and the Persians, led by Cyrus, were at the very gates of Babylon, and it is in this setting that the sordid story of Belshazzar begins. "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives,

and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." **Dan. 5:1-4.**

At the moment when this drunken orgy was at its height, a hand without noise or tumult wrote on the plaster of the wall: mene mene, tekel, upharsin. Mene, both in Hebrew and Chaldee, means, "He has numbered and finished," and being twice repeated signifies the certainty of it. Tekel in Chaldee means, "Thou art weighed," and in Hebrew means, "Thou art too light." Upharsin or pharsin in Hebrew signifies Persian, and peres in Chaldee signifies dividing. Thus Daniel, giving the interpretation by the Spirit of God, said, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." **Dan. 5:26-28.**

There is a very special significance in Belshazzar's feast. Indeed, there is a very special significance to everything that concerns the reign of this evil man, some of which we wish to point out in the following pages. There is, however, one thing, which is of special importance about this man. It is this: he, being the last king of Babylon, was responsible for that dissolute orgy which in type signifies the corrupt and devilish joining together of political and spiritual Babylon at the close of this age.

It has never been my delightful privilege to add fact upon fact to prove a point, but rather to state the truth as it is that men be not persuaded by argument, but enlightened by the Spirit of God that all those who see may understand and those who see not may become blind. What use is there if a man be persuaded through argument only, for then his head is convinced while his heart still lusts after evil things. Many men and many women I have found who are forever proclaiming the message of sonship, but the truth of sonship is not in their hearts. It is in their heads only; therefore they, not possessing the spirit of sonship, give themselves to proving their false position instead of crying, "Abba Father."

For many years now we have earnestly taught that before the end of the age all religious systems would unite under one head, that this would include Catholics and Protestants together with other systems of religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Moslemism, and even Judaism. Impossible as this sounded years ago, today one would be hardy indeed to deny that it is taking place before our astonished eyes. Long ago Paul said, "He who now letteth (hindereth) will let until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming." This scripture has been fulfilled, for the letting or hindering influence has been taken out of the way. That influence is the influence of the maturing sons of God, the true spiritual body of Christ. God is delivering them from the systems of Babylon, and now all restraint to evil is taken out of the way. Thus in the last few years there has been an enormous increase in every form of evil and with it there has been a coming together of all the religious systems of the earth. Throwing all reason to the wind, they cast their arguments and theories aside in their clamor for unity. The scripture is being fulfilled before our eyes: "Behold they shall surely gather together, but not by me." **Isa 54:15**

Not only are we about to see the joining of all religious systems, but yet another wonder is about to take place before the end. Political Babylon, which, like spiritual Babylon, is one vast morass of filth, corruption, and confusion, is going to be joined in unholy wedlock with religious Babylon. Then shall the abominable harlot of religious Babylon, drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs of Jesus, sit boldly and wantonly astride the beast of political Babylon, and, though the political beast hates this religious whore, their corrupt power will sway the whole earth until men shall cry, "Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

I shall not hesitate to predict while yet freedom of speech remains that the Roman Pope, after whom all the world now wonders, is presently to become the sole dominating head of religious Babylon. He will exalt himself above God and all that is worshipped and, sitting in the temple of God, will show himself that he is God. 2 Thess. 2:3-4. Think it not strange that this should be, for even in the days of Martin Luther, Pope Leo permitted the blasphemous Tetzl to declare, "The Lord our God no longer reigns. He has resigned all power to the Pope." (See Life and Times of Martin Luther, page 93.) After he is firmly established in the saddle, sitting as head and father of religious Babylon, another wonder will take place and either he or one appointed by him will become head of the United Nations (political Babylon) and thus become the universal head of political Babylon. This whole picture is vividly stated in Rev. 13. The beast, which was wounded unto death in the days

of Martin Luther is now being healed and will thrive mightily in his revived power until all the world wonders after the beast. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God. Rev. 13:1-10

After this John saw another beast coming up out of the earth, Rev. 13:11-18, exercising all the power of the first beast and causing all people to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed, deceiving them that dwelt on the earth by means of the miracles he had power to do. Though the United Nations is now weak and feeble and ready to die, the hour is coming when one shall stand at its head who has such power that all will say, "Who is like unto the Beast: who is able to make war with him?"

This uniting of religious and political power is the final stage of the mystery of Babylon. It is the uniting of the iron and the clay. Never forget that this fearful image here depicted is standing on feet of clay. It is ready to crumble into dust at the smiting of the stone cut without hands from the mountain.

Consider now the feast of Belshazzar that we may observe the things that shall come to pass in these last days, for the book of Daniel was written/or the time of the end, and until the time of the end it was sealed up and shut away from the minds of men that it might be a special treasure in our days. Dan. 12:9.

Belshazzar, with the armies of Medo-Persia knocking at his very gates, thought himself perfectly secure. There was no need to call his people to fasting as did the king of Nineveh. Who, thought he, was able to make war with him? No power on earth could break down the mighty gates of his city. No battering rams could penetrate the walls upon which six chariots could race abreast. So instead of calling a fast he called a feast, a feast to his lords and ladies, his wives and concubines, and the captains of his army, men, which had distinguished themselves in the defense of the city. And they ate and drank and made themselves giddy with wine as if to dare the almighty God to do His worst against them.

At the height of all this drunken revelry a new and obscene thought entered the mind of this king of confusion. He would now rise to far greater heights of omnipotence by bringing under his control all the holy vessels of the Lord. He would bring religion and government together under his own headship. Surely such excellent wine as he drank should be drunken from holy vessels! Therefore he commanded that the holy vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried from Jerusalem and placed in his storehouse should be brought that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines should drink therein. Then were the holy vessels brought into the orgy and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines drank therein and praised, not the God of heaven, but the gods of gold and silver, brass and iron, wood and stone. Dan. 5:1-4

There is much more than mere drunken frolic here. Here is a definite affront to the God of Israel and to His people, who are themselves in truth the holy vessels of the Lord. This is, indeed, the very spirit of Babylon which profanes sacred things and makes a jest of them. They want to drink their ungodly wine from the Lord's vessels to make an outward show of religion and spirituality. How true is the picture as described by the Psalmist! "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion." **Psa. 137:1-3** Sacrilegiously they alienate those things which are dedicated to God, affronting the Lord Himself and bidding defiance to His deity, for they glorified Him not, but praised the gods of gold and silver and brass and iron. Dunghill worshippers they are and dunghill deities they worship.

What a fearful prediction is laid up in this story and with what wonder do we see it being enacted before our very eyes! We do not expect the saints of God to be blessed by the things that follow, but they serve to show that we are at the very hour when the cup of Babylon's iniquity is full and that great city is about to fall.

This desecration of the holy and dedicated things so clearly seen here in the story of Belshazzar's feast is rampant everywhere in our day. Because man is spirit as well as flesh, he finds it impossible to get along without some form of religious observance; but because ungodly men, dominated by the lusts of their bodies, know nothing of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, they drag the holy vessels of the Almighty into the realm of the flesh that they might mingle their drink in them and praise a visible god, even though it be only gold and

silver, wood or earth. Are you aware of the abominable spirit, which persists everywhere perpetuating the notion that to have some form of religion is all that is necessary? It is immaterial whether you are a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Moslem just so long as you belong to something. Every effort is being made to drag the vessels of the Lord into the world's disgusting orgy. Churches, which long ago were dedicated to God and were buildings in which one could feel the sacredness of God's presence are now often pastored by ungodly men as wicked in heart as Belshazzar himself. For the sake of gathering a spurious congregation they hold dances in their basements, introduce what they call off beat singing, dramatic acts, contemporary music, sing-alongs, coffee shops and night clubs where young people can eat sandwiches, drink coffee, sing lively, spiritual (?) songs, and in general have a real bang up time in the flesh. One of the latest notions is the drive-in church. Here busy people who have no time to worship God and kneel before their Creator in dedication and repentance can cater to their carelessness and salve their consciences by maintaining an outward show of religion by driving in to buy coffee and soft drinks, eat sandwiches and doughnuts, and hear a meaningless sermon that affects no one and changes nothing.

This is the wickedness and corruption of the last days. This is the abominable sin of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, who, not satisfied with the sordid filth of his own flesh, must now drag the vessels of the Lord into his dissolute manner of life. Let us drink from the vessels of the Lord. Yea, let us fill the vessels of the Lord with the wine of our own choosing that we may eat and drink, dance, laugh, clap our hands, and stagger in disorderly confusion and ribald dissipation, praising the gods of our own imagination that can neither hear nor see, think nor walk. The whole iniquitous idea of the present hour seems to be bound up in the wickedness of making commonplace all holy things by dragging them down to the plane of mortal man that they might be our playthings. There is among men today an unholy desire to corrupt holy things by lowering them to the common level, to kick in the face everything that is sacred, and make it the common property of all. Let all men drink of the cup and eat at the table of the Lord. Let the drinker, the smoker, the adulterer, the blasphemer, and the homosexual stand in the pulpit and preach to the people. Let them all drink freely of the vessels of the Lord and praise the gods of gold and silver, brass, iron, and earth, for are not these the very ingredients of the Babylonish image? Let them praise them or any other god they choose, for we are all one, think they, and there is no difference anywhere.

Only recently it was the man who attended church and made a profession of godliness who was the object of gibes, wise-cracks, and persecution, but there has come a change in the last decade. Church-going has become the popular thing. It matters not what or where, but you must belong to something. Your manner of life matters little just as long as you make a show of drinking from the vessel of the Lord. The man who for conscience sake feels obliged to obey God and separate himself from this feast of Belshazzar is now beginning to be the unpopular man and is beginning to feel the sting of his separation. School children are being asked on Monday morning whether or not they attended Sunday School. If not, why did they not? They are being refused permission to play on school teams or join the boy scouts unless they are members of a Sunday School. Grown men are being asked about their church affiliation when they make application for work. I think we should be able to see in this very trend the coming of the day when men will not only be refused work if they cannot prove membership in a religious denomination, but they will also be refused the right to buy or sell unless they bear the image of this beastly system.

There is yet another way in which the holy things are being dragged into Belshazzar's abominable feast. During the last few years there has been much talk of spiritual gifts and speaking in unknown tongues. While I am a believer in spiritual gifts and have myself spoken with tongues on many occasions, there is an alarm sounding within that tells me that much of what we are now seeing is not the work of the Holy Spirit, but a sinister deception by which many people are being deceived.

Not all people are willing by mere legislation or juggling of doctrines to throw in their lot with Babylon. There are many people who have had experience with God in years past and who have borne in their souls the keen edge of persecution and the hate of the religious world while they walked in the light of God. These people do not willingly cast aside all they have to throw themselves into the arms of the beast religion as the cold and formal do who have never known God. But do not be unwise to the tactics of Satan, for the mystery of iniquity is already at work, *"even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they receive not the*

love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:9-12**

There is something startling about the words, "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," because they let us know that, whether one is absorbed in dead, lifeless religion or has had great experiences with God, we will be faced with deception on the level on which we are. To some Christianity has never been anything more than a lifeless profession while to others it has been a life. The dead and lifeless willingly submit to whatsoever their leaders proclaim, while others are deceived by the false signs and wonders performed to deceive and lead them away captive to the mystery of iniquity. When speaking with tongues and prophecy get to the place where these phenomena are a fit subject for T.V. interviews and demonstration as they have recently been, then know that they have been dragged from the realm of God's holy temple into the realm of Belshazzar's ungodly feast. When the things that concern the glory of God are made a public display for general amusement and debate, then we may be sure they are no longer the things of God, but the working of Satan for the purpose of deceiving those who are willing to be deceived by it.

Long ago when Simon the sorcerer saw that by the laying on of the hands of the apostles the Holy Ghost was given, wicked covetousness sprang up in his carnal heart. Never in his life of sorcery and sleight of hand had he ever seen anything that awed the public like this. In his eyes this amazing power of Peter and John was a trick of tremendous value to a public showman such as he and was well worth all the money he could afford, for, cost what it would, it would return him many fold in gain. Already he had "bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." **Acts 8:9-11** So he came to Peter and John and, offering them money, said, "Give me also this power that upon whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." **Acts 8:19-21**

No, indeed, his heart was not right with God, for he thought to do as Belshazzar had already done to bring the holy vessels of the Lord into the realm of the sordid, the commonplace, the evil, and the bawdy. He was like some of the wretched prophets of our day who offer their lying and eloquent prophecies for money, who pray for the sick, not from compassion, but for the hope of reward that will come in the envelope when the request is made. Ah, cursed and perverse generation! Who shall deliver you from the wrath to come who offer strange fire before the Lord to bewitch the people, who make fervent appeals on behalf of the poor to fill your own coffers, who imagine gain is godliness and the acclaim of the people to be acceptableness with God?

In Egypt long ago there appeared a hateful thing. Moses, the servant of God, had been sent before Pharaoh with power and signs and wonders so great that almost any man seeing them would believe that God was speaking. But, alas! When Moses cast his rod upon the earth and it became a serpent, the magicians of Egypt, crafty, clever, and cunning men who knew not God, also cast their rods upon the ground before the eyes of Pharaoh and in the presence of Moses and they became serpents. By devilish duplication they annulled the work of God and made the power and glory of God a commonplace thing. They stripped it of sacredness and made it profane. They cast it from the realm of the Most High to the realm of the most low, from the realm of truth to the realm of error. And thus did these wretches always, even attempting to turn the dust of the earth into lice, which, being an act of creation, they could not do. Ex. 8:16-19

The spirit of corruption is manifest in the religious world today and that on every hand. Religious men are performing miracles without the power of God, producing lying signs and wonders to deceive the unwary, praying for the sick, speaking in tongues, and prophesying all manner of things, giving out that they are some great authority and all the world should listen to them; but when it comes to the proof of their ministry, they cannot begin to show even the power of the common magician. I for one am totally unimpressed by men who, intent upon proving their power with God, tell strangers their names and addresses, their telephone numbers, their physical ailments, their business, together with their past history. While this to most people is sure proof of the genuineness of a man and the great power of God in his life, all this proves exactly nothing. More than

once I have seen witches and wizards who made no claim to godliness whatsoever do all these things, blindfolded, in the public square. Why are God's people so gullible? Why do they always go by the outward appearance of power and authority and very seldom by the witness of the Spirit? Why do they shout AMEN at the first sign of a miracle? There is a Spirit within God's people that should bear witness to the truth. It is the Spirit of truth that discerns between all good and evil and testifies only of Christ. It does not wait to see a miracle before it accepts a man, but will breathe its fervent amens even in the presence of those in whom the Spirit dwells.

Be not deceived by signs and wonders, for lying signs and wonders will pervade the earth in the last days. Men will call down fire from heaven, but believe it not, for many deceivers are gone out into the world who are not content to drink wine from the flasks of their own sorcery but must attempt to drink it from the vessels of the Lord, because they know how gullible God's people are. Be not followers of men, but followers of Jesus Christ. His paths are strait and straight and lonely, but there is no deception in them.

The apostle Jude by the wisdom given him of God wrote many things that should shock men today with the awful reality of the hour in which we live - an hour when the precious things of God are being dragged into the realm of the ungodly, an hour when men are not content to be adulterers, fornicators, lesbians, homosexuals, and drunkards, but when these same reprobates must also be church members, take communion, speak in tongues, perform miracles, and talk about sonship and the great revelation from God. Dare not to tell me that I am exaggerating or that I am misinformed. These things are surely so! "For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God, the Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." **Jude 4-5**

There is a base and sordid evil in the world today: the revelation of God, that can be understood only by those who have the Spirit, is being proclaimed by men who understand only with the natural mind. This must be the hateful thing of which the apostle spoke, saying, "These speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." **Jude 10**. When a man by revelation grasps the glory and wonder of a truth revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, then lives are transformed and saints are drawn closer to God in a walk of faith and love and true godliness, but when natural men with natural minds seize upon some precious and holy truth, they drag it into the realm of their own sordid walk, turning the grace of God into license and lasciviousness, corrupting the precious things as they like Belshazzar drink their wine from the vessels of the Lord. Woe to them for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. The way of Cain is the hatred of the true way. The error of Balaam is the error of using the things of God for profit, which error fills the cup of Babylon to the brim. These people, good as they may appear to the public eye, clever deceivers that they are, are in reality "spots in your love feasts, for they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about with winds (doctrines): trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (for the age)." **Jude 11-13**

To illustrate how the precious vessels of the Lord have fallen into the hands of modern Belshazzars who corrupt the revelation of the Lord, it should be clearly evident to all that for decades men and women who have never had a personal experience of conversion and who have never tasted of the new birth, John 3:3, without which no man can see the kingdom, many of whom still swear, drink, smoke, and indulge in the excesses of the world, have ceaselessly preached the kingdom of God and that on every street corner in the nation. It is not that the kingdom of God is a lie, for indeed it is the truth that binds all previous ages into one, but, because it has been a truth that men know naturally as brute beasts, they corrupt themselves in it. See Jude 10. For many years men have preached and written about the restitution of all things, which is not only a truth, but truth sublime. But, alas, many who caught a glimpse of this wonderful truth have turned this grace of God into lasciviousness, for they say, "If all things are to be restored, then let us eat and drink and be merry and enjoy ourselves completely after the flesh, since we will be saved anyway." So they corrupt themselves in the truth because they see it not by the Spirit but by what they know naturally as brute beasts. But, when by the Holy Spirit one sees truly the eventual gathering of all things into Christ, then for the first time in his life he sees the

purpose of God in all things, and, once a man sees the purpose of God, he longs to ally himself with that blessed purpose, for his heart goes out in ceaseless love to God who maketh all things to work after the counsel of His will. Therefore, "ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20

"As it was in the days of Sodom, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man." **Luke 17:28-30** The days of Sodom are upon us. They are now officially here. Loathsome as it is to even mention the base and sordid corruption of Sodom, for God has declared that it is a "shame even to mention the things that are done by them in secret," **Eph. 5:11-12**, for all that we must not close our eyes to the vivid signs of the times which hang like a hateful pall all about us. I say the days of Sodom are officially here because of the recent sickening news from London as follows: "Members of Parliament, voting freely without party ties, approved Friday a bill legalizing homosexuality between consenting adults in private. The result of Friday's vote was greeted with applause from the public gallery, packed to overflowing." "Powerful voices, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, have been raised in favor of reform, but the latest move to liberalize Britain's moral laws, coming amid a spate of reforming zeal on subjects like abortion and stage censorship, is bound to provoke fresh argument from those who feel that the new permissive mood abroad in the country will undermine social values among young people."

Thus it is, then, that the only Commonwealth of Nations on earth, the nation that has been used above all others in the propagation of truth, now by an act of Parliament officially embraces the filth of sodomy, which has been the downfall of many nations. Thus the sodomite becomes a respectable member of society, and no doubt a respectable Christian as well. Cursed be such a declaration and cursed be such a generation, for they, "even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." **Jude 7** Woe to them, for God has given them up "to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature, and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which were not convenient." **Rom. 1:24-28**. So the days of Sodom are officially here.

The greatest sin of Noah's day and that which caused the fearful conditions described in Genesis, chapter 6, was the sin of mingling that which was of God with that which is of men. The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all that they chose. Gen. 6:3 The result of this unholy union was that children were born to them, which were of old, men of renown, and God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth." See Gen. 6:4-6

The days of Noah are here again, for the seed of God has mingled with the seed of men, and from that wicked mixture has come forth on every hand mighty men which are in our day men of renown.

The days of Sodom are here, for mankind has not only given himself over to the fleshly goddess of rampant sex but, not content with his abuse of that which is holy, has also gone after strange flesh. Women have changed the natural use into that which is contrary to nature, and the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, have burned in their lusts one toward another. Rom. 1:26-27

The last days of Babylon are here, for the holy vessels of the Lord have been made the playthings of the world. The sacred hymns are being jazzed up and desecrated in what is described as Christian night clubs. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are made subjects for panel discussions by the world on radio and T.V. Healings and miracles, whether false or true, have been made a drawing card for the crowds, which are then bled of their money by the modern Balaams. Says one rich socialite, "In our circle it is chic to be born again." Ah, hateful, hateful feast of Belshazzar!

Thou art weighed in the balances, O Babylon, and found wanting. Thy kingdom shall be taken from thee and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, for even now Cyrus, the anointed of the Lord, is at the gates. Thou, O Babylon, shall be destroyed and laid even with the ground, and never shalt thou be any more.

In that same night in which Belshazzar held his corrupt ungodly feast he was slain. Even while the blasphemously drank wine from the holy vessels of the Lord God of heaven, the Medes and Persians were battering at the gates of the mighty city which Nebuchadnezzar had built. No army on earth could batter down the walls of his city, thought he, for her fortresses were too strong, her walls too high, and her gates too unyielding. So he drank and made merry and praised the gods of gold and silver. He had not learned the truth, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Drunken people often imagine that they have no problems. The poor imagine themselves rich and the miserable imagine themselves happy. "I can drink or leave it alone," they boast, and know not that their fool's paradise is indeed a horrible pit where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. The drunkard does not know that he is the annoyance of modesty, the trouble of civility, the spoil of wealth, the distraction of reason, the brewer's agent, the tavern's benefactor, the beggar's companion, the constable's trouble, his wife's woe, his children's sorrow, his neighbor's scoff, and his own shame. Let us eat, drink and be merry, "for all is well."

So Belshazzar, the king and head of government, was drunk and his lords and ladies and captains were drunk with him. Need we now remind ourselves that the great harlot Babylon of the last days is described in these dread words: "**And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.**" **Rev. 17:6** And do you not think it most significant that John beheld this same woman, arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones, having a golden cup in her hand? Just as Belshazzar wickedly drank from the golden vessels of the Lord, so also this woman is seen with a golden cup. Her feast is like his; they are both drunk, both religious, both blasphemous, and neither one aware that they are weighed in the balances and found wanting and that even now the kingdom is to be taken from them.

The almighty God, the Lord of heaven and earth, suffereth long and is kind. He is gracious and full of loving kindness and tender mercy, but He will not hold back His wrath forever. His judgments will come swiftly and without revoke or appeal. To the mighty ocean He said, "**Here shall thy proud waves be stayed,**" **Job 38:11**, and to mighty nations and wicked systems He declares, "Thus far and no farther shalt thou go." Let men build up their systems if they will, for the Lord will cast them down. Let them swagger with the drunken harlot and cry, "Peace! Peace!", when there is no peace. Let them come together, both Catholics and Protestants with Moslems and all the rest to build a tower so mighty and strong that it will reach unto heaven itself, but know this, O vain man; the Lord God almighty has already come down to see the tower you are building and has sent His mighty angels to cry against it, saying, "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.**" **Rev. 18:2-3** And to you, the people of God, He calls with the voice of a trumpet, "**Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities... Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord who judgeth her.**" **Rev. 18:4-8**

I feel it my God-given duty to speak personally and with fervent appeal to every reader of this book. We are without doubt at the end of the age. The last days of the Babylon system are even now upon us. We have come to the feet of the image. Gone are the kingdoms of the golden head, the silver shoulders, the belly of brass, and the legs of iron. The image of Babylon is now standing on its rotten feet, part of iron and part of clay. Dan. 2:31-35 Political Babylon and religious Babylon are becoming more and more one. Confusion reigns world-wide regardless of never ending peace conferences. Destruction, and that irrevocable, awaits, for when men shall speak of peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.

I beseech you that you will not be among those unwise lords and ladies of Babylon who, even while the army is at the gate, cry peace and safety, for the handwriting is on the wall. This whole system of which we have been

a part for so long has been weighed in the balances and is found wanting. The kingdom is going to fall and be divided, and woe to us if we remain in it until we are partaker of its plagues. It is time to heed the word of God and come out. Come out of her with all her enormities into which she has sunk and in which she drunkenly staggers that we be not partaker of her sins and her plagues. Come out and walk with Jesus Christ. Learn to know His voice and never to depend on man whose breath is in his nostrils and can in a moment of time be snuffed from him. Lean not upon me, but upon Him, for it is He who liveth and was dead, and, behold, He is alive forever more.

Verily, verily, I say unto you that men can know Christ. They can know Him personally, hear His voice, and follow Him. They can receive of Him eternal life and never perish, neither is there any might in the universe that can take them from His power. Oh, that men would know the Lord! Oh, that they would cease from their dependence upon men, even upon good men! Those who follow Him walk like Him. Those who talk to Him talk like Him. Those who hear His voice think like Him. Those who see Him are changed into that same image and likeness of the only begotten of the Father.

The prophets of God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament foresaw the destruction of this world's system as a time when blood would flow like rivers of red water. John saw a battle line two hundred miles long, involving two hundred million men of all nations of earth. He described it as a winepress from which the blood flowed to the horses' bridles. Rev. 14:20 The prophet Ezekiel foresaw the day when men would fall upon the mountain and in the field, and so great would be the slaughter that the passengers would stop their noses while they bury the dead for seven months, and fowls would eat the flesh of captains and mighty men. Ezek. 39:1-24

Even now it is rumored that Russia is planning to orbit two hundred megaton bombs that can be exploded at high altitude over America at any given moment. This would disrupt all communication in twenty-four hours as well as wipe out sixty percent of the population. The strategy would be the same as that at Pearl Harbor with suddenness and complete surprise. Is it any wonder God has said, "Sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape?"

As I write these things, I feel a special urge to tell the people of God that the last days of Babylon are here. The cup of iniquity is full to the brim. The wrath of God has come up in His face and fury is in His countenance. His anger will break forth as a flaming fire, coming as a snare upon all those who dwell on the earth. The patience of God will endure the blasphemies of men only a short time longer, for why should the almighty God endure forever the blasphemy of a harlot system which desecrates every holy thing, which makes light of His word, calling it myths and fables, whose ministers insist that man came from polliwogs and that monkeys were our fathers, and take the sacred songs of Zion, jazzing them up in night clubs while they laugh and joke and drink their coffee and wine? I tell you the whole system is weighed in the balances and found wanting. It is to be destroyed and never shall it rise any more.

Dare any man look at the world and condemn it of sin? I tell you all the sins of the world will be required at the hands of this drunken harlot church system toward which God now calls with a final call, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues."

"And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines have drunk wine in them, and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass and wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know, and the God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified." **Dan. 5:22**

CHAPTER THREE

WHERE DO THEY WORSHIP, WHO COME OUT OF BABYLON?

It was a long walk from Judea to Galilee, and the record states that our Lord was weary with the journey when at last He and His disciples paused to rest at the well at Sychar. This was a famous well. Centuries before, Jacob in his wanderings had dug it and from it had watered his thirsty cattle. Nearby lay the parcel of ground,

which Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor. Gen. 33:19 The ground was given to his son Joseph for a possession and here the Israelites, after entering the Promised Land, had buried Joseph's bones. Joshua 24:32. The well, which Jacob dug three hundred years before the exodus, is there unto this day. It is covered by a stone vault into which a visitor is let down by a strait hole. Then, removing a broad flat stone, he discovers the well itself. It is dug in firm rock about nine feet in diameter and about thirty-five feet in depth and has some five feet of water in the bottom. Little did Jacob know that the well he dug for himself and his lowly cattle was destined to be graced centuries later by the presence of the Son of God, nor could he have thought that its refreshing water was later to be the text for one of the most remarkable expositions ever to bless the ear or to refresh the soul of a weary and thirsty humankind.

Jesus departed into Galilee. So the evangelist wrote; and my soul has oft times mused with pleasure on these words that follow: "He must needs go through Samaria." Why He needed to go through Samaria the record does not say. Perhaps some hostile folk had refused to let Him pass their way or perhaps they had bidden Him depart from some city as the Samaritans later did when they would not receive Him because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. For this hostility James and John, the sons of thunder, sought leave to call down fire upon their inhospitable heads. Luke 9:54. I prefer to believe, however, that as Philip was directed of the Spirit to go to Gaza by the desert road because a eunuch of Ethiopia, a man of great authority and prestige, was prepared of God to receive the gospel, so Jesus by the Spirit knew that a sin-benighted woman, predestined and foreknown from the world's foundation, would that very day come with her empty vessel to draw water from Jacob's well, but find instead that living water, of which if a man drink, he will never thirst again. This is the water of which our Saviour cried, saying, **"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive..." John 7:37-39**

It was high noon, the sixth hour of the day, when our Saviour and His disciples, wayworn with the toil and heat of the journey, came to Jacob's well. Perhaps they drank of its cooling water. We cannot tell, but now they had gone away to the village to buy food while Jesus remained behind to keep an appointment predestined and arranged from the foundation of the world. "Give me a drink," said the Lord, the fountain of living water. The Samaritan, surprised at this request from a Jew, suspiciously questioned, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?" "If thou knewest the gift of God," said Jesus, "and who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Back and forth the blessed dialogue went of Jacob and his well, of Jacob and his cattle, of water from wells of which men must drink and drink again and of living water which, once received, springs up forever unto life eternal. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst," He told her, "but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." We speak the truth in Christ when we say that that which was revealed to the woman as a well of water is now revealed in greater glory for all the saints to see - a river of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God. **"And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev. 22:1-2**

The benighted woman could not understand such words of life, for her soul was dead in trespasses and sins. Conviction of sin had never seized upon her. Because she had no revelation of sin she felt no need of a Saviour. It was to awaken the woman both to her need and to her sin that Jesus said, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." "I have no husband," she slyly evaded; but He, who knew all things, in grace replied, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." "Sir," she replied in wonder, "I perceive that Thou art a prophet." This was the first light that had ever dawned on her darkened spirit and with the revelation her true conviction of sin began. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," she affirmed, "but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Here Jesus, the Son of God, master and giver of all truth and understanding, brought forth from the eternal storehouse of God's wisdom an answer of peace that would settle her mind, together with yours and mine, as to where and how mankind should worship God. And I am certain that the message was not given to her alone, but to us at the end of this age who, being called out of Babylon, are enquiring, "Where shall I go to worship God?" Learn quickly then, Oh virgin daughter of Babylon, that thy God, the creator of the universe, dwells not in temples made of brick and stone; neither is He worshipped there.

Jesus said unto her - and we can readily see the urgency of His words - **Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."** **John 4:21-23**

During the past months well-meaning and devout Christians have constantly asked this question: "If we leave the church system and come out of Babylon, where will we go to worship?" It is in reply to this question and in the hope of giving God's people the rest that comes with a true understanding that I will direct my thoughts in the following pages. "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of His saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee; to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things." **Prov. 2:6-12** I warn you here that the church system is full of men and women who speak froward (perverse) things.

"Where shall we worship?" was the question besetting the mind of this woman at the well. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Forgive me if I am perverse in surmising, but have we not reason to suppose that her distracting question, coming where it did, was in reality a rather clever attempt to dodge the true issue and direct the conversation into some controversial channel less personal and much less vital? What had places of worship, whether they be mountains or cities, to do with repentance and conversion or with partaking of the water of life? Was not her question an effort to side-step the true issue at stake? There was, however, some justification for her clever foot work, for she had never been converted, as you and I have been. She had never partaken of God's Spirit as you and I have done. God, to her, was someone far away in some distant and cold heaven who had little or no interest in the affairs of men. She may, therefore, be excused for associating buildings and places with worship, even as millions in outer darkness do in our day. "Ye worship ye know not what," Jesus in kindness informed her; and I fervently pray to our Father in heaven that the Holy Spirit will fasten these words as a nail in a sure place in the minds of all who in the end of the age now read them. From the abounding word of truth that hourly stirs within my soul I now testify that all men in our day who in their blindness associate worship with places, whether they be cities, denominations, tabernacles, steeple-houses, camp-meetings or any of the like, are worshipping "they know not what." Let these mighty words of the Saviour sound as a trumpet blast within your soul! "Believe Me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

We must take very special heed to what our Saviour spoke on this most important occasion. "Woman, believe Me!" It was seldom, indeed, that our Lord asked men to believe Him. He was the truth, and, because He could speak no lie, it was not His custom to ask men to believe that what He spoke was the truth. Men often say "believe me" because inwardly they know that their hearers may have reason to disbelieve them, but, when He who is the truth and cannot lie makes reference to His own truthfulness by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," then great importance must be attached to what He says. "Woman, believe Me," He said. "The hour is coming." And I shall not hesitate to add that the hour of which He spoke is of special significance to us who live in this the end of the age. In no way can we avoid the conclusion that we are now living in the age of Laodicea. This is the period of lukewarmness. Wherever we may go we mingle with those crowds who are neither hot nor cold and are doomed to be spued out of the mouth of the Lord. We cannot avoid the conclusion that Laodicea and the Christians of this period are identified with, if not identical to, that whore and her harlot daughters, which God calls Mystery Babylon. Her system is full of false prophets, false apostles, false pastors, false teachers, false gifts, false healers, and every abomination and evil. She is drunk with the wine of her fornication; she is full of the blood of God's saints. She walks hand in hand with the world and the political Babylon, which it is. I need not tell you of her abominations, for it is plain that she is naked, unashamed, and lies in the bed of adultery with the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is an hour of Impenetrable darkness when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people, and no man knows his way, for that darkness has blinded his eyes. Wars never cease. Crime is on the rampage and increasing at an appalling rate every

year. The lie of "a new morality" has exploded and an epidemic of loathsome social diseases has emerged. The world seethes with racial strife, and drugs and narcotics have brought to our doorsteps a whole generation of imbeciles and criminals. On every hand the system that masquerades as the church walks hand in hand with the whole obnoxious mess, accepting as genuine the pseudo-conversion of hippies and screen stars and in general aiding and abetting the former in their disgraceful rebellion by sheltering, condoning, and financing them. When will people learn the truth - this truth: "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat?" **2 Thess. 3:10.**

"The hour is coming," said Jesus, "and now is when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father." It is an indisputable fact that from time immemorial men have been prone to associate their worship of God with places and things. It is also painfully true that, as time passed by and love waxed cold, the places and the things became more important than God Himself. Christians are disposed to imagine that, because they met God in such and such a room or building, they will find Him there again. They are not unlike the German lady who, having received a wonderful experience of salvation at a camp meeting altar, returned the next night leading her husband, Charlie, to the exact spot where she had knelt the night before. After he knelt at the altar, she stood back to survey him carefully; then, stepping to his side, she whispered, "Shust one foot farder nort, Sharlie." You may smile at the innocent ignorance of this young convert that led her to believe that to meet God her husband must kneel just where she had knelt. We can easily overlook her innocence and lack of understanding, but do not we who are Christians of many years disclose an inexcusable lack of understanding when we ask, "Where can we go to worship God"? Was it only to the woman at the well that this word was spoken, "Neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father"? Or was it to us also and to us especially that He spoke - even to us who in this Laodicean period now hear Him calling aloud, "Come out of her, My people?"

Centuries ago, when the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, they grew rebellious against God and spoke against Moses. The account is written in Numbers 21:1-10. To correct their rebellion the Lord sent fiery serpents among them that bit the people, and when they cried unto Moses, he was told to set up a brazen serpent upon a pole. "And Moses made a serpent of brass and set it upon a pole; and it came to pass that when a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." The brazen serpent of brass should not have been kept after the people were healed. The Lord had given them no instructions to keep it. Like Mt. Sinai it had served its purpose and should have been forgotten and left behind. But this they did not do. We read that almost one thousand years later King Hezekiah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it." **2 Kings 18:4** Terrible idolatry, you say! And we reply, Amen! But isn't that just like people? Isn't that just like the twentieth century Christians who cannot be persuaded to dissociate themselves from places and things? From buildings, which they call churches, from denominations, from altars, from ordinances, the repetition of repentance and the continual laying on of hands? Why have the words of Paul faded from our ears and from our spirits that we can no longer hear him say to the mature, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal (aeonian) judgment." **Heb. 6:1-2** I say with all respect and fear that repentance, baptism, laying on of hands, and all the things Paul mentioned, good and true as they are, must be recognized as nothing more than first principles of our experience. They must be looked upon as the kindergarten of Christian experience. When in school you learned that c-a-t spelled cat, you were learning the first principles of reading and writing. When you learned that 2+2=4, you were learning the first principles of mathematics. Even Einstein had to learn that 2+2=4. First principles are truth, but I dogmatically affirm, for I do not see how I can be contradicted, that, once we have learned that 2+2=4, we have learned it and cannot be taught it again as long as we live! It is a fact. It is established. It cannot be altered. We must leave this first principle behind, and go on to things we do not know. It was this very thing that Paul was teaching when he exhorted the Hebrews to leave the first principles and go on to perfection. Why then do Christians waste their lives trying to re-tell and re-learn and re-do every first principle of the doctrine of Christ?

The Jews at the end of the dispensation of law were stubborn and unreasonable about giving up the tradition they had held for some fifteen hundred years, but not one whit more stubborn than Christians who for two thousand years have almost worshipped sectarianism, doctrines, ordinances, Sunday Schools, and all codes of their religion. To the Jews the temple and its ordinances meant everything, and even today they blindly

weep and pray before the crumbling stones of the Wailing Wall. To the Jews the temple was the place where men were to worship God. Like the church system of our day it had become a den of thieves where beady-eyed old hawkers sold cattle and doves for sacrifice and did a roaring business in money exchange for worshippers who came from afar, yet to them the temple was everything. But these crooked old merchandizers could not hold a candle to the grasping and grabbing preachers and priests in the church system of our day. The system has become a den of thieves, deft in their sleight of hand and so cunning in their pettifoggery that even the well-meaning and sincere are thoroughly deceived. Money is their cry in every meeting. They shamelessly solicit through the mails, by radio, by television, by craftily inventing schemes and programs, by robbing widows' houses, by loans, insurance policies, and pledges. They delight in persuading innocent people, usually widows, to mortgage their homes to finance some grand scheme, some program or building, but it is seldom, if ever, that the widow sees her mortgage repaid. She often loses her home because she discovers too late that she has trusted a crook. All over America today these big-time evangelists are successfully persuading people to make their wills in their favor. How can these dishonest defrauders escape the damnation of hell? Yet Christians ask every day, "If I leave this abominable mess, as I know I should do, where shall I go to worship?" Happy indeed is the man who in this dark and dreadful hour of Laodicea can hear the voice of Jesus echoing down the corridors of time, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh and now is when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

This is not a popular message. I am thoroughly convinced of that! But it is the same message Stephen preached before the Council of the Jews on that memorable day when he by wicked hands was stoned to death. Have you wondered, while reading the seventh chapter of Acts, what truth it was that threw those unbelieving Jews into such a towering rage? It was because Stephen showed them how they had forgotten God and had given themselves over to adoring, if not worshipping, places and things, which were in truth the work of their own hands. "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Ramphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus (Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." **Acts 7:41-51.**

If we give consideration to the above passage, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the whole history of Israel was darkened by the heathenish practice of their forgetting God while they delighted themselves in temples and tabernacles and idols of their own making. It was well nigh impossible for these stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears as they were, to think of God or of worship apart from places and things that were in reality naught but the works of their own hands. "What house will ye build Me?" the Lord demands. "Or what is the place of My rest, since heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool? Hath not My hands made all these things, ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears?"

It is a dreadful thing of almost unpardonable dimension that these Israelites were so dull and blind in spiritual understanding that they could not conceive of God or worship apart from their tedious, wearisome forms and ceremonies, most of which they did not understand nor did they care to learn their meaning. Well spoke the prophet Isaiah, saying, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: Your hands are full of

blood." **Isa. 1:11-15.** Dreadful as was the blindness of these stiff necked and unbelieving Jews, their darkness was light when compared to the blindness of Christians who in this age of Laodicea cannot grasp the truth our Saviour taught when He said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Never in any age could these words of truth apply as they do now. This is the age and this is the hour when the spirit of God is calling His saints, saying, "Come out! Come out!! Come out!!! Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins. Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing. Come out and deliver thyself from the abominable mass of confusion where men and women worship they know not what. Flee from the place where worship is neither in spirit nor in truth. Come out of Babylon! Come out unto God! Come out and join that universal throng of true worshippers who worship God in spirit and in truth."

There is a place in God ten thousand times more real than any natural realm where saints may dwell. There is a true temple; not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is the mystical temple, which is His body. There is a church which is the true church. It cannot be seen of men. Its happy saints dwell in the realm of the spirit, and, because they do, they continually worship God in spirit and in truth. I anticipate that many will ask, "How do we worship God in spirit?" But this you will not discover until the hour comes when you learn that neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, nor in the church system, nor in the denomination, nor in the mass, nor in the ordinances, nor in any such thing do men worship the Father. When you have departed from all these things and broken these idols from off your neck and cast their image from before you, then you will see no man but Jesus only, and then only will you understand what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. When this wisdom is sweet to your soul, then like the woman of Samaria you will drop that jug with which you for so long a time drew natural water from a natural well, and you will run off as she to unashamedly declare, "Is not this the Christ?"

Before we proceed to other things, there is yet another statement that fell from the lips of Christ, which is of utmost importance in this vital hour of decision. It is this: "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." Just think of those words! "The true worshippers... shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." **John 4:23** Men have always imagined that there was strength in crowds. The truth is there is great weakness. Nothing is so fickle, so mindless, or so divided as a crowd of people, and because of this divided state and sectarian spirit Paul said to the Corinthians, "Ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." **Cor. 11:17** That fact is more potent and true in our day than it was then! But the Father is seeking not crowd worshippers, but true worshippers who worship Him separate and apart from all outward show. His eyes run to and fro through the whole earth to find those whose hearts are right in His sight. There is a realm where Christ is all and in all. There is a "place by Me" where we stand upon a rock. **Exod. 33:21** There is a path that the vulture's eye hath not seen. **Job 28:7** There is a church of the firstborn whose names are written only in heaven. **Heb. 12:23** There is a place outside the camp of Babylon's vain worship and pseudo-church. **Heb. 13:13** "Therefore let us go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," and there we will be His sons and daughters who worship none else but God, and there we will worship Him in spirit and in truth.

During the past years since God has moved upon me to call men out of Babylon, well-meaning folk have written me stating how well they saw the truth of the message, "but," said they, "I think I will stay in the system (church, they called it). I can do more there to help people see the truth of the message." There are two pitfalls I have found in this faulty reasoning. First, such people never do come out, but sink deeper and deeper into Babylon's mass of confusion and finally disappear and are heard of no more. Secondly, I am convinced that those who decide to remain in the system are like Lot's wife. They have never seen by revelation that Babylon is the whore that sitteth on many waters, **Rev. 17:14,15**, for, if they had, they would flee from her. The Father is seeking true worshippers. He desires not worshippers who associate God with systems. Neither is He seeking the fellowship of those who are either followers or worshippers of the great men of this age of confusion.

It is a blessed day for any man when he makes the discovery that the realm which Jesus called "in spirit" is the secret place of the Most High, spoken of by David in **Psa. 91:1**. It is not an imaginary place, a figment of man's imagination, but a place of reality where saints of God may dwell. We who have fixed our hopes in Christ must certainly believe that heaven is a place, and that we share a part in its more excellent glory, but the hour is at hand when the saints will know that heaven itself with all its reality is in fact and in truth the realm of the spirit.

These things are hard to utter, because Christians abide so much in the natural realm that it is almost impossible for them to believe that the spirit realm is an abiding and an eternal reality. To most of God's people the natural realm is the realm of reality and the spiritual realm is the realm of shadows, mists, visions, dreams, and unreality. The natural man (and most Christians are pitifully natural) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning visions and revelations from the Lord, and, after reading his words of inspiration, I am entirely convinced that that which men speak of as a vision is in fact reality, and that which men call reality is in fact only a vision, for that which is seen is temporal, but that which is not seen is eternal. 2 Cor. 4:18

"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory," said Paul. "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." **2 Cor. 12:1-5** What is this third heaven of which Paul speaks but the realm of the spirit? Does not God's word clearly show that man is spirit, soul, and body? Does not the tabernacle built by Moses clearly show that there are three realms where men live and worship - the outer court, which represents the natural realm; the holy place, which represents the soulish realm; and the holy of holies, which is the spiritual realm? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Is not this secret place the realm of the spirit where God is our refuge and our fortress and our eternal dwelling place? So Paul was caught up into the third heaven, the holy of holies, the realm of the spirit, where heaven is open and angels ascend and descend upon sons of men. That realm is not

"Far away in some region old,
Where rivers wander o'er sands of gold,"

But "the word of God is nigh thee, even in thy mouth," nearer than hands or feet. It is the realm of the spirit, the realm from which the veil of our own flesh has always separated us. In that realm of reality and blessedness, the third heaven, the apostle both heard and saw things that were unlawful for him to utter. Why do you suppose it was unlawful for him to utter such things? Simply because he was speaking to men who dwelt in a lower realm, most of whom had never passed beyond the realm of the flesh where they worshipped God in the outer court of spiritual experience. It would not have been unlawful for Paul to have uttered the things he heard and saw had he been speaking to men of like experience with himself. John or Elijah or Daniel would have understood him, and I am certain that many humble little ladies in our day, unknown, unrecognized, and unsung by the world about them, would have understood every word he had to say; for "many shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God," while many that should have entered in will be left standing in the outer court of their fleshly religion and their denominationalism, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us."

Have you ever wondered why the epistles of John seem hard to understand and almost contradictory at times? Have you noticed how in one breath he says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," and in the next sentence he says, "He that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him"? How often natural men with natural minds have tried to explain that paradox! The answer is extremely simple when we grasp the fact that this beloved disciple had long ago ceased to dwell in the realm of the flesh where so many others dwell, or yet in the realm of the soul, but his writing and speaking was all from the realm of the spirit, the holy of holies, the secret place of the Most High, where he continually abode under the shadow of the Almighty. In that secret place of the Spirit there is no sin. That is the realm where the saints have "seen Him" and "known Him". From that glorious inner realm of reality he wrote to those who still remained in that outer realm where self and sin have not been crucified and where all who say they have no sin deceive themselves and the truth is not in them. Let all who read these words consider what I now say. While at this moment the vast throngs of professing Christians live their lives in the outer court, there are at this moment, scattered in the four corners of the earth, those who dwell continually in the realm of the spirit. They have passed beyond the veil, which Christ has opened for them. They dwell in the light, which no man can approach. The realities which they hear and taste, touch and smell and see, are unlawful to be uttered to Christians who live without, for to them such realities are but the unreal and ghostly phantoms of the mystics. "Thou art beside thyself," cried Festus with a

loud voice as Paul explained his heavenly vision; "much learning doth make thee mad." But Paul replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Acts 26:24-25

On a wonderful day in the long ago a disciple by the name of Philip went in search of his brother, Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" To this Philip answered, "Come and see," and he brought him to Jesus. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and said to him, "Behold, an Israelite in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathanael answered and said unto Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Jesus answered and said unto him, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." John 1:45-51 Blessed realm of reality! Blessed land of the spirit! Here in thy heavenly chambers, the secret place of the Most High, shall men worship the Father, for they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. Ask nevermore, O child of God, "Where shall I worship, or where shall I go when I leave Babylon?" For neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father; but the true worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

Dispensationally speaking the church age is over. Like all other dispensations it has run its fleeting course, fulfilled its aeonian purpose, and is ready to vanish away. The night cometh when no man can work. The storm clouds of tribulation are filling the sky. Man's six days of labor are almost over. Gross darkness, even darkness that can be felt, precedes the dawn of the seventh day when the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away.

"Of the writing of books there is no end," Solomon said, and John in his wisdom added, "If all the books were written that should be written, I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." But in this interval, while we wait, the Holy Spirit has left us some important instruction, showing how men ought to live and walk before God and how they ought to teach their children the great and important things so essential to spiritual growth and maturity. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the simplest and most workable form of church order when He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20 This is the best form of assembling that has ever been known to the saints of God. Under such a wise and blessed order a man and his wife, worshipping God in spirit, reading the Bible together, praying together, and communing together are in reality a complete church unit and a local church. And if that man and wife have been blessed with a family, then they have a better and more complete church to rear and nurture in the fear of God. Sunday School is a poor, sick, unscriptural substitute for family worship. It is a manmade institution less than three hundred years old. It is a crutch devised to substitute for fathers and mothers who shirk their God-given responsibility for the upbringing of their children in the ways of God. By it they relinquish their own ministry to some outsider who knows little about their children and often cares even less.

It is the God-given responsibility of Christian parents to personally teach their children the truth and bring them up in the way they ought to go. I am appalled at the lack of parental concern displayed among Christians. The abounding disobedience, disorder, and delinquency now sweeping the world like a plague can be easily traced to the evil doctrine of self-expression. "In myself there dwelleth no good thing"; therefore, "expression can only be evil. Parents, walking in the darkness of that evil rule, contribute as none else to the disobedience and delinquency of their children. Teach your child right from the cradle that your word is law. Let your child know from infancy that you do not speak twice. A child must know experimentally that whatever you command must be done now, without hesitation, argument, or back talk, and without any pouting or tears. Never threaten or argue with a child, but carry out the required and necessary punishment without ado, hesitation, or anger. You will discover, when you follow this rule, that obedience will be spontaneous and genuine for a life-time. Your child will be a credit to you and to the nation as well. All the violence and destruction that is in the world today has sprung from that evil product of the carnal mind - self-expression; and the pitiful thing about it is that we are now living in a period when even the judges of the land are men who were brought up under that delusion

of self-expression. The result now is that the supposed rights of the criminal are respected more than the rights of the innocent. Democracy was never designed for the insane, the criminal, or the juvenile. Responsibility comes only with age and experience.

I cannot begin to tell how much I owe to the steadfast goodness of my own mother. She has gone to be with the Lord now, but it was not until after she departed this life that I began to realize what a tremendous influence her life had been. She was a quaint little English woman who in all her years in Canada never lost her delightful accent. We all loved her dearly and often indulged in some good-natured teasing, which Ma heartily enjoyed. When we would kid her about how little she was, she would draw herself up to her full height of four feet eleven inches and say with a wry smile and a twinkling eye, "I'm just the way the Lord made me." There was, of course, no reasonable argument against so profound a statement, so the jesting usually ended there. Ma had a most unusual way of teaching us things we needed to know, and the singular thing about it was that we never seemed to realize that she was teaching us at all. Sometimes I wonder if she knew herself how indelibly she was impressing a truth upon our impressionable minds. Ma had a proverb, a song, a poem, or a scripture for absolutely every situation that could possibly arise, she was an excellent mimic and was often inclined to be a clown, and, though I think I could count on one hand the number of times she punished me for my wrong-doing, her word was law and her promises irreversible.

Brothers, though born for adversity, seem always to be getting into a jangle about something, and our household was by no means free from such manifestations of brotherly love. But our row would be hardly started when along would come Ma with the calming words, "I say! I say, boys! You mustn't quarrel like that!" Then with elocution worthy of the vaudeville she would recite these lines:

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For 'tis their nature to;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For God has made them so.
Now, little children, never let
Such angry passions rise.
Your little hands were never made
To tear each other's eyes.
Let love through all your actions run;
Let every thought be mild.
Be like that blessed virgin's Son,
That sweet and holy Child,
Who grew as gentle as a lamb;
And, as His stature grew,
He grew in favor both with man
And God the Father, too."

I don't know how she managed it, but before she was finished with the verse, we boys had forgotten our quarrel and had been taught a lesson that would never escape us throughout our earthly pilgrimage. No Sunday School teacher that ever lived could impress me as she did, and I think this is true of each and every mother if she will apply herself to the wonderful task God has given her instead of shirking her God-given responsibility or shifting it to the shoulders of someone else.

Ma taught us never to say "can't", or to even imagine that there was any task or job too big or too hard to be done. Any man or woman who has been raised in the delightful environment of a prairie pioneer will know some of the almost insurmountable difficulties that arise from day to day. Sometimes we were about ready to quit and say it couldn't be done, but that was always where Ma came in with her potent and ever ready proverbs. So, when I would say, "Oh, Ma, I can't do this," she would reply with her delightful English accent, "Now, George, where there's a will there's a way." And sure enough sooner or later a way to surmount the problem would be found, and not only that problem but the many, many more that would present themselves through the years that were to follow.

"Somebody said it couldn't be done,

But he with a chuckle replied
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one
That wouldn't say 'no' till he tried.
So he buckled right in with a trace of a grin
On his face; if he worried, he hid it,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it."

Ma had a great sense of justice and she wanted us to know that we were in no way superior to anyone else. She knew that rich men were not superior to poor men, but that God had chosen the poor to be rich in faith. It may have been with that thought in mind that she often sang this song we always loved to hear and with an anointing that seemed peculiar to herself.

They played in a beautiful garden,
Those children of high degree.
Outside the gates the beggars
Passed on in their misery.
But there was one of the children
Who could not join in the play,
And a little beggar maiden
Watched for him day by day.

Once he had given her a flower,
And, oh, how he smiled to see
Her thin white hand through the railing
Stretched out so eagerly.
She came again to the garden;
She saw the children play;
But the pale, pale face had vanished,
The little feet gone away.

She crept away to her corner
Down by the murky stream,
But the pale, pale face of the garden
Shone through her restless dream.
So the high born child and the beggar
Passed onward side by side;
For the ways of men are narrow,
But the gates of heaven are wide.

Ma taught us that the Bible was God's holy word and that every bit of it was true. She taught us that Jesus, who lived among men long ago, was divine and the Christ of God. She taught us:

Thou shall have no other gods before me.
Thou shall not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
Honor thy father and thy mother.
Thou shalt not kill.
Thou shalt not steal, (not even a pin).
Thou shalt not bear false witness.
Thou shalt not covet.
Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

All these commandments are truth. They are the word of God and, because they are truth, they cannot pass away, but must abide forever. We who are under grace are no longer under the law, because the law is written in our hearts. I can think of nothing more profitable for a boy or a girl than for them to be taught that these Ten Commandments are not only the law of God, but they are the very heart and nature of God as well.

Ma never waited until we were old enough to understand. Well she knew that children have far greater capacity for spiritual understanding than anyone could begin to imagine. So she taught us to pray long before we were old enough to understand the meaning of the words we were saying, let alone the meaning of the sentences. Before we were tucked into bed at night, she taught us reverently to kneel and pray:

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child.
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.
Fain I would to Thee be brought;
Gracious God, forbid it not.
In the kingdom of Thy grace
Grant a little child a place."
Amen.

When we were tiny boys, we used to love to crawl into bed with Ma for a few minutes in the morning, before it was time to rise. It was on one of these playful visits to her bed that she and my brother, Phil, taught me how to recite the Lord's Prayer. We might well suppose this to be an instance of no significance, but it must have made a deep impression upon a little boy of only two summers, since I still remember it sixty years later.

I will not weary my readers with a longer dissertation of the impressions she left with us. Time and space will not permit me here to tell of how she taught us to keep away from strong drink and how the beautiful poem, Jennie Gray, was often recited to impress upon us the dire calamity that comes to people who indulge in strong drink. Nor can I tell how the poem, Ayrey Scheffer, the story of a poor boy who became a world-renowned artist because of his great diligence and devotion to God, inspired me to aspire to higher things. Too numerous to mention were her proverbs: Fine feathers make fine birds.

Handsome is as handsome does.
Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.
Willful waste makes woeful want.

Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. So deeply did all these things impress us that, when we grew older and fiercer temptations came our way, we did not ask ourselves what the Sunday School teacher would think or what the preacher would say, but the question that blocked each wayward path was, "What would Ma think?"

Two nights before she went to be with the Lord she loved in her ninetieth year, I sat beside her bed and talked with her for a long time. Her mind was brilliant and clear. She seemed to feel some sorrow that her life had not been more worthwhile. I took her hand in mine and said, "Ma, maybe you think your life has not amounted to much, considering all those pioneer years of dearth and hardship on our old farm, but I want you to know that because of you the gospel of Christ has gone all over the world." She looked at me with a strange look of incredulity in her eyes, and then she said, "You mean because of you three boys?" And I said, "Yes, Ma, that's what I mean." Perhaps it was only my fancy, but I thought she looked happier for that. Then she prayed for all the family and every relation she could think of. She prayed for the body of Christ and her voice, strong and triumphant, filled the building. But in the morning she was so weak that she could scarcely speak and a few hours thereafter her soul was borne upon the perfume of earth's drooping lilies to the land where flowers never fade.

I have undertaken to relate these things that all who read might know the tremendous influence one lowly, humble, almost unknown individual can have, not only on a family but on the world as well. My good brother, my good sister, please never ask again, "Where shall I worship when I come out of the church system?" Once you begin to walk in the Spirit, all such things are vanity. The value of assembling in congregations has been

grossly overrated by Christians of every century, but the inestimable value of the "church which is in thy house", **Col. 4:15**, has been sadly under-estimated. It is the rottenness of the church system (I do not say of the church), together with the degradation and erosion of the home life that has brought the world to its present evil estate. I am one hundred per cent convinced that every emphasis should be put on home life. Here let mothers and fathers rear their children in the nurture and admonition and fear of the Lord. The church system today, as in all generations of the past, is full of personalities who, though they desire to be teachers, understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. 1 Tim. 1:7 How easily can we see the abiding influence of godly parents in these words from Paul's letter to Timothy: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also." **2 Tim. 1:5** Here we have three generations of unfeigned faith - a godly grandmother, a godly mother, and a godly son. That is wonderful. It is right and as it ought to be. The disintegration of the home life is wrecking the nations of the world. Fathers and mothers have gone far astray. They have gone awhoring after every temporal thing - lavish homes, luxurious automobiles, expensive playthings, trips abroad, boats, cabins, and countless other luxuries. To attain all these temporal and passing fancies the inestimable value of the home life is neglected. Mothers, forsaking their God-given responsibility, go to work as well as the fathers. Everything, even God Himself, must give way to their lust for temporal things and the result of this erosion of home life is not only a generation of delinquents, but a world so sordid, violent, and evil that it is no longer a fit or safe place to live.

Mr. Husband and Mrs. Wife, it is time for you two to get together and talk things over in the fear of God, because the course you are now pursuing will disqualify both you and your family from among the faithful to whom the kingdom will be given. Husbands and wives, according to the ordinance of Almighty God, are one unit, yes, even one person. The "thus saith the Lord" concerning the matter is simply stated in these inspired words: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." **Eph. 5:31** It is a great mystery, we know, yet in spite of such divine revelation and truth as this comes the monstrous evil of women's liberation to captivate the simple minded. What fiendish evil and devilish deception it is to pretend that male and female are somehow rivals at enmity and in antagonism with each other! Male and female were ordained by God to complement each other, each having his God-given place and calling, for as the woman is of the man, so is the man by the woman, but all things of God. 1 Cor. 11:12

Hear the word of the Lord and take heed, all women who hope to attain to God's high calling, for thus saith the Lord, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, and give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." **1 Tim. 5:14** "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." **Titus 2:3-5**

Here now is a "thus saith the Lord" for husbands. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." **Eph. 5:25, 28, 29** And again, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." **Eph. 6:4** And let this saying apply to husbands also: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. 5:8

It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. If faithfulness is required of stewards, how much more, then, shall it be required of sons? Faithfulness was required of Moses and of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and so shall it be required of us that we perform with faithfulness and devotion the thing that God has given us to do. If all the husbands in North America would take the responsibility of providing for their homes and if all the married women would quit their jobs and return to their God-given place of guiding the home and bringing up their children, delinquency would drop to almost nothing within a year. And if fathers would take upon themselves the responsibility God has given to them and to them alone to love their wives and love their children, to insist on obedience and godliness and lead the church in their own house, the blessing of God upon our nation would abound beyond compare.

I write with great plainness of speech because I seek not yours, but you. I covet not followers, but that men should become devoted disciples of Christ, our elder brother. Let husbands and wives then consider the matter together with earnest devotion, and let them return to the Lord and follow His ways, and He will surely bless them and reward them as His word has promised to do. It is time for us all to consider our ways. It is time to remember with devotion that we are members of that particular citizenship known as Christians. It is impossible for Christians to walk hand in hand with the world and become one with its system and still retain their unity and standing with God. I care not what our past experience has been or how up-to-date our belief seems to be. We will never attain to mature sonship as long as we love the world. As for the church system, how can we walk hand in hand with it, since it walks hand in hand with the world?

Husbands, there is one special word for you. Immeasurable truth lies in the words, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them." I am both a husband and a grandfather, and I know by experience that the surest way to gain the love, respect, and the obedience of your children is to sincerely love their mother. A husband's love for his wife should be continually manifest around the home, and that in the sight and presence of the children, by kind and loving words and deeds, by fond embraces, by thoughtfulness and thankfulness and consideration. You will find immediately that your children will join you spontaneously in this great joy, and your family will be knit with a bond that cannot be broken. Home is no place for austerity, quarrels, unkind words, and coldness.

Furthermore, we must reject as from the devil all the silly, childish talk about the "generation gap". Have you ever thought what a calamity it would be if there were no generation gap? There has to be a gap between generations, and we are fools if we try to bridge it. Let the children play and let us who are older smile knowingly and lovingly and with appreciation at their joy, but let us not try to be one of them. In the first place we cannot; we don't want to be children. In the second place they don't want us to be. Children and young people do not want parents to become pals. They want their parents to be good, solid, old Dad and Mom, their ever, present source of strength, security, safety, and good advice and chastisement, upon whom they can always depend.

I earnestly pray that the eyes of our understanding may be greatly enlightened as we read together the remaining lines of this article. Surely the blindest man on earth must be able to see that upheavals enormous and incredible are shaking the entire world. Every form of government is reeling like a drunken man. The religious systems are shaking, particularly that system which, for the want of a better name, is called the church. The upheaval, the disorder, the confusion of human notions and human doctrines, the blasphemous acts, the hordes of false teachers, false pastors, false prophets, false evangelists, and false apostles is at its absolute height. Well did the prophet Isaiah say, "**They err in vision; they stumble in judgment, for all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.**" **Isa. 28:7-8**

It was at the very height of all this dreadful disorder and confusion that the apostle John saw a woman give birth to a son who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and the woman, fearing lest she should be overcome and swallowed up by the dragon of religious systems, fled into the wilderness, where she was fed of God for 1260 days. We are seeing those days right now. There may be a double or a triple fulfillment to this prophecy as with all others, but know this: there is a company of spiritual people who today are living in a spiritual wilderness, separate and apart from the confusion, disorder, and blasphemy of the present day religious world. They have not gone out into a literal desert to live in trailers and tents as some misguided people are saying we should do, but they have separated themselves unto God. From Him and from Him alone they drink of the inexhaustible fountain of living waters, and from His hand they receive their daily bread.

Centuries ago our Lord Jesus said, "**When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the house top not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.**" **Matt. 24:15-18** No scripture is of private interpretation. Each one ascends from the natural to the spiritual in understanding. Therefore, I affirm that in our day we now see the abomination that maketh desolate every sacred thing standing tall and stately and blasphemous in what were once holy places. It is time to flee without delay to the mountain of God without trying to salvage either things or people from that house which must be abandoned. "But to what mountain

shall we flee?" you ask. I reply, "Did not Isaiah say by the Spirit, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths"? **Isa. 2:3** The Lord Himself is our high and holy hill. He is the mountain of which it is written, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains..." **Psa. 72:16**

Beloved and elect people, chosen of God and precious in His sight, can you not see that we are now in the end of the age? Is it not perfectly clear that the end of this age cannot possibly be as it was in the beginning? When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth? My answer is this: He will find faith only in those elect people who, in answer to the call, "Come out of her, My people," have in obedience gone unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. His faith will be found only in those who have obeyed His voice and have come out of the bondage and corruption of Babylon into the glorious liberty and freedom of God's holy mountain.

Those who have come out of Babylon are sometimes mystified as to how they should instruct their children in the ways of God. Tradition has for centuries erroneously taught us that our instruction must be found in listening to the oft repeated and usually juvenile sermons of a preacher several times a week. But is it not true that even his sermons are purported to be taken from Bible texts? Do you not have a Bible in your house? Has not God said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"? Need any man starve, then, for want of the word of God? Is it not a thousand-fold better and more desirable to have the Holy Spirit as your instructor rather than a college graduate, who is only really implanting sectarian tradition in your brain?

I know of no better way to conclude this writing than to read that most enlightening exhortation given by Moses to the children of Israel. In these words of scripture Moses taught the fathers in Israel how they were to instruct their children in the ways and truths of God throughout the centuries of their early pilgrimage, and shall we not call to mind in our day that all these things are written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages are come? "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shall bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shall write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates. And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which He sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shall have eaten and be full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which around about you ... And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, "What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?" Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes; and He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He sware unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us." **Deut. 6:6-14,20-25**

We should also notice how Joshua in like manner instructed the fathers and mothers and made it their solemn responsibility to tell their children the things of God and explain all questions to them as they were asked. Parents should always remember that, as soon as a child is old enough to ask a question, he is at that moment old enough to receive a correct answer without evasions, fairy tales, or lies. "And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall answer them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever... Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry

land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over. That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever." **Josh. 4:5-7;22-24**

The commandments of God, worn in their day as frontlets between their eyes and carried on their bosoms, must now in our day of grace be carried in our spiritual mind, which is the mind of Christ, and hidden in our hearts. How much better should we who have Christ within be able to instruct our children and give them an answer for the eternal hope within us, and that with meekness and godly fear!

Fathers and mothers, you have grievously erred in that you have neglected the family altar. Because you have neglected to gather your family around a common altar for prayer and the reading of the Bible, decay and disorder have set in to such an extent that it is now hard to correct it. I exhort you, therefore, to repent of this neglect of your duty as God's priest and change your way. Father, you are the head of the household. Therefore let all fathers be exhorted to call their families together at the breakfast table. Read the word of God in company, then kneel together and take time to pray. You will be amazed at the results. You will be fed in this wilderness and you will be strong in grace and in the knowledge of God.

Great moves are under way to form a world government and irresistible efforts are being exerted to form a world church. Both these things draw nearer by the hour, and, when they are complete, they will compose the two great beasts of the Revelation, one political, heading up the nations under Anti-Christ, the other religious, rising from the Charismatic and Ecumenical movements. As Belshazzar in the days of Daniel conceived the wicked thought of dragging the holy vessels of the Lord into his corrupt and drunken orgy, so the world today mingles things sacred with its mad orgy, even pretending that Christ was a hippy. Conversely the church system takes a heathenish delight in dragging the filth of the world into all places once deemed sacred, even indulging in rock masses dancing to hippy tunes both at and on their communion tables, where they assemble not for the better, but for the worse.

Mene Mene, Tekel Upharsin is the handwriting on the wall. Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting is the decree against the godless system. Let us, therefore go unto Hun without the camp, bearing His reproach. Let us flee to His mountain where we shall be taught of the Lord.

CHAPTER FOUR THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The long day of toil was over for David, the stripling son of Jesse. The sun had kissed the Palestinian hills a fond good night and was gone beyond the western horizon to bless and gladden other lands. The Lord with rosy pigments painted the glowing sunset on the canvas of the sky while Mother Nature with gentle fingers drew the shades of night across the windows of heaven.

Deep shadows creep along the country lanes;
The birds are winging homeward to their nests.
Bright little lights wink out from window panes,
And bid the weary toiler home to rest.

And, when each sheep had passed beneath the shepherd's rod and not one lamb was found to be missing, David, the shepherd and sweet singer of Israel, sat down to meditate, to sing and to play. The song the Holy Spirit inspired his shepherd heart to sing was this:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.
Thou prepares! a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
—Psa. 23.

With the possible exception of the Lord's Prayer we would be right in saying that this psalm is the best known, the most frequently quoted and dearly loved of all the writings of the holy scriptures. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." **2 Tim. 3:16-17** Because all scripture is given by inspiration from God and is profitable in so many ways, every child of God should seek to fill his heart and mind with all its holy truth. The great benefit in storing the word of God within the heart is manifested in that it cleanses the spirit, enlightens the eyes, and gives knowledge to the simple and understanding to the saints who walk in the ways of the Lord. As I waited before God this morning, the words of this psalm came like a ray of dawn over the meadows of my heart. For months I have been praying that the Lord would especially lead me, together with all His elect people, in these perilous times that herald the close of the age. Surely everyone who has a serious thought must know how important it is in these days of tribulation to be led by the Holy Spirit. Make no mistake about it! Let the message ring clearly within our hearts, for God has declared, and none can alter the decree, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." **Rom. 8:14** They are the ones who will be possessors of the mind of Christ and they will stand tall among God's sons on that wonderful day when He speaks this word to all creation: "Here am I and the children (sons) whom Thou hast given Me." "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." **Matt. 19:28-30**

In the twenty-third psalm it can be plainly seen that the Holy Spirit is taking the events in the working day of a shepherd in Israel as an inspirational basis for the words of the psalm. Each event and activity of the shepherd's day was turned into a delightful allegory, vividly portraying a spiritual truth, every one of which should comfort our hearts as daily we walk through this valley of the shadow of death. It has always been a delight to me to discover how men and women from all walks of life find spiritual meaning from the details of their own occupation. The farmer tells of the miracle of a seed that was planted in the ground. He speaks of the preparation of the soil and the marvelous increase of the harvest. In his work he sees the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies and beholds the increase that comes forth in its image. The physician speaks of the marvels of the body - the head, which is Christ, and the body, which we are. The architect thinks of the wonders of God's creation and how all things are designed by Him, and we can hear the astronomer breathing forth the words: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." **Psa. 8:3-6**

It is no wonder, then, that Jesus spoke of ravens, and sparrows, and lilies, and corns of wheat that fall into the ground and die, of sunrises and sunsets, of fig trees, and hens that gather their little ones under their wings; of shepherds and sheep and folds for flocks, of men who build their houses on the sand and others who build upon the rock; of sowers that go forth to sow their seed in every place, and of oxen that are led away to the watering on the Sabbath day, and much more besides.

Thus spoke David, the shepherd son of Israel, as he likened the varied activities of his day to our earthly journey through the valley of the shadow of death to the eternal abode in the house of the Lord, of which I will later speak more particularly. David was a shepherd and he knew that sheep have very little sense of direction. "All we like sheep have gone astray," said Isaiah the prophet, Sheep, left to themselves, are prone to wander and go astray. This young man, who so early in life had learned the hardships of a pastoral life, knew full well that the greatest requirement in a shepherd is to have a shepherd's heart. He had learned by experience that

great truth uttered centuries later by Jesus, the Son of God, "The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." **John 10:13** This David is the man who, as a stripling, stood before king Saul of Israel, declaring his ability to fight with Goliath of Gath, and the words he uttered were these: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee." **1 Sam. 17:34-38**

David had a shepherd's heart. He was no hireling or striker who would not work an hour overtime without double pay. Many a night he had sought for sheep that had gone astray and many a day he had bound up the sores of the wounded, pouring in oil and wine to heal them. Thus it was that as he thought of his work as a shepherd of sheep, the Spirit reminded him that there was one great shepherd in heaven on high who was the leader and pastor of all mankind. With his heart bursting with the truth of the message, methinks he picked up his harp and sang in the Spirit, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." What David was singing for himself he was singing for all those who put their trust in the Lord, for Jesus Christ the Son of God has declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd, who giveth His life for the sheep.

During the months that have passed there has come into my heart a longing to be rid of all unnecessary and superfluous things - unnecessary words, unauthorized works, and all human programs. The scripture is very explicit in its statement, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The things we do and say when we are thus led by the Spirit of God are never idle, useless, or superfluous, for the Lord is our shepherd. As the days pass swiftly by and we find ourselves treading the path that leads through this present valley of the shadow of death unto the sunlit hills of the kingdom age, many things give us much concern as we go. Paul once described the difficulties of the way by saying, "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." **2 Cor. 7:5** However brave our hearts may be, we soon discover that all who are called to the sonship which His gracious foreknowledge has ordained will find themselves encompassed by enemies and in the good fight of faith often thwarted, defeated, and beset by many fears until we learn to trust, not in ourselves, but in the living God, who raises even the dead. We must learn that it is through our tribulation and seeming defeat that we begin to see our true calling. We must come to understand that God has not called many wise men after the flesh. He has not called many mighty nor many noble. If, indeed, He has, I do not seem to know who they are, and, when such are called of Him, all their earthly glory must be abased.

Rather than call wise men after the flesh, God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise - that is to say, the things which the world deems foolish - even as it has been written, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men." **1 Cor. 1:25, 27** Even the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that are perishing, but to us who have been saved such preaching is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Thus it follows that, after mankind has made the discovery that he cannot be saved from sin or delivered from death by his own wisdom, but through the foolishness of the faith we preach he finds peace and forgiveness with God, then the cross, which hitherto had seemed foolishness and a stumbling stone to his earthly wisdom, is found indeed to be both the wisdom of God and the power of God. "There was a little city and few men within it, and there came a great king against it and besieged it and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools." **Eccles. 9:14-18**

"The Lord is my shepherd," David sang, and centuries later Jesus, the son of David, the Son of God and the promised Redeemer, re-echoing the truth that David spoke, said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Many were the perils of sheep in the Holy Land. There were wolves and bears and lions, poisonous snakes, thorn bushes, rushing streams, cliffs and rocky terrain. The shadow of death was ever present. It is into such a shadow as this that we through the wisdom of God are being led from day to day. Whether we are ready to accept it or not, the fact remains that the difficulties of the way are ordained by the

wisdom of God, and these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

"He that entereth by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." John 10:3 These words are founded upon the fact that in the near east sheepfolds often were built to accommodate the flocks of several shepherds, but there was never any danger of the sheep becoming mixed or lost to their shepherd because each one possessed that God-given instinct to know the voice of its own shepherd. They steadfastly refused to follow a stranger. That is why Jesus said, "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." **John 10:5.** At the beginning of each day "the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." **John 10:3-4**

Many centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world..." **1 Cor. 14:10.** To that statement of truth we can say a very sad Amen. There were many voices in the world in his day, and I think their number must have multiplied an hundred fold in our day. Voices! Voices! Voices calling us here and there to do this or that, everyone with a doctrine, with a tongue or a revelation, but so few who follow Christ, knowing only His voice! "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ" was the divisive clamor of the Corinthian church, and Paul, rebuking their factious spirit with the severity of which he was capable, enquired of them, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or are ye baptized in the name of Paul?" I suppose that even the Corinthians would have been horrified at such suggestions as these. Nevertheless they still persisted in their schisms as the Christians do today. Paul did not stop with this scathing rebuke! He showed them the wickedness that lay beneath all this variance and rift within the camp when he said with no uncertain voice, "Ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" **1 Cor. 3:3-4**

Oh that God's people would consider that Paul and Apollos and all other men who are called of God are nothing more than ministers by whom they believed and not a christ to be followed! When Christians follow a man, however good that man may be, they make him a false shepherd, a false prophet, and a false christ because they persist in following him instead of following Christ and being joined to Him who is the only head of the body. This wicked spirit of "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, I am of Apollos" fills the world today. The names of sects, denominations, and famous men are legion and every one of them becomes a false christ because each and every one of them conveys the impression to his followers that only if they follow his particular way can they be saved.

Christians today for the most part are not following the Good Shepherd. They are following religious systems, and those who are not following systems are following famous men. It makes my heart ache when they talk to me or write to me, and I am usually struck dumb in their presence as I listen to their childish prattle. If men and women become followers of me, what will they do when I pass from this earthly scene? However true I may have been before God, doubtless I have become a false shepherd to them if they have followed me instead of Christ. Well meaning people often write me, requesting me to tell them the story of my life, explain my background, my religious persuasions and all the rest. I am not particularly ashamed of my past, but I see nothing special about it. It is no more worthy of praise or comment than is theirs who write. I, too, am a sheep of His pasture. I seek, as they, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. What can any saint desire more than this, since He is the Shepherd of us all, who has given His life for the sheep that He might give His life to the sheep?

Some years ago I went to visit an old friend who lay dying in the hospital. We had been farmer boys together down on the Saskatchewan prairies. In his mid-thirties the year 1935 he had been converted in a meeting my wife and I held in a little country schoolhouse. "Brother Hawtin," he said, "God has given me a word of wisdom that I would like to pass on to you." These are the words he spoke: "Look not at the past; it is forgotten. Nor peer into the future; it will yet unfold. But live today in the eternal present, for where the Lord is it is now, today." I was so impressed with these words that I hastened to write them down lest I should forget them, and

for some hours I walked in a daze as they gripped my heart. Oh that God's people would forget the past and all the blunders and errors and sins of the way! The past is a thing forgotten just as surely as He has buried our sins, never to be remembered against us any more. We have been redeemed by the blood of the everlasting covenant. The will He made He confirmed by the shedding of His own blood, signifying that He died that He might give His life to us. How good it would be if preachers who have been saved from lives of sin would cease from the vanity of advertising their past crimes to draw crowds to their meetings! Do they not know and will they never learn that "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret"? **Eph. 5:12.** It is not the parading of the rottenness of the flesh that brings men to Christ. But Jesus showed the way when He said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.

We are living in perilous times. I doubt that in all time since the foundations of the world so many strange voices have been heard calling the saints to follow them. I speak the solemn truth when I tell you that there is some inborn wickedness in the heart of every man, whether small or great that craves for disciples to follow him. We can almost hear the hurt in the soul of Paul, who, after speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus, warned them of this danger in the following words: "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." **Acts. 20:29-30.** What an obnoxious situation this is! Yet we must face the fact that every denomination and sect from the least to the greatest is a sheep stealer and all the great names in this sick, abortive, modern evangelism are continually seeking to draw away disciples after themselves. Seek to follow only Christ, my brother, and, when you follow only Him, you will make the blessed discovery that you are not only in harmony with God, but in fellowship with every believer who also follows only Him.

It was never my privilege to be a shepherd of natural sheep, but I had a very dear friend who had spent most of his life in that occupation. He could interest me by the hour, telling me the remarkable ways of sheep. It should be in our interest to know that, though healthy sheep follow only the voice of the shepherd, a sick sheep will follow the voice of a stranger. This, then, must be the reason Christians follow organized religion instead of following Christ and Him alone. They have become sick from starvation and spiritual malnutrition. They have lost their grip on Christ, the Good Shepherd, and they have turned to following hirelings whose care is not for the flock, but for the fleece for building up their own earthly kingdom.

I wish I could tell you some simple formula by which all men could know the voice of the Good Shepherd and by which they could easily distinguish it from every other voice, but no such simple formula exists. We come to know the voice of Christ only by hearing it. Just as a mother can distinguish between the voices of her children by continually hearing them, so also by hearing do we come to know the voice of Christ as distinct from other voices. It is a spiritual understanding, which cannot be mistaken if we live in contact with Him. He it was who said, "My sheep know My voice." There is only one way they could possibly know that voice and that is by hearing it in the depths of their spirit. Again I say it is a spiritual thing — not that He speaks in audible tones, for He seldom does, but there is an inner voice that comes from an inner contact, and I can explain little more than that.

If we would hear the voice of Christ speaking to our spirit within, it is of utmost necessity that we give ourselves to seasons of fasting and prayer. Fasting cleanses the body and enlightens the spiritual eyes of a man, bringing light and understanding to his heart. Fasting has the effect of breaking the bondages that tie us to this corrupt world system and all the things that belong to it so that our spirit is liberated from the flesh to go out to meet with God. Fasting loosens us from the power of the flesh, which is the physical body. All passions and desires of the physical flesh resist and stand in the way to hinder the growth of the spiritual man.

A healthy person can easily fast for ten days or three weeks, not only without harm to the body, but with very much spiritual benefit. Diseases of all descriptions can be cured by a long fast simply because the body has time to rid itself of the poisons it has accumulated for decades. But the physical blessing is as nothing compared to the benefit attained in the spirit, for in fasting and prayer the inner man hears the voice of God and comes to know his secret the sound of His voice and not the voice of strangers. You will have trouble the

first time or two you fast; make no mistake about that. The eating habit holds your inner man far more in bondage to the flesh than you ever dreamed possible. Indeed, your communion with God during the first five or six days of a fast may seem to be less than nothing, but it is afterward that the benefit will be realized. Even Jesus, when He fasted forty days, was tempted sorely of the devil, and I suppose the sorest temptation of them all was this: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." The temptation to break your fast by eating is very real, especially with beginners in fasting. It is a temptation that should be resisted with great spiritual resolve. You will probably feel as though you are ready to die, but your condition is well described in the words of Paul, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." **2 Cor. 4:16.**

Learn to listen to the voice of Christ and by listening you will discern that it is the voice of the Good Shepherd. Give ear to His voice much more than you do to the clamoring voices of men. You will be surprised, when you wait before Him, to see just how many wonderful things He will drop into your heart. His voice is a still, small voice that can only be heard when all other voices are stilled and when personal ambitions fade from your heart. When the soul is hushed, the spirit stilled, and the ceaseless demands of the body are put to naught, then the voice of the Good Shepherd is heard speaking in His holy temple, which is your inner man, revealing His truth, manifesting His will, and transforming the spirit into the image of Him that created it. Someone once said to a man of God, "I would give all the world for an experience like yours!" "That is just what it cost me," the man replied, and that is true.

The more you live in communion with Christ the more obvious will be the voice of strangers. I cannot explain this inner knowledge. You must experience it for yourself. The man who lives in harmony with the Spirit of God is able to smell the rottenness of the flesh, even at a distance. I have heard unholy men praising the Lord, but my spirit recoiled from them — not that I knew their manner of life, but I sensed the emptiness of their spirit. I have heard men preach good sermons, but I knew they had neither part nor lot in "this inheritance." Never give heed to a showy outward appearance however good it may look or sound, for false prophets wear rough garments to deceive and grievous wolves come dressed in sheep's clothing. Learn to know the voice of strangers. If they are out of touch with Christ, the Spirit will not bear witness to them. Once the Spirit has failed to witness for them, you must steadfastly refuse to try to persuade yourself to favor them. I do not mean that you must always understand a man's message or that his message must harmonize with old tradition, for often times words that you do not understand may have the joyful ring of truth. They will be in harmony both with God's word and the Holy Spirit within you.

"The night is far spent; the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." **Rom. 13:12-14**

"When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them; and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice." **John 10:4** Not all people are the Lord's sheep. Jesus Himself once said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." They were His because by His blood He purchased the whole world, for God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. The completion of that reconciliation, however, takes ages of time, though the price has been paid for every man. Not until the dispensation of the fullness of times will God gather the "all things" into Christ. Eph. 1:10. Christian people make a great mistake when they imagine that it is God's will to gather all mankind into the fold now. God has no such intention. His intention is first to gather in an elect "in Christ" company. How good it would be if men could see, however dimly, the implications of the term in Christ! It means so much more than simple justification by faith! To be in Christ means to be included among those many brethren of whom it is written, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29** These are the true body of Christ and the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, Eph. 1:23, or, as Weymouth says, "The completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." We have been guilty of using the term in Christ with deplorable looseness. There is a primary sense in which all Christians are in Christ because they are believers and are justified, yet on closer examination the in Christ are shown to be a very elect sonship company, all born of God, who are being transformed into the very image and likeness of Jesus Christ, that first begotten Son.

It is not God's intention nor is it even God's will to bring all mankind into the fold during this present age. This sad notion that the Father would, if He could, save all men in this age has thrown the entire age of grace into turmoil and disorder. Well-meaning people have worked themselves into nervous breakdowns in their efforts to get all men and all nations to receive Christ now, in this age. They have added greatly to their confusion by teaching the ridiculous and untenable doctrine that would have us believe that all who are not partakers of God's grace in this age will be lost and that forever more. The utter stupidity of this widely accepted doctrine was set forth with great clarity by the apostle James, who, standing before the apostles at Jerusalem, plainly declared God's intention, first for this present age and secondly for the age to come. These are the inspired and indisputable words He spoke: "Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles (nations) to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this (after He has taken out a people) I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." **Acts 15:14-18**

The passage quoted above unfolds the plan of God, first for this age of grace - that is, to take out a people for His name, which simply means the in-Christ people. After this company is made complete during this age of grace, the Lord will return (verse 16) and set up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down. This simply means that Christ and the in-Christed sons will set up the kingdom and reign on the throne of David over all the earth in one glorious kingdom, in which all will be set right. During that age of righteousness the residue of men will seek the Lord. The word residue simply means the remainder or surplus after a part has been separated or otherwise treated. (Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary). How beautifully clear and simple that is! It is the lifting up of Him that brings men to Christ. The elect are being separated now. These are the Lord's sheep. The in-Christed ones are being prepared, not to go to heaven, but to reign with Christ in the kingdom of God, during which time the residue of all mankind will seek the Lord.

Should there be any doubt remaining concerning God's intention for those blessed ages to come - the kingdom of God and the fullness of times - such doubt is fully allayed by that one last sweeping statement, "And all the Gentiles (nations) upon whom My name is called." I shall not try to differentiate here between the two phrases the residue and all the Gentiles, but I think this passage, as translated in Weymouth's original, throws much light upon it. This is what he says. "Afterwards I will return, and will rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will set it up again; that the rest of mankind may seek after the Lord - even all the nations which are called by My name." The rest of mankind includes all nations of men on the face of the earth which are not Israel nations - Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Africans, and many others. The nations which are "called by My name" are the Israel nations, all of which at the present time are nominally Christian nations with the exception of a small segment of Judah.

Now you are going to demand, "But what about the people who have already died and have passed from the scene without even hearing of Christ?" I reply in the words of Paul: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" What is the resurrection for if it is not for judgment? And what is judgment but pure justice? What is more just than that the eyes of the blind should be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and that they should hear that one true message, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us (the in-Christed) the word of reconciliation"?

2 Cor. 5:19. Oh that Christian people might pray for the spirit of understanding that they might see that our omniscient God knows His own business! He knows what He is about. His purposes have not been foiled and frustrated by a devil who was created by God Himself for the specific purpose of resisting His will. The devil was a murderer from the beginning. He never was the anointed cherub that we have erroneously made him to be. He has no power at all except what has been delegated to him that God's people may be made strong in resisting evil and that they may be complete overcomers in all things. Temptation is an absolute necessity to strong spiritual growth. We cannot be overcomers without temptation. God never intended His people to be pansies, but mighty pillars of strength, capable of overcoming evil in God's name and fully equipped to restore the whole universe to the image of God. Let Christians abandon Babylon's nonsensical notion that would liken God and Satan to two powerful and clever wrestlers, contending with each other for the universe and the souls

of men. Only God is almighty! Only God is omniscient, immutable, omnipresent and eternal! The mightiest nations are but dust in the balances with Him and, when they have fulfilled their purpose, they are dusted off as a woman would dust her mantel-piece. "...The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." **Dan. 4:17** Mighty nations who defy God are permitted to continue only as long as He wills. Then they are dusted off as chaff from the balances when their baseness has served its purpose in purifying the people of God.

Learn, oh man of God, that it is the Lord who rules. It is the Lord who purposes and who brings His purposes to pass. None can stay His hand or say to Him, "What doest Thou?" His will is supreme in all earth and heaven and, when He says He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, then let us preach no sermons about God's will being frustrated by the puny will of man. When He says it is His will that all should come to repentance, then rest assured that His will shall be carried out in every detail and that every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess to God that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. No man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps I have wandered away from my subject, but I have done so that it might be seen that the Good Shepherd is faithfully doing His work. He is the shepherd of all mankind and will faithfully gather the last sheep into the fold. The Lord is not satisfied even when ninety and nine are in the fold. He seeks the lost until He finds it and will bring them all in their own appointed time and in their own order. The church system - Babylon, which is confusion and disorder - has taught that the majority of men will be lost, and this is supposed to be "good tidings". The system has taught and still is teaching that for every one that will be saved ninety-nine will be lost. They have reversed the parable of the ninety and nine. **Matt. 18:12** They have one sheep in the fold and ninety-nine lost, not only in the hills, but in hell, and that forever. The words forever, everlasting, and eternal do not belong in the Bible. The words aion and aionian, from which these words are translated, mean age or age-lasting and have nothing to do with forever and ever. It is impossible for an age to be forever simply because an age belongs to time.

This is the day and the dispensation when Jesus, the good and great shepherd of the sheep, is calling His own sheep by name. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him." **1 Cor. 8:2-3** The people who love God are the ones Christ knows by name. He has a special eye for them; they are the special objects of His care. They are being prepared now above all others. Not that He does not love all others, but rather that their time for special calling and attention has not yet arrived. The time for the other sheep will come, but first of all He must take out a people for His name.

See then what the Good Shepherd is doing in this present hour. These sheep, which He knows by name, are being led out. He "leadeth them out"; He "putteth them forth". **John 10:4** I cannot resist repeating the fact that we are living in the end of the age. All the governments of the world are Babylon. All the church systems of the world are Babylon. The Roman system is Babylon. The Protestant system is Babylon. The former is the mother of harlots; the latter, the harlot daughters. The union between the two systems is Babylon the great. All is confusion. All is disorder. That the whole world system, whether political or religious, is collapsing even the blindest man can see. Every pillar is rotten, every foundation standing on sinking sand. Riches are corrupted. Garments are moth-eaten. "The gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them is a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire." **James 5:3** The governments are rotten to the core. The morals of the people are collapsing. Families and homes are broken down. Famines and pestilences stalk the earth with increasing horror. Earthquakes are becoming more severe. Hail stones as large as soft balls have fallen here in Saskatchewan. Men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming on the earth, for the power of the heavens is shaken. If there ever was a time when mankind needed a shepherd, it is certainly now!

Let us notice this truth more closely. "He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out." This is the day John saw at Patmos in which, at the end of the dispensation of grace, Christ would be calling, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." **Rev. 18:4** Every man that will heed that voice is being led out, led out of the world and out of the systems to follow God. I am sure that any man who will face the present situation honestly, prayerfully viewing the course of the age as it really is, will hear the voice of God calling, "Come out from among them and be separate."

Because I am constantly exhorting Christians to abandon the church systems, people are continually telling me that I am bitter against the system. There is no truth in that. I have nothing to be bitter about. I simply see the situation as it is portrayed in God's word, and practically everything I say is nothing more or less than a repetition of what the scripture has repeatedly stated. Can you condemn me for calling it a harlot system when God's word describes it as such? Is it wrong to call people out of a building that is collapsing, even though that building be the Tower of Babel itself? I must confess I care very little what people say or think, but I care greatly for the message that God has put in my heart.

Those who are called by His name are being led out, and, as it is said in **verse 4**, "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him and they know His voice." Be assured of this: The Good Shepherd of the sheep, who is calling us to come out, has also promised that He will go before us, and those who will obey Him may assure their hearts that, when they start to follow Him separate and apart from the disorder and confusion of all systems of religion, they will come to know Him more intimately in a few short weeks than in all their previous lifetime. Surely the blindest man can see that there is no spiritual growth in the church system! Their tendency is always backward. What denomination since time began has gone forward to greater light and understanding? Only in numbers do they increase. In all else they backslide until their people have a name that they live, but are dead.

"When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." These are the words of Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, and how similar they are to the words of David, who said, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake"? Here, walking in the light of His presence, we find ourselves treading in green pastures. There is plenty of food in God's word and the amount left over increases with the increase of the number who eat it. The more there are to eat it the more there is left over. It is like the loaves and fishes which, when blessed, fed the hungry multitude - five thousand men besides at least as many women and several times as many children - but when they had eaten all they could after their three days of fasting, there were left over twelve baskets full.

There is much beautiful truth in the words of David, "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Shepherds of the east are very careful about their names. They do not become good shepherds by having a bad name. They do not want to be known as hirelings nor cowards in the face of danger. They do not want to be careless of their sheep, leaving them sick, in danger, of half starved. This is what David had in mind when he wrote the words, "for His name's sake." And let us remember that this whole psalm is prophetic. It is really referring to Jesus Christ. He who leads His people out has a special eye for them for His own name's sake. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. This is the ultimate in goodness, and all else that we could mention is secondary to that. All the riches of God in Christ Jesus come to us through the death and, above all, the resurrection of the Good Shepherd of the sheep. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." **Psa. 34:10**

David ended his beautiful psalm with these words: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." For want of space we must regretfully pass over much of the teaching and beauty of this psalm to conclude with the significant words, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The house of the Lord is really the body of Christ. House in scripture very frequently means household. For instance, we often read such statements as these: "There was war between the house of Saul and the house of David," or "Is there any left of the house of Saul?" Also we often read of the house of Judah or the house of Israel. The meaning cannot be mistaken. It means family or household. Thus it was that, when David said, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," he knew that he was a member of God's family and thus a member of God's household. He knew that he was a part of that mystical body of Christ, that company of younger sons that were to be born. The house of the Lord is "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." **2 Cor. 5:1** It is the place of which Jesus spoke when He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." **John 14:2** It is the place of which Paul spoke when he said, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." **1 Cor. 3:9** This is the house Peter so beautifully described when he likened the elect believers to stones in God's house, saying, "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The very corner stone of that house is none other than the first perfected Son, Jesus Christ, who Himself was of the household of David. Matt. 1:1. Our Lord Jesus Christ referred to His own body as the

temple of God, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," **John 2:19**, and explains that He spoke of the temple of His body.

John 2:21. Every saint should remember that "His body" does not consist only of the flesh and bones which formed the human tabernacle of Jesus of Nazareth, but of that whole household of His saints, who by one Spirit are baptized into one body. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." **Eph. 4:4-6**

It is true that there is but one body and that body is the body of Christ. It is true there is but one baptism, and of that one baptism the apostle has said, "By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body ...and have been all made to drink of one Spirit." **1 Cor. 12:13** Therefore we are "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." **Eph. 5:30** This is His glorious body. He who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, is the head of His body, the church. Col. 1:18. He is not head of denominations and sects that call themselves the church, but He is the head of the true church, the true ecclesia that are called out to follow Him, who are baptized into His body and made members of His house, the holy temple of the Lord.

We must forget about denominations and sects when we speak of the body of Christ, for they are not the church but the harlots of the Babylon system. There is but one body even as there is but one Spirit and one God and Father of all. Learn to see beyond the visible things of man's building into the realm of the invisible, for there we will see the house God is building. The works of man shall be thrown down so that there will not be one stone left upon another, but the house of God shall never fall. The mystery of the true church, the body of Christ, is the mystery that has been hid from ages and generations. It is the secret of God's mind from the beginning, but that secret is now being made manifest to His saints, "to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles (nations); which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." **Col. 1:27**. God hath put all things under the feet of Christ (we saints who live in the end of the age are the feet), and gave Him (Christ) to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Eph. 1:22, 23. The true church, the true body of the saints, composes the fullness of Christ.

101 We must learn by the Spirit that Christ consists of both head and body. Jesus Christ, the oldest Son is the head. The head is first born. The elect and chosen sons are now coming into His likeness—they are the body. Without them there would be no fullness or completeness of Christ any more than a man would be complete if he were a head without a body or a body without a head. It is this glorious body that is going to fill the universe with the government of God. It is His glorious body that filleth all in all, or, as Weymouth so beautifully puts it, "God . . . has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:23** (Weymouth).

This is "My Father's house", the house of many mansions, of many, many living stones. This is the house of which David spoke, saying, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." **Psa. 84:10**. To this statement my soul sings a thousand Amens. This is the house of which the good shepherd of Israel sang when he saw its glory at journey's end. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 21
PEARLS OF GREAT PRICE
BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-7

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CHAPTER ONE
LOOKING UNTO JESUS

The subjects about, which one could write are almost as numerous as the stars of the heavens. They are numberless because the thoughts of God are numberless. They are inexhaustible because the Lord Himself is inexhaustible. But faith must come from what is heard, and what is heard must come from the lips of Christ. Fathomless wealth lies in the wisdom and knowledge of God. His judgments are inscrutable, His methods hidden in mystery, His thoughts beyond human understanding. Neither man nor angel has ever been His counselor. Who has ever given anything to Him for, which he will have to be repaid? Everything comes from Him. All creation lives by Him and every inhabitant of the universe ends in Him. Honor, glory and praise be unto Him through all the generations of the ages of ages. Amen!

As we see the final day approaching and as this present age with all its turmoil and distress rushes toward its conclusion, there is but one thing of truly lasting value. It is that we might be found living in harmony with the Lord as we look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, beholding Him continually and by our beholding being changed into His glorious likeness.

The entire dispensation of the grace of God has been an age of strife. Nations have raised their armies and on blood soaked fields of battle have fought each other to the death over principles or to take a spoil. Mighty empires, born of war and bloodshed, have edged their irresistible way across the landscape, engulfing all in their gory paths, yet they in turn have faded and passed from the scene as a lurid dream in a fitful night. Great Babylon rose to the height of her glory and power under the invincible King Nebuchadnezzar, destined to become the golden head of a body of empires which were yet to follow, and when her warfare was accomplished and all nations lay beneath her marching feet, the hand of God wrote doom upon her walls while Belshazzar in his irreverent affront to the Lord of hosts mockingly supped wine in the presence of his lords from the vessels of the God of Israel. Even while they drank, the hand that wrote upon the wall inscribed the fateful words. "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. Thou are weighed in the balances and found wanting." While he quaffed his wine and gloried in the safety of his city, all unknown to him the armies of Media-Persia, having turned the great Euphrates from its course, were entering beneath the city's towering walls.

Media-Persia, the silver shoulders of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw, for a time held her marvelous sway, but her two horns were broken by the might of Greece, the ram with the notable horn between his eyes. Greece, in the short time she endured, stamped all beneath her ruthless feet until the horn of her strength was broken and she, having served her purpose, fell, her brazen glory crushed beneath the iron legs of ancient Rome. Thus in dust lies the glory of mighty men. The Pharaohs, the Nebuchadnezzars, the Alexanders, and the Caesars each in turn enjoy their little day of triumph, but the wind, ever blowing where it listeth, passes over them and they are gone, their earthly triumph enduring but a moment and then passing away to be no more, while they that put their trust in the Lord abide as mount Zion which cannot be removed.

*I sit on the brink of ocean as I watch
The heaving bosom of the deep,*

My seat a throne midst sculptured crags
That through the ages lonely vigil keep.
And on the moving loom of sands below
The shuttles with their dripping fingers play,
And throw the broken waves against the rock
To weave a watery carpet from the spray.
The Sun goes down; and mother nature draws
Across the skies the curtains of the night;
Dissolved horizons melt into the dark.
The vast expanse of ocean fades from sight
Save down below where heaving waves inhale
The full of ocean's power while they roar
Defiance at the rock that will not move
And spill their broken whitecaps on the shore.

In God's dear book mankind is like the sea:
A moving, restless mass of weary men.
Accomplishments are fantasies of time.
Empires, like waves, rise but to fall again.
And through the watches of the bygone years,
Midst idle boasting of a man-made calm,
The braggart's words, like nature's thunder voice,
Have only been the heralds of the storm.

Thou ceaseless, moving sea, thy restlessness
Responds to pull of moon in realms afar;
The planets beckon — but you cannot rise;
The pull of earth has kept you where you are.
The seething ocean of mankind has felt
Two spheres contending long for its rebirth,
The upward pull of heaven and its Lord,
The downward pull of sin and self and earth.

What mysteries are buried in thy graves,
Unbroken secrets locked up in thy deeps,
Covering with impenetrable dark
Thy sandy bed where proud Atlantis sleeps.
Where are the mighty kings of yesteryear?
Where are the great, the noble, and the wise?
Where are the ancient empires proud and strong
That dared defy the Master of the skies?

Engulfed beneath the flowing tides of men
Are buried the proud empires of the past.
Though waves of generations roll and break,
Their godless human systems cannot last.
Men build their Babel towers but to find
The seas of retribution wash away
And bury deep in dark oblivion
The godless things they plan and do and say.
The mighty Medes their battle flags unfurled
To find a place of glory in the sun
And proudly trampled 'neath their marching feet
The crumpled might of once great Babylon!
The tidal waves of Greece rolled out of the west

And, as the waters of its rage recede,
It carried back with fate's relentless
The smashed and broken empire of the Mede.

'Til by the side of Tiber's winding banks
A sleepy giant girded for the fray,
And Caesars laughed and scoffed at heaven's Christ,
While legions thundered down the Appian way!
And Roman eagles screamed defiantly
And tore to shreds the vaunted might of Greece;
Then turned with blood drenched hands of war
Against disciples of the Prince of Peace.

The heavens trembled; and the ocean tide
Of human waves rolled once again in rage
And buried in the shifting sands of time
The proudest, mightiest empire of the age.
So perished Rome, her forum voices stilled;
She met her doom in God's appointed hour.
Oh, Christ, can man distort Thy purposes
And take to self Thy glory and Thy power?

And so throughout the march of ages past
The tide of empire flows — then ebbs away.
The pomp and grandeur of its yesteryear
Are buried in its shifting sands today.
But strong and firm throughout the passing years
I see a Rock that stands out on the shore,
A Rock of ages, cleft for you and me,
A Rock that will endure forevermore!

Oh, Christ, our life, our strength, our Rock divine,
Before Thy might the oceans stand in awe.
No decrease Thine; for this increasing Stone
Was chiseled from the mountain Daniel saw.
The raging, tumbling seas of time may roll
'Til earth's proud empires crumble and decay,
And Thou alone shall triumph, Prince of Peace,
When all the storms of life have rolled away.

Charles S. Price.

We see, do we not, how quickly the world passes and all the lusts thereof erode away with it? Poor, insignificant, little man builds his mighty empires, kingdoms which he in vanity thinks will last while time abides. Yet, even while he looks, he sees them sinking beneath the shifting sands and ebbing with the restless tides away. None of us will build our empires or glory in the rhythmic tread of marching feet. Such glory, were it attainable, is far too short lived and temporal for me. Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. He fleeth as a shadow and continueth not. Though affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. Therefore let us look unto God and unto Him commit our sacred cause. They that seek the Lord shall be delivered from all their fears.

Centuries ago the disconsolate and troubled David wrote, "They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." **Psa. 34:5-6** What blessings accrue to those faithful saints who through long experience have

learned the secret of always looking unto Jesus! Those who continually look unto Him are looking to a realm much higher than their own and they remain untouched, undefiled, and unsullied by the abounding iniquity that is about them on every hand. It is far too easy in such an hour as this to furtively cast our eyes about us only to behold the travail of a world sunken deep in sin and held in the relentless coils of every human system. It was when Peter saw the boisterous waves about him that he began to sink beneath them on that memorable night when Jesus walked the water of stormy Galilee. While Peter looked at the Christ and beheld His glory, the heaving waves were a pavement for his feet; and so will be the stormy waves of this present evil world to us, if we behold not them, but Jesus Christ. The troubles that surround us on every hand will fill our lives with gloomy doubt and sorrow. It is only when we turn our eyes away from them and look unto Him that we are lightened and our faces are unashamed. We soon become aware that it is not easy to forget the sorrows that roll like sea billows about us. It is no light matter to be unmindful of a body racked with pain or the torture of some nagging disease bent on relentlessly tormenting its victim. It is always a matter of human concern when things go wrong and the best made plans of life falter, lose their way, and come to naught, but, could our eyes be opened in that hour, we would see the outstretched hand of Jesus, waiting to lift us up. The moment we discover that earth's vanities are unreal and cannot sustain us, we look unto Him, and, in looking, we are lightened and our faces are unashamed.

There's a story in the Bible,
You have heard it, too, no doubt,
Of the waves and sinking Peter
And the Lord who helped him out.
There are many points to gather
From this incident, I know,
But the one to me that's clearest
I'll endeavor now to show.

Keep your eyes upon Jesus and not on the waves;
Keep your eyes upon Jesus; He so sweetly saves.
Keep your eyes upon Jesus and not on the gale;
Keep your eyes upon Jesus, and you'll never fail.

How bravely Peter started
In his walk of faith that night!
But how quickly he was sinking
When he turned from faith to sight!
While his eyes were fixed on Jesus,
He defied the wind and wave.
It was when they marred his vision
He so quickly cried, "Lord, save!"

Among the famous wax works of Madame Taussaud in London, England, stands a simple touching scene of the British general, Wellington, in deep meditation as he viewed the lifeless body of the once great Napoleon. The dramatic scene was molded from the event as it actually happened. As one looks upon the waxen figures of these two men, who in life had fought each other so fiercely through many a bloody day, Napoleon lying in death and Wellington a sad and thoughtful onlooker, one can imagine the reflections that filled his quiet meditation in that hour. There is no look of hate or resentment on Wellington's face, but rather the saddened appearance of one who has seen the fruitlessness of human struggle. What glory now are all the campaigns of violence and bloodshed? What joy in the silence of death are the victory shouts of yesteryear, the defeat of armies, the acclaim of men, and the caresses of admiring women? Have you never thought as you have gazed upon the ashen face and folded hands of one who lies in death how fruitless and useless are all our wars and contentions? How vain have been our strivings about doctrines and our insistence upon little technicalities, which we in ignorance deemed so very important! How often my own heart has been saddened as I have listened to preachers wasting their time from pulpit or air, contending over some point of difference among brethren, and when they were through with all their supposedly indubitable proofs, they had accomplished nothing at all except to fortify themselves behind the crumbling walls of their own ignorance and misunderstanding. As we gaze upon the lifeless forms of men who have spent their lives in strife and contention, we see the vanity of all our own belligerency. "Avoid foolish questions," said Paul, "and

genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." **Titus 3:9** It might do us good to remember that after six thousand years of killing and being killed the roaring lions are almost extinct, but the gentle lambs are counted in billions.

A message is filling my heart today and with it there is an unspeakable longing that the eyes of every saint of God be turned to behold the face of Jesus Christ. My dearly beloved brethren, I speak the truth when I tell you that man is made to see and serve only one master at a time. He cannot serve God and Mammon. He cannot love the world and still love the Lord. He cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of devils, and he cannot exalt a man and exalt the Lord Jesus at the same time. That which is of the earth is strictly earthly and that which is above is heavenly and abides in an exalted realm. While our admiring eyes are entranced by the apparent greatness of a gifted man, we receive only what man can offer, and this has no power to transform the soul or lift us up above the strife of earth. But saints who learn to look only to Jesus Christ behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and, looking unto Him, their faces are lightened and they are changed into that same image of Christ.

It is only natural that our hearts should be saddened when friends we have long loved and with whom we have walked in communion for years turn from us, drawing away the shoulder of their strength and denying us the love and spiritual sinew we have learned to appreciate so much, but these things will happen and, in fact, must be that we may learn not to trust in man but in God, who raises man from the dead. Every earthly dependency shall be swept away like sand from beneath our feet, for our heavenly Father is teaching us that we will always be the heirs of disappointment while we put our confidence or our trust in anything less than Himself. Times without number we find ourselves building high hopes of this brother or that sister. We feel assured in ourselves that sonship will be their portion. From outward appearance we conclude they have gained the victory over themselves, the world, the flesh, and the devil, but with what bitter disappointment are we beset when in consternation we discover that these apparent towers of strength are weaklings like all other men, so devoid of roots and moisture that, when the burning sun shone upon them and scorched them, they withered and soon faded away to be seen no more at all. And thus will it always be while we anchor our confidence in the strength or veracity of human beings. I am sure the Lord often allows His people to build high hopes on the strength of someone else, and, when we have foolishly believed them to be unshakable and unsinkable, He lets them fall before our eyes to become a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring that our trust might be in the living God and in Him alone. He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.

It is the will of God that man should look only to Him. I do not mean that we should not love and appreciate our brethren, but we must never fix our confidence or hope in man lest we be ashamed. We must not pin our admiration upon men, who have been sustained, but upon God, who sustained them. Neither are we to admire men who have gained the victory, but God, who made them victorious. There exists a great cloud of witnesses who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, were mocked and scourged and imprisoned, were stoned and sawn asunder, were slain with the sword, and wandered about destitute, afflicted, and tormented, but for all the glory of their wonderful victory we are instructed to build neither upon their personal faith nor upon themselves. All the teaching of scripture instructs us to seek after the God who helped and sustained them and who is faithful to all who put their trust in Him. Who among us can refrain from rejoicing that some have waxed valiant in fight and have gained the victory? But they would not have gained it had they been left to their own resources. A man's sufficiency is of the Lord. It is He who is our strength and our exceeding great reward. Let us not therefore rejoice in Daniel, but in God, who was with him in trouble.

What are we going to do when brethren fail and fall out by the wayside? Well, my brethren, if you have your eyes on them, you, too, may fall out with them. Your first thought may be to turn aside to unravel their difficulties for them, and I do not say it is wrong to do this, but you must not be swayed nor turned from your own steadfastness because you have seen the weakness of someone else. Your trust is not in men; neither are you to depend upon the weakness or strength of any other. Let your eyes look right on and your eyelids straight before you. Turn not to the right hand or to the left. It is quite possible you have misjudged your

comrade's place in the body of Christ. It is God alone who knows the ministry of each and every vessel He has chosen and He will assure that that worthy place in Him is fully attained. If we have the right understanding and fix all our hopes in Christ, we will never be unnerved by the sudden fall of another. Sorrow will grip our saddened hearts, but we will not be overwhelmed, neither will we be weakened because of the weakness of man. He who has spiritual understanding has the witness in himself and will be unaffected by the strength or weakness of another. God's people must reach such a high plateau in their walk with God that, should the earth be removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, and should the waves roar and be troubled while men of might and faith fall like ninepins all about them, they themselves will not be troubled nor shall fear grip their hearts, because their faith and confidence is founded not on man, but upon the Father of lights and understanding, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." Psa. 46:4,5. It is the Lord of hosts who is always with us. It is the God of Jacob who will help us early. Do we not read with heavy hearts the words of Paul when he wrote, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me:" but are we not made to rejoice by the next sentence, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me"? 2 Tim. 4:16. It fills our hearts with sadness to hear the great apostle say, "Know this that all who are in Asia have turned away from me." We wonder how such an apparent tragedy could be, but Paul, like all other saints of God, had to learn not to trust in men, whose breath is in their nostrils, but in the living God that raiseth men from the dead. There may come times in your life when no man will stand with you. Fear them not, for such dread hours come that you might learn that the Lord is standing with you, and, once you have learned that secret, you will be unaffected by either the strength or weakness of other human beings. These are lessons we must learn in life. Towers of strength will continue to collapse all about us until we have learned to keep our eyes steadfast upon the face of Christ. Then and then only can we say, "God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Psa. 46:1-2

King David was a prophet and a man after God's own heart. Few men who have walked the journey of life were ever afforded a better opportunity to see and know the weaknesses and frailties of men than he. He knew the dreadful fear and uncertainty of having to flee for his life, and that for many years, from the face of King Saul, a man who should have felt deeply indebted to him. He knew the bitterness and disappointment of the loss of his familiar and intimate friend, Ahithophel, with whom he held the closest communion, walking in company together unto the house of God. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Psa. 41:9 He knew the sadness that only a father can know when he found his own son had deceitfully plotted against him and was leading the nation in rebellion to dethrone him. See 2 Sam. 15:1-6 His bitterness, too, was greatly increased when he was told that his friend, Ahithophel, was with the conspirators. 2 Sam. 15:31 "Lord, be merciful unto me," he sobbed from the deep of his despair. "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee. Mine enemies speak evil of me. When shall he die and his name perish? And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad he telleth it. All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more." Psa. 41:4-8

Sorrows like sea billows rolled over this man, bowing his head down as a bulrush in the fierceness of the east wind. Sorrow has a strange way of magnifying itself against us like a terror in the night so that "when it rains, it pours." No sun appears in many days and there seems to be no way out of the ever increasing dilemma of tribulation that has loosed itself upon us. Yet it is in the time of man's affliction that he calls upon the Lord, lifting his heart up to God to behold His righteous face. O that the saints of God would remember, when storms of trial and affliction burst upon them, that back of the darkling clouds the face of God, shining as the sun in his strength, is waiting to smile through upon them, turning their miserable hour of sorrow and heartache into the glad tomorrow of joy and understanding.

I walked a mile with pleasure. She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser for all she had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow, and ne'er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her when sorrow walked with me!

As we walk the journey of this life, we learn that man is never at his best in the midst of prosperity. In prosperity we say, "I shall never be moved," **Psa. 30:6**, but it is not in prosperity but when earthly treasures fail and floods like sea billows roll over our souls that we discover what unbelief really exists in our hearts. Undoubtedly it is for this very reason that the Spirit of the Lord allows great tribulation to come upon all the children of men. Many people who read these lines have often had their heads and their hearts bowed down with grief that few could share, but you will discover soon that those who have shared a sorrow like your own are the ones who can reach you a helping hand. "God is our refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble, because in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them." **Isa. 63:9** "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." He knows our frame because He has shared our frame. Thus the wise apostle was able to reason, "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." **Heb. 4:15**

It is the Lord who is our light and our salvation, and, since this is so, whom shall we fear and of what shall we be afraid? When evil men assail us with their perfidious and demeaning slanders, it is they - not we - who stumble to their inevitable fall. Should an army encamp against us as one did against Elisha, we need have no fear, and should war be waged against us, in this also we may be confident. None of these light afflictions carry the weight of a straw though for a little moment they loom larger than the earth itself. The pertinent point that really concerns us is only this: All things are working together for our eternal good because we have been chosen of God. On the day of trouble He shelters us within His shrine. He sets us safe upon a rock and will lift our heads up in victory high above all our foes. In the time of trial we can hear our own hearts calling, "I will seek Thy face in righteousness. Thy face, O Lord, do I seek. O Thou eternal Lord, do not hide Thy face from me nor turn me away in Thy anger. Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God my Saviour. Even though my father or my mother or my brethren forsake me, Thou, Lord, wilt take me up and care for me in my time of distress. Teach me the way of the Lord and lead me in a plain path beside still waters. Leave me not to the fury of my foes and let none of them thwart me in my purpose to seek Thy face and behold Thee in Thy righteousness. Let my soul be brave as I wait for the Lord, for I shall see the face of God in the land of the living."

"Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide (backslide). Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. For Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in Thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers and will not sit with the wicked. I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord," **Psa. 26:1-6**

Do we not see from all these things how all men look unto Jesus in time of trouble? Is it not when tribulation spreads its dark wings over us that we seek His face in prayer, searching His word to find the truth and help and comfort that only He Himself can bring? When we speak of looking unto Jesus, we may be beset with that sentimental soap that is inclined to appeal to some sort of romantic feeling within us. We think of glorious experiences and we have a right to do so, but I fear we may discover that, while our soul is in glory with Him, we ourselves may be found sitting in some dungeon, standing in the lion's den, or walking through a fiery furnace. The Marechale (Evangeline Booth) from her gloomy prison in France sang:

"Best beloved of my soul!
I am here alone with Thee,
And my prison is a heaven since
Thou sharest it with me."

It matters little what has inspired us to seek the face of the Lord. The end result is what should concern us, for all who seek shall find and all who behold Him, even though it be through a glass darkly, are being changed into that same image, steadfastly progressing from one level of glory to another.

Christian men and women must learn to think of themselves as a totally different sort of people. We are indeed a peculiar people, for, once the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has cleansed us from all our sin, we have become new creatures in Him. We are not today the same as we were yesterday. When our hearts were washed clean, at that moment our nature was changed. Our ambitions altered their course. We were lifted by

Christ to a heavenly realm we had not known heretofore. The things we once loved and our souls lusted after we now begin to hate, and the things we once hated and skillfully avoided we now begin to love and cherish. "The course of bad men leads through darkness dim. They cannot see what makes them stumble; the course of good men, like a ray of dawn, shines on and on to the full light of day!" **Prov. 4:18** (Moffatt) So much do we become the inhabitants of a new realm that we discover we are no longer true citizens of this present evil world. We have acquired a new citizenship, given to us by the grace of God. We become citizens of the heavenly realm, both exercising and enjoying the rights of citizens of that higher realm. When men travel to a foreign country, they become aware that they are not citizens of that country. They may be and usually are treated with great courtesy and hospitality and made to feel very much at home; nevertheless, they are not at home and, because they are not citizens, they cannot exercise the rights of citizens. It is when their feet turn homeward and once more tread their native soil that they know they are citizens and are home once more. Many times, when returning from a country not my own, I have felt I would like to climb the flagpole and sing with all my heart, "O Canada! My home my native land! True patriot love in all thy sons command", and this same joy of citizenship I have seen in the hearts of men of other lands and sensed the evident thrill within them as they neared their native shores. And this is how it ought to be.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself has said,
This is my home, my native land,
Whose heart has ne'er within him burned

As home his footsteps he has turned? So, when we give our hearts to Jesus Christ, we become citizens of a new country, even an heavenly country, and we ought henceforth to think of ourselves as citizens of that realm — not citizens by naturalization, but citizens by a new birth. Christians ought no longer to think of themselves as mere inhabitants of earth, but should steadfastly look for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Far too often, I fear, people regard salvation as a sort of free passport to a heaven that will be theirs when they are reluctantly through with this present world, but this ought not to be. They should think of themselves as no longer belonging to this evil world or any of its human systems, but citizens of an heavenly realm with all its supernal glories.

An ambassador from one country to another, even while abroad, remains subject to the laws of his own country. He cannot be arrested or tried in the country to which he has been sent; neither is he made subject to their laws. He can, of course, be sent home if he does not walk and live as an ambassador ought to do, but he is not subject to the laws of that country in which he is an ambassador. The Lord has told us plainly that we are ambassadors of Christ, beseeching men to be reconciled to God. We are not citizens of earth. We are citizens of the heavenlies. Neither are we to be governed by the laws of earth. We are to be governed by the laws of heaven, for we are citizens of that realm. We realize without a doubt that any man who lives in harmony with the laws of heaven will certainly be in harmony with the laws of earth; nevertheless, he is not under any of them because he is an ambassador from the realm above. I think Jesus was showing us this principle when he sent Peter with the money to pay their taxes, taxes in fact, which He did not owe.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, for he looked for a city, which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. See Heb. 11:8-10. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but, having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Verses 13,14. The fact that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth clearly shows that they were not citizens, but foreigners and pilgrims just passing through as strangers in this present world. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." **Heb. 11:14-16.**

Abraham, as he wandered across the wilderness of this world seeking the country to which God had called him, confessed that he was not a citizen of this present world, but that he was seeking a country which God

had promised him. What a beautiful example this really is of the truth we are trying to show — that we are citizens of God's heavenly realm and not citizens of the realm in which we now dwell! So much was Abraham involved in glory of this hope that dwelt within him that he spent his whole life living in tabernacles, or tents, with the other heirs of the promise. Never once during all his life did he seek to sink his roots down in this present evil world of desire to live as a citizen of it, but he went about as a stranger, continually seeking that glorious heavenly realm that God had promised to him, for he looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God. What can that be but the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21?

Those who thus walk in the Spirit, embracing their high and holy calling and knowing that their citizenship is in the heavenlies, should especially direct their attention to the wonderful truth found in Heb. 11:13 This is a veritable bastion of faith and yet every statement in it appears to set forth some distressing trial, which one unlearned would think to be ruinous to faith. [We will therefore enumerate these six beautiful points here set forth as evidences of real and pure faith.](#)

- (1) These all died in faith,
- (2) Not having received the promises,
- (3) But having seen them afar off,
- (4) And were persuaded of them,
- (5) And embraced them,
- (6) And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

Christians have been badly taught by shallow thinkers that faith must immediately grasp the promise and bring it home right now. But faith seldom works that way. It sees the promise afar off. It becomes persuaded of its truth. It embraces the promise with the embrace of love and confesses its belief with joyful anticipation. Faith is perfectly willing to die without receiving the promise, knowing that God, who cannot lie, is the God of the resurrection, raising the dead to life again and bringing to pass things that man deemed to be impossible. That was the attitude of Abraham when he offered his son Isaac on the altar.

Thus we repeat that Christians should live as citizens, not of this world, but of that which we have seen by promise, though it be yet very far off. We are not of the world, but God has chosen us out of the world, and thus we should live and move and have our being, always beholding the face of the Lord in pure faith and confidence, knowing that God, who cannot lie, will bring to pass His every promise. Our pure attitude of heart and mind means a great deal to our faith, and our steadfast outlook on life will often prove whether or not we are truly seeking a heavenly country. It was this unsullied attitude of heart that made Job cry out, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" Many years later Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians, saying, "[For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.](#)" **Heb. 10:34-35** If those blessed people who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods had been worrying about their citizenship in this present evil world, I am sure there would have been no joy among them when they were robbed of their goods, but, because they knew that above in heaven, where their citizenship really was, they possessed a better substance than they possessed here, they were filled with joy - a joy that was enduring and could never be spoiled or plundered by the spite and greed of evil men who have their portion only in this life.

Throughout this chapter we have been trying to show the infinite blessing of looking unto Jesus, and how can that be better accomplished than by our constant attitude of living in His presence as citizens of His glorious realm? We should not need any special revelation from God to show us that we live continually in His presence. The emphatic Bible teaching of His omnipresence should teach us that, and, because we have that knowledge, our daily care should be to practice the presence of God. By this I mean that we should hourly live in the knowledge that He is ever present. He is with us and dwells within us just as Jesus has said. He is at hand to hear, to lead, to direct our hearts and our thoughts into the patient waiting for Christ. We should believe that when we read His word He is speaking to us. His Spirit is instructing us and bringing illumination to the sacred pages. Our hearts should be assured that when we ask His guidance He will willingly give it to us, providing we have no mind of our own to interfere. We are always in God's presence, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Therefore our lives should manifest that attitude of heart, which eagerly confesses

that He is constantly at hand. How better can we look unto Jesus than to live daily in an attitude of response toward His mind and will? How enlightening it is to pray and praise, and what illumination comes as He unfolds the secrets of His truth to our searching spirit! The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. We are never sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

It is recorded in the book of Exodus (Chapter 34, verse 29) that, upon Moses' return to the congregation of Israel after he had gone up into Mount Sinai to receive the covenant of the law, the skin of his face shone with the glory of God and he hung a veil over his face so that the children of Israel would not behold the glory that was slowly fading away. Now when Paul was commenting on this remarkable incident in the life of Moses, he said, "For if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away (or was fading away); how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation (that is, the law) be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." **2 Cor. 3:7-9** What Paul is actually teaching is this: By the law is the knowledge of sin and sin brings only death, but by Jesus Christ is the knowledge of righteousness, the end of which is life, resurrection, and glorification. Paul is therefore saying that if one look at the law that ministers only death to sinners was so glorious that the countenance of Moses literally shone with the glory of God, then how much more glorious is a look at life itself? We know that the only source of life in all the universe is that one Son of God, Jesus Christ, of whom it is written, "Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

How I wish God's people could understand the law. The law is holy and just and good. The law is the very nature of God. He who sees it knows full well that it can be kept only in the heart of Jesus Christ and it will also be kept in you and me because Christ in you and in me is the hope of glory. A man who truly loves God keeps every sentence of the law, not because his carnal nature strives to do so, but because the law has become part and parcel of his new nature by the indwelling Christ. To accomplish this God has changed our nature and transformed us from sinners under death to saints under life. The law of God, written on the tables of the human heart, is the only true freedom that exists, yet its purity brings death to those who live in the realm of death just as life-giving sunlight brings instant death to a protoplasm. Sin cannot live in the light which no man can approach unto; therefore, the law is death to sin but life to all those in whom it dwells. Whether the law brings life or death to us depends entirely upon whether we live in the realm of death and sin or in the realm of life and righteousness.

Our subject here is not looking unto the law, but looking unto Jesus, for even that which was made glorious (that is, the law) had no glory at all by reason of the glory that excelleth. The glory that excelleth is the life in Christ Jesus. Surely, if that which speaks death to sinners is glorious, that which speaks of incorruption, immortality, and eternal life to saints is much more glorious. Can we wonder, then, that we are exhorted to always be looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high?

"With this hope in our hearts we are quite frank and open in our ministry. We are not like Moses, who veiled his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing its fading glory. But it was their minds really which were blinded, for even today when the old agreement is read to them there is still a veil over their minds — though the veil has actually been lifted by Christ. Yes, alas, even to this day there is still a veil over their hearts when the writings of Moses are read. Yet if they turned to the Lord the veil would disappear. For the Lord to whom they could turn is the Spirit of the new agreement, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, men's souls are free. But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transfigured by the Spirit of the Lord in ever-increasing splendor into His own image." **2 Cor. 3:12-18** (Phillips).

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18** (King James Version). Behold the infinite value of looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER TWO CHRIST, THE LORD AND HEAD

In the life of any man there are special times of great importance - days that are more than just ordinary days, hours that are important above other hours, events that have far-reaching effects and decisions that alter the whole course of a life. These momentous times transpire throughout the lives of all of us, making indelible impressions upon our lives, our personalities, our experiences, and often deciding our eternal goal. However important an event in life could be or however great its effect, it would be hard to find any time more important than these two hours - the one at the beginning of life, which we call birth, and the other at the ending of life which we call death. Without the former there could be no life or experience at all and without the latter, whether by the way of the grave or by crucifixion, there could be no entrance into the magnificent glory that God has prepared for those who love Him.

In like manner also during the life of a dispensation there are many, many glorious hours, many important times and changes, that are ordained of God to have their lasting and momentous effect not only on the age itself but, more important still, upon the course of the lives of all those people who inhabit the age, for it is not with time that God is dealing, but with people. How could we possibly overestimate the transforming power that gripped and shook the entire dispensation of grace when the words, the just shall live by faith, came flooding like a river of light into the heart of Martin Luther, inspiring him with faith and power that was destined to revolutionize the entire Christian world and loose the chains of ecclesiastical tradition that had cursed it so long? And what can we say of Wesley and Whitefield, Huss, Finney, Moody, and a host of others who in their day transformed whole nations, turning them from the path of judgment to the path of peace and from darkness to light?

Nevertheless, of all the glories of the dispensation of grace none shines so brightly as those events that shook not only the earth but the universe as well at that magnificent hour which closed the gates on the dispensation of law and flung wide open the portals of the dispensation of grace. Never has the earth been shaken with such a ministry as that of the only begotten Son of God. Never did mortal eyes behold such power. Never had ears heard such words of wisdom. Never had the oppressed found such judgment or sinners such pardon, for He had been anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Momentous as was His glorious life, greater still were the events that shook the universe when "mid rending rocks and darkening skies" that life was laid down and a fountain was opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness and the way prepared back to the Eden of God. There on either side of the river and in the midst of the street thereof blooms forever the tree of life with its twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of all the nations.

However, the death of the Saviour must not be considered alone, for, were it not for the breath-taking wonders of the resurrection morning, our faith and hope in Christ would be in vain and we would yet be in our sins and all who died in Him would have perished. But He rose from the grave and walked again the lowly realms of earth in the sight of His disciples and before many witnesses until at the end of forty days he stood with five hundred beloved brethren who heard His blessing and watched in awe as the glory of God enfolded His being and lifted Him to heaven in their sight. How long they stood gazing into heaven I do not know, but they stood as men transfixed until two shining ones stood by them with this message: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? For this same Jesus that was taken up from you into heaven shall so return in like manner as ye have seen Him go."

Then came the transforming glory of Pentecost as the Holy Ghost with the sound as of a mighty rushing wind fell upon the waiting company filling all the place where they were sitting. Tongues of fire sat upon them all. It was the same glorious fire that Moses had seen in the burning bush, the same that had fallen upon the sacrifice on the wilderness altar, the same that had fallen in judgment in the days of Elijah. It was the fire of God; yea, it was God, for God is a consuming fire. It was not for show or excitement that the fire was manifested, but to transform men of weakness to men of power and change sons of men to sons of God.

The one time shrinking Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,
How boldly he is preaching unto the gathered host;

Three thousand souls were added unto the church that day.
And many went rejoicing while journeying on their way.
Five thousand more were added and many priests beside;
When Pentecost was active, disciples multiplied.

These were the momentous events that heralded the coming of the age of grace. The best wine, however, was reserved until the last at the wedding supper in Cana, so we must interpret that incident with the understanding that God has reserved by far the best and greatest thing unto the end of this age. Wonderful and glorious as were those mighty acts of God which brought this age to its birth, I feel sure we may say with reverence and deepest respect that those great events were but the dawn of a greater day, the seed of a greater harvest, and the infancy of an eternal maturity that will fill and govern all things. That beginning was the little stone cut out of the mountain that was to smite the image of this world system, rolling on and on to fill the earth with the knowledge of God and with the judgment and equity of the Lord until nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all Zion's holy mountain; neither shall any say, "Know the Lord", for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. None shall cry, "Show me the Lord", for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Neither shall any man rob another nor the oppressed cry for vengeance upon the oppressor, for all the earth shall be filled with the justice, equity, judgment, knowledge, and truth of the Lord.

It is true that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived until men will question whether there is any faith on the earth at all, but the point we so often miss is this: while the world without is sinking deeper and deeper into gross darkness, God is preparing His deliverer in the womb, for thus the word of God declares. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she being with child, cried travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and didst cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and the child was caught up to God and to His throne; and the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days." **Rev. 12:1-5**

So it is clear to us all that, at the very moment when Satan's night has filled the earth with gross darkness, God's deliverer, the man child, the 144,000 sons, is brought forth. Though the many-headed dragon with his ten horns of power is standing in gleeful anticipation to devour God's mighty deliverer, whom He hath ordained to shepherd the nations throughout the entire kingdom age, yet at the very moment of his birth he is caught up to the realm of the Spirit beyond the power of any harm. I do not believe that this man child was caught away out of the world, for it is he who feeds the woman in the wilderness (verse 6), but he is caught up into the open heavens to walk in a realm unopened and unavailable to men who live in the flesh.

Why should it be deemed a thing impossible that a Son of God should live and move and have his being in a realm foreign and unknown to ordinary men? Did not Jesus while still on earth declare that He was in heaven? He said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." **Jno. 3:13** Heaven is not a place far removed. Heaven is a realm all about us, separated and unseen because of the veil of the flesh behind which we continually dwell. But Jesus did not live after the flesh. He lived in such communion with God that He was able to say that, though He had come from heaven, He was also in heaven. If we had not so limited the glory and power of the word of God, we would have known long ago that it was this very truth Paul had in mind when he declared that "our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven." **Phil. 3:20** And it is from heaven that we look for the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile bodies that we may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Though the apostle Paul remained on the earth until he was known as Paul the aged, many years before he, too, had been caught up into those waiting heavens where he walked the elysian fields of the glory of God, both hearing and seeing that which dare not be uttered this side of the veil of flesh.

When John was exiled on the lonely Isle of Patmos, he suddenly found himself standing in a realm that far exceeded the glory he had seen on the mount of transfiguration. There they had been sore afraid. Matt. 17:6-7 But here on Patmos such a heavenly realm was opened to him that he fell as dead. Rev. 1:17 Surely one

would think that no greater glory could be given to a man than the effulgent glory he beheld at that wonderful moment. Yet, though thus caught away into such unspeakable realms, he again heard a voice calling him up yet higher saying, "Come up hither and I will show you things which must be hereafter. Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven and One sat on the throne, and He that sat on the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about throne in sight like unto an emerald." Rev. 4:1-3

Are we to gather from this that John had left the earth? Or had he entered that realm which, though unseen, is all about us? That which is seen with the mortal eye is only temporal, but that which is unseen is eternal. No! John had not left the earth. He had been caught up to God's throne. Rev. 4:2-3 So it was that John in the Spirit saw that the man child was also caught up to God and His throne, and just as John remained to bring his revelation to the world, so also the manchild, the sons of God, the 144,000, though caught up to God's throne, will minister to the woman in the wilderness and shepherd the nations with a rod of iron for the entire dispensation of the kingdom.

As we draw nearer to the end of the age and as the darkness of the evening covers the earth as it did in the days of Noah, there is an ever increasing conviction within that those elect of God who are to attain the blessedness of true sonship will experience more and more the blessedness of breaking through to the heavenly realms until that glad day finally comes when they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air and, being thus forever with the Lord, they will dwell no more on human planes but will walk with Christ in the glory of the resurrection. Human minds have not been made to understand or even imagine the glory that God is preparing for the age that lies just ahead of us, but that purpose will find its expression in the manifestation of the sons of God.

In the Lord Jesus Christ we find God's ideal of sonship. He was a Son in whom God was well pleased. But I am sure that I speak the truth when I say that it is God's purpose and God's will that all who are coming to sonship will be like Him. Just like Him! Exactly like Him! For God will dwell in them and walk with them, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be their God. When we shall see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Jesus Christ is the first born of many brethren. Rom. 8:29. Weymouth translates it, "Those whom He has foreknown He has also predestined to share the likeness of His Son that He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers." The world is yet to be ruled by sons of God, a vast family of 144,000 sons, each one having God's name in his forehead, each possessing the mind of Christ and governing the world according to the will of God. It is impossible for any man to imagine the impact on the world of the life of that one lonely, rejected Son of God who came two thousand years ago - not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. How then are we to imagine the glory of a millennial reign in which such a vast company of sons in the very image and power of Christ shall govern the earth in righteousness and equity for a thousand years?

It is not the body of the bride that is being brought to perfection today. It is the body of the bridegroom, the sons of God, for Adam was first formed, then Eve. But that vast family of sons has one Son as its head, and that one Son is the firstborn of them all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The seal of the living God in the forehead undoubtedly means that those who have been thus sealed have been made partakers of the mind of Christ. Those who receive the seal of the beast in their foreheads have undoubtedly partaken of the mind of the beast, but those whom God has sealed have partaken of the mind of God. No man can do anything in the name of Christ until he has partaken of the mind of Christ. Then and then alone dare he say, "I do this in the name of the Lord Jesus." People today, especially those whom we call ministers and preachers, are far too flippant about using the name of Jesus Christ. They pray long prayers strictly out of their own minds and end with the time worn phrase, "We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ". But they did not have the mind of Christ. They prayed only because it was part of the ceremony of a public service. Perhaps they had even prayed for something and asked amiss, that they might consume it on their own lusts. They demand healing "in the name of Jesus". They try to perform miracles in the name of Jesus, and for the most part they have no more of the mind of Christ about the matter in question than did the seven sons of Sceva, who stood over the demon-possessed man and cried, "We command you to come out of him in the name of Jesus whom Paul preacheth." **Acts 19:14**

Now here is something that possibly you have never heard before. While meditating on such things one day, the words of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", were made real to me in a way I had not hitherto seen. It seems clear to me that the use of God's name in profanity amounts to little more or less than a crude, cheap, thoughtless form of blasphemy used strictly by a world of unbelievers. But to take God's name in vain is a common sin among believers who, having no true knowledge of the mind of Christ nor of having discovered the will of God, thoughtlessly and carelessly pretend to act in His name and use His authority when indeed they have no authority from Him. The mere fact that millions of prayers do go unanswered is proof enough of this forgery of His name, for Christ Himself has promised that whatsoever we should ask in His name, believing, we should receive. Thus it was that the sons of Sceva called over the demon the name of Jesus and the demon, knowing they were using God's name in vain, said, "Paul I know and Jesus I know, but who are you?" And he leaped on them and they fled away wounded and naked. To sign the name of another man on a check without the power of attorney is forgery, and to use the name of Jesus without having the mind of Christ is also forgery, and the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

We should never attempt to ask anything in His name until we have taken time to empty our souls of self and selfishness and we know beyond a doubt that He has put His mind and will in our minds. Then and then alone may we ask in His name. If Christians would only take time to listen to God's voice, they would find that ninety-nine percent of their prayers and the vast majority of their good works are filled with hidden desire for some selfish aggrandizement. Why do we see all this excitement about physical healing today? Does it spring from genuine compassion for the sick or are such things as fame, money, pomp, crowds, and luxury involved? Do our frantic efforts to gain converts arise from a passion for men's souls or is the desire to gain proselytes the underlying principle? We will have to learn to speak truth to ourselves in the inner parts before we are able to have the mind of Christ about anything, and without the mind of Christ we cannot use the name of Christ except in vain.

We are now living in one of the most important hours the world has ever known. It is an hour of special importance to all who are filled with the longing to become sons of God, because all who are to share His glory and all who will reign with Him in His kingdom will be people who have one head and one only, and that one head is the Lord Jesus Christ. We are at the hour when all other heads and all other leaders must be taken away that He may be head of every man. All other lords must lose their authority that He may be Lord. All allegiances to other authority must be broken that He may become the supreme head of His body. There and there alone is unity, and it will not be found in any other place nor by any other method.

It is very, very easy for a reader to respond with an amen to such a statement as we have just made, but it is not enough just to respond with an amen! We are going to have to go through the suffering of being beheaded of all earthly heads. Let us not in any wise deceive ourselves, for there will be very few who will read these lines who do not have some other head besides Jesus Christ.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was explaining to them that there is one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ, but he wisely interpolated the sentence in brackets, "(there be gods many and lords many)". **1 Cor. 8:5.** Well he knew that every man in the world has some kind of a god whether wood or stone or gold, and well he knew also that the vast majority of Christians have some lord that they place ahead of Christ. We will all be quick to deny this assertion, but because of the seriousness of the hour in which we live we would be much wiser to earnestly consider it with fasting and prayer until the Spirit of God points up our idols to us.

There are far too many lords and gods in the Christian world for any man to even attempt to name them all, but let us earnestly consider this question. Why is it that the Christian world has departed so far from the simplicity of a man's personal walk with Christ? Is it no longer necessary to know Him and love Him and know His voice, to possess His mind, and to walk in His will? Why are there practically no people in the world who, like Enoch, "walked with God", or like Abraham, who "walked before God and was perfect", or like David, who dwelt in "the secret place of the Most High"? Is it not because our lives have been crowded full with the abominable rush and bustle of church activity until day after day and evening after evening we are expected to be at some meeting where we go through the ritual of a church ceremony that all too often is devoid of freshness, sincerity,

or revelation and has become a meaningless form? Such things do not help our relationship to Christ. They are stumbling stones and a hindering influence. Christians have become so rushed and crowded and herded into the idea of throwing their weight behind church programs, missionary programs, radio programs, revival campaigns, tract campaigns, prayer chains, and the support of a dozen different men who claim to be God's man of the hour that they have no time to listen to the voice of the good Shepherd, and so can never discern between His voice and the many other voices in the world.

I think God must have been teaching Elijah this very lesson when he was in a state of unrest and frustration before God because the work of the Lord seemed to be falling to pieces and Baal was prospering. But God showed him that there was something more important than noise and excitement, and that was to hear and know the voice of God. "And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away. And He said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord, and, behold, the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave, and behold, there came a voice unto him and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?..." **1 Kings 19:10-13** If we are going to learn to know the gentle voice of Jesus, we are going to have to forget about the excitement of the earthquake, the winds, and the things that are calculated to attract and hold the crowds, for God is seldom in such things. We are going to have to quit worrying about the trend of the age, the rise of communism, and what the prophets of Baal are doing. We are going to have to learn to get alone with God in some cave of His choosing and listen to what He has to say, hear what He plans to do, and understand His program for the end of the age. We must quit worrying about what men are going to do and discover what God is going to do. Man can never do more than propose, but God has the power to dispose of any human plan or force and throw it into discard the moment He is through with it.

The reason Christians are so feverishly rushing about is that they know nothing of God's purpose. Preachers claim to believe the prophecies that concern the end of the age, yet show their unbelief by frantically trying to reverse the very thing God has said would be. They do not know the mind of Christ. They have not knelt in Gethsemane and yielded their wills to Him that He might reveal His will to them. It is by no means easy to yield our will to God, for our will is very strong. It is not easy to yield our mind to God, for our mind is full of its own personal ambitions and desires that have been mistaken for God's will. We will never be free from them until we follow Christ to the Garden of Gethsemane.

I want to testify to a great truth in this way. When the day comes that you enter the Garden of Gethsemane, your experience will be identical with that of Christ. You are going to find that you will have to leave all your disciples and all your friends and all your relations at the gate of the garden. You are going to find that, while you are sweating as it were great drops of blood in your agony to become one with His will, all your friends, all your disciples, and all your relations will be heavy with sleep. You will try to rouse them up to the seriousness of the hour, but they will only stretch and yawn and fall asleep again. You are going to have to go through it alone, and were it not for the angels of God who are sent to strengthen you, you would die as far as man is concerned, and many would be glad to see it so. Furthermore, when the agony of coming into God's will is over, you will be betrayed. You will be hated. You will be sold. You will be stripped. And you will undoubtedly be crucified.

I am not writing these things for the sake of sermonizing. I write them as a witness to my own personal experience, for I could lead you to the very spot where I knelt in my Gethsemane. I could name the disciples who slept and yawned at the gate and who in spite of my urgings only fell asleep again. I could repeat the words of hate that followed my surrender and I could lead you to the very room where I was betrayed and stripped and sent away empty and alone. Your experience may not be identical with mine, but it will be like that of your Lord. There is no other path to the will and mind of Christ. Terrible as may be the hours of your Gethsemane, you need not fear it too much, for it is there that earthly heads are removed and He becomes Head and Lord indeed.

Here is a story of a Gethsemane from the book of Genesis. "And Jacob was left alone and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he (the man) said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he (the man) said, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob, (i.e. the crook, the supplanter, the cheat). And he said, Thy name shall be no more Jacob but Israel, for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men and hast prevailed ... And Jacob called the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved, and he passed over Peniel and the sun rose upon him and Jacob halted upon his thigh." **Gen. 32-24-31** It costs us something to change from Jacob, the supplanter, to Israel, the prince, but it is the beginning of a whole new world and a whole new life of resurrection. It brings us into the will of God, the mind of Christ, and it makes Christ our head, and not man.

Can we not see then from all these things that every one of us has had gods many and lords many? Can we not see that for years our own course has been dictated by man, programs, denominations, sects, activities, and because this has been the case, Christ has never been our head? Why is it that so many people have backslidden and gone out into the world the moment they have been separated from all this activity? It is because this has been their head rather than Christ. On the other hand why is it that some, when separated from all these things, are found to grow stronger and more mature in God? It is because they have made Christ their Lord and He is never separate from them, neither does He leave nor forsake them. They can say with David, "God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early." **Psa. 46:1-5**

I am saying all these things because I know that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Those who are guided by it will say Amen! Amen! to the most profound truths and dynamic statements, but, after hearing them, continue on with their rush and program and their "gods many and lords many" with confident assurance that the truth has no reference to them. It all reminds me of the man who boasted to his Quaker friend that he never wasted a moment of his time. "Why," he bragged, "I read while I am eating. I study during my lunch hour. I study while I ride the street car, and I even study while I am shaving." His friend eyed him without expression for a moment, then dryly asked, "When does thee do thy thinking?" You see, the man studied so much that he knew nothing but the thoughts and minds of other people and had no communion with his own soul. This is the fearful pit into which Christians have fallen. We have become so bogged down with the plans and purposes of men and organizations that these things govern us completely until Christ is neither our head nor our Lord except in name only.

A short time ago a brother related this little story to me and it added much to my understanding. He said that during a time of great distress, after there had been much upheaval and division in the church, he had been greatly troubled in spirit, not knowing which way to turn. In his distress he went to the Lord and asked, "How am I to know what the body of Christ really is when there is so much division?" The Spirit asked him as only the Spirit can, "Do you know who the Head of the body is?" To this he replied, "Yes, Jesus Christ is the Head of the body." The Spirit spoke again, saying, "Well, everything that is joined to the Head is the body." From then on my friend had no more questions about the body of Christ, for the answer he received was the only true answer. The body of Christ does not consist of this group or that group, this sect or that denomination. It has nothing to do with holding to this idea or that idea or any such thing. The body of Christ consists of that company who have made Christ their one and only Head. These have His mind. They have passed through His Gethsemane and walk in His will. None other need lay claim to sonship than these, for sons of God are they who are led by the Spirit of God. They do not rush about the country doing what seems good and right to them. They move only as the Spirit moves them.

There was a rugged man two thousand years ago who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord and to make straight a highway for our God. No man then alive in Israel had ever heard of such a ministry as he possessed, for no prophet had appeared in Israel for four hundred years. His message, like his life, was very simple and easily understood. He had no elaborate advertising, no choirs, orchestras, stately buildings, or advance agents. He had no soft attire or luxury hotels, but he had come by the will of God

and in God's time. He did not seek the crowds. The crowds sought him. Towns, villages, and cities were emptied of their inhabitants, who went out into the wilderness to hear his message and be baptized of him.

We can think of many great instances in the life of John the Baptist that shine like suns on the pages of holy writ. He had proclaimed to the vast throngs, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He had seen soldiers, priests, and common people come by thousands to his baptism. He had beheld the Spirit descending from heaven upon the Son of God and had cried with the voice of a trumpet, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." He it was who held the Saviour in his strong young arms and immersed Him in the waters of the Jordan River. He had seen the Spirit descend like a dove upon Him and had heard the voice of God thunder from the sky, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Ah! What excellent glory this man had seen of whom Jesus had said, "Of man born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

There is, however, another instance in the life of this man, which to me seems the greatest of them all. Things had not been going so well for John since Jesus had appeared on the scene, and I think it was with a little resentment that his disciples approached him one day and objected. "He to whom thou bearest witness beyond Jordan, the same baptizeth and all men come to Him." **John 3:26**. But John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me record that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." How could man ever speak more significant words than these? Herein lies the true secret of making Jesus Christ the Lord and Head of your life. He was not filled with animosity because another was more honored than himself, but he rejoiced in that one great principle of the kingdom, that Christ is the Lord and Head of all.

Now does it not seem significant that John decreased until one day, while kings and lords made merry with wine and dancing, an executioner was sent by the king to behead him? The truth I see so clearly is this: If Christ is going to increase and become our Lord and head, then all other heads must be taken away, even our own. There shall no longer be gods many and lords many, but there shall be one God, even the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. When John died, they asked for his head; they did not ask for his body. But when Jesus died, they asked for His body and did not ask for His head, that He might be the head and we might be the body. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." **Rev. 20:4** "I must decrease, but He must increase" is the first law of sonship.

There are very few men in the Christian world today who look with pleasantness upon a decreasing ministry. No, indeed, it is not so. The whole idea seems to be to gain more prominence, more followers, more radio stations, bigger buildings, and, of course, more money. All this is foisted upon a gullible people as the will and mind of God, but it is usually the work of an organizer who has himself become the head of his own little kingdom and longs to increase more and more.

I was not called of God to spend my time exposing the evils of our day and it always goes against my nature to expose what is wrong. It is much more blessed and useful to spend time teaching positive truth. There is, however, no question but that we are in the end of the age. There is no doubt that the mystery of iniquity is at work. The church system is held in disrespect by the world of unbelievers and rightly so, because for the most part she does not represent either Christ or His apostles. The faithful city has become a harlot, and she is full of bastard sons. The way of the Lord she does not know. Her ministers speak lies in the name of the Lord. Their methods are the methods of the world and not the methods of Christ. They teach the traditions of men for the commandments of the Lord. She has become the habitation of devils and the hold of foul spirits. She is full of the merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones. She is decked in fine linen with all manner of ornaments. She is head over heels in debt with her costly buildings. The kings of the earth commit fornication with her and the nations of the earth have made themselves drunk with the wine of her fornication. We are about to see the grand alliance of the mother of harlots with her numerous daughters. Romanism and Protestantism will soon be one. I do not believe it will stop at that, for a harlot will flirt with all she can deceive.

Other religious systems such as Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Confucianism will be wooed into the camp until all nations have drunk the wine of her fornication and the harlot system will sit astride the whole earth. Rev. 18:1-24. There is only one thing to do with a system like that. None can reform her. She is doomed to destruction. So we must come out of her that we be not partaker of her sins.

I do not believe that the glorious church without spot or wrinkle can remain part of the harlot system. That glorious church is an invisible mystery, composed of people who are joined to the Lord in the Spirit. It is a thus saith the Lord that he which is joined to an harlot is one flesh, but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. 1 Cor. 6:17-18 Henceforth we know no man after the flesh. Yea, if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

Of late I have felt the tremendous pressure of the Spirit upon me. My heart is filled with the ever, growing belief that we are very near to some outstanding event in the plan of God. Many, many people have written expressing the same conviction, and others have written to tell of experiences in the Spirit that must foreshadow the great manifestation of the sons of God. This is a time of preparation. This is a time when we should all seek the grace of God to anoint our eyes with eye salve that we might see things as they really are. Surely this must be the hour spoken of by Ezekiel when he saw the man with the inhorn sent forth to put the mark of God on all those who sighed and cried because of the abominations in the midst, for the abominations are great, indeed, and the sighing because of them is increasing by the hour.

Let us consider further the importance of making Christ our Head. Would it be possible for any man to reign in the kingdom if he did not possess the mind of Christ? And could he possess the mind of Christ if he had not made Christ his only Lord and Head? If only one man could reign in the kingdom still possessing his carnal mind, it would be no time at all until the kingdom itself would be corrupted and become identical to all the kingdoms of the past. Those worthy to reign in the kingdom of God will not reign to carry out their own wills. They will reign to carry out the will of God in every minute detail. Jesus Christ was the first manifested Son of God. He was a perfect example of what all the reigning sons will be. Jesus never did His own will. He did only "the will of Him who sent Him". He did not even speak His own words, but that which He had heard of His Father. "The works that I do are not mine but the Father's," He said. "I do only those things that please the Father." That is the attitude of the first manifested Son of God and that will be the attitude of all that vast family of sons who reign with Him, having God's name in their foreheads. These will shepherd the nations with an iron rod. These are filled with the same mind that was in Christ and, because of this unity with Him, they will bring the whole world into a reign of a thousand years of peace, justice, righteousness, and equity such as could never be imagined today. The lame man shall leap as an hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, the blind eyes shall be opened, and the deaf ears shall be unstopped. The wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and springs of water will bless the desert. The lion shall lie down with the kid and the wolf with the lamb. The cow and the bear shall feed together, the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

I am firmly convinced that all who take part in that blessed reign of the kingdom will have to be prepared for it in this present age. We cannot live after the traditions of a Babylonish church and expect to be ready to reign with Christ. The business of partaking of the mind of Christ must be accomplished here and now. Let us not be mistaken or deceived in a matter of such importance as this. It is the duty of every man who has this hope in him to purify himself even as He is pure. I firmly believe we should avail ourselves of every possible means of grace to cast off systems and traditions of men, to free ourselves from religious entanglements that forever hold our minds captive to their dreary ritual of activity, and which deny us the right and the time to partake of the mind of Christ.

One of the greatest men to walk the earth in recent years was the late Dr. Chas. S. Price. Few men have been so wonderfully used of God in the salvation of souls and the healing of the sick. Whole cities were shaken to the foundation by the impact of his revival meetings. The largest buildings were packed to overflowing. He was in demand everywhere all the time. Then God began to speak to him in a different way, calling him aside unto Himself, filling his heart with revelations of the age to come. As he followed God into new realms, his friends urged him to keep on with the big meetings and chided him for drawing aside. But as one brother chided him

for preaching less than usual, he quietly said, "God told me that I had to get off that merry-go-round." How precious it is to find great men who are willing to lay down the work of a life-time that they might follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

It must be positively stated that the first and most important step in attaining sonship is that Jesus Christ shall become Head and Lord of the individual life. When it comes to sonship, God is not dealing with crowds or nations or groups. He is dealing with individuals. God will sift through multitudes of people to find one son and, when He has found him, He will take him unto Himself and through suffering teach him obedience, patience, wisdom, understanding, sound judgment, and righteous government. Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy wisdom get understanding.

Consider well how God in centuries past separated the sons He was preparing to do His will. To Abraham He said, "Come out from thy country and from thy kindred and from thy people unto a land that I shall show thee." See also how Joseph was separated from all his people to suffer rejection and misunderstanding until the appointed time. Moses, too, was separated from Pharaoh's house and all his brethren for forty years. John the Baptist was in the wilderness until the day of his showing unto Israel and Paul was sent to the desert of Arabia. What a lonely man King David must have been when all Israel was dutifully offering their sacrifices and offerings on the temple altar. David's experience in God made all those things old and distasteful and ready to vanish away. As he watched the sacrifices and offerings being continually made, his heart broke within him and he cried in the loneliness of his spirit, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart Thou wilt not despise." **Psa. 51:16-17** Many people today feel the same about the dreary round of church activity as David felt about the ritual and ceremony of Israel's worship. They have lost all heart for it. They find no satisfaction in it. Their hearts are reaching far beyond forms and ceremonies to the realm of the mind and will of God, to the realm where Jesus Christ is Head and they can follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. It is not those who faithfully follow ritual who are sons of God, but as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. Rom. 8:14

Sons are selfless beings. They have made Christ their Head. Their own will and their own mind they have crucified and no longer exist. They are so one in the will of God and in the joy of fulfilling it that they could be happy anywhere on earth or in any circumstance whatever. They can say with Paul, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content," or with David, "If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there." There is a joy in fulfilling the will of God that can never be found in fulfilling the human will. All who love the human will become disgustingly selfish. They know nothing of sympathy, kindness, or generosity, but they have become a kind of demi-god, enslaving themselves also as they build up their little paper kingdom that will collapse and disappear with themselves. But the man who does God's will has made himself part of the permanent and will, like God, abide forever and ever.

The utter selflessness of the first begotten Son of God is seen in **Mark 10:45** "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a ransom for many." The marvelous grace and selfless love of Christ is seen in every phrase of that wonderful verse. The Son of Man came... not to be ministered unto... but to minister... and to give His life a ransom for many. This is indeed the manifestation of a life in which God was both Lord and Head.

By way of contrast with this lovely selfless life of consecration to the will of the Father let us notice Christ's own description of the ministry of the priests of His day, who had inherited Moses' seat of authority. **Matt. 23:2-10** "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them upon men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. All their works they do for to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, (Reverend, doctor, cardinal, most reverend, very reverend, God's man) but be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ."

All manner of teaching and instruction will never persuade man to make Christ his Lord and Head, With instruction there must be a spirit of revelation upon the hearts of all who hear; otherwise darkness remains and

blindness hides the truth from our eyes. Men hear and do not understand. They see and do not perceive, for their hearts are waxed gross and their ears are dull and their eyes have been closed. To try to understand spiritual things with the natural mind only brings greater darkness. For this reason Paul prayed that God would give the people the spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Him. How greatly we all need to pray this prayer!

While looking to God for a suitable conclusion to this chapter, there came a deep impression to my heart that there is one thing above all others that hinders men and women from making Christ their Head and thus partaking of the mind of Christ. That one thing of which I speak is our reluctance to stop the thing we are doing, lay it down and wait for direction from Jesus Christ, our Head. Is this too big a task for you? Then you may as well forget about sonship, the mind of Christ, or the Headship of Christ. The people who lived under the dispensation of the law were not able to attain the blessings of the age of grace until they were completely willing to lay down every ritual and ceremony of law and discard it all as a thing waxed old and ready to vanish away. Sonship and the blessings that go with sonship belong to the kingdom age - the age that is now dawning. We cannot attain to that relationship with Christ by trying to revive, regenerate, and rejuvenate the things that belong to a dispensation that is passing away. We are going to have to lay them all down and wait for His direction.

Christ cannot become our Head as long as something or somebody is taking His place. There was a time in our spiritual infancy when it was God's will for us to be under tutors and governors and in bondage to the elements of the age. Gal 4:1-4 But now that the fullness of time is come, God is sending forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts that we might receive the adoption of sons, or full sonship. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son.

When the age of grace dawned, it was well nigh impossible to shake the Jews loose from the rituals of the Old Testament. They loved those rituals and without them they seemed to be sailing uncharted seas. So also it is now. Those seeking sonship are hard put to it to leave off the old ways. Without the traditions and the tutors and the governors of the past two thousand years they fear their little boat will sink beneath the angry waves, but fear not! Christ the Lord, the Pilot and the Head, is walking on the angry waters. Invite Him into the boat and immediately you will be at the other shore. "Then they willingly received Him into the ship; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." **John 6:16-21** "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb" Rev 14:4

CHAPTER THREE THE INNER MAN

There must come a time in the life of every chosen son of God when the inner man is enlightened by the Spirit of revelation that he may see what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in His saints. Woe unto us, for the thickening fogs of human understanding and the multiplied traditions of the elders have so clouded our minds that we have spent our lives chasing for some will-o'-the-wisp that has no part in reality and no place in God's eternal plan.

Long, long ago Solomon wrote, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14:12 Though the world at large follows this way, it is not confined to the unbelieving alone. The overwhelming majority of believing Christians who possess the assurance of sins forgiven devotedly follow the way that seemeth right. The way that seemeth right is the way of natural understanding. It is the way of human learning, the way of tradition. We may be technically right in our interpretation of a Bible text, yet be walking the way that seemeth right, for that which touches the outer understanding only is of no value to the inner man.

It was on the sixth creative day that God proclaimed His eternal edict, "Let us make man in Our image and after Our likeness." Before we meditate in greater fullness upon these words, let us first settle in our hearts that the mighty fiat that went forth from God's lips that day has neither changed nor been rescinded in the least degree. It is God's purpose now, as it was then, to make man in His own image and after His likeness. The fall

of man, bemoaned by preachers of all ages as an enormous tragedy with irretrievable losses, has never been bemoaned by God as such, but confessed by Him to be one of the steps by which the revelation of God would be known in such completeness that it could never under any circumstances be destroyed and by which man should come into the image of God. "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." Rom. 9:22-23 Oh, what depth of majesty of understanding is displayed in the words of Paul: "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom. 8:20-21 How contrary are these words of inspiration to the way that seemeth right! Man has never been able to see with his natural mind how God through crushing brings forth fragrance, how breaking brings forth a spirit that is whole, how resurrection bursts forth from the tomb of death, how sonship is born of the pangs of travail, or how God's awesome curse produces His mightiest blessing. But on and on goes foolish man with his natural understanding, preaching the tragedy of the fall and even the tragedy of the cross, knowing not that the almighty God, the all-wise Lord, with neither let nor hindrance is unfolding an eternal plan by which all mankind shall come into His image.

Shatter, Oh God, the dismal mists of our human understanding that we may see beyond our pain to the triumph at the end of Thy purpose! Grant, if it be but dimly, that we may hear as John heard every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth and in the sea saying, "Blessing and honor and glory to Him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb for endless ages." Rev. 5:13 As the storms of life beat mightily upon our souls to crush them, and crippling infirmities beset our bodies to break them, let us be melted in the fire, for we shall shine in Thine image and Thy glory at last!

When God made man in the beginning. He made him above all else a spiritual being. It is true that He gave man a body and it is true that He made him a living soul, but important above all else is that man was a spirit. His spirit was in God's likeness, in God's order, in God's image, and in God's class. It is right here in the very beginning that all human knowledge, tradition, and reason must end that the revelation of the Almighty might give us understanding lest we perish in our ignorance. We will never, never be able to answer the question, "What is man", until we abase all human understanding, cast aside preconceived ideas, discard tradition, and abolish all forms of human philosophy.

Man is a very presumptuous creature who attempts not only to build towers that would reach to heaven but to invade the stratosphere, forgetting that God has made him to dwell on the earth and has appointed the bounds of his habitation. With his fleshly mind he attempts to understand God, who is spirit and cannot be understood nor comprehended by anything or any creature that belongs to a purely natural realm. Man cannot understand himself. He has, indeed, made some strides in his understanding of the physical body because the body is physical, but to understand the mind is impossible because the mind has a spiritual element as well as a natural element. But the human spirit is beyond natural understanding because the spirit is in God's order and God's class and God's likeness.

I do not think we can speak too strongly of this truth, for, unless we begin to see by the Spirit's revelation what we are, we will be forever bound in the prison house of despair. The bars of the flesh will hold our spirit in forever and the floods of the carnal mind will encompass us round about even as the body of the great fish encompassed Jonah. The depths closed round about him and the weeds were wrapped about his head. The earth with her bars is about us forever. While we are in this condition, all God's waves of truth and billows of revelation pass over our heads. We are cast out of His sight and look not toward His holy temple. We observe lying vanities and forsake our own mercies. As Jonah cried to God out of the corruption of the fish's belly, even so now, Oh God, our spirits cry to Thee that they may be delivered from the stinking hell of this belly of flesh that day by day strives to digest and assimilate our beings to make us food for corruption!

When God made man in the beginning, He made him above all else a spirit being. It is true that the man was given a body from the dust of the ground, but this in itself was not of greatest importance. The great truth was that God breathed into the man the spirit of life and an entirely new creation came forth in God's image, the spirit being predominant in every respect. Man was created a companion of deity. His mind (or soul) was ruled

completely by his human spirit which was in God's perfect image. Thus the man had a spiritual mind. His spiritual mind ruled His body, keeping his body in a state of incorruption, transformed by the spiritual mind that was in him. Compare Rom. 12:2. Because man's spirit was in God's image, he was in God's class of being. He was not only a companion of God but a son of God. The wisdom that filled his mind was not wisdom gained as ours, by the five senses of a corrupt physical body, but it was the inherent wisdom that flowed freely from his spirit, which was created in God's order and God's likeness and which had come forth from God, the Father of spirits. This first man was spirit ruled; I mean, he was ruled by his own spirit within him, which was in God's image, God's order, God's class, and God's likeness. It could say in truth, "I and my Father are one."

It is impossible for me to explain the glory of such a thing as this because we are staggered and blinded by the magnificent light of a realm that long ago passed away. Nevertheless, the moment we understand that man in the beginning was created above all else a spirit and that that spirit was in God's likeness and was God-like, then we can understand for the first time in our lives the true meaning of the saying, "Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the body (flesh)." Gal. 5:16

It was not necessary for Adam to learn anything, for his spirit, being in the likeness of God, inherently possessed the wisdom and understanding of God. "Whence hath this man this wisdom" could have been asked of him as it was asked of Jesus, Matt. 13:54, and he (Adam), possessing the wisdom and likeness of God, ruled with authority over nature itself, all things being subject to him and under his control. Winds and waves were obedient to him as they were to Jesus, for he knew the secrets of the winds, their goings forth and their habitations. His body depended not upon the trees of the garden for subsistence, for the spirit within was the life thereof, and thus in union with the Father of spirits he had meat to eat that we know not of. When the animals were brought to him, he named them all - not with tags and titles as we do, but with names that described their innermost nature, ability, and purpose. He named them even as God Himself would have named them, for his spirit was the very breath of God. Gen 2:7

Somehow I feel it is wrong to say that man has a spirit. There is a sense in which this statement is right, but the real truth is that man is a spirit. Instead of thinking of man as a creature that is a body and has a spirit, let us rather see him as a spirit that has a body, at least until such time as the wisdom of God teaches us the unity of spirit, soul, and body which is the true man. There is, alas, at the present time no unity between the spirit and the body, for the flesh (body) lusts and wars against the spirit and the spirit wars against the flesh and these are contrary the one to the other so that we cannot do the things we would. Gal. 5:17

The body is the outward man. It is seen with the outer eye, for the eyes of our head have the ability to see only hard and tangible things. All our lives, unfortunately, we have been consumed with and concerned for the outer man of flesh and bones. All the industry of the world operates for the sake and benefit of this flimsy animal of flesh that for a moment flourishes as the grass and as swiftly passes away. The great burden of this message does not involve the things that concern the outward man, which is the body of flesh, but the things, which concern the inner man which is the spirit. Please take notice that when referring to the human spirit we are using small letters to differentiate between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. Time and again, when the Bible speaks of the spirit, reference is being made to the re-newed human spirit, re-generated and re-created and re-born in God's image. Failure to recognize this has landed us in such a fog that we seldom find a man who knows how to walk in the Spirit. Once it is made clear that to walk after the flesh is to walk after the dictates and passions of the corrupt physical body, then it will be easily seen that to walk after the Spirit is to walk in the wisdom and understanding, the counsel and holiness of the regenerated human spirit that is recreated in God's wonderful likeness and image. Naturally such teaching as this comes as a shock to our minds and I question not that some will listen no further to what I have to say, but those who heed will begin to find the order and government of their lives coming from a new throne where God's image is supreme and no longer from the corruption of fallen flesh now motivated by the mind of Satan.

The human spirit is called the hidden man of the heart. That is why Peter said, "Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair and wearing of gold and putting on of apparel; (This is the adorning of the outer man, that corrupt enemy of God, the enemy of the re-born human spirit, which is the true man.) but let it be the hidden man of the heart." 1 Pet. 3:3-4. The hidden man is the re-born human spirit. Because he is hidden, we never see him. We never search him out. We pay no attention to him. We drown him in corruption

and earthly activity and hearken not to his voice of wisdom and understanding. He is the hidden man and we, corrupt fools that we are, let him remain hidden while we live after the outward man and the outward world.

The apostle Paul, like Peter and all other spiritual men, understood the difference between the outward man and the hidden man. But Paul describes this hidden man as the inner man, saying, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Rom. 7:22 The inward or inner man is the human spirit, which is the true man, though at present he is the hidden man of the heart. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts (your spirits) by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and depth and height and to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Eph. 3:14-20 What a fathomless prayer!

Adam in his unfallen state was spirit, soul (mind), and body just as we are, but because his spirit was predominant, his mind was filled with the wonderful wisdom of his spirit, which spirit was in the beauty of God's image and likeness. Thus he had a spiritual mind. In this blessed state he was scarcely, if at all, dependent upon the five senses of the physical body, for in union with God he lived and moved and had his being. It was not until after he fell that his spirit lost contact with God's Spirit and, as a branch cut off from the vine withers away, so his spirit cut off from God's Spirit lay dead in trespasses and sins. Cf. Eph. 2:1

God has made the human spirit to be totally dependent for life upon the Holy Spirit. It is like the branch of a tree which, though possessing abundant life while it is joined to the tree, withers and dies when it is severed from the stem. In sublime parabolic language our Lord Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now are ye clean through the word, which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:1-6 It may take six thousand years to learn the lesson of abiding, but in the end every man from the garden of Eden to the gates of Paradise will know that in Him is life and the life is the light of men. They will know that the source of life abides in the vine and not in the branch, and that, separate from God, even the human spirit lies dead in trespasses and sins. As a storage battery, cut off from the generator, loses its life and lies dead, so the human spirit, cut off from its source of life in God, lies dead in trespasses and sins. But as a battery, reconnected to the source of life, can be recharged, so the spirit, receiving Christ, is grafted again into the true vine and is regenerated and re-born and resurrected by the life of God.

The time has certainly come for some true revelation and spiritual understanding concerning the human spirit. It is time for deep spiritual meditation together with some satisfying looks into God's word. Until the human spirit is brought into the proper relationship with God, it cannot be set free from the overpowering corruption of the carnal mind, and, if it cannot be set free from the bondage of the carnal mind, then the war between the flesh and the spirit will continue to rage all the rest of our lives. Paul did not say in vain, "The flesh lusteth (warreth) against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal 5:17

The scripture clearly shows that man is a tripartite being. Man is a trinity. He is a spirit, he is a soul, and he is a body. His spirit is after God's likeness. His body is temporal after the likeness of the earth, and his soul possesses both physical and spiritual elements. It is like the spirit on one hand and like the body on the other. Any man with an ounce of understanding knows that there is more to man's mind than the gray matter we call the brain. The brain, which is physical, is the seat of the mind, which is spiritual. When you understand this fact, you will clearly see that the mind of man can be influenced and governed either by the spirit, which is God's image, or by the corruptible body of flesh with its endless temporal demands. The man whose mind is governed by his regenerated spirit, re-born and re-created in God's image, has a spiritual mind. But the man, whether saved or unsaved, whose mind is governed by the five senses of his physical body has a fleshly or carnal mind, for carnal means fleshly.

I shall not enter into that battlefield of futile controversy in which earthly minds match wits in a vain endeavor to identify the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but I do know that within every man these two trees exist, for "if you live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live". Rom. 8:13 So to live after the flesh is to partake of death and to live after the Spirit is to partake of life. Well did Jesus say, "The power of life and death are in the tongue", for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; therefore, if the words pouring forth are of the Spirit, there is a river of living water, but if from the carnal mind, there is a river of death.

When God brought forth in Adam an entirely new kind of creation, he was predominately spirit. The spirit was breathed into him. That spirit came forth from God and was God. It was in God's image and likeness in wisdom, righteousness, holiness, understanding, counsel, and might. As was God's Spirit, so also was Adam's spirit, for in the image of God He created him. Just as Jesus Christ was said to be the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, so also was Adam. But with great reverence and eternal respect I must point out that our matchless Lord came to the earth in the form of sinful flesh, in the physical form of fallen man. He who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God made Himself of no reputation, took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2:5-8. Thus in the wisdom of God was this wonderful Christ, the last Adam, manifested to the world on a lower level than God did manifest the first Adam. That first Adam did not come as sinful flesh. His spirit, created in God's image, ruled his mind and thus he had a spiritual mind. And his body, being under the control of his spiritual mind, knew the blessed and wonderful lightness of incorruption. Paul spoke of the transforming power of the spiritual mind when he said, "Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1-3 As our bodies will one day be transformed by our spiritual minds, so Adam's body knew the blessedness of that transfigured state because of a mind created new in God's image.

I freely confess that I cannot identify with certainty the tree of life nor the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but wisdom is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, Prov. 3:18, and wisdom teaches us that it is "the Spirit that maketh alive and the flesh profiteth nothing." It teaches us that if we live after the flesh, we die and, if we live after the Spirit, we live. It teaches us that from the regenerated spirit gushes forth the life-giving stream of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance, but from the flesh flows the sullen river of death polluted with adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, and heresies. The Spirit is life unto life, the flesh is death unto death.

We will not know how light and celestial Adam was until that blessed day when we experience our own transformation. What a breathtaking view was given to Peter and James and John as on the Mount of Transfiguration they beheld the Son of God in His kingdom as His face shone like the sun and His garment was white as the light! The first Adam came in this unfallen state, but left the world a sinner in corruption, but Jesus, the last Adam, came in the form of sinful flesh and ascended to heaven transfigured.

There stands before us still today the tree of life in the midst of the garden of which God says, "It is the Spirit that giveth life ", and there stands also the tree of death of which God says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." As long as Adam lived after the dictates of his spirit, he partook of the tree of life, but the moment he yielded his mind to the demands of his flesh, in that same moment he died. "In the day you eat thereof, thou shalt surely die", God warned him, and in this our day we have the same warning: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but, if ye through the Spirit do put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

I strongly feel that the things of which we now speak are particularly given as a revelation to those who have followed the Lord out of the confusion of the harlot systems of religion. None but they can hear them, for that ancient and wicked system is both born and sustained of the carnal mind. Therefore, let us give heed to these things, for from henceforth the temple of our minds will have a new landlord, even the reborn spirit, born again, renewed, and regenerated after the exact image and likeness of God's Holy Spirit. The old landlord, the flesh, the corrupt human flesh, is to be evicted from his place of rulership. No longer will he restrain the spirit in the

prison house of the carnal mind, bringing forth death to the entire man, but the mind, being ruled by the regenerated and renewed spirit in God's image, will begin to transform our mortal flesh. It is here that we begin to understand the words of Paul, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds... Rom. 12:1 When the flesh rules, we have a carnal mind, bringing forth the fruit of death. When the re-born spirit rules, we have a spiritual mind in God's image, bringing forth fruit unto life.

The Lord would not have told us the story of the garden of Eden and of the fall of man had He not wanted us to know the secret of life and death. Therefore, let us say again with all emphasis that man in the beginning was made in God's image. The spirit that was breathed into his nostrils was the very breath of life - nothing less than a spirit given by God, part of God, and in the image of God, in the class of God, after the order of God, making him a son of God. The mind that was in Adam was ruled by the spirit that God gave him and thus his spiritual mind both thought and lived in the realm of God, and his mind in turn kept his body in a state of blessed incorruption, dependent upon nothing but the life, giving spirit within. Well he knew the truth, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you". Rom. 8:11 It is a woeful scientific fact that today the average man is capable of using only five percent of his brain power. Thus is illustrated the terrible depths of degeneration and death that followed when the spirit was dethroned and the flesh began to rule his mind.

Many secrets has God hidden from the children of men. He reveals only those things that are necessary and never more than is necessary. Thus are the glorious mysteries hidden from the prying eyes of the wise men of this world that "seeing, they may see and not perceive, and hearing, they may hear and not understand." God reveals His secrets by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. He maketh wise the simple and bringeth to nothing the understanding of the prudent, for not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty and not many noble are called, but God has chosen the weak things to confound the mighty and the things which are not to bring to naught the things which are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. While learned scribes and Pharisees, parading in their robes of office, fain would stone Mary for the Babe that grew in her virgin womb, Elizabeth rises to call her blessed while her own unborn child leaps for joy. Spirit calleth to spirit and deep calleth to deep, even as in water face answereth to face.

We shall not know for a little while all the things that transpired in Eden as this blessed first man, possessed with a spirit in God's image, rejoiced before God with his spiritual mind while his body, light and incorruptible, was a vehicle of his spirit, depending not on earthly things. I do not fully know why God decreed in His eternal plan that this superb creature of His own creation should become subject to vanity and futility that he might know by experience the desperate sorrow, travail, hopelessness and death of a life that is lived after the demands of corruptible flesh and not after the spirit. Do not enquire of me how such a man could ever fall, for this secret God has hidden from the children of men. But of this I am sure: When at last the secret is made known, we will see a creation in God's image - not in the innocency of babyhood, but in the innocence of perfection and of knowledge so great that sin can never more affect any part of the universe.

One verse of scripture may often pass over a great period of time and a great series of events. Genesis 1:1,2 is a prime example of this very thing. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Without doubt there is an infinite period of time and innumerable events between the first verse and the second. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", but He did not create it void in the beginning, for Isaiah says, "He created it not a waste (not void)." Isa. 45:18 (R.V.) But somewhere before Adam, the earth became a void waste and darkness fell upon the face of the deep. We mention this to show that God in wisdom withheld many details, for the world itself could not contain the things that should be written, but we are given only the things we need to know and the rest is left to revelation when the time and need arises.

Thus when God made Adam He placed him in the garden and, before ever Eve was brought forth, God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:17 We will know in some future day what dread thing occurred that caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam, a sleep from which he never fully awoke, for in sleep all things are shut out from us. We see not nor

know; neither do we understand. The hungry man sleeps and dreams he is eating. The thirsty man wades in pools of water, but wakes and his thirst remains. How dreadful is that sleep in which man still slumbers! In it all eternal realities are shut out from us and we know only those hard and lifeless things of a temporal realm. In our sleep of death the things that are real have been shut out from us, for it is the eternal things of the spirit that are real. We walk as men in a dream, touching, tasting, hearing, seeing and smelling only temporal things that pass away - things that are not real, things that are ever changing and never remain the same. That which is ever changing is not real, but is like unto the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow has vanished away.

There is a hidden reason why God said of the man whom He made, "It is not good that man should be alone," **Gen. 2:18**, for He had already said that God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good. Gen. 1:31 Be that as it may, a deep sleep came upon this man who was male and female in one perfect Son of God. He was like unto those who shall at last be called "in Christ", for in Him (in sonship) there is neither male nor female. We are wrong when we think and teach that 'in Christ' male and female will be disregarded. The truth is that 'in Christ' male and female will be rejoined and reunited. Marriage is only a symbolic rejoining of male and female. It is only a symbolic rejoining of Christ and the church or of the sons of God company and the bride company. And this in turn is the mystic herald of the rejoining of God to all His creation, for He shall dwell with them and walk with them and God shall be their God and they shall be His people.

When man put forth his hand to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, at that very moment his spirit went dead. At that very moment his spirit was cast from the throne room of his mind, a new ruler took the throne, and his mind began to be ruled by the five senses of his physical body. Thus his mind, being dominated by the demands of his body, became a carnal mind. The spirit alone can maintain contact with God. The flesh has no more ability to contact God than a lump of clay or a piece of stone. Neither can the fleshly mind contact God, for the fleshly or carnal mind is interested only in the things that concern the physical body - what it can taste and smell, feel, hear and see. While Adam's mind was spiritual, he cared only for God and his spirit gave life to his body, but when his mind became carnal and the spirit was dethroned, he cared only for the things of his body. He was body minded, flesh minded, and carnal minded. So tremendous is this fact that one can clearly see that every industry in the world of whatsoever sort it is operates and exists either directly or indirectly for the sake of the five senses of man's body of flesh. Take these five senses of the flesh away and every industry in the world would stand still in one day. Not that the five senses of the flesh are sin, but, being of the flesh and belonging only to the body, there is no life in them and all who live in bondage to them surely die.

Now the spiritual mind is taught of the spirit, but the carnal mind is taught, not of the spirit, but by the five senses of the body. Everything that a natural man learns during his life on earth is taught him by the five senses of his body. There is no exception to the rule, and when man goes beyond what his senses teach him, he enters the realm of speculation as Darwin did. A baby may be born into the world with a perfectly good and normal brain, but if the child is born deaf and blind, lacking even the sense of touch, we call him an imbecile, for, though his brain is sound, he cannot be taught anything because all human knowledge comes through the five senses of the body. Have you ever watched a baby as he toddles about investigating everything within sight and reach? Everything touchable he touches and by this he learns the meaning of hard and soft, hot and cold, pleasant and unpleasant. He tastes everything he can taste, for by this he learns sweet and bitter, good and bad. His mind is educated by the things he sees, by the things he hears, and the things he smells. All his knowledge through life must come through these five channels, but the things of God knoweth no man, for they are spiritually discerned.

Do not pass lightly over the statements of **Gen. 3:6**, for here the serpent is making his appeal to the senses of the body. He is calling Eve's attention away from the things of the spirit to the things of the flesh. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof and did eat." Here we have the appeal to the eyes, the appeal to the stomach, and the first mention of gaining knowledge through the physical senses, for the wisdom they were to gain was not spiritual wisdom, but flesh and body wisdom, which is not wisdom but foolishness and a mad dream.

No sooner had they made this discovery after the flesh than their eyes were opened into a new and sordid realm of death. To their amazement and dismay they found that the transfiguring glory of the spirit that clothed them as a house from heaven was now departed from them, and they, who but moments before were clothed upon with heavenly glory such as our Lord displayed, whose face did shine as the sun, whose garments were white as light, whose earthly was swallowed up by that which is heavenly, now found themselves but corruptible flesh, capable of desiring only corruptible things. As he who is dressed in filthy garments is ashamed in the presence of a king, much more were these ashamed who, now naked and undressed of God's glory, saw their eternal shame. Then did their fleshly minds seek to clothe themselves with garments of their own making, knowing not that the righteousnesses that come from the flesh are but filthy rags and all who stand before God clothed therein are ashamed. Then heard they "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." **Gen. 3:8-10**

Let us not pass over this truth until the Spirit of God reveals to our hearts the awful tragedy of a human spirit dead in trespasses and sins, a spirit dethroned, a spirit asleep. But I think we need not hesitate to use the word dead, for that is the word so often used by the inspired writers of the Bible. Did not Paul say, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins!" **Eph. 2:1**

One of the most damning tragedies among God's people is their utter blindness in understanding what the carnal mind really is. In spite of all the millions of sermons preached about carnality and the carnal mind practically all miss the point, for the carnal mind is blind to its own state and only the revelation of the Holy Spirit can awaken us to its condition. A sleeping man knows not that he sleeps and a dead man knows not that he is dead. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." **1 Tim. 5:6**. It is like two men who hear the gospel. Both hear that they are sinners, One with his fleshly mind accepts the fact and talks about it. He knows he is a sinner and even jokes about it. You have often seen men like that. But the other man hears that he is a sinner and by the revelation of the Spirit the awful truth is fastened upon him, so he, falling down upon his knees, confesses to God, seeking the cleansing of the blood of Christ and the renewing of the spirit within him. The carnal mind is nothing more nor less than the mind that is ruled by the demands of the physical body, those demands being made through the five senses. Every man at work today, whether he knows it or not, is working to earn money to buy things to see, hear, taste, touch and smell, and every industry in the world caters to these five demands which arise from the physical body. You may have the audacity to say to me as some have already done, "Who in the world does not know this?" But that is just the point. We know this with the carnal mind and joke about it like the sinner, but the curse of a life governed by the body has never been revealed to your spirit, for then you would know that "if you live after the flesh you will die, but if you through the spirit do put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." It is not only the unbelieving world that lives after the flesh. Saved people do, too, because the manner of the operation of the carnal mind has never been revealed to them, and thus the spirit, even though now regenerated, does not sit upon the throne of their minds, but lies in bondage to the demands of the body.

The revelation of what the flesh is, is the greatest revelation of my life. The moment I saw that the flesh is nothing more or less than the corruptible human body of flesh, whether it weighs a hundred pounds or three hundred, then I saw immediately that the fleshly or carnal mind is the mind that is dominated by the five senses of the body. Thus all the desires of the carnal mind are for the body, catering to all its passions and fulfilling all its demands. From this mind come evil thoughts such as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, gluttony, drunkenness. Cheating and fraud originate there and every form of selfishness and greed. Men hoard millions of dollars in banks and holes in the ground lest some day their bodies should be in want and their physical man deprived of the luxuries of life. The carnal mind is very religious, for it dreads the thought of any form of suffering or loss in another world. The carnal mind wants to go to heaven, for there it hopes to loll in ease forever beyond the reach of any distress.

This carnal mind, this fleshly mind, is an enemy of God. It is not subject to the laws of God, neither indeed can be, so that they that are in the flesh (that have fleshly minds) cannot please God. Rom. 8:8 Or "those who are in a sensual state cannot please God." **Rom. 8:8** (Emphatic Diaglott). The moment this truth is made real to you by the Spirit of God, causing you to see it as it really is, at that same moment you begin to lose interest in

all earthly things, for all these things that are physical and belong to the realm of the body are passing away. "All flesh is as grass, which today is and tomorrow is not. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat than the grass withers and dies." As grass withers and dies before the sun, so does the flesh die before the fire of the Spirit. From henceforth let those who see these things live, not to love the passing things of this age, but to be associated with them only where necessity demands. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The pride of life is the satisfaction felt by the carnal mind in its possession of all these things.

Furthermore, those who see what the fleshly mind is not only lose interest in it until it becomes totally obnoxious to them, but at that same moment a new interest arises. The moment they turn their eyes away from the earth, they begin to look at the sky, and the moment they look away from the carnal, they begin to behold the spirit. Right here all their desires begin to center around eternal things. As they begin to hate the passing and the unreal, they embrace and love the permanent and the real. Then do their hearts know and doubt not this truth: "That which is seen is temporal, and that which is not seen is eternal." They have found a priceless treasure hid in a field of corruption. They have sold all lesser pearls and obtained the pearl of great price.

Man with a carnal mind grovels along through his life on earth little better than a beast who cares only to preserve his body. He may, indeed, belong to that fraudulent thing that men are now calling the great society, in which it is hoped poverty will be done away and every man will have abundance, where the carnal mind grows bigger and stronger and the spirit more dormant and debased. But be it known that all who will inherit the kingdom must be born again.

Now that we have seen that the spirit lies dead in trespasses and sins and that there can be no spiritual mind while we are in this condition, we can understand those mysterious words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." **John 3:3** We cannot see it, we cannot understand it, and we cannot enter it, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Therefore, ere man, dead in sins, can come into God's presence to behold the things of God, there must be a re-birth of the human spirit. It must be re-born, re-generated, and re-newed after the image of Him who created it in the beginning. Just as God breathed upon Adam in the beginning and he became a living soul born from above, so His Spirit must breathe on us now that our spirit, dead in trespasses and sins, may be re-born to partake anew of the image of our Creator.

Though we cannot speak in detail here, know this: from the Spirit of God comes forth the re-born human spirit, from the re-born spirit comes forth the re-born mind, and from the re-born mind comes forth the re-born body. For this very reason Paul, speaking of the body, said, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." **Rom. 12:1-2** The good will of God is done when the spirit is re-born. The acceptable will of God is when the mind is re-born and becomes a spiritual mind. But the perfect will of God is when the body is transformed by the renewed mind. Thus the spirit, the soul (mind), and body are re-born in God's image.

The new birth is strictly a New Testament experience. It did not belong to the age of the law. In all ages there are a few elect people who attain to the experience of a coming age even as David did, who refused to offer sacrifice and offering, but saw the truth of the re-newed and re-born spirit, saying, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it"; and again, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Cf. **Psa. 51:10, 16, 17** Then there was Enoch, who in the dispensation of conscience knew the glory of translation to heaven. But certain experiences belong to certain dispensations and people as a whole must wait for them. Many people are shocked when I tell them that even the twelve disciples of Jesus were not born again or even truly converted until after the resurrection. They could not be born of the Spirit because the Spirit was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:39 We remember well the conversation Jesus had with Peter when He said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee that they faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." **Luke 22:31-32** This should not shock our understanding, for, as we said above, the born again experience is a New Testament experience and the age of the law was not finished until Calvary nor the new dispensation of grace fully begun until Pentecost.

No man can be born again in spirit until the Holy Spirit of God from heaven touches the human spirit and renews its life. This is exactly what happened after the resurrection of Jesus. On the resurrection morning

Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." **John 20:17** That very morning He ascended to heaven as the High Priest into the Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement, for He had said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." **John 16:7** The very same day at evening our Lord had returned from the Holy of Holies hi heaven. Standing hi the midst of the disciples where they were assembled, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, He said, "Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hand and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." **John 20:19-22** It was right here that they experienced the new birth. This was not a promise of Pentecost. This was not a baptism of the Holy Ghost. This was the Holy Spirit of life from God, touching their spirits, re-generating and re-newing that which hitherto lay dead in trespasses and sins. The sixth dispensational day had begun for them and God was saying once again, "Let Us make man in Our image." They were born again. Their spirits were re-born by the touch of God's Spirit. Life from above had come and their souls sang the joyful song, "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Long centuries before, on the day that the Almighty Lord made Adam, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man was born from above, born of God. Now centuries later our blessed Lord breathed again on men alive in body but dead in spirit. The breath he breathed was not mere wind. It was the breath of God, the life of God, and the Spirit of God. It came from God and it was God. It made their spirits alive, re-created in God's image, re-born of incorruptible seed by the word of God that liveth and abideth forever.

But some will ask, "Why then are folk thus born from above not perfect right away?" Ah, yes! But we have underestimated the fearful enemy with which we contend. I do not speak of the devil as many will at once suppose. Our greatest enemy is not the devil, but the corruptible flesh. Do not imagine for a moment that this enemy who so long has ruled the mind of man, holding it hi complete subjection, will now step down from his throne to willingly yield the mind to the newborn spirit. If we imagine this can be, we will be deceived and die in our corruption, for the moment our spirit is reborn from above, war is declared - a war that unregenerate people know nothing about. The spirit of man, so long deposed and held by the flesh in the prison house of death, now seeks possession of the throne from which he was deposed, even the throne of the mind; but the reborn spirit finds the power of the flesh firmly entrenched in the mind, and the mind, desiring on the one hand to do the will of God, is held hopelessly captive to the will of the flesh on the other. Thus war is declared and the battle is joined, the flesh warring against the beautiful desires of the newly born spirit and the newly born spirit warring against the corrupt desires of the flesh.

I must tell you an awful fact here. Once the war is on between the flesh and the spirit for possession of the mind, a double mind exists, desiring on the one hand the fullness of a life in the Spirit, but torn on the other by the demands of the flesh. How true were Paul's words when, speaking of this war to the death, he said, "The flesh lusteth (wars) against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." **Gal. 5:17** It is true both ways. The spirit cannot have its way because of the flesh, and the flesh cannot have its way because of the spirit. The mind is the battleground and has become like a servant with two masters, each with contrary minds, so that there is no peace.

It is this warlike turmoil that Paul is describing in the **seventh chapter of Romans**. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I." **Verse 15** "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members (in my flesh) warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," i.e., the body of corruptible flesh. Then he cries in anguish, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Or from the power of this dead corruptible body that rules my mind). We should be eternally thankful that Paul's thought and revelation does not end where the scholars ended the chapter, for it is in the next verses, Rom. 8, that the secret strategy for victory over the flesh is given. The law of sin and death is not the law of Moses nor any other law that God has given, but rather the power of the flesh, which makes its own laws, ruling the mind and defying every law of God. The law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2) is the law of the re-born spirit, which delights in every law and every commandment and all the will of God.

We cannot be too emphatic now in saying that this re-born spirit within us is re-created in God's image and after God's likeness. It is once again in communion and accord with God. Furthermore, it is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and Christ the hope of glory inhabits it. Our spirit is re-born of incorruptible seed by the Word of God, Jesus Christ, who liveth and abideth forever. As was Adam's spirit in the beginning, ours has now become. Refuse to budge from that position, for that which was dead in trespasses and sins is now thoroughly alive and ready to do battle and take possession of the mind. Failure to recognize this cardinal fact has been the cause of millions of Christians remaining carnal and in bondage to the flesh all their lives. They have never been overcomers and are not prepared to sit with Him in His throne. Our spirit is re-born. We delight to do the will of God after the inner man, and this is the point from which we start, for the law of the Spirit of life will fully make us free from the law of sin and death which is in our members. Reference to the Spirit is made nineteen times in Romans chapter 8. Sometimes the reference is to the Holy Spirit and sometimes to the re-born spirit. But we are not to make too sharp a distinction here, for the Greek word for spirit here is pneuma, meaning wind and making no definite distinction between the Spirit of God and the re-born spirit of man. They, dwelling in each other, are well beyond distinction. Christ in us is now the truth.

It is here that the great secret is revealed. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." **Gal. 5:16** What spirit does he mean? He simply means that we are now henceforth to walk after the direction of our re-born spirit. That spirit is now in the image of God, created in righteousness and holiness. It is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and by Christ who has made it His throne. It is in God's image and God's class and God's order. It loves only God and His law. All its dictates are according to the will of God. It loathes everything that is of the flesh and seeks to dominate and rule the mind after the will of God, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God and bringing it into subjection to Christ. This power is now part of us and it is the real us, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.

His servant ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness. "They that are in (or after) the flesh cannot please God, but we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you... And if Christ be in you, the body (the flesh) is dead because of sin, but the Spirit (your re-born spirit) is life (is alive) because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:8-10** When the glory of this truth dawns upon the believer and he is convinced that his own spirit is now born again and renewed in God's image, his first desire should be that the re-born spirit may now take full possession of his mind that his mind may also be re-born. But alas! He will find that the flesh is still in possession of the mind, firmly entrenched, through years of domination. Neither will it yield a fraction of his possession until routed by the spirit. It was the flesh that crucified Christ. It is now Christ who will crucify the flesh.

Failure to understand what we have here stated has caused millions of Christians to doubt their experience, for they do not understand why it is that at times they seem to be two distinct people. The same tongue that blesses God also curses men, and from the same fountain flows forth both sweet water and bitter. Cf. James 3:9-13. Learn quickly then that the re-born spirit must now possess the mind and renew it that it may in turn renew the body, for this is the path of immortality.

Behold the truth contained in this nugget. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." When wheat falls into the ground, it is not the inner life that dies. It is the outer shell that cracks open and perishes that the inner life may spring forth in a new creation. The outer shell is the flesh. The inner life is the spirit. The kernel of wheat, which we are, is cast into the ground. God is using every method in suffering and tribulation to crack the outer shell that the spirit may spring forth and death be swallowed up of life.

Hear, O child of God, and live, for why should you perish holding that which is not?

CHAPTER FOUR THE INNER MAN

PART TWO

In the proceeding chapter we saw that the human spirit, once dead in trespasses and sins, is now re-born, re-generated, and re-newed by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is born again after the image of Him who created it in the beginning. Once again the human spirit is in God's image and God's order and a partaker of the divine nature. The reborn spirit, now repossessed by the Spirit of God has become the habitation of God. It is the dwelling place of Jesus Christ, who has come to make His abode with us. John 14:23

It is the re-born spirit and the spirit alone, which is able to understand the things of God, "for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:10** The deep things of God pass our outer ear as unintelligible sounds and they are rejected by the natural mind as utter foolishness, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. **1 Cor. 2:14** This is a revealing statement. It definitely shows that the spirit discerns and understands that which the natural man rejects as foolishness. What a world of truth lies in the statement, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10** It is the reborn spirit, indwelt by the Spirit of God that both understands and searches the deep things of God. It is the reborn spirit that grasps and comprehends with delight and understanding the things revealed by the Holy Ghost.

Among the ninety-nine propositions of the reformer, Martin Luther, was this: "It is not in the power of man's will to choose or reject whatever is offered to it." This is a truth of tremendous importance. Even the things you are now reading cannot be received by the natural mind. How wise then is the child of God who prays, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." The realm of the reborn human spirit is a realm far beyond the thoughts, let alone the understanding, of the ordinary Christian man or woman, and with them we include without hesitation that proud and deluded lot who vainly imagine themselves to be manifested sons of God. With them we may also rightly include all those who believe in spiritual gifts, who may or may not have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. While spiritual blindness has been the blight of countless millions of Christians, spiritual pride has been the downfall of the rest.

Let men now cast aside their pride of attainment. Let them debase their titles of degree. Let the learned lawyer cry woe to himself, for in refusing to enter into the spirit realm, he has taken away the key of spiritual knowledge and the door remains securely locked. Woe to the scribes and Pharisees! Woe to the doctors of divinity and church members who shut up the kingdom of God against men, who enter not in themselves and with their carnal reasoning deter those who would enter! Woe to those who shut up heaven against men, who devour widow's houses while they cover their wickedness with prophecies and prayer for the sick! Cursed, cursed generation, full of pride and human knowledge, answering that which thou understandest not and explaining that which thou knowest not! "O my God, incline Thine ear and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name: for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God; for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." **Dan. 9:18-19** Let this be our prayer of repentance as we turn our souls away from the pride and arrogance of a wicked system that loudly proclaims, "I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing", but knows not that she is miserable and wretched and poor and blind and naked.

Man is a trinity - spirit, soul, and body (flesh). Of these three the spirit is the greatest, for it is the spirit that giveth life and the flesh profiteth nothing. John 6:63 As faith without works is dead, so also the body without the spirit is dead. Yet it is for the body of flesh that men live. It is for the body that men toil all their lives - to clothe it, to feed it, and to give it comfort. It is for the body that all the wars of history have been fought, for war comes from covetousness and greed, and upon what else can the fruit of covetousness be bestowed but the body? "Dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return" was spoken not of the spirit but of the body, for "the spirit returneth to God who gave it" **Eccles. 12:7**, and cannot pass away because it is an eternal element.

Many years ago I became almost fascinated with the study of the tabernacle built in the wilderness by the children of Israel. I learned its every measurement by heart and could describe in detail the composition of every part of it. There was scarcely a scripture concerning this wonderful structure in either Testament that had

not been committed to memory. For many years it was little more than a Bible subject, a cold type out of the past that had found its fulfillment in Christ, but to my amazement I discovered that practically every New Testament truth is described in detail in the hidden depths of the tabernacle. It matters not whether the truth concerns the unity of the body of Christ or the plan of redemption, whether it concerns the witness of God or the witness of man, all are included and come flooding across the meadows of the heart whenever His Spirit draws a new veil aside.

As we behold man today - body, soul, and spirit, a wheel within a wheel within a wheel - so was the tabernacle of old - the outer court (body), the holy place (the soul), and the holy of holies (the human spirit). Into the outer court all Israel could come. One did not need to be a special personality to enter there. Even the outer gate itself was wide and low. But to enter the holy place, which was the second realm, one must be a priest of the priestly tribe of Levi, for this was a new realm with a new light, the realm of incense, prayer, and communion. Here the world could not come, and even the religious multitudes of Israel were forbidden. Let it be known to every child of God that we are not all on the same spiritual level, for while some are happy to abide in the outer court, others have found their way into the holy place of communion, of prayer, and of the flickering light of the candlestick. For, as there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars, so also there are levels of glory and experience among the people of God.

Beyond the holy place stood the holiest of all. This was the realm of the spirit, and whatever else this holiest place signifies, it also signifies the realm of the re-born human spirit. Into this realm no ordinary priest could come, but only the high priest once a year, for this was the holiest of all realms. Here was no ray of sunlight as in the outer court, here no light of a flickering candle as in the holy place, but the shekinah, the light of the presence of God, flooded this windowless room with a glory so bright that even the high priest dared not enter without intricate preparation, and then never without the sacrificial blood lest he die. Here was the realm of the shekinah; here was the ark of the covenant, which was the most inclusive type of Christ, for it is Christ in our inner man that is the hope of glory. Within the Ark of the Covenant lay the pot of manna, that spiritual bread which He is and which He has given for the life of the whole world. There also lay the two unbroken tables of stone, the law of God written within the heart, and the rod, resurrection, that budded, blossomed, bloomed, and brought forth almonds in one night. And there above the mercy seat stood the cherubims of glory, as the angels sat one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Christ had lain. John 20:12.

Ah, what a realm this was and how wonderful it would have been to see it! But, though that typical tabernacle has long since passed away, its sublime truths still live in a temple not made with hands, even the temple which we are. This is a true type of the universal body of Christ which has now been long in forming, but while we behold that true tabernacle of His spiritual body, let us never lose sight of that individual temple which we are, for as the body is one and has many members, so also the body of Christ consists of many members, which we as individuals are.

Come, then, with boldness into this new realm, this sphere of the re-born spirit, this region where Christ sitteth, this clime where we see only by the light of God and not by the light of human study and learning. Here they need not the light of a candle, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. Leave forever that fleshly plane, that realm of the carnal mind of which James wrote, saying, **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."** **Jas. 4:1-3.** Have you ever known an assembly of people without wars and fightings, many prayers and few answers? This is the portrait of Christians everywhere. Even the prayer of the carnal mind is tainted with the desire to consume the answer on itself.

The dread infirmity of God's people is this: Though the spirit has been re-born, the body and mind have remained much as before. We have walked after the outer man instead of following the inner man. We have never heeded the instruction of Paul, **"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."** **Gal. 5:25** Neither have we learned that, though the Spirit is life because of righteousness, the body remains dead because of sin. Rom. 8:10 The moment we believed on Christ, our spirit became alive and received the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but our body remained in its condition of death and our minds remained carnal because we continued to

permit them to be governed by the demands of a physical world and a physical body. How blessed it would have been had we quickly learned to give our minds over to the blessed wooings and leadings of a regenerated spirit, recreated and reborn hi God's image! We are in exactly the condition of the individual described in **Rom. 7:22** "I delight in the law of God after the inward man (the reborn spirit), but I see another law in my members (the members of my body of flesh) warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Consider these words with great care and you will see that the mind is kept in bondage to the body, and the spirit, though regenerated, is not in control, but in bondage.

It is not my wish to press the truth of the re-born spirit beyond reason, yet because of our limited understanding on the matter, we must pursue it a little further. Your first impulse may be to reject what I am writing because almost all previous teachings regarding the spirit have been so obscure. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." **2 Tim. 2:6-7** The tragedy is, however, that though many husbandmen have labored, very few have partaken of the fruit, and thus the instructors are as confused as the instructed. We have been raised under a generation of hirelings who understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. 1 Tim. 1:7 Let us therefore pray for the spirit of understanding.

Weymouth's translation of the eighth chapter of Romans is most enlightening because he spells the word spirit with a small "s" except hi those places where it is clear that the reference is to the Holy Spirit. For this purpose, then, we will quote a few verses of this chapter to show the place of the re-born human spirit in our walk with God.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; for the Spirit's law - life in Christ Jesus - has set me free from the law of sin and death. For what was impossible to the Law - thwarted as it was by human frailty - God effected. Sending His own Son hi the form of sinful humanity to deal with sin, God pronounced sentence upon sin in human nature; in order that in our case the requirements of the Law might be fully met. For our lives are ruled, not by our lower, but by our spiritual nature. If men comply with their lower nature, their thoughts are shaped by the lower nature; if with their spiritual nature, by the spiritual. Thoughts shaped by the lower nature (flesh) mean death; thoughts shaped by the spiritual (spirit) mean life and peace. For thoughts shaped by the lower nature mean a state of enmity to God. They do not submit to God's law, and indeed cannot... You, however, are not absorbed in such things, but hi things spiritual, if the Spirit of God is dwelling hi you; whereas if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ is hi you, though your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit has life because of righteousness... Therefore, brethren, it is not to our lower nature that we are under obligation to live by its rule. If you so live you are on your way to death; but if, by the power of the spirit, you put merely bodily habits to death, you will live." **Rom. 8:1-10,12,13.** (Weymouth).

Reading the above scripture, you will notice how by the use of a small "s" where the words spirit and spiritual refer to the human spirit an entirely new light is shed on the passage. Now we are brought to see that to walk in the flesh is to walk after the dictates of that fallen, dead, corruptible part of ourselves which is like unto the dust, but to walk in the spirit is to walk after that God-like part of ourselves, the re-born spirit, the inner man recreated and renewed and indwelt by Jesus Christ Himself. To walk after the flesh is to walk after the corrupt outer man. To walk after the spirit is to obey the thoughts and leadings coming from the inner man.

It should not be difficult to tell from what source a thought comes. The scripture above says, "Thoughts rising from the lower nature mean death, and thoughts shaped by the spiritual nature, mean life and peace." The love of the flesh is always selfish; the love of the spirit is unselfish. Paul's prayer for the removal of the thorn in the flesh was largely from the lower nature, but the understanding, which followed was by the spiritual nature. The carnal mind insists on the removal of the thorn because it bothers the flesh, but the spiritual mind, seeing the benefit of the crucifixion of the flesh, rejoices in infirmity, in distresses, in tribulation, in persecution, knowing that when the outer man of the body is weak, the spiritual man in God's image is strong. We live in an hour when Christians have literally gone awhoring after physical healing. He who advertises himself as a healer of the body gets a vast following, but he who dares to preach the crucifixion of the flesh is forsaken, even by his friends. Yet it is the crucifixion of the flesh by the power of the Spirit that will at last mean the salvation of the body.

When our blessed Lord walked the lowly realms of earth, He ever made it plain that He was one spirit with the Father. "I and My Father are one," He said. The same spirit that was in the Father, or, I should say, was the Father, was also in the Son. When He said, "I do always those things that please the Father", understanding teaches us that it could not have been otherwise, for the Spirit that possessed the one possessed the other. The same Spirit that was and is the mind and counsel of God reigned in the mind of Jesus Christ and that so completely that our blessed Lord affirmed that the works He did were the Father's works and the words He uttered were the Father's words. So complete was this oneness that when Philip said, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," He answered, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

His whole life was walked step-by-step and hour by hour in the will of Him that sent Him. It was not a slavish servitude to ritual and tradition, but a joyful carrying out of His own will, for His own will and the will of the Father were exactly the same thing. If for a moment there seems to have been a clash between the will of the Son and the will of the Father in Gethsemane, let us remember that He who knew no sin was about to become sin for us and bear the guilt of every human that ever lived. But even here there was no clash of wills, but the simple, beautiful, and positive submission, "Not My will but Thine be done."

We could easily fill the rest of this volume speaking of the perfect unity of the mind of the Son with the mind of the Father, and it may well be concluded that no reader would ever doubt for a moment the reality of that unity. The purity of that blessed oneness is not hard to understand. How could two possessed with one Spirit and one mind be other than one in thought and deed, will and action, truth and love, power and might? The Spirit of the Son was the Spirit of the Father, and it was the Spirit and not the body that ruled the mind of Christ. In all the New Testament there is not one single evidence that physical concern for Himself was ever allowed even for a moment to be predominant. His Spirit ruled and reigned in His mind and, as a result, even His physical body knew no sickness and could never have died had He not laid His life down. "I have power to lay it down and power to take it again," He said, and thus He also did.

Now while we are considering such wonderful unity as this, does our heart not say, "Oh, to be like this!" But let me promise you here and now that this same blessedness that He enjoyed, saying, "I and My Father are one," is also laid up in store for you and me, and had it not been for the ignorance and blindness of our hearts, we would long ago have seen the truth and walked after its precepts.

By the use of vivid contrasts our minds are often taught great truths. It was for this reason that the apostle Paul used a most extraordinary contrast to display to the slow, dull minds of the believers the marvelous oneness of the re-born spirit with the Spirit of God. Therefore he said to the Christians at Corinth, "**What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.**" **1 Cor. 6:16-17** This is a most remarkable statement, and it would be well to pause in your reading for deep meditation and prayer, for here we are being told by divine inspiration that the same oneness of spirit that exists between God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son also exists between the born again human spirit and the Spirit of God. No longer does the human spirit lie dead in trespasses and sins, but, being re-newed after the image of the Creator, is joined to the Lord and is one spirit with the Father.

The great trouble with these Corinthians as with all other Christians is that, though their spirit has been renewed and regenerated and was in reality one with the Lord, their body with all its corruption was still ruling on the throne of their minds. It is with a measure of astonishment that Paul says, "**Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters,, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.**" **1 Cor. 6:9-10** All these are the works of the flesh, every one of them, and they show the awfulness of a mind ruled by the dictates of the corrupt flesh that is never satisfied, not even by the fulfillment of its lusts.

It is here at this very point that God's people come into bondage. Instead of being taught to walk softly after the loving direction of a re-born, re-created, and re-newed spirit in the very nature of God, they start like Pharisees to lay down a multitude of rules and regulations for the flesh to keep, but the flesh being unregenerated and the mind being still fleshly and carnal, they find themselves subject to a bondage that they can neither understand

nor abide in. By their rules and regulations they try to overcome the desires of the flesh and thus their whole religious experience becomes a matter of do's and don'ts which neither assist in the crucifixion of the flesh nor change the attitude of their carnal mind.

The true deliverance comes when we recognize that it is the reborn spirit that is important and the chief personage of our being. Henceforth we are not debtors to live after the unregenerate flesh but debtors to live after the regenerate spirit. If you walk in the spirit, you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Those who follow with delight after the impulses and leading of a re-born spirit discover that the desires of the flesh will fall away simply by disuse, while the whole nature blossoms out in the newness and freshness of a spirit regenerated and made one with God, for that re-newed spirit, being of one essence with the Father, loves the Father and can tolerate nothing but His will. The mind is thus renewed and becomes a spiritual mind, and the body, thus subjected to the spiritual mind, begins to partake of transformation that sickness and corruption may depart from it.

It is of no value to conquer the flesh by the discipline of the fleshly mind, for as a wound inflicted upon the body of a dying man begins to heal, so also the wounds inflicted upon the flesh by the carnal mind also heal, and the last state is no better than the first. It is the spirit that makes alive and the flesh profiteth nothing at all. Therefore, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh, for if we live after the flesh, we will die; but if we through the spirit (the reborn spirit) do put to death the deeds of the body, we shall live. Rom. 8:13 Please notice how this passage uses the terms flesh and body interchangeably, demonstrating that they are one and the same thing.

We sometimes read books and listen to sermons advocating the imitation of the life of Jesus, but with all love and respect for our wonderful Lord I must tell you that it will do you no more good to imitate the life of Jesus than to imitate the lives of the scribes and Pharisees. Imitation changes nothing and smells of hypocrisy and insincerity. Some years ago the famous comedian, Charlie Chaplin, sang a ballad as part of his comedy. Being highly commended by one for the excellence of his voice, he replied, "The truth of the matter is I cannot sing at all. I was imitating Caruso." Imitation helps nothing and proves nothing. Indeed, one with a soul as black as night could imitate Jesus and by the word of the Lord many will do so and succeed in deceiving many. Even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light and his ministers into ministers of righteousness. Do not try to imitate Christ or any other person. It changes nothing but leaves you and sometimes others empty, disappointed, and deceived. The change must come from the inside, from the re-born spirit, recreated and repossessed by the Spirit of the living God.

All too often God's people adorn the outer man with attire thought consistent with godliness, but the mind has not changed and the spirit is not ruling. Indeed, all too often the spirit itself has never known the joy of re-birth. God's people are continually held in the cruel bondage of tradition. Christians, they think, must do certain things or must not do certain things. When will God's people ever learn that it is not what we do or do not that counts but what we are. He whom the Son sets free is free indeed, not free to follow his own will and do as he likes, but free to follow the will of God and do as He likes. The bondage of labor from the standpoint of duty will all be over and the bondage of love will have begun.

Have you ever noticed the beautiful freedom in which Jesus moved? Yet He was not in bondage to any tradition or any law. He moved about from day to day shoulder-to-shoulder with the greatest traditionists the world has ever known. Scribes and Pharisees paraded about attired in their gowns of office, their sharp eyes a watch continually for every minute infraction of the law as they poked their inquisitive noses into the whys and wherefores of everything; but for all this their hearts were often as black as hell itself, full of envy, murder, and jealousy. They were in bondage to every custom and tradition and determined that nothing should interfere with the monotonous ritual they carried on day after day. Their outward forms were not the true index of their inner life, for they, like whited sepulchers without, were full of dead men's bones within. Outward form often cloaks corruption within and seeks to hide the true condemnation in the heart.

On more than one occasion our blessed Lord openly and purposely clashed with their tradition. He healed the sick on the Sabbath days, for it was right to do good, to save life and deliver on any day. He stood by without rebuke and watched His disciples rub out the corn to eat on the Sabbath, for He well knew that the Sabbath

was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners, for He was more pleased with their sincerity than with the insincerity that adorned the ritualism of scribe and Pharisee.

The spirit must be released from the bondage of the subtle tradition that flows in an endless stream from the carnal mind. It must be released from tradition that it may be free to carry out the will of God in all its blessed and holy aspects. Jesus was not at all religious; He was spiritual. He adhered not to form and ritual, but was in all things led by the Spirit, which made Him one with the Father. It is difficult to be religious and spiritual too. It is impossible to adhere to codes and still be led by the Spirit. Spiritual men always go far, far beyond the confining realms of religious systems. That is why they are soon cast out of any organization with which they have become entangled.

The word of God bears abundant evidence that the outward man of the flesh and the inward man of the spirit are not in accord with each other. They are enemies in fact, for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other so that we cannot do the things we would. Do not pass lightly over this statement, because it is a tremendous revelation to our own hearts, declaring as nothing else can the reason for all our difficulty in carrying out God's will in our lives. Here lies the reason for all spiritual failure. Here is the cause of all failure in God's work. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and here we have a divided house, the spirit and the flesh in one and the same man, divided one against the other and warring with vise-like grip unto death. It is a civil war within, two factions, the flesh and the spirit, warring for possession of the mind, the regenerated spirit warring against the flesh and the corrupt flesh warring against the spirit. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (in my flesh). Rom. 7:22-23

It should be evident that this condition must be dealt with as soon as possible, for what life can be as it ought to be while there is war within? We must now affirm with all emphasis that no Christian is exempt from this condition, and those who do not know it exists are by all means in great blindness and possibly great spiritual pride.

Long ago David spoke of enemies that compassed him on every side. Our first thought is of Philistines, Edomites, or political foes, but these he could overcome. Our real enemies are within ourselves. Take your pencil and draw three circles, one within the other. Then name the inner one the regenerated spirit, the second one the soul or mind, and the outer one the body or flesh. Then you will see that the reborn spirit is compassed by the carnal mind, and the mind is compassed by the corrupt and fallen flesh. These will keep you "all your life time subject to bondage" unless the spirit is set free. It must have been to this very condition that the Psalmist referred when he sang, "My soul is escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler; the net is broken and I am escaped." **Psa. 124:7**

It should be evident, then, that if we are to attain a spiritual walk, the spirit must be delivered from these confining walls, these enemies that hem the reborn spirit in and keep it ineffective. "The lusts of the flesh and the desires of the mind," **Eph. 2-3** hold the spirit captive so that we can never do the things we would. As long as the spirit is in this bondage to the outer man, confined and walled in by the unbroken flesh, all our labor is ineffective, for when men meet us in this condition, they do not meet the inner man, which is renewed after the image of God, but they meet the outer man, which is corrupt after the deceitful lusts. Therefore, even the words of life we speak in sincerity from our spirits are largely obscured, tainted, and obliterated by the outer man which men meet. Is it any wonder that Paul cried, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death (this dead body)?" This is the problem that all face, especially those who are ordained to sonship for the age to come.

Christ in us is the hope of glory, and if, when meeting us men meet the Christ, who now dwells in our reborn spirit, tremendous results would ensue. But, instead of meeting the inner man, they meet the outer man, unbroken, uncrushed, and unrenewed. Christ must be lifted up. The mind and the flesh must also be reborn and renewed, deriving their life from the spirit and made love slaves of Jesus Christ. What a conversion this is! Long ago some Greeks came to Philip, saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." **Matt. 12:20-24**. When Philip and Andrew brought the request to Jesus, He replied with a statement of such wisdom that eternity itself could

scarce unfold its depths. His answer was, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Now when a grain of wheat is cast into the ground, it is not the inner life that dies, but the outer shell. As soon as the moisture cracks the shell open, the life within springs forth, shooting roots downward and bearing fruit upward, first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full corn in the ear. Do you see the secret mystery hidden here? The outer shell, the flesh, must be broken before the Christ life is seen, and when that has come to pass, we will discover that, just as Jesus testified, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." So we will be able to say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Son."

There are many people today talking about and claiming sonship who know nothing whatever of the breaking of the outer shell that the Christ who lives in the reborn spirit may appear. The things that will soon happen universally must first happen individually. Christ must reign until He has subdued all things in the universe unto Himself, but first He must subdue all things in us, His chosen sons - first the spirit, then the mind, and finally the body, that Christ may be all and in all.

We have now come to the most important part of this truth. How does the Lord accomplish this breaking of the outer man that it might be brought into subjection to the Christ nature within? It is here that Christians always cringe, for God's great work of breaking the power of the outer man is by suffering, tribulation, distresses, and all manner of affliction. Sadly I tell you that the vast majority of God's people literally hate to hear this. They do all in their power to preserve the outer man who is corrupt after the deceitful lusts. But God has ordained that the outer man shall be crucified that it may fall into the ground and die. We try with all our might to wriggle out of our sufferings. We listen attentively to foolish, unbroken preachers who insist that we have no need to suffer because Jesus suffered for us. But writhe and wriggle as we may God goes steadily ahead with His plan for breaking the outer man, bringing it into subjection to the will of God.

Why do the righteous suffer? This has been a paramount question in the minds of Christians of all ages. All manner of answers have been given, most of them entirely wrong. How often we have heard some green unbroken person declare that our sickness or our business failure or our desperate heartache proves there is sin in our lives or that we are not right with God! It proves nothing of the sort, but rather that God in love is dealing with us as with sons, breaking the outer shell that the inner life, even Christ within, may shine forth in the glory of the resurrection. When suffering and tribulation pour like a sullen river across your pathway, never forget this divine word of wisdom and knowledge: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." **Heb. 12:6** Never in all history has there been a true son of God who received not chastening. Indeed, divine wisdom has declared, "If we receive not chastening, then are we bastards and not sons." **Heb. 12:8** The man who can stand by and declare that our suffering proves God's wrath against us knows nothing at all either of the word of God or of spiritual experience. Such unchastened babes as this should not attempt to crawl from their cradles to tell maturing sons the ways of God.

There is a beautiful story told in the gospels of a woman who came to Jesus in the home of Simon the leper and, as He sat at meat, she broke an alabaster box of precious ointment and poured it on His head; and the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment. The disciples murmured at the waste and said it could have been sold for much and given to the poor, but Jesus replied, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For ye have the poor always with you; but Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." See **Matt. 26:6-13**

It is when the alabaster box is broken that the sweet odor comes forth. It is when the outer man is broken that the re-born spirit fills all things with the fragrance of God. We may spend our whole life feeding the poor and doing commendable things, but after we are finished there are just as many poor as before. But when the alabaster box, our outer man, is broken and the spirit in which Christ dwells pours forth in rivers of eternal life, men find meat and drink that they knew not of, for "he that believeth on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his innermost being (inner man) shall flow rivers of living water."

There is nothing wrong with giving to the poor or alleviating their hunger. It is a good thing to do, but one does not even have to be in touch with God to give alms. Indeed, the carnal mind rejoices greatly in such acts that

do not require a broken heart, for it is like the Pharisee who prayed, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men, adulterers, unjust, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess." We can do all these things and still remain unbroken, our spirit hemmed in by its enemies. The whole world today is full of religion, but what good, pray tell, is religion? And if some longing hearts are crying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus", how can they see Him? Though He abides in our reborn spirit, He cannot be seen until the veil of the flesh is rent in twain and the alabaster box broken that His fragrance may fill the whole world.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we read the thrilling story of those mighty heroes of God who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens... Heb. 11:33-34 Oh, how we would love to be like them! But hold a minute until we hear the story of the tribulation they endured for the breaking of their outer man, the breaking of their alabaster box that the perfume might forever flow forth. They had trial of cruel mocking and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. Heb. 11:36-38 This is trial of faith. This is the breaking that releases the spirit, the dying that brings forth much fruit, the wounding that heals, and the killing that makes alive.

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:1-2 What a magnificent truth this is and what a blessed comfort to all those precious saints who suffer as they climb the mountain to sonship! Cease then from your murmuring, your whining, your grumbling and doubting, and be no longer like a little child who yells with pain before ever the rod falls upon him. Suffering and tribulation, when received from the hand of God, wean the soul away from the passing things that we have loved so long so that our hearts, unhindered by the flesh, may embrace with love the eternal will of God. How often I have heard men cry amid their suffering, "Why does God do this to me?" Or, "I may be wicked, but I don't deserve this!" Ah, foolish man, your spirit is imprisoned by your flesh and your loving Father is driving away the enemies that hem you in that Christ may shine forth in the glory of the Father. Then shall your mind also be renewed that the mind of Christ may dwell in you, and your body, changed by the renewing of the mind, shall be fashioned at last in the likeness of His glorious body.

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Gal. 6:18.

CHAPTER FIVE ASCENDING

When our Lord said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", He was ushering in a whole new realm of spiritual truth, for He was unfolding the truth of what really happened in man at the beginning of his day. Man, having partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, had not only fallen into sin, but his spirit also had become dead and without contact with God. The Lord had departed from him and his own spirit, once alert and alive to all heavenly things, ruled over and indwelt by God's Spirit, now through disobedience lay in chains of darkness, dead, inert, without understanding, and having no fellowship with God. Only yesterday his body had been the temple and habitation of God and his God-like spirit had been lord of his body and of his mind. His mind was light and spiritual, knowing continually the effulgent glory of the Lord. It understood the mysteries of God. The depths of the human spirit responded to the depths of the Spirit of God and there was a continual oneness and fellowship as the spirit of man rejoiced in the celestial mountains of the Lord.

"The Spirit searcheth all things," said Paul, "yea, the deep things of God." The heights and depths revealed by the Spirit of God to the unfallen spirit of man were immediately comprehended by him, for his spirit was one essence with that of the Father even as a branch is one essence with the vine. His mind was light and spiritual and responded with glorious alertness to the things of the Spirit. There was no veil of the flesh, no corruption, no carnal mind. No thought need be given for tomorrow and the things thereof, for all was one glad eternal today. There was no need to instruct the spiritual mind, for all the answers lay within its blessed self and sprang into life the moment they were touched with that life which is from above.

"Let there be light and there was light" was the order of the day, and no dark shadows ever hung about that must be dispelled and dissipated before the glory of the Lord shone through. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face-to-face is the future anticipation of all who are coming into Christ, but Adam, who fell, could have spoken the same words of the past. In his fallen state he could see but darkly, but "then", in his unfallen state, he saw face to face.

Not only had the mind of man been light and celestial as it was ruled by the glory of the spirit but the physical body, too, being transformed by the spiritual mind, was much more akin to the body of Christ's resurrection than the body of weakness, which we now endure. No sickness or disease ever touched it or defiled it, for it rejoiced daily in the transforming power of a spiritual mind. Cf. Rom. 12:2 But when the spirit, alas, lay dead in trespasses and sins no longer to rule the mind, then the mind itself became the victim of the physical body of flesh. Ruled and dominated by the flesh, now fallen to the state of beasts, the mind became a fleshly mind ruled by the carnal, which is the flesh. No longer did the physical body receive life from the life-giving spirit, but it was forced to sustain itself with food, which the beasts did eat. Of necessity it now exchanged the fruit of the Spirit for the fruit of the trees, the meat of the word for the flesh of beasts, the bread of life for the bread of the oven, the water of life for the desert streams.

Our blessed Lord spoke the promise that heralded our return to more glorious things when He said to the Jews, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world... Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live forever." **John 6:48-58.**

With what words of wisdom did our Lord instruct the woman at the wayside well when He spoke of a return to the living water which He is! The woman had said to Him, "Art Thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well and drank thereof himself and his children and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." **John 4:13-14**

How dreadful was the change from the bread of life to the bread of death, and with what woe did they slake their bodily thirst with physical water who once had drunk the life-giving water of the Spirit and were satisfied! If the spirit of him who is thirsty is revived a little as his body partakes of literal water, how much more, then, is the body of man transformed when his thirsty spirit drinks of the Spirit of God and thirsts no more forever! It seems to me that man who thus drinks of the water of life, which is God's Spirit, not only has his thirst forever slaked, but he himself becomes a fountain from which rivers of living water ever flow, for "in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (his inner man) shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:37-39**

All who drink with their body drink only natural water from natural fountains, thirsting again and again, but they who drink with their spirit drink of the living water which He is, and they shall never thirst again, for the water that they now drink is in them a well, a fountain, a river of water springing up into eternal life.

It is only the reborn spirit that knows how to partake of the living water, which He is. Should we instruct the natural mind forever concerning the things of the Spirit, it would never understand, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness unto Him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. All the teaching and instruction of the colleges and universities of the world touch only the natural mind but can never touch the spirit. Even forms of righteousness and codes of ethics taught by natural minds to natural minds are of no profit to the spirit, for the man who depends upon his personal righteousness, as the Pharisee did, is worse off than the deepest sinner who beats his bosom and cries, "God

be merciful to me," because he, going about to establish his own righteousness, has put his spirit beyond the realm where it can receive the righteousness of God.

When God calls to man, He calls not to the outer ear of the natural mind. He makes no appeal to human wisdom or human reason, but rather He calls to the spirit, the inner man, the human spirit. He calls beyond the natural mind and the natural reasoning. He speaks a language to the spirit that the outer man cannot comprehend nor understand. It is the "Lazarus, come forth", spoken to the dead spirit, and the dead spirit of man, hearing the voice of the Spirit of God, comes forth born again, in newness of life, still bound, alas, hand and foot by the grave clothes of the flesh and the carnal mind from which it must be loosed and let go free. One of the saddest things of the present hour is found in the fact that, whether we like to believe it or not, the church system of the present day is filled with men and women whose spirits have never heard the voice of God. We wonder what is wrong with our young people. We have taught them well. We have taken them to church. We have taught them the Bible. But still we know there is something sadly lacking. Why do they not lay hold upon the things of God as we once did? It is because they have become second and third generation Christians. They follow the precepts of their parents and give mental assent to the things they have been taught, but their spirits have never been re-born. Their inner man has never heard God's voice. They may have had their emotions stirred and they may have shed some tears, but that does not constitute an experience with God or a new birth.

In our school readers there was a little verse that said,
Who hath seen the wind?
Neither you nor I;
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

So it is with the Spirit of God, who moves as a wind over the unregenerate heart. For the wind (Spirit) "bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Though many years have passed since my spirit was reborn, I am still at a loss to explain it, but the trees of spiritual experience are bowing down their heads, proving beyond a doubt that the wind is passing by. Why, the very day the wind of God's Spirit blew over the lifeless desert of my spirit, a transformation began. Old things began to strangely disintegrate. Bright new things were born and new interests from another world began to move in and take possession. The earth was without form and void, and darkness hung like a shroud upon the face of the deep, but the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, for God had said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Jesus Christ, the light of the world, had shone into our hearts, giving the light of the glory of God from the face of Jesus Christ. There is an experience in the spirit which comes to men who believe on Christ, for He is the resurrection and He is the life, and all who believe on Him are justified from all things and righteousness within has begun.

There is really nothing complicated about the new birth. When a man is born again, his spirit becomes alive. Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, has been received into the human spirit and the spirit that was dead in trespasses and sins receives the life of God from the Christ, who has come to abide with him forever. He has been strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. The human spirit has heard the voice of God and has come forth from the grave of death in response to the voice of resurrection. John 5:25,26 The words of Paul, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. 2:1, have become a reality and the spirit of man has become the habitation of the Spirit of God.

Death can no more live in the presence of Jesus Christ than darkness can abide in the presence of the sun. No funeral sermon was ever preached by Jesus Christ. Whenever He attended a funeral, the tears of sorrow were turned to pearls of rejoicing, for He always raised the dead to life again, and I suppose that, had He that blessed day in Bethany but called, "Come forth", instead of "Lazarus, come forth," every grave would have burst open and yielded up its dead. "In Him is life" and the life is the light of men, and everything He touches springs forth into life. Life and light are one and they cannot be separated. Death and darkness are also one and where one abides so also the other. When light comes into the presence of darkness, it is always the darkness that flees. Darkness, however dense, cannot overcome light. A tiny candle burning in the window on a dark night can be seen for miles, because the darkness cannot overcome the light however feeble the light

may be. Thus as light and life are one, and death and darkness are one, so then as light dispels darkness, life expels death, for death cannot overcome resurrection life, but without hesitation must give up its captive.

I do not know where darkness goes when the light shines forth. It does not go anywhere, for it no longer exists. The same is true of death. It does not go anywhere, but when life comes it just ceases to exist at all. Thus we may boldly say, "Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?" The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, death in all its forms, the first death and the second death, and they shall be no more. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light."

Those who are thus raised from the dead by the glory of the Father now walk in the newness of life. Rom. 6:4. The life that begins when Jesus comes is an entirely new life. It is lived in an entirely new realm with an entirely new attitude. All its aspirations are for things above and not the things of the earth. All its treasures are in heaven, not so much heaven as a place, but heaven as a spiritual realm. All its love is toward God. All its mind is exercised in Christ. The will of God is its constant theme and the very breath it breathes. It has a new love as different from the loves of earth as day is different from night. This new love is the old love that was in the beginning before man fell. Its interests are centered in God and not in the things of the earth. The love of man is always selfish, but the love of God is benevolence.

This newness of life is of ever increasing importance and should be cherished now above all else. It is the life of the Son of God in the inner man and, because it is the life of the Son of God, it is therefore the very life and spirit of sonship. The hope of all creation is the manifestation of God's sons. Even now while I write the whole creation is in restless upheaval, waiting and groaning for their manifestation and for their government. The whole kingdom of God is the very essence of this new life, which has now begun, and all the magnificent triumph of the kingdom age will be the result of the newness of life in those who reign with Christ in His kingdom.

With the coming of this newness of life into our spirits and the living of an entirely new life as a result, we must rid ourselves of tradition and the multitude of useless theories that have shackled and chained our spirits throughout the ages past. As the years have passed, the religious systems of earth have added bondage to bondage and chain to chain until at this the end of the age God's people are bound hand and foot with the grave clothes of doctrines, traditions, theories, organizations, and ten thousand things that go along with the program of carnal systems. You long to be free to walk in the newness of life? Then in one fell swoop tear off those binding shackles to walk a free man in newness of life, to sit with Christ as Lazarus in heavenly realms.

We are living in the closing hours of this dispensation. We live in an hour when the earth is filled with violence of every sort. Business is now run by violence as authority vacates to threats of violence. There is violence in the streets, violence on the highways, violence in the dockyards and on the picket lines. Governments are overthrown by violence and violence has become a way of life. Wisdom has vanished and madness has taken its throne. But the kingdom of God will know no violence, but righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost.

The new life that has begun in our inner man will now begin to take possession of our mind, and we must let it do so. There is a new birth for the mind just as surely as there is a new birth for the spirit. When Paul said, "Let this mind dwell in you that was also in Jesus Christ," he showed that there is newness of mind just as surely as there is newness of spirit. The carnal mind is a dead mind. It exists in death and all its thoughts lead to death. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. There is a carnal mind and there is a spiritual mind. The rebirth of the mind is as important as the rebirth of the spirit, but I am constrained to say that thousands of people who have known a rebirth of the spirit have never known a rebirth of the mind, and as a consequence the church systems have many people who have known a rebirth of their spirits, but whose minds still grovel in the corruption of religious systems and who are always filled with consternation about the things of earth.

Men have never been able to understand the teaching of Jesus when He said, "Take no thought for tomorrow, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink or wherewithal ye shall be clothed." It is not natural for man to take no thought for tomorrow. It is not normal for him to cease from worrying about earthly things. It is not natural to

cease from worry because worry and trouble are the way of the natural mind. But there is a place in God where taking thought ceases, where dependence upon the wisdom of man and the arm of flesh is no more. There is a place where redeemed men live and move and have their being in God, knowing that in Him are all things. This kind of life has nothing to do with slothfulness or laziness, but just as in newness of life there is no dependence upon the old, so in newness of mind there is no dependence upon the carnal ways of the world. There must come a time and that right now when the truth, "In Him we live and move and have our being", is a reality and not just a pleasant statement from the pages of our dead theology.

When the children of Israel left Egypt, they faced an entirely new way of life. But they, as we, were terrified by the wilderness that faced them. There were no gardens or paying jobs out there. There were no wells sparkling with water. Even the seething fleshpots that had been provided for them in Egypt were gone. There was nothing out there but sand and dreadful heat, so in their hearts they murmured and desired to return to the old staple ways they knew so well. But God was out there all unknown to them to be their food and drink, their clothing, their shelter from the heat and their pillar of fire. There on the sand came angels' food that would sustain them for forty years, a cloud to shield their heads at noon and a pillar of fire give to them light in darkness. As soon as we say to a man, "Take no thought for tomorrow," he is immediately terrified at the prospect, but this confidence will come with the newness of the mind just as new life came by the newness of the spirit.

Many years ago, when we were still in the Egypt of denominationalism, it had fallen to my lot by the will of God to be principal of a Bible College. The attendance had grown in a phenomenal way until it was necessary to build a large dormitory to accommodate the students. We were then in the heart of the depression when people had almost forgotten what money looked like, but God had told us to build and build we did. While I was looking to God in prayer over the impossibility of the task, the words of Heb. 11:1 flooded over my mind. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." I raised my hands in praise to God, for He had revealed to me that faith is substance and by it the substance of the visible world was formed out of nothing. Surely the same faith that framed the worlds could frame this little building, too. So there by faith it stood, the evidence of things not seen.

Many were the struggles that followed, and to this day I cannot tell where the money came from to build. The date for opening the fall term had come long before the building was completed, and I shall never forget the consternation it caused me as I lay in bed at night wondering what we could possibly do to accommodate all those people who were coming to school that fall. I was so troubled that I arose in the chilly night to pray, and kneeling beside the bed, began to plead with God for help. I have always been thankful to my wife who, awakening from sleep, saw me kneeling in my night attire and, knowing how cold the night was, threw a blanket about my shoulders. It gave me the feeling that there was at least one soul in the world who was concerned. I had not prayed long until the Spirit of the Lord arrested my prayer of unbelief and made me stop. Then these thoughts from God overwhelmed me. "Who was it that told you to build this building? Who is it that is sending all these students?" He seemed to say. I knew it was the Lord, so with an entirely different mind I said, "Lord, it was not my plan to build this building. It was Thine. I did not ask these students to come. Thou art sending them. It is all Thy plan and Thou must undertake for it." I went back to bed happy at heart and fell asleep immediately. Needless to say, the Lord saw us through.

We are always taking thought for tomorrow. We are always terrified because of the wilderness. But the new mind that is born of the new spirit moves in God. How easy it is to worry about what people say and what they think! There is always somebody to offer good advice though it may be as carnal and old order as anything could possibly be. But, if we are going to walk in the newness of life and in the newness of mind, we may no longer listen to the vain reasonings of men and women who still follow the dictates of the old mind. The carnal mind always takes thought for tomorrow, for its very existence depends upon the things of tomorrow, but to the spirit there is only one glad today, for it has entered the eternal realm. It is part of the eternal and cannot die. "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions, and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man that is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die." **1 John 2:15-17** (Phillips)

So, you see, we belong to the eternal realm in which there is no night and therefore no tomorrow, a realm in which we cannot pass away, a realm in which we only abide in God. Oh so often people write to me asking me to pray that they will get better jobs and more money, but, my dears, do you not know that God has made the poor of this world rich in faith? They are rich in faith because their faith has been tried, and the trial of our faith is more precious than gold that perisheth, for when it is tried in the fire, it will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Let us cease to take thought for tomorrow. Do not fear to tithe the mite you have, for that is a manifestation of faith. The man who does not have enough faith to give God what belongs to Him will never have faith enough to take no thought for tomorrow. The no thought life has nothing to do with carelessness or laziness, but with the new realm of the spirit where men derive their life from God.

God's people are still lacking in understanding. Oh, how few have any true conception of their relationship to Christ the divine, risen, eternal Son of God. They do not know that, when He died, we died in Him. When He rose, we rose in Him. Because He lives, we also live. He ascended on high and we have ascended with Him far above all principality and power and might and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that age which is to come. It was in this blessed knowledge that Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ." **Gal. 2:20** And again, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Col. 3:1 It was for this reason Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And again, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be given you."

All these truths have been acknowledged by Christians as doctrines, but pitifully few have ever grasped their significance to reach beyond the realms of theory to enter into the realm of experience. Is it not true that, while multitudes are repeating the scripture, "I am crucified with Christ," at the same time they are putting themselves into years of financial bondage to obtain the very things that belong to the realm they claim is crucified. While God's people load themselves down with debts and obligations, they fall under the yoke of men, in bondage to the lenders of money and the collectors of usury, for the scripture has said, "The borrower is servant to the lender." **Prov. 22:7** As long as we remain a servant of man, we are no longer free to serve God with singleness of heart. We will have a worry on our mind that demands our attention and service is divided. No man can serve two masters, for he will either love the one and hate the other, or else he will cling to the one and despise the other. We cannot serve God and mammon. Mammon is the god of riches.

We read the words, "If ye then be risen with Christ." This we propagate as a doctrine and we profess to believe it, but only a few, pitifully few, have seen this to be a living truth and not a dead doctrine. Only a few who are saved really, honestly seek the things that are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the Father, but prefer rather to set their hearts on things of earth while their conversation concerns the furniture in their home, cars, hair-do's and dress. The man whose life is truly absorbed in eternal things finds it hard to waste his time in idle conversation and silly talk, for his mind is always drifting off into celestial realms where he sits with Christ in the Spirit. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also", and, conversely, where our heart is there will also our conversation be. We cannot deceive God and we cannot deceive spiritual men, for, as a sow returns to her wallowing in the mire, so the carnal mind instinctively falls back to the things of a natural realm. There alone can it feel at home. But he who is truly risen with Christ is ever seeking the things that are above, and his conversation slips as naturally to higher ground as the conversation of the carnal falls into the pit of corruption. "By my God I have run through a troupe and by my God I have leaped over a wall." **Psa. 18:29** The upward pull of resurrection life has become greater than the downward pull of the realm of death. There is coming a day when all the in Christ company will be "caught up" and I cannot help but say that many are being caught up now as they sit with Christ in heavenly realms far above the common conversation of earth.

Identification of man with his Lord is only realized when it is personally appropriated. That is what Paul meant when he said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure." Those who would sit with Christ in heavenly realms must do more than play with theological toys. It is not enough to have a preacher expound the theory of our position in Christ. It is not enough to walk out of the church door and exclaim, "Was not that a wonderful sermon?" These truths must be revealed to us by God's Spirit and received with all seriousness of heart and mind. They must be entered into with joy, and with gladness we must be prepared to accept whatever tribulation and suffering may come our way in consequence. We must cast aside our garments and run unto Christ as the blind man did at the revelation of Him. We must leave the ship and the fishes and cast ourselves into the sea as Peter did. We must sacrifice the oxen and follow the Spirit as Elisha did, for he who putteth his hand to the plow and looketh

back is not fit for the kingdom of God. If we love anything on earth more than we love Him, we cannot even be His disciple, much less sit with Him in heavenly realms.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." **John 5:24** Or, as Moffat says, "He has passed from death across to life." It is not enough to talk of identification with Christ's death. There must be, not only identification with His death, but identification with the glory and power of His resurrection, "for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." **Rom. 6:5** The Christ that was buried was the same Christ that arose from the dead, but have we considered how utterly different He was? He who was crucified through weakness now lives by the power of God. He was utterly freed from all the confining influences of a natural world because His body was raised a spiritual body. One moment He was saying to Mary, "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father," **John 20:17**, but later, having ascended and returned, He was saying to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side." **John 20:27** Beneath the Passover moon He walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and, vanishing from them, appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem, who sat behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. Time and distance were things of the past for Him, for He had entered into a new realm, even the realm of the resurrection, the realm of the eternal where distance, time, and prison bars are no more.

Perhaps our minds are still too dark to see it, but the truth is that those who identify themselves with Him to live by the power of His resurrection begin to live far above and beyond the boundaries of natural law. They begin to live beyond the possibilities of the natural man. They manifest the beauties of the divine nature and divine character. Even their standards of life are all divine. They are no longer concerned with the letter of the law, but with the spirit of it. They know that their association with Christ is better than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Their lives are no longer ordered by a set of rules, but by the love of Christ that constraineth them.

We are always plagued and troubled because we try to hang on to the old realm. We are loath to let it go. We seem determined that things must remain as they always were - our attainments, our achievements, our denomination, our set of doctrines, our human understanding of things, our splendid life after the natural and as members of the great society. It cannot be this way, for as long as we try to live the resurrected life while we still remain on the death side of the tomb, we are going to be disappointed. It cannot be done. Those who have shared the likeness of His resurrection have come in to a new realm. They live on the resurrection side of the grave. They belong to a higher order and a new country.

I have often packed in preparation for a long journey, taking cases full of clothes, travelers' checks and expensive cars, continually bothered with food and lodging and crossing of borders, and I have smiled to myself as I have seen the little birds flock up for their journey south. They take neither scrip nor money. They worry not at all about their food. They need no conveyance or gasoline to drive it. They cross the border without interview at customs, and all because they live in a realm where God is everything, though perhaps they know it not. But we poor things, who know the doctrine and the truth, are bound hand and foot by every earthly circumstance, never able to move a mile without trouble and expense. Is it any wonder that Jesus said, "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these." Consider the ravens who have no storehouse or barn, yet the heavenly Father feedeth them. And again, "Consider the sparrows, that two are sold for a farthing, and yet not one falls to the ground without My Father, and are ye not much better than many sparrows?"

It is time for God's dear people to begin to ask Him for light and understanding as to their true position in Christ. It is not enough to read my writings. It is not enough to hear sermons. It is not enough just to read the Bible. There must come a moment when the spirit of revelation and understanding like rays of dawn come stealing over the meadows of our hearts, giving the light of God from the face of Christ, making truth live and understanding flourish.

I have known very ungodly men who loved to sing, "Take time to be holy; speak oft with the Lord." Yet they never took time to be holy and never spoke with the Lord. Too many of God's people are just like that. They know the way it should be, but the glorious light has never fully shined in their hearts, bringing them the knowledge of God from the very face of Jesus Christ. Long ago Paul said, "When it pleased God, who

separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His Son to me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Cf. **Gal. 1:15-16** What a world of truth lies in that saying! Once God reveals these glorious things to our heart, we are spoiled forever for all that is past. We are sickened by all the old things that once held us, and even conversation about them is a weariness to our spirits and a heaviness to our hearts. Denominationalism is gone as in spirit we dwell in the mystical body of Christ. Human effort has passed away in the omniscient and omnipotent purpose of God. "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." **1 Cor. 1:20-24**

While we hang on to our human comprehensions and our mortal possessions and attainments, we live in unbelief and close fast the door to spiritual understanding and spiritual attainment. How many millions of Christians are missing the glory of the resurrection and the wonders of walking with Him in spiritual realms because they insist on holding their man-made doctrines that have been handed down by insipid old professors who struggle to master spiritual things with their natural minds! Who on earth can understand with the natural mind such words as these? "Except ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, ye have no life in you," "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead, but whosoever eateth the bread that I shall give shall never die." Who with the natural mind can comprehend the saying, "Take no thought for the morrow"? Don't worry about food or clothing, for our Father recognizes our need of all these things. When men try to understand such truths naturally, they make fools of themselves, because they try to accomplish in the natural realm the things that can only be done in the spiritual realm. We should not be living on such a low plane that we will always be affected by material things. Let other people live in the sordid realms of distress and worry, but Christ is saying to us, "Come up here and live with Me. Come up here and sit where I sit in the spiritual realm, far above all earthly things." God's people should not live in the flesh and try to get the Spirit of God to serve them and help them. They should live their lives in the Spirit and in communion with God. Then the things of the natural realm would be subservient to the Spirit and they would have mastery over them.

Only recently I received a wonderful letter from a sister who long had sought healing for her body, but she had sought without success and with no help from God. Then in her disappointment the light of God shone into her heart. In the light of her revelation she saw that her real trouble was not a sick body, but a sick spirit. It was in the inner man where the real trouble lay. Then to her amazement as her spirit began to be healed and become one with God, her outer man was also healed and she became strong and well in body. I have been convinced for years that herein lies the trouble with millions of Christians. Because they are more interested in the body of flesh than in the spirit, they run hither and thither seeking healing for their bodies, and ninety-nine times out of the hundred they go away disappointed in spite of all the eloquent claims to the contrary. The trouble is not with the body. The trouble is with the spirit, for "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

I have little confidence in healers and healing meetings, not because I do not believe in healing, for I do. Great, long healing meetings are a man-made invention, and, if we would only admit it, are in most cases an utter farce, filled with fraud and trickery, the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Certainly some are healed, largely because of their own faith and not the faith of some highly advertised man. There is not one word of scripture that would lead one to believe that either Jesus or the Apostles ever advertised great healing meetings. Their healings were all spontaneous, on the spot, and by definite direction of the Holy Spirit. They were as likely to heal a man on the highway as in the synagogue. These man-made institutions are not the way of the Spirit, and we will find it so in the end.

Child of God, do not allow circumstances to become your master. Do not make yourself a slave to your environment. Your life in the Spirit is dependent upon the eternal, illimitable possibilities of His divine nature and not upon the confining powers of your own humanity. The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead is dwelling in you, bringing within your reach all the possibilities of the resurrection and an abundant life in Him. He who has given His life for us now is giving His life to us. Stop trying to imitate Him. Stop trying to be like

Him. Let Him live and move and have His being in you, as you live and move and have your being in Him. Then all that He is will be manifest in you, for because He lives, you shall live also. The resurrected Jesus brings the abundant life within and there is no life apart from this. The life of Christ is not an imitation of Jesus of Nazareth. It is the life of the resurrected Christ living in you.

There is an evil spirit in the world today that has permeated, not only the world, but the church as well. We have substituted education for regeneration and materialism for spirituality. We have imagined it was enough to be able to explain a doctrine without thought of appropriating its truth, and we have deceived ourselves into believing that, if the church system was prospering materially, all was well. But this is a lie and a "way that seemeth right to men, but the end thereof is the way of death."

The living Christ must be everything, Christ in you and you in Christ. In the beginning was the Word, and in the end also shall be the Word. That word is the Logos, the living speaking Christ.

There shall come a time and that right soon when heaven is more real than earth, and the realm of the Spirit more real than the realm of the flesh. This is not only desirable, but completely possible. I am forever being reminded by well-meaning people that no reference need ever be made concerning the flesh, but all we need to do is speak of the Spirit. While there is a measure of truth in this, there is also a measure of fatal error. May I now remind you that, before sailing the glorious depths of God's ocean, it is necessary to raise anchor, throw off the restraining lines that hold us to the shore, and launch out into the deep. As long as we waste our time viewing the sordid activities and corrupting nonsense of film stars instead of communing with Christ, we need never expect to enjoy any of the wonders of which I have spoken. The mouths of fools feedeth upon foolishness, Prov. 15:14 and all unknown to us the face of Christ becomes strangely dim, prayer loses its power, love waxes cold, revelation dries up, the real becomes unreal, and the unreal becomes real. Spiritual conversation ceases. It is right here that we lay aside the hindering weights to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

We live at this moment on the very brink of Jordan that flows between this age and the kingdom of God. This is an hour of tremendous importance. It is an hour of trial and temptation such as the world has never known. Christians are tempted in a way hitherto unknown to God's people. They are not killed and persecuted in caves and dens in the earth, but placed in a position where the superabundance of the flesh with all its ease and luxury can cause the face of Christ to grow strangely dim. Happy is the man who has little of this world's goods. It is so very easy, while we wait, to say, "My Lord delayeth His coming. All things continue as they were." It is so easy to become involved with the world in eating and drinking and surfeiting, being drowned with the cares and deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in to choke the Word (Christ), making it unfruitful. While men are looking for tribulation to come on the earth, they have been blinded to the fact that right now all about us there is tribulation such as never was before and never will be again. Because of the abundance of the flesh and the affluent societies men are poverty stricken in spirit and starved for the want of spiritual bread.

Let us now lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily, beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

CHAPTER SIX IT IS THE LORD

"After these things Jesus shewed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed He Himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately and that night they caught nothing. But when morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, **Children, have ye any meat?** They answered Him, No. And He said unto them, **Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.** They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is

the Lord, Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked), and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, **Bring of the fish, which ye have now caught.** Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, **Come and dine.** And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." John 21:1-12

We may well wonder if ever before in human history twelve men had endured a more grievous trial than had the disciples of our Lord during those frustrating weeks from the Passover to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The blessed Christ had said much to forewarn and forearm them of the ominous perils which were to come, but it seemed His assurances served yet the more to fill them with wonder and dread, for they neither knew nor understood the meaning of the things He spoke. He told them He would die, but what small comfort was that to men who in their hearts cherished the hope that He would now restore the kingdom to Israel as the prophets of old had spoken. Even after He was raised from the dead, their minds were still filled with this hope as they questioned, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" **Acts 1:6** It was but little that their hearts were uplifted by His reply. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ..." **Acts 1:7,8.** A beautiful promise, indeed, but scarcely the one they had hoped to hear!

When Jesus announced His coming death and resurrection in these words, "**The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day,**" they understood not that saying and were afraid to ask Him. **Mark 9:31-32.** It was for this plain statement of truth, so ominous and terrifying in its import, that poor Peter in his consternation "took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." **Matt. 16:22.** "**Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men,**" said Jesus; but it is left for us to understand that Peter's unsavory rebuke sprang from his lack of spiritual understanding. How often have we in like manner thought that good was evil and evil was good, putting light for darkness and darkness for light!

The promise of His rising from the dead served only to raise more questions in their minds. To us the resurrection is history. To them it was something almost beyond belief. For a man to die all could believe; but for the dead to rise was contrary to all reason. They remembered that Jesus had raised the dead, but for the dead to be raised without Him present to raise them was beyond their understanding. So they questioned among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean. Mark 9:10 Next there came the troublesome prediction to fill their hearts with fear and amazement that one of their own number would betray Him. Even as they did eat, He said, "**Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?**" **Matt. 26:21-22** Then, after the supper was over and the traitor had gone out from their midst, they sang a hymn in the midst of their grief. O God, I wonder what strange words of devotion their choking voices hymned, or could it quench the blinding tears that crowded o'er their sight! After the song was ended, they walked in company to the Mount of Olives. But their woe was far from ended, for if they had thought harshly of the traitor, they now had solemn cause to doubt themselves, though such a thought they could not entertain. "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night," Jesus said, "for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." But Peter, the ready spokesman for them all, lacked not assurance that "though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." No strength was given to their fainting hearts to be warned by Him who never spoke in error, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice." The silence of the Lord upon hearing the steadfast avowal of Peter and the others, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny thee", seemed only to emphasize the emptiness of their words and magnify the weakness of their flesh. Many years later Paul proclaimed the secret of all steadfastness when he said, "**We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.**" **2 Cor. 1:8-9** The passing years have taught me that all my vowing to do or not to do, to be or not to be, served nothing at all but to bring unnecessary condemnation upon my own head. The lesson all must learn is this: "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The fidelity of these brave disciples was beyond all question, but their trust was in themselves and in their own strength and devotion. They had not learned as yet that all-

important truth, "The flesh is weak." **Matt. 26:41** They did not know that willing spirits, leaning for strength upon the flesh, would find it naught but a broken reed that would pierce the hand of him who leaned upon it. Though this is not my theme at present, I shall pause to say that God is not interested in our strength. He is not even interested in helping us to be victorious or to overcome. He is interested in being our strength, our enablement and our victory. Men who think they stand, depending the while upon their own veracity and strength, will find themselves in the end to have miserably failed. But our failure need not be without a blessing, for in failure do we learn that strength is not in ourselves, but in the living God.

It was in the midst of all these shocking revelations of things which must shortly be that Jesus gathered them about Him to give them a truth that would cause them to stand, "though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." "Let not your hearts be troubled," He said. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." O troubled heart, weary and oppressed by the frowning face of misfortune, simple trust in God will calm life's stormiest sea. It will cause the iron gates of your prison house to swing open of themselves on their squeaking hinges. When life's storm clouds lower upon you and some spiritual Euroclydon, Acts 27:14, lashes the waves of your sea into fury, when neither sun nor moon nor stars appear for many days and all hope of being saved is lost, and naught seems left to do but abandon your ship to the violence of the waves, if you still believe in God, there will stand beside you the angel of the Lord, whose you are and whom you serve, and you will hear Him say those words so oft repeated in holy writ: Fear not!

Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed.
For I am thy God; I will still give thee aid.
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

"Ye believe in God," Jesus said, "believe also in Me." The Father's house, of which He spoke, is the true body of Christ. The many mansions are the individual believers in that dwelling place of God. O Spirit of the Lord, let Thy people see that trial, affliction, temptation and tribulation are necessary parts of Thy plan to weed out, to tear down and scatter abroad all that is pretentious or profane, and to gather, strengthen, and sanctify all whom Thou hast chosen from the beginning of the world!

Judas had betrayed the Lord as Jesus had said, but now the betrayal was past; the denial a bitter fact. Peter had denied the Lord as Jesus had said, and all had fled. The Lord had been lifted up on the cross according to the plan of the ages. He had lain in the earth three days as He said, and now incredible stories were coming from all directions, saying that He was alive and had been seen of the women, of the eleven, and of the two who walked to Emmaus. He had appeared to them and breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Still their hearts could not grasp the staggering truth that He was alive forevermore, and that all the troublous happenings were the plan of the Lord after all.

"I go a fishing," said Peter, not knowing what else to do. "We will also go with thee," the others had volunteered; and though they toiled all through the weary night, their nets were still empty in the morning. And, when a man shouted from the shore, "Have you caught anything, boys?" they had answered, "Nothing." "Cast your nets on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," He told them, and, though I suppose they did so reluctantly, they did obey, for what could they lose by the trial? And immediately their nets were full. "It is the Lord," gasped John to Peter, who, upon hearing that it was the Lord, pulled his fisher's coat about him and plunged into the lake to swim to Jesus. We will not continue the narrative here. You can read it better from the twenty-first chapter of John. But it is upon John's words that I would tell my story: "It is the Lord." It is the Lord! Many thoughts I will relate will be familiar to you and will, I am sure, fall in well with your own personal experience in God, for if "thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; ... then shall thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." **Prov. 2:2, 5** "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." **Prov. 2:10-11**

It is of utmost importance to all who love and fear God that we should become acquainted with His ways as early and as quickly as possible. Many thousands of Christians are like the princely patriarch, Israel, who,

notwithstanding a lifetime of experience with God, and in spite of all the dealings of the Lord with him, was still at times unable to recognize the mighty hand of God directing his affairs and the affairs of all men. Few men have experienced more bitter trial than this man Jacob, who, nearing the end of his sojourn, testified, "Few and evil have been my days." I may be wrong, for who am I to condemn him, but it seems to be a pity that he of so much experience should at the height of his trouble say, "All these things are against me." **Gen. 42:36** There is a better secret for us to learn when tribulation overwhelms the soul. It was taught by another prince with God who after a lifetime of tribulation wrote to all saints of light, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." **Rom. 8:28** This was the same man who, triumphant in his sufferings, used the story of his fearful tribulation as definite proof of his ministry and apostleship. "Seeing that many glory after the flesh," he said, "I will glory also. For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face... Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice suffered I shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without that, which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Demascenes with a garrison, desiring to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." **2 Cor. 1:18-33**

Dare we venture even to think that such calamities as these are working together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose? Yes, indeed, these are the things that are working together for good, not only in the life of this princely man, who was called of God to be an apostle, but in your life and mine tribulations such as these are working together for eternal good; and it will be the greatest possible blessing to all who enter into a spiritual understanding of this great, eternal fact. Then we will know the meaning of these words of inspiration: "When wisdom entereth into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee."

It is to be regretted that in our day many persons greatly lacking in understanding are proclaiming a false message when they tell the people that it is the will of God for all men to be prosperous and free of adversity. By cunning craftiness and for personal gain they teach the people that God wants all bodies healed and all poverty banished from the land. All this is deceitful rubbish that has its source in the corrupt fountain of the carnal mind. Where do we find even in secular history that great men arise through ease and plenty? Is it not so that the greatest musicians and composers the world has seen were raised under the eye of tyrants, and poets, too, in struggle and difficulty and poverty? Was the road easy for Washington? Or for the revered and honored Lincoln, whose history in brevity was this: Failed in business in 1831; defeated for the legislature in 1832; failed again in business in 1834; his sweetheart died in 1835; defeated in the election of 1838; defeated for Congress in 1843; defeated again in 1846; and again in 1848; defeated for the Senate in 1855; defeated for vice-president in 1856; defeated for the Senate in 1858; elected president in 1860; assassinated in 1865. His was a hard and awesome preparation for the grueling years of guiding a great nation through its most troublous period. Tribulation, anguish, and disappointment dog the footsteps of both men and women whose work concerns even the affairs of this life. How much more, then, should these necessary trials prepare the hearts of those whose ministry concerns the ages to come and the restitution of all things! Have we often prayed for patience? Why then are we amazed when tribulation comes our way? Has not God said, "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope"? And is not hope among the greatest blessings in the spiritual world, since hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost?

God has His own way of making saints and bringing sons to the scene of adoption. It is by way of the cross and tribulation. And we will further say that God by the use of the same instruments - the cross and tribulation - easily weeds out those who are not fit for the kingdom of God. My brother and my sister, let me tell you with all faithfulness that the trials and heartaches for which you have been blaming the devil are not the work of the

devil at all, but are the work of God. It is the Lord, working in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. Everywhere I have been the vast majority of Christians are forever attributing to the devil trials and testings that actually come from the wisdom of God for our eternal good and betterment. Learn quickly, child of the Lord, that Satan has no power but by the permissive will of Jehovah, and, if you abide in faith and confidence in your trial, you will learn that much blessing has accrued to your account, and you have grown more perfectly in the image in God. Which man would you much prefer - the self-righteous Job before his fierce and fiery tribulation or the Job who stood clothed in God's likeness after the fierceness of his fiery trial was ended? I know what your answer must be. Therefore, I beseech you to consider not your present light affliction, but behold instead the eternal weight of glory it is working for you. Some years ago a man sat in my presence, pouring into my ears a tale of grief and woe. Business had failed; sickness had come; death had struck; and sundry troubles more. After pouring out his woe, he sobbed in the bitterness and rebellion of his soul, "I may be a bad man, but I don't deserve all this." Poor fellow, deluded, impatient, and ashamed, completely lacking in spiritual understanding, he did not know that the faithful Father was giving him the greatest opportunity of his life. He did not understand that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and that hope maketh not ashamed. To him tribulation seemed to be the punishment of God. Therefore it was not working patience, but impatience; not joy, but bitterness, bringing no blessed experience, producing no hope, but shame and sorrow and unbelief.

Oh that men in their hours of turbulent trial or affliction would only realize that He who is calling from yonder shore, "Children, have you any meat," is the Lord! They need not ask Him who He is, knowing that it is the Lord The same afflictions which we endure are accomplished in our brethren who are in the world. 1 Pet. 5:9. Surely, then, we need not think it strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try us as though some strange thing happened unto us, but rather rejoice insomuch as we are the partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

"And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." **Heb. 11:32-40** Do you think these men and women could say in their affliction, "He is the Lord"? Yea, verily they knew, and "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods", knowing that they had a better and more enduring substance laid up for them in heaven.

The things, which are seen, are temporal and the things which are not seen are eternal. But am I not right in saying that almost all people deem the opposite of this to be true? The things which are seen are thought by most to be the real things, and the things that are not seen are scarcely worth our attention at all. Yet these are the things that shall endure forever and grow stronger and greater as the ages come and go. Anything in the world that can be analyzed by the five senses of the body is temporal and unreal. Whatsoever we can see with our eyes, touch with our hands, hear with our ears, smell with our nostrils, or taste with our palate belongs to the realm of the temporal and is essentially unreal. I say it is unreal because temporal things are always changing and never remain the same. The flower, which today is in the field is withered tomorrow. The magnificent building, so admired and honored by passers-by, begins to fall into decay the very moment the workmen gather up their tools. The young man who delights in his strength today discovers grey hair appearing on his brow tomorrow and in a few short years his strength has decayed and withered as a leaf. Full well do the words inscribed on a lonely tombstone describe our temporal plight.

Stranger, take heed as you pass by;

For where you are so once was I.
And where I am you too shall be.
Prepare for death and follow me.

Every industry in the world, without one exception, exists because of the demands of the five senses of the body - seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, and smelling - and yet all are temporal and all are passing away. But love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance are the graces of God, that, though unseen, are eternal, and these are the things which the Spirit of God in infinite love desires to perfect in our lives.

Now if we set the things that are temporal side by side with the things that are eternal, we will soon learn that whatsoever is done to bring temporal things to their fullness will serve without fail to bring desolation and death to all that is eternal within us.

Contrariwise, whatsoever brings to naught the worthless toys of time and sense is at the same time bringing to perfection all things that are eternal. Fire, disaster, and tribulation will divest us only of the things that are earthly even as they divested poor Job of buildings, possessions, herds, and family. But the same tribulation that destroys the temporal will work the grace of patience and bring to fruitfulness all the wonderful blessings of spiritual experience, the best and surest teacher known to mankind. Then hope follows experience, and with hope comes the grace of faithfulness and a face that is unashamed. When we go to the grave, my friend, we will be stripped of all that is temporal, and all our five senses will be no more. Is it not much better that God should try us now that, after He has tried us, we should receive a crown of life?

I am amazed beyond measure at the slavery men endure in their efforts to gather about them all manner of temporal things, knowing, as they surely must, that all these shall fade as a leaf and wither as the green herb.

We spend our health to gain our wealth;
We sweat and toil and save.
We spend our wealth to gain our health,
And all we get's the grave.
We live and work for things we own;
We die, and only get a stone.

It is the Lord who sends our tribulation, for He in love would teach us what true values really are. The Holy Spirit teaches us by much tribulation that by experience we may be complete in all understanding, knowing in truth that "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." **2 Cor. 4:17-18** Choose the eternal, then, and let it never slip from your grasp. Hold with a loose grip all things, which belong to this present life, for they are swiftly passing away and withering into nothingness before our eyes.

It is God who worketh in us to will and to do His good pleasure. When our Lord promised that another Comforter would come who would abide with us forever, He made the truth very clear that the Spirit would not only dwell with us, but that He would dwell in us. It is the Holy Spirit who enters the heart of a man when he is born again. It is the Holy Spirit who gives saving faith. It is He who cleanses with the blood, purges with the Spirit, and washes with the washing of regeneration. It is the Holy Spirit who renews the life of God within us, as Paul so beautifully taught when he said: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." **Titus 3:5-6** The Holy Spirit is a person. He is God. He indwells the believer with the express purpose of transforming him into the very image of Christ. That is why Paul said, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure."

If personal names denote the personality of the Holy Spirit, to an even greater degree do personal ministry, personal acts, and personal treatment manifest to all that He who dwells within us is indeed a person and not merely an influence. The Holy Spirit loves, as I think is evidenced by the fact that the very first fruit of the Spirit

is love. Gal. 5:22. The Holy Spirit is given to guide us into all truth; John 16:13; therefore He is a guide. He is given to comfort; therefore He is a comforter. John 14:26 The Holy Spirit makes intercession according to the will of God; therefore He is an intercessor. Rom. 8:26 The Spirit teacheth us all things and is truth; therefore He is a teacher, and all He teaches is truth. 1 John 2:27 He takes the things of God and shows them to us; therefore He is a revealer. John 16:13. He shows us things to come; therefore He is the true source and spirit of prophecy. We will speak of each of these ministries in more particular as time passes, but our thought for the moment is merely to show that only a person can be a teacher, a prophet, a guide, an intercessor, a comforter.

Furthermore, be assured that He who dwells within is a divine person, even God Himself, because personal treatment denotes personality. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," said Paul. **Eph. 4:30** And who but a person could thus be grieved? Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that, which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, because these are the things that grieve the Spirit and spoil our experience, bringing us into the dust of desolation; but be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. See Eph. 4:29-32.

The Holy Spirit says, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation..." **Heb. 3:7-10** Nothing grieves the Holy Spirit so intensely as unbelief. I am sure we are right in concluding that unbelief is the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost. It is the one sin that cannot be forgiven in this age. Since all things are of faith, how, then, can forgiveness be found in unbelief? Avoid all unbelief, for what can God do for any man who tempts Him with his unbelief? It was unbelief that caused God to swear that Israel should not enter into His rest. Heb. 3:11 Therefore "take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief 'in departing from the living God." Grieve not the Spirit through this one most damning of all sins.

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." were the words of Stephen before his death; and from this statement we conclude that the Holy Spirit can be resisted, and that this personal treatment denotes His personality. It is a damning sin to be unbelieving, but what a dreadful evil is present when men willfully resist that which they know to be the truth! In this resistance against God's Spirit men continue, because the carnal mind is an enemy of God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so they who are in the flesh cannot please God.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" **Heb. 2:3-4**. The salvation, which the Spirit brings can be neglected. The gift which the Spirit gives can be neglected, as the words "neglect not the gift that is in thee", **1 Tim. 4:14**, clearly teach. Our neglect of the Spirit and the things of the Spirit is an error that works to our detriment in this age and in that which is to come. It is an error of almost unbelievable magnitude. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting," **Solomon said. Prov. 12:2** The man who hid his talent in the earth lived to see the day when the Lord said, "Thou wicked and slothful servant." See **Matt. 25-26-30** Therefore the Spirit saith, "Be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." It was Felham who said, "Negligence is the rust of the soul that corrodes through all her best resolves," and Shakespeare said, "To persons grafted in a serious trust negligence is a crime."

How often my heart is saddened when people send the message back with the notation, "I have no time to read"; and of course there are many others who have no time to pray, no time to meditate, no time to wait on God, too busy to fast, too tired to pray, too poor to tithe, and too short-sighted to be thankful. All the while the Spirit is saying, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." That verse was not written to sinners, though it is to sinners that most preachers direct this text. If we can grasp even in part the marvelous extent of the promises given in Hebrews, chapter 1, then we may understand why the apostle, upon ending his wonderful chain of reasoning, commenced chapter two with the precise adverb "therefore," saying, "Therefore

how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" It is amazing what wisdom, light, and understanding will come to those who persistently refuse to corrode their souls by neglecting the Spirit.

"It is the Lord," John said in the long ago. "It is the Lord," our voices echo today. "It is God that worketh in you" was the apostle's word. "It is God that worketh in you" is the word today. O, Holy Spirit, faithful and true, teacher and instructor of every heart, open wide the eyes of our understanding that we may know that salvation is not of ourselves, but of the Lord. Gifts and graces are not of man. It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. Stop us in our tracks and make us know that human effort avails us nothing, but by His Spirit we are changed from glory to glory.

More and more like Him! Repeat the blest story
Over and over again;
Changed by His Spirit from glory to glory,
I shall be satisfied then.

Now, when Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit, He said to His disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." And again, "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." Let every believer rejoice in the indisputable knowledge that Christ by the Holy Spirit has come to abide in his heart. "Christ in you" is the hope of glory. I pray to God Almighty, whose I am and whom I serve, that He will grant the reader special grace in wisdom and understanding as we read and meditate upon these holy things, that our hearts may be opened and our spiritual minds illumined to grasp the vital truth that it is God who is at work within us. It is that person divine, the Holy Spirit, who from hour to hour and day to day is transforming us into God's image, renewing our spirits in the very likeness of Christ, sanctifying our lives, giving power for service and victory, bringing us to the fullness of adoption as His sons, living His life within us, giving us victory over sin, the world, the flesh, the devil. We are born again, not of the will of man, but of the will of God - not of corruptible seed as at the first, but of incorruptible seed, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. It is God, I tell you! It is the Lord! It is Christ in you, the hope of glory! And what is glory but full sonship in Him?

Be gone forever, ye works of men! Flee ashamed to your hiding place, all forms of self-reformation! Let self-righteousness blush with shame and hide from the wrath of God! If a worm could by self effort or reformation remake itself into the form of a man, then also may man by self effort and reformation transform himself into the likeness of God; but these are things that cannot be. He who in the beginning formed man of the dust of the earth, He who breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, He alone has power and glory to transform that man into the image of God. He alone is the Creator, and He alone can accomplish the task set forth in that eternal decree, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness." How does it come about that we who say that only God can save us suddenly begin to depend upon ourselves as though some ability were given to the saved to bring about God's likeness? I was deeply impressed recently when I read these words in **Acts 15:1**: "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." How can saved men make such silly affirmations as that, as though an insignificant nick in the flesh would determine heaven or hell for a man? And how much more preposterous do such statements appear in view of the fact that God, who knoweth all things, had already sent forth the Holy Spirit into their hearts, filling them with joy and gladness, even as He did the disciples at Pentecost! Acts 15:7-10 In the face of the spiritual witness these men had received, we could as well believe that except we gash our hand we could not be saved.

There comes a time in life and experience when we must see by the Holy Spirit that God is neither interested in nor concerned about ritual and ceremony. He takes no delight in the number of times we attend meetings in a week, nor is He overjoyed with the number of times we read our Bibles in a year, good as such reading may be. He is not interested in hearing about how much we give to the poor nor how faithfully we tithe nor how often we fast. Commendable and good as such devotions are, they will not change the inner man, but should rise as an incense from the life within as naturally as perfume arises from a rose. I am sure you have read the wonderful utterances of David, who, in that far off dispensation when sacrifice and offering were the order of the day for every Israelite by the commandment of God, lifted up his heart in prayerful understanding and said to the Lord, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The

sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." **Psa. 51:16-17.** David was in fact saying, "Let those offer sacrifices and burnt offerings who live on the level of outward form and ceremony, but, as for me, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praises." These are the sacrifices of righteousness. These are the bullocks upon the altar of God.

Learn, O brother, and understand, O sister, that it is God who worketh in you. It is the Lord, that divine person, the Holy Spirit, whose divine names, divine acts, divine graces, divine ministries all indubitably hail Him, not only as person, but as God Himself, dwelling, living, and abiding in the believer's heart. It is because God is dwelling in you that you have become the habitation of God through the Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within, you are the mystical church, "My Father's house", and you in person have become a mansion or abiding place in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

In conclusion there is another thought we must introduce here. God is working in us to this end: to will and to do His good pleasure. We are not our own; we are bought with a price. Therefore seek not your own will, but let God be glorified in your body and in your spirit, which belong to God. No man knows God's will of himself It is the Holy Spirit who knows God's will, and He abides in us. Is not this what Paul was saying when he said, "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts (the Father) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit (the Holy Spirit), because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." **Rom. 8:26-27**

If we know not what to pray for as we ought, the only effectual prayer is the prayer we pray in the Spirit; and I am perfectly convinced that the man who dwells in the Spirit will also pray in the Spirit and that without ceasing. Not only will his lips breathe out the will and mind of God in prayer, but his very life will be the out-breathing of God's will. So often I have said and written that there is but one element to real faith, and that one element is the will of God. He who walks in the will of God will walk the stormy waters with Jesus, remove the difficult mountain, or tear up the sycamore tree by the roots, for nothing shall be impossible to him who walks in God's will. He who walks in God's will never attempts anything that savors of his own mind or his own will.

The will of God is His good pleasure. It is the good pleasure of God that is being done in your life by the Holy Spirit. Cease, I pray you, from damning the circumstances about you. Cease from moaning over your difficult estate. Complain no more of lions' dens, fiery furnaces, or of feet that are hurting with fetters. It is not the devil who is making life miserable for you. It is the Lord working in you both to will and to do His good pleasure.

Before the ages were formed or ever the world began, before God breathed into Adam the breath of life, He saw every man in Christ. He beheld every man perfect. He rejoiced in the final triumph of His labor, the perfection of all things. His eye-lids tried all the interim years in which with longsuffering and infinite care He would break and melt and mould and shape the vessels and fashion them after His pre-arranged and predestined plan. We feel the crushing hammer blows now; He sees the breaking. We feel the sting of the burning, fiery furnace; He sees the melting, the separation of the gold from the useless dross. We sense the fearful hurt of the molding; He sees a vessel, perfect, finished, and fit for the Master's eternal use. How great it is to look beyond the trial of the beginning to the joys of the end! How precious to send the vision soaring far above the dank and dismal valleys to God's beautiful mount of perfection where "saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's!" **Obadiah 21**

The Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit is God. It is God who worketh in us to will and to do His good pleasure. Oh that from the fathomless depths of our spirits our voices may re-echo the words John whispered on that wonderful morning so long ago, "It is the Lord!"

CHAPTER SEVEN HIMSELF

As the stream of time is rushing on to the boundless ocean of eternity and the evening sun is sinking toward the horizon of this the sixth day of man's labor, the lengthening shadows herald the certainty that the

nightmarish rule of corrupt and carnal man is near its end. The sun, which God set to rule man's little day, will finally bid the earth its last adieu that the Sun of righteousness may arise forever with healing in His wings.

Deep shadows creep along the country lanes
And birds are winging homeward to their nests.
Bright little lights wink out from window panes,
And bid the weary toiler home to rest.

The approaching end of the age is bringing into focus all the awesome predictions foretold by God through seers and sages, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, clearly stated by our Lord Jesus Christ, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit in His apostles. To all who have eyes to see and hearts to understand it should be evident beyond the realm of the least doubt that these are the days of vengeance. These are the days of the fulfillment of all things spoken concerning the end of the age. The startling things we now see, the defiant and mocking voices we now hear, the appalling circumstances, which we cannot control declare with great plainness of speech that the end of the age is at hand. Tribulation is even now in our midst and a time of trouble such as the world has never known is even now upon us.

Dare any man doubt that we are now re-living the days of Noah? Is it not evident beyond the slightest word of argument that as it was in the days before the flood so it is now? The infallible testimony written of the days of Noah so long ago now reads like a condensation of today's newspaper. "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." **Gen. 6:11-12** These things have their background in a corruption forbidden of God and hateful in His sight. The sons of God, mingling with the daughters of men, brought forth giants in the earth, terrible men of renown who increased the wickedness of the earth until it knew no bounds.

In our day the world is also full of giants. We find them in the political world and we find them in the religious world. The Roman Pope, the giant religious leader of five hundred million souls, extends his hand of friendship to the giant leaders of bloody and godless communism. World renowned evangelists (men of renown. Gen. 6:4) receive cloaks and honor from cardinals and praise the merits of ecumenism. If there ever was a time since Noah's day when the sons of God mingled with the daughters of men it is certainly now. The towering giants produced by this sordid union are in large part responsible for the abounding corruption and staggering violence so typical of the system of the swaggering and drunken harlot of Babylon.

We would indeed be very foolish to close our eyes to the ever, increasing signs of the end of the age, but I must confess that as time passes I for one am losing interest in them. There is something of much greater importance than these outward passing things, and it is toward this greater realm that our thoughts should now be turned. As I consider the days of Noah, abounding with crime and violence and the mingling of the sons of God with the daughters of men, incurring the judgment of God upon the world, I am persuaded that in the heart and mind of Noah, that one man who alone was righteous before God, there was one thing more important than all else, and that one thing was the building of the ark which God had told him to prepare against the day of judgment and tribulation which was to come. Had Noah wasted his time concentrating his efforts against the wickedness of his day, he would probably have been drowned with the rest of the world. God had not commanded him to save the world and turn these sinners back to God. He had commanded him to build an ark to save his house. I know I will run afoul of thousands when I say that Christians today are concentrating on the wrong things. God has not commanded us to save the world, but to dwell and abide in Him who is greater far than the ark of Noah's building. "It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him. In Him, too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ." **Eph. 1:7-12** (Weymouth) The most important project in the earth today is not the vast expensive program to put a man on the moon nor the futile efforts of men to provide food for an exploding world population nor yet is it any one of a hundred other grand notions of humankind. The most important project in the world and the thing by far most important in the eyes of God is

the formation of that true and mystical church, that wonderful ark which is in truth the body of Christ. There are almost endless millions of people today talking about the church, but for all their talk they are looking at the wrong thing. They are looking at a harlot system, which defiantly calls herself the church, calling herself by Christ's name to take away her reproach, but in no sense is she the church which is His body. In no sense is she the ecclesia, the called out ones. There are tens of thousands of people and preachers without number who are full of talk and sermons about the body of Christ, but they have never seen by the Spirit what the body of Christ really is. They have adopted theories, imbibed traditions, and latched on to teachings, but there is something revolutionary and unspeakably different when our spirits are made alive to the awful and solemn truth that, in like manner as the Holy Spirit over-shadowed the virgin Mary to form within her a man in God's own image, a Son ordained to be the living habitation of God, so now His overshadowing presence is forming a vast family of sons who in that same image of Christ will form one body of sons, who forever and ever will be the habitation of God through the Spirit. God Himself shall live in them and walk in them and they shall be His sons that in coming ages He might subdue all things unto Himself through them. These He has also chosen and ordained in His own divine way and through His infinite wisdom to be the fullness and completeness of His Christ - even the mystical body of Christ.

What purpose other than this could have been in the divine mind when He came to us by the Holy Spirit and planted the incorruptible Christ seed in the womb of our spirit and we were born anew - not of the will of men, not of the will of the flesh - but born of God? The purpose of God when His creative Spirit overshadowed the virgin in the long ago, planting the Christ seed in her womb, was that she might bring forth the Christ. And shall not we who are born of that same incorruptible seed, the living word of God, see the Christ come to maturity within us, first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full corn in the ear? The hour is at hand for those who believe it when it shall be no longer "I", but "Christ", and the life, which we now live in the flesh shall be lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. The "I" has been crucified; the "Christ" has been born. The old is passing away. Behold, all things are becoming new. With every breath, we breathe in Christ and breathe out self till Christ is all and in all to us.

In our understanding of spiritual things there is a handy key which will open the door of understanding to many a secret. It is this: All natural things have their spiritual counterparts. For example the planting of the seed whether natural or spiritual brings forth after its kind. But it is equally true that spiritual things are opposite to natural things. For example, the natural man who would exalt self advertises, brags, and keeps his picture and name before the eyes and thoughts of the people, but in the Spirit it is "he who humbleth himself that shall be exalted. In the natural realm the man who would be rich hoards his money and gathers to himself as much as possible of this world's goods, but in the Spirit the rule is, "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over..." Thus it is written: The first man (Adam) is of the earth earthy. The second man (Christ) is the Lord from heaven. And again: The first man was made a living soul, but the second man is a life giving Spirit.

If we bear in mind this simple rule, we will have no trouble understanding how it was that, when the Christ seed was planted in the physical womb of the virgin, the purpose was to bring forth the incarnate Christ. Incarnation means "in flesh". Therefore at the appointed time she brought forth the incarnate Christ and He was separated from her. But, when the incorruptible seed is planted in the believing heart, the purpose is no longer to bring forth flesh and blood, but to bring forth Christ after the Spirit. Therefore He shall not be separated from the believer as He was from Mary, but shall increase within him, until He possesses spirit, soul, and body and he, the believer, will say, "It is not I, but Christ." Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away and, behold, all things become new. The mind of Christ begins to dwell in that man until the mind of Christ is his mind and his own mind has been put away. The life of Christ dwells in him until the life he now lives in the flesh is lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Therefore it is written: "As we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." **1 Cor. 15:49**

The greatest hindrance to the growth and maturity of the incorruptible seed is the incessant intrusion of the big "I", the giant ego. We want Christ, but we want self to live also. We want to possess the gifts, but not the Giver. We want to possess Christ, but we don't want Him to possess us. Whatever happens, we insist upon preserving self. We always take good care of the "I", but it is only when we begin to live the "not I, but Christ" life that all things are freely ours.

If the Spirit of God will help us, surely we will not fail to clearly understand that the most important thing imaginable now and forever is our personal relationship to Jesus Christ. All that can be done of good works and mighty deeds outside of Him falls under the category of filthy rags and works of iniquity. Truly shall God's Son speak in His displeasure on the Day of Judgment, saying, "I never knew you; depart from Me ye that work iniquity (rebellion)." It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood that we have our redemption. God has made Him to be all things to all men. Therefore let all who read these things know assuredly that not only has God made Him both Lord and Christ but all else besides, for His Spirit has declared and His word agrees that "God has made His Son, Jesus Christ, unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." **1 Cor. 1:30**

We are not taught by the apostle that we are to receive our wisdom from Christ as a student would receive wisdom from an instructor. We are taught the fathomless fact that Christ Himself is our wisdom. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2:3, and wisdom that dwells apart from Him is foolishness with God. 1 Cor. 3:19 We will never attain to the wisdom of God by attending the universities and colleges of this world. Wisdom does not come to our hearts from the pages of books nor from the lips of clever instructors. God's wisdom comes in Him, whom God hath made unto us wisdom. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" demanded the Jews as Christ taught them the wonderful wisdom of God. **John 7:15** And to their question Jesus replied, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

Let your mind grasp this truth: Wisdom is not a thing but a person, and that person is none other than Jesus Christ. Wisdom is not an abstract noun. He is our wisdom. God hath made Him wisdom. The great and wise King Solomon realized that wisdom was not some abstract thing, but a person, for, when writing of wisdom, he used the pronoun "I", saying, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, or the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." **Prov. 8:22-36**

Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God, and God has made Him to be our wisdom also. When Paul wrote the remarkable words, "Let this mind dwell in you which was also in Christ Jesus", he was telling the saints of God that their only hope of wisdom lay in the casting away of their own minds that the mind of Christ should dwell in them. The mind that dwelt in Christ Jesus was the Father's mind. Christ possessed the wisdom of God because God the Father dwelt in Him. Likewise also we shall possess the wisdom of God because of the Christ who dwells in us. He Himself has spoken, saying, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23** It is not God's will that His Son, Jesus Christ, should dwell in some remote corner of our being, hidden among the rubble of our lives as Rachel hid her father's gods among the camels' furniture, Gen. 31:34, but Christ must be crowned Lord and Master of our lives. He must reign now as King upon the throne since the kingdom of God is even now within us, and His sitting upon the throne will be complete when His mind is in possession and our minds have been cast away. No man can ever claim to be fully Christ's possession while his own mind remains in control, but when the mind of Christ shall dwell in us, ordering and directing God's kingdom within, then we are fully His, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom.

Tens of thousands of people today are fully aware that the abounding distress, turmoil, upheaval, and senseless violence in this modern world, together with all sin and iniquity, are the direct result of the dominion of the carnal mind of man, which is basically and thoroughly corrupt according to every deceitful lust. And there are multitudes who know full well that, when the dispensation of the kingdom of God spreads its light over the earth, all its intrinsic glory and wonder will flow forth like a river from the mind of Christ, and many ten thousands there are who hope in that day to reign with Him in His glory. Though we may entertain great hope of reigning with Christ in His kingdom, have our minds grasped the meaningful significance of the words of our Lord, "The kingdom of God is within you"? **Luke 17:21** In this evil world in which we presently dwell there are many kings and presidents, dictators and emperors, but none of them have ever possessed a universal kingdom. None among them can reign as lord supreme, but in their selfish clamor, strife and bloodshed, war and rebellion are ever with us. But, when at last the kingdom of God's Christ has come, then shall His will be done in all the earth even as it is now done in heaven. Then those who reign with Him will have their part in putting down all other rule and all other authority. **1 Cor. 15:24** "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet ... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, (the Son), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." **1 Cor. 15:25, 28**

Let us then take heed to the words of our faithful Lord when He spoke, saying, "The kingdom of God is within you." It is within you and within me that God's kingdom has its first beginning. When all things within you and all things within me have been subdued unto Christ, when all our inner enemies are under His feet, when the mind of Christ dwells in us and our whole life is ordered and directed by the mind of Christ, then and then only are we fit to sit with Christ Jesus in His glorious kingdom throne, subduing all the world to Him. How could any man possibly imagine that one could reign with Christ in the glorious and universal kingdom who has not first submitted himself as a willing and obedient subject of the kingdom of God now being set up within himself? The man who does not let the mind of Christ dwell in him now has no hope - no hope, I repeat - of ruling with Christ in the age to come. He who has not submitted himself to the rule and mind of Christ in this age can never hope to dispense God's law and God's will in the kingdom age to come. How truly ring the words of the apostle Paul: "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruit. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." **2 Tim. 2:6**. Consider it well. Consider it thoroughly, and may the Lord fill you with understanding.

The more our hearts bow down in meditation upon the seriousness of these eternal things the more we are brought face to face with the solemn dignity of our personal relationship and association with Jesus Christ. God has made His Son all things to us. He has made Him to be both Lord and Christ. **Acts 2:36** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. **Col. 1:15-19** Neither by the eloquence of words nor by the beauty of phrases can we say more plainly or more emphatically than this that it is our personal association and participation with Christ that counts above all else. Our association with denominations or sects is as useless as the chaff that the wind driveth away. Our association with Christ Jesus is as gold tried in the fire. It is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared with it. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be of an understanding heart! Receive my instruction and not silver, and my knowledge rather than choice gold. Let this mind dwell in you which was also in Christ Jesus, for God has made His name to be the greatest authority in the universe that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.

There are many false christs in the earth in our day, who blind the minds of men and hinder them from fully trusting in God's one and only Christ. Chief among the false christs are the religious denominations and sects that number legion among us. Under the flimsy shadow of their frail wing men put their confidence, trusting in their energetic prophets who, instead of directing men to follow Christ, all too often direct their minds toward busy programs, inspired by their own personal ambitions. Jesus warned us that one of the great signs of the end of the age would be the existence of many false christs and many false prophets. **Matt. 24:11, 24** Why then do we who believe that Jesus was the greatest prophet who ever lived bury our silly heads in the proverbial sand while we steadfastly refuse to recognize that the pulpits of the land are as full of false prophets

today as were the groves and high places in the days of Elijah? And, when Elijah comes, he will come against these false prophets even as he came against the prophets of Baal in the long ago.

Turn then from these vanities, for Jesus is God's only Christ, the head and firstborn of a vast family of sons who, because of their loving subjection to Him, are now rising in His image. Turn away your faces from the false christs of denominationalism, the heads of which on June 10th, 1969, met in Geneva, Switzerland, with the Pope of Rome. Must our eyes be so dim that we are blinded to the fact that the great multi-headed beast system spoken of in Revelation (read Rev. 13) is now rising to its full stature? Are God's sons unaware that the hour is at hand when none shall buy or sell or preach or write without the permission of this beast system? Rev. 13:15-17. This system will be replete with all signs and wonders, healings, tongues, prophecies, and all the rest. They will be full of the very things they rejected in the hour when God was pouring out of His Spirit, but their wonders are lying wonders. 2 Thess. 2:9-10 The hour is at hand when men shall call fire down from heaven to deceive all that dwell upon the earth and the image of the Beast will open his mouth to speak blasphemy against God - a thing which, in my opinion, he is already doing; for these lying systems that insist upon calling themselves the church are in truth blasphemers of God, denying the infallibility of God's word, the virgin birth of Christ, the divinity of the Lord, the power of His blood, the truth of the resurrection, the ascension and return of Christ. In these dread hours when the cup of iniquity is full and the swaggering harlot system is drunk with the blood of God's saints, we may well thank God for the elect few now scattered in the four corners of the globe who have made Christ their hope, their refuge, and their high tower. He alone is the solid rock. Through the shedding of His blood we have our redemption; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jesus is all this poor world needs today. Blindly they strive, for sin darkens the way. Oh, to draw back the grim curtains of night! One glimpse of Jesus and all would be bright.

In these tremendous days when the Spirit of God is calling His elect people to leave the harlot systems of religions, saying, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters," let the minds of God's saints be illumined that they may clearly see that all their hope for time and eternity is wrapped up in the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. In Jesus Christ and in Him alone has God given us all things. With great reverence and fear I make these solemn affirmations. It is not salvation men need. It is Christ. There is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. It is not healing we need. It is Christ; for if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ shall make alive our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. Rom. 8:11 It is not wisdom we need. It is Jesus Christ, for God has made Him to be wisdom unto us. It is not righteousness we need. It is Jesus Christ, whom God hath made unto us righteousness. Neither is it sanctification, the subject of so many sermons, that we need. It is Jesus Christ, whom God hath made unto us both sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor. 1:30

On every hand we hear men and women sighing for faith. If only I had faith to believe God for healing or for deliverance or some other blessing, how wonderful it would be! No, my friend, you are quite wrong. It is not faith you need. It is Christ. When the lame man was healed at the temple gate and all men marveled, Peter said, "The faith which is by Him (Jesus) has given this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." **Acts 3:16** "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." **Eph. 2:8** Every gift of God, my brother or sister, is wrapped up in the person of God's Christ and is inseparable from Him. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things"? **Rom. 8:32**

For many years A. B. Simpson suffered the trials of a weak and infirm body, but, when at last he was led of the Spirit to receive his life and strength from Christ, a dear friend said to him, "You were healed by faith." "Oh, no," Simpson replied. "I was healed by Christ." And what he answered was surely true. It is not faith healing we need. It is Christ the healer. Men are always trying to build up faith or, worse still, they are trying to work it up, hoping against hope that, when they get their faith worked up to a sufficiently high pitch, they will be able to suddenly release it to seize the prize and carry it off captive with them. For this very reason men everywhere run from city to city and from country to country, seeking out men who advertise themselves as men of great faith, capable of praying the prayer of faith for just about anything their clientele demands. It's a great money-making racket, performed by racketeers beyond the reach of the law. It is the greatest moneymaker because

"all that a man hath will he give for his life." But it is not the prayer of faith we need, my brother. It is Jesus Christ who with Himself freely gives us all things.

In reading the word of God, have you noticed that the words "Him and "Himself are given a place of outstanding prominence? "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." **John 5:26-27**. There is no life apart from Himself. In Adam all die, because there is no life in Adam. It is only in Christ Himself that all are made alive. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" sighed doubting Thomas. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," replied Jesus. He does not give life, my friend, my brother. He Himself is life, and beside Him there is no life. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," Jesus said; but is it not entirely true that this life eternal is Christ Himself, who said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"? **John 17:3** He who would receive eternal life may only receive it by receiving Jesus Christ. "He who hath the Son hath life and he who hath not the Son of God hath not life." **1 John 5:12** "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" — that is, darkness cannot comprehend light. John 1:4, 5. Men who live in the darkness of their traditions are never able to comprehend that Christ is all and in all. They must be forever trying to grasp more and more things as gifts from His hands, never quite understanding that God, who made His Son the Alpha and the Omega, the A and the Z, has also made Him to be all the other letters of the alphabet as well that all heavenly riches may be embraced in Him.

"And when the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." **Matt. 8:16** Himself! Himself! Himself took our infirmities: Himself bare our sins! Christ has given us all these things in Himself and nothing apart from Himself.

"Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness," said the Jews; but Jesus replied, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." See **John 6:22-59**

When Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, he used the joyful greeting, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that we might be delivered from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." **Gal. 1:3-4** When he explained our identification with Christ in His cross and the resulting transformation that took place, he said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." **Gal. 2:20** And to the Ephesians he wrote: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." **Eph. 5:25-26** He gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil world. He gave Himself for me that I might be delivered from myself to be identified with Him and live with Him; and He gave Himself for the whole church, which He loved, that it might be sanctified and cleansed by the water of life and by the word of God and presented to Himself.

From time immemorial there has been a dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. Strife, envy, jealousy, war and persecution have been their lot. Neither League of Nations, the United Nations, nor any treaty can overcome a hatred so deep-seated. It is the ancient animosity descended from Jacob and Esau, sharpened by years and multiplied by millions. "Peace, peace," the nations cry; but there is no peace in the hearts of men who daily clamor for possession of the weak and beggarly things of this present evil world. Where enmity holds its dreadful sway, the dove of peace can find no rest for the sole of her foot. But peace there will be, for He has said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It was upon the foundation of this great knowledge that Paul was able to boldly declare to a world full of strife and envy, "He is our peace who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances,

for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace ... for through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." **Eph. 2:14, 16, 18**

One would indeed need to be a silver-tongued orator or a writer with a golden pen to describe the glory that shall descend like a mantle upon the world when He Himself becomes the peace of the whole world. We have become so accustomed to peace conferences, disarmament conferences, wars and rumors of war, that we take it as a matter of course, knowing full well in ourselves that nations who go to the disarmament conference with one battleship will come home with two and nations who had one cannon will return with two. But peace universal and serene is coming, and it is coming in Himself and in no other. How our tired hearts long for that blessed kingdom morning when men shall learn war no more, when lame men shall leap as the hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing, when nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, for men shall have become one in Himself and His knowledge shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea!

Well may we hymn God's praise because of the glory of His purpose in all the earth, but know this, oh man: God had in mind and purpose realms much greater than the earth when He declared His intention to reconcile all things to Himself by His Son. The false prophets, dwelling and preaching among us, have blinded the eyes of many believers to the greatness of Christ's redemption and God's purpose in Him. The minds of men have been confined to such a narrow channel that they can scarcely believe that Christ is the redeemer of any except a chosen few who by their own striving have made themselves acceptable in His sight. But "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." **Col. 1:19, 20**

Why do people who profess to believe the word of God fly into a fury, write nasty, sarcastic letters, and cast us out of their midst because we dare to tell them that by Him and "through the blood of His cross" God will reconcile "all things", whether they be things in heaven or earth or under the earth, and that every knee in heaven and earth and under the earth shall bow at (in) the name of Jesus Christ? How small and insignificant have these false prophets rendered the mighty Lord of heaven and earth! How frail have they made His omnipotence, how shortsighted His omniscience, how vacillating His immutability, how loveless His love, how merciless His mercy! Surely the God they serve is one to be placed on the mantelpiece and their Christ is but a doll in a manger! It is time to shake ourselves free from the corrupting influences of religious systems of whatsoever name or creed they be that we might behold the glory of God our Father, who in His greatness holds the universe He has made in the hollow of His hand, and the glory of Christ our Redeemer, who has in His cross even now reconciled all things to Himself.

Nowhere in scripture do we ever read of God's being reconciled to man, but that He through the blood of His cross has reconciled all things to Himself. Col. 1:20 He gave Himself & ransom, 1 Tim. 2:6, when He gave Himself for us. Titus 2:14 By Himself He purged our sins away. Heb. 1:3. Himself suffered and was tempted for us, Heb. 2:18, when He offered Himself a sacrifice to God for our sins. Heb. 7:27 And should it seem strange to any of us that, having accomplished such a mighty redemption by which He has reconciled all things unto Himself, He should also present the church to Himself & glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, Eph. 5:27, and that He Himself should become the chief cornerstone, or better still the headstone of it? Yet in all these things "Christ pleased not Himself" but received in Himself every reproach of the human race.

In these the final hours of man's sixth day we have become very much aware that everything in the universe is a satellite of something greater about which it unceasingly orbits. The moon is a satellite of the earth about which it continually orbits. The moon with the earth and the other planets are in their vast orbit about the sun, and the sun and our great universe are in orbit around the Pleiades. Even your own physical body is a universe of orbiting atoms, each revolving around the other. But what, my friend and brother, is the sun and center of your universe? Does your life revolve around a religious system that dares to call itself a church? Or does your life revolve around that Son of all the universe, Jesus Christ Himself? Has Christ, the Sun of righteousness, been lost to you in the cloudy skies of church activity, attending meetings, listening to sermons, giving to missions, building buildings, and other things so numerous that they cannot be numbered at all? Has the church system become the axis about which you continually orbit? Then, my friend, you are definitely wrong.

You have forgotten that the true saints are the church and that the center of their universe is the Sun of righteousness, the Son of God, Jesus Christ Himself.

I will not gain friends for myself when I tell you in the sincerity of my heart that the system which men everywhere call the church is that one and self-same Babylon of confusion described so thoroughly in Revelation, chapters 17 and 18. She has become chief among all false christs and false prophets in this the end of the age. Her sun and center is not Himself but herself, who even now boasts of the vast increase of her riches and resources, now estimated in excess of five hundred billion dollars. She boasts of her works, her programs, her alms deeds. Her radio and T.V. programs often exalt the person of an individual man of flesh and blood. Her magazines at times display a dozen pictures of one great man or one gifted woman, but Christ, the bread of life, is not exalted; neither is He given to the hungry multitude. When, oh Christian, will you learn that today all about us and on every hand false prophets and false christs are claiming the attention of the people until the people are as deceived today by them as Israel was deceived by the prophets of Baal in the days of the wicked Jezebel?

Wherefore saith God, "Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters." God cannot receive you or call you sons and daughters as long as you bury your life among the systems of religion. They are abomination in His sight, because your life is centered about them instead of Himself.

One wonderful day, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles in old Jerusalem, Jesus our Lord stood up and cried aloud to the people: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." **John 7:37-38**. That, oh child of God, is the secret of eternal blessedness. Our faith and relationship to Jesus Christ makes us the source of rivers of living waters, ceaseless in their silent flow forever and ever and ever. It is not our relationship to systems or our faith in human programs of whatsoever sort or magnitude they may be that sends forth the gushing streams of life. The secret of eternal blessing is found in our relationship to Himself.

High upon the massive shoulders of our towering Rocky Mountains there rests innumerable cold, forbidding glaciers. Embraced within their frozen bosoms are countless millions of tons of ice, continually replenished by the freezing rains and eternal snows that fall in summer and winter upon them. As the summer sun shines upon them, they pour their turbulent steams down the mountain slopes to join their watery hands with the laughing brooks in the valley far below until together as a serene and mighty river they wend their wonderful way through the endless prairies and parched deserts, irrigating the farms, racing through the turbines, watering the thirsty fields, making glad the birds and fishes and those who love to play on the broad breasts of the lakes, and onward, ever onward, to the boundless ocean of God. But what of the silent glaciers from whence these living waters flow? Why, they do nothing at all except to be glaciers! And that is the way, Jesus said, it is with you and me who believe on Him as the scripture has said. All we need in this life or in the glory of the life to come is just to be sons of God, who believe - not as man hath said, not as the systems teach - but who believe on Him as the scripture hath said.

In these last times, these days when any hour may be the last before He appears, may He Himself become the center of your universe, the center of your life as you present yourself to Himself.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 22
TRUTH TO OPEN THE UNDERSTANDING
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-5

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CHAPTER ONE
THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF SONSHIP

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." **S. of S. 2:10-13**

The winter is past; the rain is over and gone. Winter is the season of the year when all things lie dormant in a state of typical death. It is a time when trees are stripped of their leaves and fruit is forgotten, when the flowers die, song birds fly away, and even great beasts hibernate in dens of the earth. Winter is a time when men's lives are sustained only by that which has been stored away, and should it continue long, all things would perish from the earth.

The six dispensations from innocence to grace have for mankind been a long, dreary winter of death. They have been a time of great and dreadful death when all but a few of the human race have been in a state of spiritual sleep. The heavens, once wide open to Adam, have remained closed since the fall while men have groveled in gross darkness and appalling ignorance, knowing not that all about them a radiant, eternal world of light and glory and liberty shines with a brightness of a million suns.

Now when anyone falls asleep, a strange thing happens to him. Except for his breathing he is in a state of death. Realities are shut out from him. He knows neither where he is nor who he is. Whether he is alone or in company he knows not. Friends and acquaintances, sickness, pain and joy are all forgotten to the sleeper, for he like the dead knows not anything.

It may be hard for you to understand what I now tell you, for sleep may hide it from your eyes, yet some will surely understand that a glorious awakening is even now at the door. Long ago in lovely Eden, we are told in Holy Scripture, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Gen. 2. In that sleep all things were shut out from him. The glory of the angels, the magnificence of the eternal world, wisdom and understanding with counsel and might were obliterated by the deepening stupor that fell upon him. Knowledge was gone, and even the wonderful glory of God's presence was shut out from him so that he knew not anything of the eternal realm and little, indeed, of the natural realm.

The omissions of God's word are often as important as forthright statements, and here I think we have an omission of tremendous importance. Though it is said that a deep sleep fell upon Adam, it is not said that

Adam ever awoke from the deep sleep that came upon him. All his remaining nine hundred years he remained dead asleep to eternal things. Certainly I could be wrong, but I myself am convinced that never again were the heavens open to Adam as heretofore, and never again did any of his posterity completely walk in all the light and presence and glory of God until that wonderful day when Jesus Christ, the second Adam, was baptized in Jordan and the heavens opened to Him, and, being opened to Him, they never more closed except for that one awful hour as He suffered vicariously on the cross of Calvary.

There is much more to the fall of man than at first appears to the casual reader. Adam, being both male and female in one, was a Son of God and perfect. He was like unto that blessed company who at last shall be in Christ, for in Christ there is neither male nor female, but sons of God, for sons of God are male and female in one as it was in the beginning. What need had Adam for a mate like unto the beasts of the field? He, being a son of God, possessed that perfect chaste virgin within himself and could have replenished the whole earth with his kind in God's image by a word of power as God by a word had willed him into existence in the beginning. But, as the beasts were brought before Adam to be named every male with his female, he must have imagined after the outward and fleshly to be as the beasts instead of after the inward to be as God. Therefore it is said, "But for Adam there was not found a help meet for him." Gen. 2:20 Thus the deep sleep fell upon him and in his sleep the virgin, the female, was taken from him to be presented to him from without in another form, to be possessed even as the beasts possessed their mates, and the children that were brought forth in travail and in pain were not brought forth in the image of God as Adam had been, but in the image of Adam himself, who had imagined after the outward to be even as the beasts.

If we separate heat from cold, we have two dangerous things - fire and frost - either of which will kill us, yet, joined together, they are beautiful and harmless. If we separate judgment from mercy, we have sadism on the one hand and confusion on the other, but joined together we have peace. Positive together with negative is powerful and useful, but either one alone is helpless. So also, while male and female were one in one Adam, there was a pure virgin sonship and harmony with God; but, separated the one from the other as the beasts, the door was opened wide for all disobedience with its attendant train of sin and death. Thus, when Eve was tempted by the serpent, she was no match for his satanic wisdom, for, when male was separated from female, wisdom was separated from understanding. Hence she, being separated from the knowledge of God that dwelt in Adam, became a prey to the knowledge of good and evil, and Adam, likewise no longer possessing that pure virgin within himself, was moved in passion as the beasts toward that which was without to bring forth sons, not in the image of God, but after the image of himself, in manner as the beasts of the field who, having no knowledge of God, desire only to sustain their physical life and reproduce themselves.

Thus they had partaken of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Their eyes were opened to see their outward forms and to know the grief of sustaining their bodies by sweaty toil and the sorrow of reproducing themselves in desperate pain and travail. The good spirit and glory that had been their covering was departed from them and they knew the shame of their nakedness before the Lord.

But we are near the end of our long night of deep sleep. The day of waking, of sonship, and of the open heavens is at hand. With every tick of the clock our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Each violent deed, each act of lawlessness, each war and earthquake that rocks the peace of the world brings us one day nearer to the hour when that first company of 144,000 virgin sons of God shall stand on Mount Zion with Christ and in Christ, clothed upon by the seven spirits of God as a rainbow round about the throne to govern the world in righteousness for-evermore.

One day during the life of our Lord on earth His friend Lazarus fell sick and Jesus, hearing of his illness, remained two days where He was until Lazarus had died. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep." But when He saw that the disciples did not understand, He said to them, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I am not there." Please read John 11:1-46 How well these words, our friend Lazarus sleepeth, fit the entire picture of the human race from Adam even until now, but the hour of awakening is almost here. Jesus, the first born from the dead, is about to call "comeforth" to all who are in Christ - not just to Lazarus or some other lonely man, but to all that great company whom he (Lazarus) represents, that all who died in Adam will live forever in Him.

Come now, and let us reason together in the Spirit, for there is an ever increasing longing in my heart to make at least the elect of God to see something of the length, the breadth, the depth, and the height of the goodness, the wisdom, and the love of God. God cannot be sufficed with the weak and sickly twaddle advanced by a harlot church as truth. What good is it for men to spend their lives studying doctrine only to find in the end that they know not God? All striving about doctrine is vanity and vexation of spirit, but to enter into the secret place of the Most High, to abide under His shadow and find delight in His presence is the all important thing. What a disastrous tragedy it is for men to begin in the Spirit and then imagine they can come to perfection by adhering to codes and ethics, rules and traditions. I tell you of a truth that a man who knows in his heart the truth that God loves the world, himself included, knows infinitely more than all his instructors who do not know in fact, but only in theory.

The time has come for you and me to so believe into Christ Jesus that here and now we will experience an awakening from the long winter of our sleep of death. The time has come for us all to stop looking through the polished doors of buildings that men erroneously call churches and start instead looking into the heart of God Himself. The time has come to exchange our sitting in comfortable pews for sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ. High time it is to cease from giving ear to the frothy eloquence of trained puppeteers who hold men captive to their wills, teaching them only what they want them to hear, and to sit instead, as Mary sat, at Jesus' feet to hear from His lips the unfolding of His purposes for the ages.

There are not many people who are sufficiently awake to believe it, but at this very moment tens of thousands of church goers of every sect and creed are walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful. Their delight is not in the law of the Lord, neither do they meditate in it either day or night. They are filled with doctrine and program, tradition and church activity, and, though they profess to be believers, they would not know Christ if they met Him on the street. Oh, let us awake and turn away from such vanity and come to know Him! Of a truth that lowly woman who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, kissing them without ceasing and wiping them with the hair of her head, knew more than all her learned critics, for she, dwelling in the love of God, believed all things while her learned critics, dwelling in the dismal hut of their human traditions, succeeded only in making the word of God of none effect.

It was in the evening of the sixth day that the Lord made the first man in His image. Now in the evening of the sixth dispensational day, even the dispensation of the grace of God, the Lord is again bringing an elect people whom He has chosen into the very image and likeness of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how happy are those people whose God is the Lord! How blessed the people who, like the blind man of old, have cast aside their hindering garments to run after Christ, who giveth sight that all may follow Him! How wise the people who have cast off their affiliation with the world and all its outward show of vanity, refusing the mind of satanic wisdom together with useless forms and ceremonies of an harlot church system that they may be partakers of the mind of Christ and the sevenfold spirit of sonship! Upon them as upon their Lord shall rest the seven Spirits of God even as the prophet Isaiah foretold saying,

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding;
The Spirit of counsel and might;
The Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

These are the seven Spirits continually before the throne of God by which the world will be governed in righteousness. These are the Spirits that will rest upon all the sons of God in that great kingdom when the whole world shall be governed in righteousness by that man whom God hath chosen. It was of these seven Spirits that John spoke when he wrote, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace be unto you and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne." **Rev. 1:4**

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." **Rev. 4:4-5** The seven lamps of fire are the seven Spirits of God. This is the

fulfillment of the ancient type, the candlestick, which stood in the Holy Place in the tabernacle in the wilderness, which was made of pure gold (divine) and had seven golden lampstands and seven lamps burning pure olive oil, a symbol of the Spirit of God.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." **Rev. 5:6** The seven horns of God's perfect power and the seven eyes of God's full perfection are the seven spirits of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge, reverence, and deity that are ever before God's throne.

I am powerless to describe the magnificence that is here - seven Spirits of God blazing as seven lamps of fire, radiating forth the perfect light! As the seven lamps of the candlestick are but one candlestick, so also the seven Spirits are but one Spirit, even the Holy Spirit of God. The seven horns of power on the head of one lamb, even the Lamb of God, are but one Spirit of power, and the seven eyes likewise are one Spirit of God. Wonderful beyond words are the glories portrayed here, but our hearts well nigh stand still as we behold with John the dazzling glory that appeared before him. John saw one sitting upon a throne, and He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. A rainbow is one but it has seven colors, and the seven colors of that glorious rainbow represent the sevenfold Spirit of God, even as the seven lamps of fire, the seven horns, and the seven eyes.

The first rainbow that ever appeared to men was a promise and a covenant from God to assure the world of His goodness and mercy. Here again it appears in the glorious age that even now casts its rays of dawn upon us, promising the world that all its inhabitants will be governed in righteousness by the elect whom God has chosen and upon whom shall rest forever the seven Spirits of God. And there was a rainbow round about the throne! What a magnificent promise for a benighted world that from time immemorial has known nothing but unrighteous government! Even the throne of Solomon was plagued with unrighteousness, greed and taxation so fearfully oppressive that the whole kingdom was divided at his death. The reign of David, good as it was, was filled with bloodshed until he who was a man after God's own heart was denied the right to build the temple because he was such a bloody man. What kingdom or empire has not fallen prey to wickedness and corruption until it finally sank beneath the waves of its own sin and perished beneath the weight of its own iniquity? The historian Edward Gibbon, has listed five primary causes for the decline and fall of the mighty Roman Empire as follows:

1. The rapid increase of divorce and the undermining of the sanctity of the home.
2. The spiraling rise of taxes and extravagant spending.
3. The mounting craze for pleasure and the brutality of sports.
4. The building of gigantic armaments and the failure to realize that the real enemy lay within the gates of the Empire in moral decay.
5. The decay of religion and the fading of faith into a mere form, leaving the people without a guide.

Even the most casual look at the above deductions should convince any man that the same five pallbearers who carried out the corpse of the Roman Empire are at the door of our own nations to carry them out also, for I doubt that any of the mighty empires of the past, the days of Noah, or even Sodom itself could hold a candle to the rampaging iniquity that is sweeping every nation on the face of the earth in our day. Were it not for the mercy of God in sending great tribulation on the earth in the very near future, the whole earth would doom itself.

The ordinary man is kept in the dark and knows practically nothing of the abounding corruption in governmental circles, the fraud, the cheating, the outright lying and endless graft, the hobnobbing with crooks and criminals, the receiving of campaign funds from gangsters and dope peddlers, and the thousand things of which the word of God declares, "It is a shame even to speak of the things that are done by them in secret."

But a better day is coming and it is coming very soon - the day of the rainbow round the throne in sight like unto an emerald, the day of the seven lamps burning with fire, which are the seven Spirits of God resting heavily upon those glorious pure virgin sons of Zion, God's masterpiece and the hope of all creation. The day is at hand when the seven eyes of perfect insight and understanding shall search the hearts and minds of men

and nations, and the seven wonderful horns of power shall bring into one all nations of the earth in righteousness before Him.

"Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, "Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money." **Isa. 52:1-3** It is time to awake out of sleep, for the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Even now our salvation is much nearer than when we believed. These are not idle words, but words of truth and soberness. It is high time to awake out of sleep. It is high time to realize that the solemn words of Jesus are being fulfilled in all the world about us. It is time to diligently take heed that the searching prophecies of Paul are being fulfilled in that idolatrous system that dares to call itself the church, whose members have on every hand become lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, despisers of those that are truly good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

One of the most disgusting trends of our age is seen in the fact that evil men with seducing spirits have seized upon the wonderful truths of God and, though they have neither part nor lot in them, they proclaim them far and wide as great revelations. Oh, how I loathe this evil thing! They are as unscrupulous as Simon the sorcerer who, seeing that the Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands, offered money that he also might be given the same power that upon whomsoever he laid his hands they would receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter, discerning the wickedness of his evil heart, said, "Thy money perish with thee, for thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this inheritance, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Cf. **Acts 8:18-25** All over the world today men for filthy lucre's sake are proclaiming the message of sonship, but the Spirit of God's Son is not in them. Vainly they point to miracles and crowds, converts and disciples as evidence of their sonship, but all these things are empty and vain. We may with confidence affirm that every man and every woman who in any way is seeking to build up his own little kingdom does not possess the Spirit of sonship. A man who seeks to be or willingly becomes the central figure is wrong and does not possess the Spirit of sonship, for the true Spirit of sonship points men away from self and toward Jesus Christ. If I seek in any way to hold you as my disciple, I am wrong and void of the Spirit of sonship, but if, after you have read this article, your spirit cries within, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name", then I think you are becoming His disciple and the true Spirit of sonship is working in you. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, abba Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." **Gal 4:6-7**

Those blessed sons of God who are to reign with Him in His kingdom will not be men who have made great names for themselves, but men and women who through contact with Christ Jesus our Lord have partaken fully of the sevenfold Spirit of sonship. Their wisdom and knowledge comes not from schools or universities, but from the blessed fact that they have been with Jesus.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord. When a man is filled with the Holy Spirit, he is not filled with an influence, a power, or a thing. He is filled with a divine person. Therefore it is said the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. If all people who seek to be baptized with the Holy Spirit had the beautiful understanding that they were seeking to be filled with that divine person who bears within His mighty self, not only all the attributes of personality, but all the attributes of divine personality, then their approach to God would be very different than it is. Almost always people who are seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit are mistakenly seeking a blessing, the receiving of which, they hope, will impart to them some sort of miraculous power that will enable them to live more powerfully or perhaps endue them with a supernatural gift. To speak with tongues is often their highest aim, for, if they can attain to that phenomenon, then they are happy and satisfied in their belief that they have received all that God has for them in this age.

How pitiful is such an understanding! How desperately short we sell ourselves when we seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an experience that we are to attain instead of presenting ourselves as empty vessels to be

filled with that divine person, the Holy Spirit! The one hundred and twenty souls who were filled with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost were not receiving an overwhelming blessing; they were receiving a divine person who had come forth from heaven at the bidding of Christ that He might dwell in them and abide with them throughout all the age. For this purpose our blessed Lord Jesus Christ left this promise: "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more: but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." **John 14:16-20** This divine person, who is God and is sent forth by God, full of all wisdom and truth, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and reverence brings in His mighty fullness untold blessing both to the world that knows not God and to those blessed ones who through His power and the cleansing of the blood of Christ have been brought from darkness into light, being translated into the kingdom of God's dear and precious Son.

It is through the wisdom and power of that divine person, the Holy Spirit, that the world is convicted of sin, given the spirit of repentance, and made ready for the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

**Of sin, because they believe not on Me;
Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see
Me no more:
Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."
John 16:7-11.**

See then the eternal weight of blessing the Holy Spirit has brought to a world that knows not God in first convicting the sinner of his sin - not only in telling him of it, but fastening it upon him, declaring the fact of sin, the fault of sin, and the fruit of sin. But God be praised, He does not leave us in the wilderness of despair in our conviction, but reproves the world of righteousness, pointing sinners to the Son of God, who by His righteousness was so acceptable to God that He could not be holden by death, but is risen from the dead and gone to the Father (compare verse 10) that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, and that all who believe in Him may be free from sin that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. See Rom. 3:26 Likewise also the Holy Spirit convicts the world of judgment: First, that all who persist in sin will come into judgment; second, that Satan, the prince of this world, is judged; and third, that Jesus Christ has fully borne the judgment of God that we may be justified from all things as Paul by the Spirit has declared. "Being justified freely by His grace, through redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." **Rom 3:24-25**

Great in goodness is the blessing of the Holy Spirit toward a world of unbelieving men, but behold how great is the Spirit of the Lord toward those who have yielded their lives to the control of Him who is the Spirit of truth, for "when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." **John 16:13-14**

In the Greek language from which our New Testament was translated the word spirit is a neuter noun. Thus in Greek a spirit should always be referred to as it. But so definite is the fact of the personality of the Holy Spirit that even in Greek personal pronouns are used when referring to Him. A prime example of this fact is found in John 16:13-14 where eight times the personal pronoun "he" is used with reference to the Holy Spirit.

Know then, O man that it is the Spirit of the Lord that rests upon and abides within the sons of God. He who is baptized with the Holy Spirit has not received a mere exuberant blessing in his soul, but a divine person capable of speaking, loving, reproving, teaching, convicting, and transforming, One who will guide him into all truth, for He is the Spirit of truth, and One who will show him things to come. Where in ten thousand worlds can

greater truth be found than this: "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:27**

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM

The second Spirit to rest upon the sons of God is the Spirit of wisdom. As the rainbow round about the throne was seven colors yet one bow, so in like manner the seven Spirits of sonship are one Spirit. As each color of the rainbow has its own glory and manifestation, so do the seven Spirits before His throne as they rest upon the sons of God, transforming them into the image of Christ.

To understand what I say you will have to come out of all former tradition. Just as Peter left the safety of the boat to place his feet on the forbidding waves of a turbulent sea, so to follow Christ you must now leave the seeming safety of the ship of church tradition to walk with Him in realms forbidden to natural men. It becomes necessary to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and touch the untouchable. Thus the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world become clearly seen, even His eternal power and Godhead. Rom. 1:20 Divine wisdom is not something that can be learned from books and teachers. Wisdom must be imparted by God. So great is wisdom and all that pertains to it that the Spirit of God moved upon the wise and understanding Solomon to write a whole book to display that it was a living personality. Numerous writers have often in the holy scripture diligently set forth the marvels of it until the innermost soul of the reader tingles with anticipation in the hope of being partaker of that wisdom which laid the foundation of the earth and hung the stars upon nothing. Such wisdom is too great for man. The natural mind can never attain it.

If we will step from the little boat of human understanding to tread the waves of revelation with Him, we will come to believe that wisdom, like the Holy Spirit, is not a thing to be studied but a living personality. She is one of the seven lamps burning with fire before the throne, one of the seven colors of the rainbow round about the throne. Oh, how different do spiritual things become when we trace them from death to life, from inanimate things to living personalities! In the triumphant words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life", resurrection passes from the dead and lifeless realm of theology to the realm of personality and living being which Christ Himself is.

Hear now the declaration of wisdom as she seeks to lead us from the realm of the known to the realm of the unknown, from the grave of dead philosophy to the celestial realm of living things.

"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the forward mouth do I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. The Lord possessed me (wisdom) in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth, or the fields, or the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways." **Prov. 8:12-32**

Leave not wisdom in the grave clothes of human theology, but let her be raised, even as Christ, from the dead to abide and grow a living reality in your life, a lamp of fire, a color of the rainbow, the Spirit by which the world will be ruled in the age which is at our doors.

THE SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING

The third Spirit of sonship is the Spirit of understanding. Since the prophet Isaiah has called understanding a Spirit, we must free ourselves once again of the notion of dealing with understanding as a dead and inanimate thing. We cannot learn understanding as we would learn arithmetic, for it, being a lifeless fact, can as well be performed by a machine as by man, but understanding is a living thing that enters as a Spirit into the soul, a lamp burning with fire, a Spirit before God's throne. How easy it is to miss the vital significance of one word in Scripture! When the Scripture speaks of the quick and the dead, it is speaking of the living and the dead, for "quick" here means "living". 1. Pet. 4:5. And again, when Paul says, "The word of God is quick and powerful", Heb. 4:12, the meaning is living and powerful. So also when Isaiah says, "He shall make Him of quick understanding", Isa. 11:1, He means He will make Him of living understanding. If understanding then is a living thing, how apt it is that it should be called a Spirit that shall rest upon the sons of God, who are indeed the branch from the rod of the stem of Jesse. Isa. 11:1 Jesse was the father of David, the king. Matt. 1:6 Christ is the rod or vine from the stem of Jesse, and we are the branch out of His roots even as He said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." And upon this branch shall rest the Spirit of living understanding.

"Wisdom is the principal thing," said Solomon; "therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding." Prov. 4:7 It is sport to a fool to do mischief, but a man of understanding hath wisdom. It is better to get wisdom than gold, and understanding is rather to be chosen than choice silver, for "understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it." **Prov. 16:22**

Understanding does not judge either by the sight of the eye or by the hearing of the ear, but with righteousness it judges the poor and reproves with equity the meek of the earth. Isa. 11:3-4 In the face of the condemning multitudes it cries, "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness; and then shall every man have praise of God." It was neither love nor forgiveness alone that led Jesus to say to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee", but the Spirit of understanding, for He knoweth our frame and, remembering that we are dust, He said, "Go and sin no more".

The next time you stand ready to condemn men for their slowness to see the glories you behold, give place to the Spirit of understanding that it may possess you; then you will see that God alone can open the eyes of him that was born blind. We have great pity for the man who is blind or who bears in his body some physical deformity, for understanding has taught us that these afflictions came through no fault of his own. Why then do we cast away the Spirit of understanding from us by demanding that he whose spiritual eyes have never been opened should be able to see the mountains filled with the hosts of the Lord? If the men who stoned Stephen to death had seen the heavens open as he did, they would not have stoned him; therefore the Spirit of understanding in his soul whispered, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

"Be not children in understanding, howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." **1 Cor. 14:20** I greatly fear that for many hundreds of years God's people have been men in malice and children in understanding. From time immemorial the church has been a vast feuding ground of malice, envy, bitterness and strife, full of pettiness, peevishness, whisperings, debate, deceit, backbiting, and evil speaking: Men in malice and children in understanding!

Have you ever prayed that God would open the eyes of your understanding that you may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? Ah, how much better this would be than to seek gold and silver to the detriment of your devotion to God, for the heart of God is truly pained when He from heaven beholds His sons neglecting their fervent devotion to Him while they diligently rush about to attain temporal things. Walk no longer in the vanity of your mind, having the understanding darkened, while alienating yourself from the life of God through ignorance. Never spend your days seeking riches, for they make themselves wings and fly away, and if by the will of God riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Just as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, so the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Prov. 9:10. We can never over-emphasize the importance of our coming to know (iod since so much is involved in it.

Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. But neither wisdom nor understanding will ever be ours by following the traditions of the dead church systems, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding," saith the Lord. **Prov. 3:5** Yet God's people are always leaning on their own understanding and so often our own understanding is nothing more than the faulty understanding of other men whose traditions, interpretations, and deductions we have accepted. Human understanding is terribly limited. It is limited by lack of knowledge, lack of facts, the presence of prejudice and carnal thinking. "Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the heart." Therefore lean no longer upon thine own understanding in anything. Judge neither after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears, but seek that living Spirit of understanding that comes from God alone, for "when wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh forward things." **Prov. 2:10-12**

THE SPIRIT OF COUNSEL

We shall call it the Spirit of counsel, for that is what it is. Too long the world has known human counsel, which is in fact nothing more than the advice of the carnal mind. As an animal looks at all things through the eyes of an animal with the limited understanding of a beast, so fallen men with carnal minds see all things through carnal eyes and give their counsel as carnal men. They even dare to give spiritual counsel from their carnal minds, but this can only result in death. There are counseling services in every city where counsel is given for a fee. Some of it is good; some is deplorable and bad, and often the counselor is in as great darkness as the counseled. It is nothing short of amazing to behold what the world will accept as a counselor as infants counsel the aged, unmarried instruct the married in the arts of ' home-making, and the childless counsel the fathers and mothers in the arts of guiding the family.

The carnal mind has nothing to offer in counsel but darkness and death, for the carnal mind is death, but the spiritual mind is life and peace. The darkness of the carnal mind becomes ever more dark and corrupt as the centuries of our fallen state increase. The counsel given by the wise men of earth brings naught but greater frustration until the hearts of men are failing them for fear and looking after the things that are coming upon the earth. The whole system that calls itself the church has rejected the counsel of God. Is it any wonder, then, that the world of sinners has done the same thing so that when we pipe there is no dancing, and when we lament, none do mourn?

But the age is very near at hand when the sons of God will reign with Him, not in rejection and sorrow, but in transcending glory. The mind of Christ shall dwell richly in all the sons of God and from that divine mind shall flow forth the counsel of the Lord. Now counsel is advice; it is advice of the Lord. Counsel is good judgment. It is judgment taken by consultation with the Lord. It is a godly and deliberate purpose. The exact counsel that Jesus Christ Himself would give will be the counsel of the sons of God, the branch of the Lord, for upon them shall rest the Spirit of counsel.

Long centuries ago the apostle John looked through the telescope of divine inspiration and beheld at the end of the age a church neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm ready to be spewed from the mouth of the Lord. He saw how rich they were in gold and silver and the increase of goods and property, and he heard (hem boast, "We have need of nothing." But they knew not that they were wretched and poor and miserable and blind and naked. Rev. 3:16-18 They knew only the counsel and wisdom of the natural mind, neither seeing nor comprehending their wretched estate. Hear now the counsel and wisdom of God to them, for the counsel given to them may well be the first counsel that shall be given to all the world when the sons of God begin their righteous reign. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried with fire that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." **Rev. 3:18-19** My heart is filled with prayer and desire that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened to see that that which John beheld in this great vision is in reality the condition in which all Christians live who still adhere to the miserable bondage, the wretched nakedness, and spiritual blindness of the existing church systems, for they have rejected the counsel of the Lord against themselves that they may go on in their coldness, love of money, and spiritual death.

The hour is nigh when all the world shall come under the Spirit of counsel manifested in God's sons, for God has said, "I will call the man that executeth My counsel from a far country," for there is no counsel like the counsel of God which declares the end from the beginning, and from the ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." See **Isa. 46:9-11**

THE SPIRIT OF MIGHT

The nations of the earth are vainly mustering their mighty men of war. The measured tread of their armies reverberates throughout the earth. Their arsenals are filled to overflowing with weapons of unimaginable destruction, but for all this their hands hang weak and their hearts faint, for they find themselves powerless to cope with the forces of lawlessness and wickedness that rise on every side like specters from the tomb. Men have forgotten God. They do not know that nations are but dust in the palm of God's almighty hand. They fill their mouths with statements of blasphemy as they declare their feeble war against Him. But He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

Do not forget that God is never late. Neither is He ever found sleeping or unprepared. There are no emergencies with God, for He knows the end from the beginning. Think not in thine heart that Satan hath almost obtained the victory, for Satan has no power at all but such as is given him of God. There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13:1 Satan and the nations that serve him are doing only what they are permitted to do, for God that ruleth in heaven and in earth setteth up and putteth down whom He will. While the nations loudly rattle their swords, vainly boasting of their secret weapons, God is secretly preparing His sons of might, for the Spirit of might shall rest upon them. The stone is being cut from the mountain without noise and without hands to smite the earthen feet of the image man has builded, Dan. 2:34, that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His mighty Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.

The wonderful age that next shall dawn will know the glory of the Spirit of might as it rests upon God's holy sons. The world will know the wonder of true authority and might with wisdom, counsel, and understanding. The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench. He will reprove with equity the meek of the earth, and with the breath of His nostrils will He slay the wicked. Every yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing, for all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him.

The knowledge of God cannot be learned in schools and universities. The knowledge derived from schools and instructors in this world is for this age only and is as lifeless and dead as I he things with which it deals. But the knowledge of God is not an accumulation of dead facts, but a living reality that springs like a resurrection from the Spirit of knowledge, which is in truth ii manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God. Oh, how lively things become when God gives us the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of understanding that we might know that counsel, might, knowledge and reverence are living things with personality proceeding forth from the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit.

If you find such a positive statement hard to believe, perhaps you can first believe a more negative one. When we speak of evil things, we speak of lying, adultery, whoredoms, infirmities, errors, and so forth; but the Lord does not hesitate to say that some people have lying spirits, spirits of bondage, spirits of adultery, spirits of whoredoms, spirits of error, spirits of infirmity, unclean spirits, and many others. While modern learning scoffs at all such teaching, they themselves who scoff are filled with the spirit of delusion that they should not know the truth.

I do not believe in the nonsense of demonology as practiced by some Christians, who seem to delight themselves in continually talking about demons of this and demons of that, and who continually talk of casting out demons. They are usually betrayed by their own imagination. The truth is that every truly repentant soul is delivered from every evil by the omnipotent power of the blood of Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit the moment he believes. The best way to "give place ID the devil" is to start talking about him. The point is, however, that since the Lord recognizes the evils above mentioned as spirits rather than mere circumstances, then we should be able to understand what is meant when God speaks of the Spirit of wisdom,

the Spirit of knowledge, the Spirit of truth, or any other. We should be able to see that these are not mere human attributes, but personable beings and living realities as alive as God Himself, living things proceeding from that divine person, the Holy Spirit.

God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, for the workers of iniquity have no knowledge, who eat God's people as they eat bread. Psa. 53:4 But the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. Prov. 2:6 The knowledge of God makes one wiser than all his enemies so that he has more understanding than all his teachers. His knowledge is high; we cannot attain unto it, but He giveth knowledge, sound wisdom, and discretion. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that our hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God.

We are living in the hour when God has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land because there is no truth, no mercy, nor knowledge of God, but lying and swearing, killing and stealing, and committing adultery. Hosea 4:1-2. The world is filled with a knowledge that is leading it to destruction, and the people of God are chained with the shackles and death of tradition, but God is separating a people from the knowledge of the world that He might impart to them the Spirit of knowledge, for the kingdom age is at hand when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

THE SPIRIT OF FEAR

The fear of the Lord has nothing to do with being afraid. The fear of the Lord is reverence for the Lord. It is profound respect mingled with awe, affection, and veneration. It is reverential trust with hatred of evil. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. Psa. 19:9 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Prov. 8:13. The fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and His children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. Prov. 14:26-27 By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil, Prov. 16:6, for the fear of the Lord tendeth to life. Prov. 19:23

God has spoken of a people of whom it is said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." **Rom. 13:18** With their tongues they have used deceit, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness, and the way of peace they have not known. The blessed Spirit of reverence for the Lord has fled from the presence of God's people, for they seem to think nothing of light and silly talk in the presence of that which should be deemed holy. They approach God loudly and carelessly in prayer, willingly barter spiritual things for temporal gain, and quote scriptures in jest, making a mock of reverence.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the beginning of knowledge, too. God will never grant wisdom and understanding to the man whose soul is void of true reverence for God, for true reverence is true humility, and true humility places God's will above all else in the universe. "We ought to obey God rather than man" is its plea.

These are the seven Spirits of sonship that shall rest like a cloud of glory upon the sons of God. By these shall the glory and order of God's kingdom be established. Wisdom hath builded her seven pillars: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, reverence, and deity. These are the seven lamps of lire before the throne. These are the seven Spirits of God. Rev. 4: 4-5 These are the seven eyes of the Lamb. Pev. 5:6. This is the rainbow round about God's throne.

CHAPTER TWO THE SIX WATERPOTS OF STONE

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And with all thy getting get understanding." "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shall thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." **Prov. 2:3-6** Therefore "happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." **Prov. 3:13-15**

Human interpretations of the scripture and natural ways of looking at things are fruitless vines and wells without water. They are broken cisterns that can hold no water. Let wisdom teach us that our natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2:14 This scripture is doubly true. **Firstly, the natural man cannot receive them because he is natural and the things of God are spiritual.** Thus to his ears all spiritual things have the ring of foolishness. That meat is for the belly and the belly for meat he understands well and desires much, but meat for the spirit is meat to eat that he knows not of. John 4:14,32 **Secondly, the natural man cannot receive the things of God because God does not show them to him.** The Lord refuses to mix the pearls of His understanding with the husks of the swine. "It is not right," says God, "to take the children's meat and cast it to the dogs." This the Holy Spirit consistently refuses to do. It was for this reason that Jesus, when speaking to the multitudes, always spoke in parables that hearing they might hear and not understand, and seeing they might see and not perceive. See Matt. 13:11-15

Many people dislike the thing I now say, but, because it is the truth, it must be stated. God has decreed that He will awaken and make alive every man in his own order. 1 Cor. 15:22-23 Every man is left in the outer darkness of the natural and carnal mind until his turn comes to be awakened, convicted, quickened mid made alive, and converted. All the evangelism in the world HIM not speed up nor hasten the conversion of a soul. There is a lime to be born in the natural, Eccles. 3:1-2 and a time to be horn in the Spirit, Acts 31:48 We may try to hasten a man's conversion and we may think we have succeeded, but in the end we will find we have an abortion on our hands. If God's people would be honest before God and before themselves, they would soon discover that the reason for the millions of backsliders in the church system is that they were rushed and hurried into milking a profession. Because they were not under deep in conviction of sin, there was no true repentance in their hearts and, because there was no true repentance in their hearts, there was no true conversion. If we analyze this inspired statement, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death", our minds are forced to the conclusion that, whenever there is godly Borrow for sin, it is accompanied by true repentance of sin, and, whenever true repentance occurs, there will never be a repentance of our repentance. The backslider is a man who has repented of his repentance, if indeed he ever did repent in the lust place. This is strong talk, I freely admit, but it is the explanation of the fact as it is. The inexcusable error of mass revival meetings and conversions of our day is that the revivals are man-made and the conversions are not accompanied by the penitential cry of a broken spirit, "God be merciful to me, a sinner". In its place we find some ridiculous capsule type conversion that sounds something like this:

"Do you believe you are a sinner?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe Christ died for sinners?"

"Yes."

"Will you receive Him as your Saviour?"

"Yes."

"Then you are saved!"

"I am?"

"Yes. The Bible says you are saved. God bless you." When we see such conversions as this, is it any wonder that few, if any, converts can be found six months after the great evangelist has closed his campaign? And how true are the words of the old song,

"Not much crying for mercy;
Not much kneeling to pray.

Just a card signed or handshake
Is the new-fashioned way."

Let us turn away from the understanding of men that God may give light to our eyes and wisdom to our hearts. "Open Thou mine eyes," David prayed, "that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." **Psa. 119:18** It is in the hope that God will open wide the eyes of our understanding that I now attempt to set before you a truth which God has made real to my heart and a parable which to my knowledge has not been hitherto unfolded.

For almost two thousand years we have been listening to the sweet sounds of the gospel of grace. Because grace above all else is the truth of this present dispensation, it is perfectly normal that the grace of God should be the theme of our songs, the burden of our sermons, and our rejoicing night and day. But what was the theme of Abraham's song, seeing he lived in a dispensation long before grace was revealed? Abraham, who lived in the dispensation of promise, undoubtedly rejoiced in that wonderful promise, "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed." The promise of God was always upon his heart. No doubt he talked about it to Sarah at meal times. He prayed about it at family worship and dreamed of it in the night. He planned for it; he hoped for it; he rejoiced in it; and all through the weary, fruitless years and years of waiting he staggered not through unbelief. Rom. 4:20 The immutable promise of God and the hope it held was ever before him, quickening his steps and gladdening his heart as he looked for the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. As Paul triumphed in the gospel of grace and Abraham rejoiced in the gospel of promise, so Moses exulted in the holy law of God, and others, as Adam and Noah before them, walked in faithfulness to the covenant God had given them.

What shall we now say of the hour in which we live? Everywhere on earth and at all times the elect of God are awed by the blessed assurance that a new dispensation is about to dawn upon us. The kingdom of God is at hand. The covenant in which we have walked for the past two thousand years is waxing old as did all covenants before it and a new age, even the dispensation of the kingdom, is about to be established. "In that He saith, "A new covenant", He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." **Heb. 8:13** Once again the ancient truth is gripping our hearts, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." **Heb. 10:9** Just as all previous dispensations have had their gospel (good news), so also there will be a gospel (good news) of the kingdom of God, and it is with this gospel of gospels that we now address ourselves throughout the pages of this book.

"The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.** His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, **Fill the waterpots with water.** And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.** And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew); the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." **John 2:1-11**

Jesus Christ is the King of the coming kingdom; therefore it is not in the least strange to find that everything that happened during His eventful ministry was symbolic, typical, and prophetic of the coming kingdom of God. He is the King who will reign in the kingdom. Therefore all the events of His ministry were a magnificent, though miniature, display of the unspeakable glory of the kingdom age. In the first few chapters of the gospel of Mark we see a most informative display of events that will occur at the very beginning of His kingdom reign. I hope none of us will imagine that the kingdom of God is going to be a long series of revival campaigns and healing meetings, for that is not the truth; but the deliverance of individuals from all manner of evil and bondage as portrayed in the gospels is, in fact, God's promise of universal deliverance when He shall reign in the glory of His kingdom, the age of "setting things right." When the kingdom age begins, Christ will do for all the world what He did for individuals during the three and one-half years of His ministry on earth and possibly

in the same order. This progress of the kingdom of God is clearly evident in Mark's gospel. "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." **Mark 1:14-15** This is followed by the call and preparation of the men who were to reign with Him - a work, I must add, that has continued throughout the entire age of grace. Mark 1:16-20 Then comes the voice of authority (verses 21,22) - a voice almost unknown all through this age of grace, but when Christ's reign begins, all mankind will know that authority rests in Him whose name is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. The government will be upon His shoulder to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. See **Isa. 9:6-7** Moffat's beautiful translation of this passage reads as follows: "For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; the royal dignity He wears, and this the title He bears - A wonder of a counselor, a divine hero, a father for all time, a peaceful prince! Great is His authority, endless is His peace, over David's throne and His dominion, to base it firm and stable on justice and good order from henceforth and forever - thanks to the jealous care of the Eternal."

Next in His ministry came the miracle of the casting out of the unclean spirit. I need not tell you that in our day no spirit is more rampant in the hearts of the people than the unclean spirit. The filth of Sodom and the abominable corruption of the days of Noah are everywhere manifest from the throne to the dungeon, in high places as well as low places, from the mansions of millionaires to the gutters of skid road. I think we should give heed to the very significant fact that in this particular instance the man with the unclean spirit was in the synagogue. The church system in our day has become "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." **Rev. 18:2** No wonder the angels are calling, "Come out of her. My people."

When the unclean spirit had been cast out, then followed the healing of the raging fever. Mark. 1:29-31 This wicked world is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt. A dreadful destroying fever rages in the earth as nation rises against nation, kingdom against kingdom, army against army, black against white, husbands against wives, and parents against children. But the rabid and tempestuous fevers will all be healed by His matchless skill and all will rise in peace to minister unto Him. In verses 32-34 we are told of the healing of all that were diseased and all that were possessed of devils. And in verse 40) the leper was delivered from his uncleanness. Leprosy is a loathsome, wasting disease, defiling and emaciating the body as MII defiles the soul. But, blessed be God, in His reign the dominion of sin will be broken forever. Righteousness shall cover the earth. The hearts of men will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and "in that day shall there be upon the hills of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD." **Zech. 14:20** We could continue this line of thought throughout the four gospels. We could watch as Jesus touched the palsied man and delivered him of his wearisome trembling, or stand with Him among the tombs of the dead to marvel as He raised them to the life, which He Himself is. When He shall reign, all that are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God and they who hear shall live. Sail with Him, if you will, on the threatening sea and hear as He speaks peace to the troubled waters (the nations). Weep for joy as they cease from their turmoil and fretting and reflect as a mirror the face of the Prince of Peace.

According to the gospel of John, the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. This, too, is a revelation of the kingdom of God. The third day was the third day after John's witness as recorded in John 1:15-34. Verse 35 speaks of the next day, which would be the second day. The third day mentioned here is important in that it is symbolic of a future day in which all past ages will find their fulfillment. Whereas a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, then the "third day" after these events definitely speaks of the kingdom of God, John's day being the first, the day of grace the second, and the kingdom day the third.

There is to be a wedding on the third day, which Jesus will attend, not as a guest but as the bridegroom. With Him will be His many brethren who have come to sonship by His grace, even the fullness of God's Christ. This is the bridegroom who is to be united forever with that New Jerusalem bride, whom John saw descending from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. **Rev. 21:1, 2:9-27** Never was there such a bride as this and never such a groom. Of this union Adam was a type before Eve was separated from his body. But we must leave those blessed meditations for each thoughtful saint to peruse for himself while we consider in more detail the six waterpots of stone.

"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto Him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The hour which He calls "My hour" will come when His kingdom is come, but that all men might foretaste the glory of that wonderful age when His hour has come, He set before us this prophetic miracle to gladden our hearts and to quicken our understandings in anticipation of the holiness, the power, and the glory the world will know when His hour, His kingdom, has come.

The six waterpots of stone represent the six dispensations, which precede the kingdom of God. The water which each contained is that special undying truth presented by God to the world in each dispensation - innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, and grace. I think it is clearly evident that these waterpots were either altogether empty or very nearly so, and it is significant in the light of what we are about to say that Jesus our Lord ordered that they all be filled or re-filled with water; and they were filled according to His command right up to the brim. John 2:7 It is true that the truth that once filled the six dispensational waterpots has almost completely run out until there remains scarcely any truth in the earth. Preachers who disbelieve the virgin birth, deny the power of the blood of Christ, contradict the story of creation, puff at the truth of verbal inspiration, despise the resurrection, and scoff at the second coming of Christ proclaim their unbelief before the congregations of the land. Even among those who profess personal salvation there is an incredible ignorance of the purposes of God and a slavish adherence to every imaginable tradition. Whichever way we look at it the waterpots are empty and the life-giving glory of their truth has leaked out into the sands of tradition and heresy. While God's people are speaking of the dark ages of the past, they are unaware that all about us darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Isa. 60:2.

The gospel of the kingdom of God will embrace within itself all the truth and revelation of all previous ages and much more besides, because the truth of those ages was weak through man's flesh - weak as water because of the sin and darkness of the human heart; but in the kingdom age, the age of "setting things right", that which was once as weak as water will be transformed by the Spirit into the strong wine of the kingdom, a strong spiritual wine that will gladden every heart and cause to live all that was ready to die. Let not our hearts ever imagine that our wise heavenly Father has been wasting time through the ages since Eden. Be that far from the truth. Little by little, line upon line, and precept upon precept He has been breaking the bread of life to mankind, lavishly spending entire dispensations to establish in the human family one golden nugget of truth that His divine nature in all its aspects might be revealed to us who are to have dominion, and that we through His Son, Jesus Christ, might become the possessors of the divine nature, that as He is so we might also be in this present world.

THE WATERPOT OF INNOCENCE

The noun *innocence* is an English word of very common usage, but that we might have a better understanding of the extent and purity of its meaning, I quote the following lengthy summary of it from Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary of the English language: (1) the state of being innocent; the condition of being free from evil or from that which corrupts or vitiates; purity of heart; freedom from taint. (2) Freedom from guilt as of some specific crime or charge; absence of legal guilt. (3) Freedom from harmful or noxious qualities; harmlessness; innocuousness. (4) Simplicity or ignorance arising from natural lack of intellect, or imperfect development or attainment. (5) Freedom from illegal taint. Some of the synonyms of innocence are: blamelessness, goodness, faultlessness, guiltlessness, harmlessness, innocuousness, inoffensiveness, purity, simplicity, sincerity, sinlessness, stainlessness, and virtue. The word innocent is explained as follows: Not tainted by sin; pure; ignorant of evil; blameless, as an innocent babe. In a more general sense, holy, sinless, free from guilt of a particular action or crime; free from qualities that can harm or injure; innocuous; harmless; of artless or ingenious disposition. Along with this beautiful statement belong the synonyms blameless, clean, clear, faultless, guileless, guiltless, harmless, immaculate, innocuous, innoxious, inoffensive, pure, right, righteous, sinless, stainless, upright, virtuous.

The first dispensation is the dispensation of innocence. It was not the Lord who gave it that lovely name; nevertheless, I cannot imagine a name that could be more fittingly ascribed to that illustrious genesis of the ages or that could better or more beautifully describe that blessed period of virtue and holiness that filled the world with its fragrance before the dark cloud of sin passed between man and his Lord. One would need a mind a thousand fold more fruitful than any mind on earth to contemplate the surpassing blessedness of an

age in which those who governed it were untainted by sin, blameless as babes, free of crime, holy, harmless, undefiled, and devoid of any quality that could harm or injure as they walked in the smile of God. If there is any way of knowing how long that blessed age of innocence continued, I confess I am quite ignorant of it. There may be some slight evidence in Gen 5:3 in that Adam lived one hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own image. Thus he probably lived a hundred or more years in his innocence before any of his sons were born. That, of course, is quite irrelevant, and, had it been necessary for us to know the number of years he continued in this blessed state, the Lord would certainly have made it plain to us. We are assured, however, that "in the day God created man, in the likeness of God made He him." **Gen. 5:1**. From the very beginning, before ever the dispensational tree began to bear its sevenfold fruit, God had sounded forth the mighty, irrevocable fiat: "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion."

With the most emphatic emphasis I solemnly state that the divine edict, "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion...", is forever irrevocable, irreversible, and completely immutable. Until men of God are able to understand that all things, both good and evil, that have fallen across our pathway have been ordained by the wisdom of God to work steadfastly and immutably toward the goal that man should be at last in the exact image of God who created him, we will never understand life as we should nor comprehend the ways of God. Until we understand, oh child of God, that the temptation and fall of man in Eden's lovely garden was an essential part of the eternal purpose, we will fall short in all spiritual understanding. We will find ourselves standing among that bewildered, tradition-ridden throng who by their teaching would have us to believe that Satan is wiser than the omniscient One in that he was able to thwart the plan of God by his chicanery when the Omnipresent was somehow absent. The beginning of all wisdom is the fear of God. Wisdom declares that there is no true wisdom apart from Him. None can fathom His omniscient ways nor gainsay the wisdom of His counsel. From Him everything comes; by Him everything exists; and in Him everything - everything - ends. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. With what infinite wisdom did Paul say by the Spirit, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20**

Someone will certainly ask me, and justly so, "Why would God allow an age so glorious as the age of innocence with all its splendor and peace, ruled by a son of God as Adam was, to come to such an ignominious end? Why would He allow Adam, who was God's son, a man holy and undefiled in innocence, untainted by sin, free from qualities that could harm or injure, blameless, faultless, guileless, guiltless, immaculate, inoffensive, spotless, stainless and upright, to fall with the creation into a condition where his very nature became the enemy of God, his mind reprobate and bent to do all things that are not convenient, filled with all unrighteousness and wickedness? Why would God permit such an apparent calamity as this to befall man?" Was it a mistake? God is incapable of mistakes. Was it an error? God is incapable of error. Was it the cleverness of Satan? No! A thousand times no! It was all a part of the aeonian purpose to fulfill in God's omniscient manner the unalterable edict, "Let Us make man in Our image."

But someone will say, "Was not man already in God's image, since God made him so"? Yes, it is true that he was in God's image in all the beauty of his innocence, but there was one respect in which he was not in God's image. The innocence of man, being fraught with ignorance, falls as far short of the innocence of God as man's righteousness falls short of His righteousness. Bulwer made the remarkable statement, "Innocence is but a poor substitute for experience." Weigh the force of that irrefutable fact. Does it not disclose like an inspiration the absolute necessity of man's fall and the dreadful nightmare of his experience with sin? "The innocence that feels no risk and is taught no caution is more vulnerable than guilt, and oftener assailed." (N. P. Willis). Innocence and ignorance are like two sisters, one gullible and the other vulgar. How well it has been said that innocence and mystery never dwell long together!

The garden of innocence, though the most beautiful place on earth, is yet of all the most dangerous. It is perhaps innocence even more than self-will that makes every child imagine his parents are old-fashioned and archaic, too old-fashioned to be sympathetic and too set in their way to be understanding. What young people fail to understand is that their parents have already sailed these treacherous seas to learn in the school of experience that the innocent-appearing fruit of transgression contains the sting of death in its folds. Both innocence and ignorance are easily attracted by pretty faces.

With man's fall the age of innocence as a dispensation passed away; but let no man imagine that God has cast innocence away! Nay, rather through the tearful night of the fall there will come an innocence that Eden never knew, an innocence made pure and beautiful, refined and wise by both knowledge and experience. The criminal who has expiated his crime and paid the penalty of his guilt stands before the world as an innocent man. His innocence is no longer cursed with ignorance, but blessed with the knowledge of both good and evil. It is here the redemption that is in Christ Jesus has its powerful effect upon all who believe, for they who believe on Him are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Acts 13:39 The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin, and because it does, we stand before God's throne innocent of the great transgressions. Psa. 19:13

The day is coming when Eden will be restored and mightily enlarged, for all the world will be an Eden, and those who have dominion in that glorious realm will be innocent men - not innocent and ignorant as was Adam, but innocent with knowledge from experience even as Christ, who was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign unto the ages of the ages. Oh, fill to the brim the blessed waterpot of innocence that the Lord may turn it to wine!

THE WATERPOT OF CONSCIENCE

When man sinned and departed from the realm of innocence, his conscience was immediately awakened. Instinctively he knew within himself all that was good and all that was evil. It was a new realm to him and a new experience. As the piercing pains of an infirmity are a new revealing experience to one who has never known suffering, so the awakening of the conscience was a new experience to Adam, stabbing him with the pangs of conviction when he put forth his hand to evil, and comforting him when he did that which was right in the sight of God.

Conscience belongs to the realm of the Spirit, and the spirit of man is one in essence with the Spirit of God from whom it came. If we could grasp the depths of it and understand it fully, we would discover that our conscience is in fact God consciousness. Conscience is identical with the spirit. The spirit of man is the candle (light) of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly. Prov. 20:27 It knows right from wrong and possesses an inherent understanding of good and evil. Is not this what Paul was saying to the Gentiles when he wrote. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." **Rom. 2:14-15** Since the spirit in man came forth from God, Eccles. 12:7, and receives understanding from God, Job 32:8, it is therefore God-conscious, knowing the mind of God and the law of the Lord without instruction. Thus any man who truly walks according to the dictates of a pure conscience would find himself walking with God even as Enoch and Noah, who both were shining lights in the dispensation of conscience.

It is of great necessity that God's people awake to see all things as God sees them and understand them as God understands them. How often need we repeat the fact that all things from the Garden of Eden to the new heaven and the new earth, whether weal or woe, treasure or tragedy, have their sure foundation in the purpose and plan of God? Let it be well understood that God knew that man would not remain in innocence. He never intended that man should remain there. Adam in the ignorance of innocence was not fully in God's image as the entire race of Adam will eventually be. However foreign to tradition this statement may be, I declare without hesitation that, had Adam remained in innocence without the knowledge of good and evil, it would have utterly spoiled and ruined God's purpose in man for the government of the universe. If God's unalterable will was to make man in His image and give him dominion, something more was required than the pretty face of innocence. Man must know good and evil, and that by experience. The best general an army can have is a man who has experienced the blood and sweat and tears of the ranks and has seen the blood and fire and vapor of smoke. "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!" **Eccles. 10:16** Ignorance rules the world now, but it will cease to be in the kingdom of God.

God did not intend that man should remain in the realm of conscience to walk side by side with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. Neither did He intend that man should remain in the

dispensation of promise, but that he should reach forward until the shadow of promise becomes the reality. Nor did God believe or hope that man would keep the holy law, written as it was on tables of stone, for it is spiritual and man is carnal, sold under sin. The law cannot be kept by carnal men and, even if it could, it would be incapable of purging the conscience from dead works. The law must pass from tables of stone to the tables of the heart. Then the law of God becomes the nature of man even as it is the nature of God.

The dispensation of conscience ended with the flood. Though Enoch and Noah and others walked in harmony with the Spirit of God within them, the mass of mankind had a conscience seared as it were with a hot iron, until at the end of that dispensation we have the disquieting testimony that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". **Gen. 6:5** While some walked with a conscience void of offence, Acts 24:16, others had a conscience seared as with a hot iron, 1 Tim. 4:2, completely incapable of knowing the mind or will of the Lord. "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." **Tit. 1:15-16**

Some years ago my wife and I stopped for breakfast at a restaurant a few miles west of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. As we rose to leave, I was intrigued by a little sign a boy had placed on his newspaper rack. It read: "Take a paper and put ten cents in the box. Your conscience is my only protection." I don't know the person who made that sign, but evidently he knew, as you and I also do, that any man who obeys his conscience will always do the thing that is right. Say not in your heart the dispensation of conscience ended in failure. Indeed, it did, but we have not seen the end of conscience, for it is evident that those innocent ones whom God is preparing to rule the world will also be people with a pure conscience, void of offence toward God and man.

THE WATERPOT OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered." See **Gen. 9:1-17** This last clause is the most significant part of the new covenant God made with man after the flood had brought an end to those who sinned against their own consciences. Man was made lord over all things, the fish, the animals, the birds, and the beasts of the field. All were put beneath his power. He was even given authority to put to death either man or beast who had shed human blood. From this we clearly see how completely the government of the earth was placed in the hands of Noah and his sons.

Suffice it to say now that God never intended this new covenant to succeed, and indeed it did not. At Babel a curse was placed upon humanity from which we have never recovered and from which we never will recover until all things are united in Jesus Christ. Human government had to fail. God intended that it should. Just as innocence with ignorance was found wanting, and conscience, defiled by man's sinful nature, had to fail, so man must learn and that by experience that the carnal mind is not fit to rule the world and must fail under every system from democracy to totalitarianism. Oh, how evident this is on every side in our day! Human government did not end with the call of Abraham, but continues on even in our day and will continue until He comes whose right it is to reign, and God will give the government to Him. Ezek. 21:27 Man has tried every system of government that his mind could conceive - monarchies, democracies, communism, kings, presidents and dictators - but there is no soundness in any of them. There is only a continual degeneration until now at the end of the age nature itself is rebelling against man's misrule and threatening to destroy him from the face of the earth.

Nevertheless, let us not see only the abject failure. The failure is an important part of the plan of God. Before God writes "finis" to the rule of man, every person from the least to the greatest will know that every system the human heart can devise must end in failure, because man is evil and carnal, self-willed, selfish, and self-seeking. Because in our day above all other times men and women are lovers of their own selves, all the horrible confusion of 2 Tim. 3:1-11 has been turned loose upon us. But let us remember and never forget that the first edict concerning man was this: "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion..." Child of God, the Almighty Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, has decreed that the

government of this world is to be given to man. Human government was the plan devised in the mind of God before ever He made man, but it is not to corrupt and carnal man that the final government of the world will be given. It will be given to men who through the victory of Jesus Christ have come into the fullness of God's image and likeness. Throughout the ages, the dispensations, and the millennia past God has been preparing a first fruit company in His image. They have suffered with Him. They have gone to the cross with Him. They have been changed by His Spirit from glory to glory. They have cast off the works of the flesh and the carnal mind. They have let the mind of Christ dwell in them; and even now they are laid away, waiting for that blessed hour when they will rise to reign with Him.

Despise not the waterpot of human government, for the truth it contains is the eternal edict of the Lord. Man in God's image will rule the world and the universe. Today, to be sure, it is weak as water and the vessel is empty as well, but the hour is at hand when this water also will be changed to the strength of a wine that will gladden all creation when the world is ruled by the "body of Christ", that man whom He has chosen.

THE WATERPOT OF PROMISE

Dispensations once begun never end. Innocence did not end with the fall. Innocence of the Edenic type is still with us in every baby that is born. Conscience did not end with the flood. Conscience is still with us and is to be found in the hearts of all Adam's descendants. Human government did not end with the call of Abraham. Human government still continues all about us, a greater failure than ever. Neither did the dispensation of promise end with the coming of the Law of Moses. The promise is still with us. Every man who is waiting for the kingdom of God is patiently awaiting the fulfillment of a promise. The Law of Moses did not end with the coming of Jesus Christ, but it was completely fulfilled in Him, and now He abides in me and in every man who believes. All who dwell in Him love His law, for it has become our nature even as it is His nature. And what shall we say of grace, the unmerited favor of God? Will grace end with the coming of the kingdom? It can easily be shown that the grace of God has scarcely begun to be manifested in this age. The truth is that it is in the ages to come that God will show the exceeding riches of His grace. Eph. 2:6-7 This passage clearly shows that in the ages to come God will use us as living proofs, testimonies and witnesses of His kindness and grace. In this age He has but few witnesses; in the ages to come He will have myriads.

I regret that in considering the covenant of promise it is necessary because of space to confine ourselves to a mere outline. If the child of God will let his mind roam in the shining paths of spiritual revelation as he considers the far-reaching horizons of the promises given to Abraham, he will soon realize that the pages necessary to embrace its truth could not be written. When the Almighty speaks of a seed as numerous as the sands and as uncountable as the stars, then mankind is left gasping for breath and groping for words. The two covenants given to Adam and the covenant given to Noah were very great, but the covenant given to Abraham is so all-embracing that it is with shamefacedness I attempt to set forth a few of its precepts.

Man, because of his ignorance, had failed in innocence. Under conscience he had become corrupt because of the lusts of his own flesh, his conscience being completely defiled. In human government he had also failed, desiring to make a name for himself at the abominable tower of Babel. But now a new covenant is given, a covenant that will never pass away, but remain forever. The covenant of promise given to Abraham was repeated on three different occasions, and on each occasion terms of ever increasing significance were added to it.

Abram was the grandson of Shem nine generations removed, but Shem outlived Abram by thirty-five years. After the dispersal at Babel the Lord said unto Abram, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 12:1-3**

This is the first part of the covenant, and any thoughtful reader will see that, though four thousand years have elapsed since the promise was made, it is still only partially fulfilled, and a very small part at that. How strange must Abraham often have felt as year after year, decade after decade, he walked along the road of trust without the remotest or most insignificant sign that the promise of God would ever be fulfilled! But God is unlike man, who is of few days and ever encompassed with uncertainties. One day with our Father is as a thousand

years and a thousand years are but yesterday when they are past. One of the delights of my life has been to gaze with awe upon the giant redwood trees of California. It is believed that some of these mighty monarchs are five thousand years old. They were saplings while Adam was still on earth and they were standing there when God made His covenant with Abraham four thousand years ago. Who but our wonderful Lord would plant a seed in the ground, looking forward five thousand years to see the forest? But that is the kind of thing He delights in doing. So He said to Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed", and while Abraham, poor human that he was, expected to see the promise completely fulfilled in his lifetime, the Eternal was looking forward, not only to millenniums and dispensations, but to ages of ages - yea, to eternity itself. When God's promise to Abraham is complete, every nation will be blessed in him and in his seed and every son of Adam will be found walking in the light of the Lord. All that was cursed will be blessed and all that was lost will be found.

It was after Abraham was separated from the members of his family that the Lord entrusted to him the first part of the covenant - that He would make of him a great nation and all the families of the earth would be blessed in him. But, when he was also separated from Lot, the Lord renewed and enlarged the covenant with him, saying, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." **Gen. 13:14-16** I doubt not that Abraham saw the whole earth on this occasion and not merely a tiny strip of country we commonly call Palestine. Since his seed was to be as innumerable as the dust of the earth, it would require the earth to contain it. Indeed, Paul confirmed this very view when he said, "For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed through the law..." **Rom. 4:13** In like manner as Jesus Christ was taken to a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and that by Satan, so the Lord showed Abraham the whole world and made him heir of it.

Consider how great this promise was that he should be the heir of the world. His seed was to be as the dust of the earth because he was the heir of the world. The whole world was to become his possession and the possession of his seed. He was not made heir in a spiritual sense only, but in a literal sense as well. Even in this age of sin, when all men walk in a measure of darkness, that promise has seen a partial fulfillment. The seed of Abraham both spiritually and literally is planted in the uttermost parts of the earth, possessing and inhabiting the choicest places of the world. Perhaps the greatest blindness in the Christian world is our failure to understand that after the death of Solomon, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was divided into two distinct houses and two distinct kingdoms - the house of Judah, consisting of Judah and Benjamin, and the house of Israel, consisting of the remaining ten tribes, 1 Kings 12:16-24, the house of Judah, possessing the royal scepter, Gen. 49:10, and the house of Israel, or Ephraim, possessing the birthright. Gen. 48:16-20 Simeon said by the Spirit that Jesus Christ would be the glory of God's people, Israel, Luke 2:33, and so He has been, but the house of Judah rejected him. Of them it is written, "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not." Paul said, "Blindness in part has happened to Israel," and it is my sincere opinion that our blindness is most readily seen in that we neither know nor wish to know that we are the house of Israel, and heirs of the promise made to Abraham. It is almost, if not altogether, impossible to grasp the full significance of the promises given to Abraham if we fail to understand that it was Abraham's seed, both physical and spiritual, who were to become possessors of the earth and the blessers of every nation in it.

Notice further the progress of the promise made to Abraham, who dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees near to the famous city of Babylon. The Lord said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and I will make of thee a great nation." **Gen. 12:1-2** His obedience at first was incomplete, and it was not until after the death of his father that he separated himself as God had told him. After this came the separation from his nephew, Lot, and with this obedience came a great expansion of God's promise. "Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land, which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever." **Gen. 13:14** This was the promise of the land and everything in it. God has not written off the earth. Heaven itself will scarcely exceed the glory that will come upon this earth when the promises made to Abraham are all complete. I say without fear or hesitation that what Eden was to the whole earth in the days of Adam's innocence, so the earth will be to the whole universe when the water is turned to wine.

Though Abraham was separated from his country, his father's house, and now his nephew, there was still a more important separation that must be made. It was the slaughter of the flesh. There is not space enough in this article to prove that the warring kings of Canaan, five kings against four, Gen. 14:9, were symbolic of the flesh, but after the slaughter of these kings Abraham was met and blessed by Melchisedec, priest of the most high God, that strange priest without father, without mother, without beginning of days nor end of life. Heb. 7:1-3 He, bringing forth bread and wine, blessed Abraham, saying, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." **Gen. 14:17-19** But Abram was greatly troubled, for, though the promise was great, no child was given in whom the promise that he should be a great nation and possessor of the earth could be fulfilled. The Lord added at this time yet another promise to the covenant. "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." **Gen. 15:5** Men have always been intrigued by the stars and it is, I suppose, for this reason that men are reaching for outer space. The vastness of the universe and the number of the stars are so completely beyond the comprehension of man that it is entirely incredible; but, though we know little of the heavens, the facts have already gone beyond our wildest imaginations.

Astronomers now conclude that a rocket, traveling ten thousand times the speed of Apollo 14, would take four million, five hundred thousand years to reach the farthest star visible to the naked eye. It is estimated that our Milky Way galaxy contains about one hundred thousand million stars. Light travels at the incredible speed of one hundred eighty-six thousand miles per second or five trillion, eight hundred eighty billion miles in one year. At this speed the moon is one and one-half seconds away, Delta Cephei is about two thousand years away, and Hercules is fifty thousand years away. It is estimated that there are between five hundred billion and one trillion planets in our galaxy. I once sat enthralled as I listened to an astronomer speak of the universe. In the course of his talk he made this astonishing statement: "It is estimated that the stars in the heavens and the sands of the sea are about equal in number." "So," saith God, "shall thy seed be."

At long last came the wonderful day when Isaac, the promised son, was born, in whom the promises would be realized. Then came the great trial of offering this young man upon the altar of sacrifice, but, when Abraham in obedience to God had offered his son on the altar, the Lord again confirmed the covenant with him, saying, "By Myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this thing, and has not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice." **Gen. 22:16-18**

In the blessing, "Thy seed shall be as the sand" and "thy seed shall be as the stars", we have a double promise and a double blessing. From Abraham there would arise a seed of faith, a spiritual seed as numberless as the stars, and from Abraham there would come an earthly seed as numberless as the sand of the sea, possessors of the earth and blessers of the universe. If you have faith at all, you will clearly see that the promises made to Abraham have only just begun to see fulfillment. His seed was not as the sand only, but as the stars also, for "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." **Rom. 9:7** Paul has clearly stated that the particular seed of Isaac was Jesus Christ, Gal. 3:16, the Saviour of the world and the Redeemer of Israel. John. 3:16. "It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us when He made known to us the secret of His will... in Him, too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ." **Eph. 1:7-12** (Weymouth). Vast beyond all human ability to comprehend or teach was the covenant of promise given to Abraham that through him and his seed, redeemed and saved by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, all mankind would find their Head in Jesus Christ and all the universe would be restored and governed.

THE WATERPOT OF LAW

The fifth dispensation is the dispensation of law. The law was given by Moses. God established the law through him. The pure water of truth contained in this fifth waterpot will eventually be the law of the whole universe. It will never again be found written on tables of stone, from thence to speak terror to unregenerate

men, but saith God, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." Ezek. 36:26-27 There is nothing weak or insipid about the law of God. Paul told us that the law was "weak through the flesh". The flesh is corrupt and carnal. It is an implacable enemy of God. All its desires are contrary to God. Thus the law was completely ineffectual because unregenerate men lived after the flesh and not after the Spirit. The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Rom. 7:14 The trouble is not with the law. The trouble is with you and me. It is not the law that needs to be changed; it is the people. It was for this very purpose that Jesus Christ came - that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:1-4.

There is a great evil among the nations, for they are always changing their laws to accommodate the corruption of the people. God does the opposite to this. He changes the people to suit His laws, taking away the stony heart, converting them, and making them alive in His Son, Jesus Christ. Men want to break the Sabbath so we change the law to make it legal. Because a few people insist on degrading themselves with the filth of Sodom, the law forbidding sodomy is changed and homosexual acts are made lawful. Because some insist on smoking marijuana, the government appoints a committee, hoping to legalize it by a change of law. Thus corruption is added to corruption, sin-to-sin, and abomination-to-abomination. The Lord does not change His laws nor discard them to suit the carnal minds and filthy ways of sinful, ungenerated people. He does exactly the opposite to this. Instead of discarding the laws or changing them to suit the unregenerate heart, He has provided a way whereby the heart itself can be changed and the soul converted, bringing it into harmony with the nature of God. Then the word of the Lord and the law of the Lord flow as naturally and joyfully from the renewed heart as from the heart of God Himself. Those of us who are in Christ Jesus have discovered for ourselves the wonderful truth spoken before by Ezekiel the prophet, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." **Ezek. 11:19-20** By this be it forever known that God cannot change His law to suit the carnal man, but instead He converts the carnal man that he may be in harmony with the law of God.

David, the sweet singer of Israel, was one of the most informative of all inspired writers. His spiritual experience lifted him so far above all slavish subordination to written commandments that his inspired soul exulted, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." **Psa. 51:16-17** This man, who had sinned so terribly against God and against Uriah, 2 Sam. 11, knew he had no hope in the law. He had broken it and was condemned. Being guilty in one point, he was guilty in all. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts" he sobbed, "and in the hidden parts Thou shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." **Psa. 51:6-10**

How clearly it can be seen from this prayer of repentance and this earnest plea for a new heart and a new spirit that it was not God who was changing His laws to condone David's sin, but it was David who must be converted, changed, and regenerated that he might be conformed to the image of God. That is what conversion is for. That is why Peter said, "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out" when the distraught and convicted multitude cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is man's heart that is wrong and evil and unregenerate. God is holy and the law is holy and the commandment just and good. Rom. 7:12 No more forceful argument can be presented to demonstrate the incontestable necessity of conversion and the new birth than the fact that man is carnal, sold under sin, contrary to God and all that emanates from Him. In his natural condition he is an enemy of God, unconverted and unregenerate and by nature a child of wrath, without God and without hope in the world. Though the lawbreaker may try henceforth to keep the law, his efforts are hopeless because he who offends in one point is guilty of all. His one and only hope is in Christ.

He is the Ark of the Covenant and the law is kept in Him. Thus it follows that all who believe in Him are justified from all things. Acts 13:37 Their hearts are transformed by His power. Because Christ lives in them, God's law

is in their hearts, and so it has come to pass that He who condemned them in time past now presents them faultless in Christ and witnesses of the righteousness of God.

I greatly long that God's people would see as God sees and understand truth with the understanding of God. When the law was given to Moses on two tables of stone, do you imagine for even a moment that God either expected or hoped that the people would be able to keep that law? The all-wise Lord was well aware of carnal man's inability to keep His law. He knew man would transgress and stand condemned before God, and that is exactly what He wanted, for, the moment man breaks the law, his eyes are open to see his need of a righteousness much higher than his own. He awakens to his desperate need of a change of heart, a conversion, a new birth, a transformation, a new spirit, and a new mind. Well do we know that we cannot be justified by a broken law. The righteousness of God can never be attained in this manner. Therefore the law of God manifests our depravity graciously, lovingly, and kindly, leading us to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Man who ever kept the law of God. The apostle Paul said, "The law is our school-master (pedagogue) to bring us to Christ." The Roman pedagogue was a slave whose duty it was to take the children to the school and see that they did not play truant on the way. Young's translation of this passage says, "The law is our child conductor to Christ that by faith we may be declared righteous." How wonderful that is! Let everyone who reads these lines know of a certainty that the law is not our enemy, but is God's servant, God's policeman, if you please, to bring us to Christ. Without the law we would never see our need of Him. The law is not an enemy of Christ. It is His best friend, ever pointing men to Him. Law is not an enemy of grace, because its divine purpose is to cause us to trust in Christ that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor. 5:21

In the wilderness tabernacle the laver of cleansing was made from the brass mirrors of the Israelitish women. Ex. 38:8 The laver represented the law of God, but the water it held was for the cleansing of the priests. The brazen laver could never cleanse, but like the law it represented it could show the people as a mirror their uncleanness and send them to the water for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. 1 Tim. 1:8. is a revealing scripture: "The law is good if a man use it lawfully." It follows, then, that it would be bad to use it unlawfully. Its lawful use is to bring men to Christ. Its unlawful use is to try to attain righteousness by it. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." **Psa. 19:7-10**

What I am saying here is not the picture painted by orthodoxy. To people of understanding, however, it may be clearly seen that the law, condemned by many as our enemy, is in fact our faithful friend and pedagogue in the hand of the Holy Spirit to display God's righteousness and so bring us to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom God has made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. 1 Cor.1:30. Psa. 119 is the longest chapter of the Bible, and every verse but three speaks of the law of God either as law, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, or some other kindred expression, each verse expressing the infinite value of God's law. Paul, to whom God committed the gospel of grace, made these enlightening observations: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good." **Rom. 7:12** "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." **Rom. 7:22** Of course he did, because, when Christ enters the life of any man, He who kept the law transforms the believer into the image of God who gave it.

Have you considered what this present world would be like if all men loved God with all their strength? Well, men do love God when Christ comes in. Have you considered what the world would be like if every man kept the law, "thou shall not steal? Or "thou shall not covet?" Or "thou shall not bear false witness"? Or "thou shall not kill?" Or "thou shall not commit adultery?" Or "honor thy father and mother?" Think for an hour or two what a transformation would come over all the earth if this law were in every heart. The world would be transformed in one day, would it not? It is impossible to imagine the peace, the security, the happiness that would settle upon us. There wouldn't be a policeman, a jail, a broken home, or a broken heart in all the world. Let me assure you that when the kingdom of God fills the earth and the universe, the law of God, abiding in every heart by the indwelling Christ, will pervade the whole universe. Because the law of God is the nature of God and the nature of Jesus Christ, it will also be the nature of every man. The hour is not far away when this fifth

waterpot will be refilled to the brim to become a wine living and vital and real to all the earth and to the universe as well.

THE WATERPOT OF GRACE

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17. We have already stated that the law, briefly contained in the ten commandments of Exodus, chapter 20, is the very nature of God, manifesting His character and holiness as nothing else can possibly do. Grace came by Jesus Christ, and grace also is the nature of God. Let us never forget that it was God the Father who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." **John 3:16-17** "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

It never was God's intention to save either Jews or Gentiles by the law. The foundational and fundamental purpose of the law was to show man that, if he would ever attain the righteousness of God, righteousness would have to be imputed to him as a free gift of God's grace; otherwise it could never be attained. "In the case of a man who works, pay is not reckoned as a favor but as something due; whereas in the case of a man who in place of working believes in Him who acquits the ungodly, his faith is credited to him as righteousness." **Rom. 4:4** (Weymouth) There is no possible way that man can come into the image of God by his own merit. Neither his innocence, his conscience, his government, his law, or even the promise would do him any good at all if he did not believe. God is making man in His own image; therefore man must have God's righteousness, which can only be received through faith in Christ. With God's Christ is given God's innocence, God's righteousness, God's holiness, God's law, God's grace, God's nature, and God's mind. Yea, and furthermore with God's Son comes the wisdom and the understanding with which to govern the world in righteousness and reconcile all things unto Him. All must be Christ. Christ must be all. He must be all and in all.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." **Tit. 2:11-14** That is the teaching of grace, at least in part. It has appeared to all men and the purpose of its appearing is to bring salvation. Grace not only teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, but also empowers the believer to do this fully. His grace redeems us from the realm of iniquity, filling the soul with godly zeal for every good work. Show me a believer whose life is not transformed by grace divine and I will show you a man who has never truly believed. He who truly believes into Christ is both justified and purified as well, and this the grace of God abundantly teaches.

It should be the desire of every child of God to remove his feet as far as possible from what we might term technicalities concerning grace and law. Always remember that, if we must descend to any form of carnal argument concerning spiritual matters, the spirit of revelation immediately abandons us to the dark mists of the natural mind. Someone has wisely said, "A religious argument is like a dog fight in a flower bed. Nothing is settled but the flowers." I have seen men argue about doctrine until all grace and love had fled and nothing was left in them but angry retorts and contradictions. Let us put from us all forms of contention and strivings about the law, or grace, or innocence, or restitution while the Holy Spirit reveals all things to our understanding. Then we will see how the feathers of this beautiful dove fit themselves together. As the members of the physical body with their diversity of gifts and uses work together in marvelous harmony so that the eye cannot say to the ear, "I have no need of you" or the hand to the foot, "I have no need of you", so let us see all things as integral parts of God's eternal purpose whether they be of conscience, or promise, or law, or grace, or the kingdom, working together like true yoke-fellows toward an eternal goal and not as enemies one of the other.

We have already shown that the truth of a dispensation once begun has no end. The truth each brought is fulfilled in Christ and we are made perfect in Him. The waterpots of truth will be refilled at the marriage of the Lamb and the wine of their ancient truth will be presented to the world, not as water, but as life-giving wine. I now say that the grace of God will never end. Times without number men have preached that the day of grace

will soon be ended. Nonsense, my friend! Grace is God's inner nature] If grace must end, then God Himself must end; but that which is eternal has no end.

As the covenant of law was given by Moses, so the gospel of grace was revealed by Paul, who said, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward; how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words...)" **Eph. 3:2-3** It is for this reason that his epistles take foremost place in the New Testament, and all his writings are an unfolding of this most glorious truth. The covenant of promise concerned a family; the covenant of law concerned a nation, but the covenant of grace concerns the whole world, and by it all who believe are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. See the universal potential contained in these awe-inspiring words: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Eph. 3:8-11**

The transforming power of God's grace, which comes to us in Christ in this age and the marvelous hope/or others in the ages to come is developed by Paul in these words: "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom we also had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." **Eph. 2:1-8** Lest any man should doubt God's intention concerning the redemption of all mankind and the restitution of all things, Paul twice in this passage, verses 5 and 8, reminds us and every other recipient of God's grace that it was only by God's boundless grace that we ourselves were saved from the most appalling depths of sin. Why then should we who were the first to receive such marvelous grace now think that it will be denied to others in the ages to come? And especially so since verse 7 clearly teaches that it will be by us that God in ages to come will demonstrate this grace in all His universe!

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND

The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. One day John bore faithful record that Jesus was the Son of God. The next day, standing with two of his disciples, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and the two disciples left him standing alone and went to follow Jesus. John 1:15-35. The next day, that is, the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. For the past two thousand years servants sent of God have been pointing men to Jesus Christ. "Behold the Lamb of God" has been their theme. But now the third day, the long awaited kingdom of God, is at hand, that gloriously wonderful age in which Christ in all His fullness shall reign, and all the sons of God will reign with Him. The kingdom age will be the beginning of true human government, for every man who will reign with Christ in the glory of that age will be a transformed man, a true son of God, a man made in the image of Christ and the likeness of God. They will all be innocent men, not as Adam, whose beautiful innocence was despoiled by the ugliness of ignorance, but as redeemed men, whose holy innocence was made perfect through experience and suffering and now stands spotless, faultless, and uncondemned through the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In that blessed kingdom day the promise of God, confirmed and re-confirmed to Abraham, will no longer be a promise afar off. No more will he or his children be looking for a city which hath foundations, for at the end of the kingdom age the Holy City, the New Jerusalem bride of Christ, having twelve foundations, will be seen descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Weakness will change to magnificent strength;

Failure will change to perfection at length;
Sorrow will change to unending delight;
Walking by faith changed to walking by sight.

The law of God, once thundered from Sinai, before which the unregenerate cringed in terror, will then be written in every heart to become the conscience and nature of the sons of God. In that day the ransomed of the Lord with choral voice and a harmony that fills the universe will sing:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul!
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple!
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart!
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes!
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever!
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether!
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb!
By them is thy servant warned,
And in keeping of them is great reward.

Psa. 19:7-11.

And what can I more say of the grace of God in that wonderful day when it falls like the dew of Hermon from the lips and lives of the sons of God? Wonderful though grace has been in this age of grace, it has been as weak as water compared to the power and glory of its manifestation in the kingdom age and the ages and ages that will follow. Then shall the grace of God be as a sun going forth through the heavens and as a shield to every man. "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory..." **Psa. 84:11** Jesus Christ is the firstborn of many brethren. He is the eldest and head of all the sons of God. Of all the host of living stones He is the head stone. In that blessed kingdom day, when the water is turned to life-giving wine, "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it." **Zech. 4:7** With the understanding that grace will be fully manifested in that blessed kingdom age through the family of God's sons, I believe all who read these lines will understand as never before, yea, even as water turned to wine, the significance of Paul's inspired statement when he said, "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Jesus Christ." The greatest witness to the grace of our loving Lord will be manifested to all nations when by His infinite grace we stand in His likeness and in His presence, living, immortal, incorruptible testimonies of the grace of God that brings salvation. Thus through His kindness toward us shall all men in ages to come be shown the exceeding riches of His grace.

On that memorable day of Pentecost, there came a sound from heaven as a mighty rushing wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Then the mockers and men who lacked understanding said, "These men are full of new wine;" but Peter, standing up, said, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose... but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh..." **Acts 2:13-17**. The age of grace was initiated with the pouring out of the wonderful new wine of the Holy Spirit as God changed and filled and transformed the lives of countless believers, but the best wine, the wine of the Spirit in all its fullness, is reserved for the age to come, even the kingdom, which is at the door.

The third day there was a marriage in Cana, and on that day when they wanted wine, Jesus said, "Mine hour is not yet come." He is the king and His hour comes in fullness only when the kingdom comes. When at last the glory of that age dawns upon the world, His first command will be, "Fill the waterpots with water." Then will the water of truth, drawn from the waterpots of the ages, be found to be no more water, but life giving wine, and this will be the gospel of the kingdom of God, which will gladden every heart until the earth and all the universe as well shall sing the glad refrain with things in heaven and earth and in the sea, "Blessing and honor and glory and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for timeless ages." Amen and Amen!

CHAPTER THREE THE ELECT OF LAODICEA

That we are now living in the end of the dispensation of grace there can be no reasonable doubt. Not only is this statement true, but the rapidly accumulating evidence declares that we are now seeing the final hours, if not the closing moments, of that great drama of the church age which had its beginning almost two thousand years ago. The momentous days in which we live herald the end of a dispensation, and their importance is magnified when we grasp the fact that the conclusion of the dispensation of grace is also the conclusion of the sixth dispensation since Adam. It is the end of the sixth one thousand year day. "Six days shall thou labor and do all thy work," saith the Lord, "and the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Six days for man's labor, innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, and grace - but the seventh is the Lord's day, the dispensation of the kingdom of God!

For six thousand years man with his carnal mind has fumbled and bungled, muddled and fought, cheated and destroyed, and we at the end of the age with all our vaunted scientific know-how are the worst bunglers and muddlers, war mongers, cheaters, and polluters of all time. So dreadful has the situation become that "except those days be shortened, there shall no flesh be saved." We need no flood to destroy us as overwhelmed the earth in the days of Noah. We are perfectly capable of destroying ourselves. We have polluted the air, the water, the land. We have polluted the minds, the conscience, and the morals of men until the thoughts and imaginations of the human heart are only evil continually. Corruption reigns supreme from the throne to the dungeon. How true a word of inspiration was given by Paul when he wrote, "Because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." **Rom. 1:28-32** All national corruption springs forth like a wild beast from its lair when the people forget God.

Paul in his epistle to Timothy gave such a vivid prophetic description of the last days of this age and with such plain language that no amount of comment could add aught to the truths he wrote. We need only to watch the news media to know that each and every prediction he made is now in glaring fulfillment on every hand. There is no place one can look or walk without being faced with the literal fulfillment of every word he uttered. Even the most ungodly or unthinking, the unconcerned, the unbeliever, or the athiest could not fail to be impressed with the accuracy of Paul's prophetic account, written almost two thousand years ago. It is unthinkable to imagine that anything less than divine inspiration could have written in such vivid detail the things we now see fulfilled on every hand. Look and carefully consider, deciding in your own mind whether anything he spoke of the last days is untrue, or whether any detail of the things he prophesied in **2 Tim. 3:1-7** is missing from our society. These are the things he wrote: (1) "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, (2) for men shall be lovers of their own selves, (3) covetous, (4) boasters, (5) proud, (6) blasphemers, (7) disobedient to parents, (8) unthankful, (9) unholy, (10) without natural affection, (11) truce-breakers, (12) false accusers, (13) incontinent (that is, exercising no control over the appetites and passions), (14) fierce, (15) despisers of those that are good, (16) traitors, (17) heady (headstrong), (18) high minded (self-important), (19) lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, (20) having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof". In connection with this corrupt trend Paul adds this caustic comment: "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, (21) ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Peruse these twenty-one statements of prophetic inspiration and you will agree that without one exception they are being fulfilled in our day. Not only do they find fulfillment in our country, but they are being fulfilled in every corner of the globe regardless of any system of government and regardless of any system of religion.

Should it be thought by some that the prophecies of which we have spoken describe only the condition of the temporal world around us, let it be fully known that all things spoken of the church system are now also in exact fulfillment and in the exact condition that God has told us they would be.

Christ, the faithful and true witness, the Amen, the beginning of the creation of God, sent a message to the church of our day - to the Christians who live in the end of the age. Just as Paul's prophecy to Timothy concerning the last days was exact and accurate in every detail, so Christ's prophecy to the church at Laodicea, the church that represents the spiritual decadence at the end of the age, is exact in every detail. See Rev. 3:14-22. "I know thy works," He begins; and wise He was to open His allegations with that statement. Never in the history of the world has there been so much church work. It is positively indescribable - at home and abroad, on the air and off the air, in the buildings and outside the buildings, in the mail and on the street, everybody zealous to convince somebody of something and, worse still, almost everyone begging for money to propagate his work. Yet for all this enormous and almost unbelievable effort, the preaching, the broadcasting, the television, the great campaigns, the literature, the personal work, the Sunday Schools, the missionary work, the Bible Society work, feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, and all the plans and schemes that go along with these programs to carry them out, the judgment of God upon it is, "Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." As lukewarm water turns the stomach and provokes vomiting, so lukewarm professors turn the heart of Christ against them. He is sick of them and cannot bear them, and so He spues them out.

I fear that such as this is not a very happy prospect. We would be wise to stop dead in our tracks and retrace our steps that we might discover where it was we left off serving God and loving Him to cram our lives full of endless works and alms deeds, all the while growing lukewarm in soul and distasteful to the Lord. He who once appointed burnt-offering and oblations now says to those who offer them, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." **Isa. 1:13** That is what happens when Christians become filled with works while love for God has simmered to lukewarmness. They serve the house of the Lord, but not the Lord. Therefore they become obnoxious and distasteful to the Lord and He is obliged to spue them as a sickening thing from his mouth, "because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked..." **Rev. 3:17** What good is going to come to any of us if, after all our labors, all our works, all our alms, and all our good deeds, together with our vast increase in goods and numbers, we ourselves are found to be wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked? Has not the divine verdict already been passed upon us? "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

Oh, my friend, are you ministering to the house of the Lord or are you ministering to the Lord? Are you ministering because of the need around you or are you ministering to the Lord? Are you trying to satisfy the need of men or are you satisfying the need of the Lord? Are you laboring because you enjoy it or are you laboring because He has directed you?

Long ago Judas Iscariot asked the seemingly reasonable question, "Why was not this ointment sold and the proceeds given to the poor?" (Not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and hoped that he might gain.) But Jesus gave him an answer that we with our many works should thoroughly consider, for it is just as true today as it was then. "The poor you have with you always, but Me ye have not always." If our alms-giving or our abundant work is not a ministry wholly to the Lord, prompted by His direction and accomplished with an overflowing heart, it is worthless and accomplishes nothing, but tends to produce the spirit of Laodicea in our hearts.

I greatly fear that in our careless reading of the word of God we overlook the tremendous import of the things the Holy Spirit has to say. Have you, oh reader, paused long enough to consider the devastating statement of Rev. 3:17, spoken so clearly against the professing church at the end of the age, that system to which many who read these lines still belong and of which they have become an integral part? Let us then carefully consider it, because the Spirit witnesses within my soul that man cannot reach the celestial heights and the planes of glory of which I shall presently speak until the full force of his present wretchedness breaks upon him and causes him to cry out as Isaiah the prophet did when he saw the majesty of the Lord, "Woe is me: for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." **Isa. 6:5** Isaiah was a mighty prophet, outstanding among the seers. From his sanctified lips had thundered the message of the Lord, but in the same year that the good king Uzziah died, Isaiah attained to a new experience in God. He saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. He saw the seraphims of glory, each with six wings. With twain he covered his face, with

twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And each cried to the other, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried and the house of the Lord was filled with smoke. See Isa. 6:1-6

In that moment of revelation Isaiah saw two dreadfully disconcerting facts; first, that he, the prophet of the Lord, was a man of unclean lips, and second, that the people among whom he dwelt were a people of unclean lips. It was not until he saw the holiness and the glory of the Lord that he saw the uncleanness of his own heart and how corrupt were the words of his own lips. Nor could he see the corrupt and wretched condition of the people around him until he had seen the Lord! Then he knew how wretched and miserable and naked they were, "for," he said, "mine eyes have seen the King!"

A big man never appears small until he stands beside a much bigger man. I am acquainted with a giant of a man who stands six feet eight inches in height and weighs over three hundred pounds. But once I saw a man who stood eight feet six inches in height. The ring he wore on his finger would encompass three of mine. Beside him the first giant was almost a midget. Thus it was with Isaiah. He was a very holy man. The prophecies, which poured from his lips were holy utterances and sacred words of truth. But now before his wondering eyes the Lord in His glory appears and from that presence all divine he fain would run to hide himself because of his own uncleanness and the uncleanness of the people among whom he dwelt. Then his ears were opened to the angelic voices of the seraphims, those heavenly beings always associated with the holiness of God, and, when their voices fell upon his ear, crying one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory", the soul of Isaiah cringed as he remembered the brashness of his own words, and he cried, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Have courage, man of God, and fear not to seek the Lord. It is the purpose of the most, high God to reveal His glory to us that we might repent of things both good and bad as we behold ourselves in the light and glory of His greatness and holiness. Our kind heavenly Father would never consent to open the eyes of His prophet to such excellent glory only to depart and leave him in his undone and unclean condition. Be that far from His transcending wisdom! The glory of God was revealed to Isaiah that he, beholding his undone estate, might cry for help and cleansing, and, as sure as God is God, both help and cleansing immediately came. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged". **Isa. 6:7** There and then the prophet was transformed and a new commission was given him.

Think it not strange, then, that we who undoubtedly dwell in the age of Laodicea should find ourselves face to face with the same disconcerting revelation, that, in spite of our abounding works, our fervent labors, and all our vain imaginings that we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, we should now hear the terrible voice of God in judgment, declaring that we are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, and that we, instead of being spiritual giants as we supposed, are naught but dwarfs. We are not rich, but poor! We are not full of revelation, but blind! We are not clothed in white raiment, but are naked in God's sight! We are not full of heavenly joy, but miserable! We are not exalted saints, but poverty stricken wretches. Terrible as this truth may be, there is no better place to stand than in that place of known and acknowledged emptiness before God. I insist that any revelation that does not bring personal desolation and repentance is a lie and not from God. I suppose Isaiah could have fled from the revelation of his own undone condition to continue on as he had always done, and I suppose that we, too, may flee away from the things now clearly spoken from the lips of God concerning the miserably blind, naked and confused system in which we have been pleased to dwell. But, if we will now seek the face of God and deliver ourselves from it, then all the good and marvelous promises made to those who dwell in our age will be ours both here and now.

Consider briefly the import of the adjectives used by the Spirit of God to describe this Laodicean period of which we so willingly have become a part. These are not words to be read without heed or to be passed over without thought and consideration, prayer and repentance. These are words so descriptive of the existing church system that all who by God's Spirit are convinced of their truth will cry with repentance, " Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips", and, girding

up our loins with truth, we will/Zee from the death and darkness all about us. We will come out from among them. We will repent of our desolation and poverty and open the door for Christ to come in.

"Thou knowest not," saith the Lord, "that thou art wretched." Wretched is a strong word. A wretch is a base, vile, or contemptible person, a despicable character, a miserable unhappy person, sometimes a person viewed with pity. "Ah," we say, "but I am certainly not to be included among such as these!" How readily we compare men with men and judge our spiritual stature by comparing ourselves with the wretched state of those around us! This unspiritual habit has existed from time immemorial. Men do not trouble to compare themselves with the standard of the Almighty, but prefer rather to compare themselves with the low standard of their neighbors. What their friends do they can do. If their neighbor can do such and such and be a Christian, then so can they. Paul fiercely rebuked the Corinthians for that fault. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." **2 Cor. 10:12** Indeed, such a practice is anything but wisdom. It is the height of foolishness. We may safely take the stand that whatsoever the crowd is doing is almost certain to be the wrong thing. Whatsoever is popular is open to question, and "whatsoever is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." **Luke 16:15** My Christian brother, born in the self-satisfied, decadent age of Laodicea, if your spirit longs to overcome in this hour and to sit among the overcomers with Christ in His throne amid the splendor of His glorious kingdom, then it is time for you to cease and desist from your compromising with the world, because the world is an enemy of God. It is time to quit compromising with the church of Laodicea, for Laodicea is to be vomited out of the mouth of the Lord. It is time to stop comparing your spiritual state with that of other men, because the spiritual state of the people of this age is extremely wretched and miserable, even while they proudly proclaim their spiritual riches, their gifts, their baptisms, their converts, their power, and their great works.

Behold now the transformation that overtakes a man who for a few moments find himself standing in the illuminating presence of God's Christ. Daniel the prophet, like Isaiah, was a man of God - a man so upright and righteous in God's sight that he was compared to Noah and Job. Ezek. 14:14 But now, as this saintly man waits before God in fasting and prayer, humbling himself and confessing his sins before God, it came to pass that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and "behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl (chrysolite) and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." **Dan. 10:5-8**

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear," cried Job, as the vision of God burst upon him, "but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42:5-6** "Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts," wept Isaiah at the presence of the Lord. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," cried the disconsolate Peter when he saw God's glory in the miraculous draft of fishes. Luke 5:8 And now the greatly beloved Daniel, Dan. 10:11, a man comparable to Noah and Job in his righteousness, saw, as he stood in the excellent glory of the Lord, the riches of his own comeliness turned in him into corruption and the glory of his strength faded away until none was left!

Hear this, my brother and sister, contentedly dwelling in the tepid lukewarmness of Laodicea, these men did not come to see themselves as God saw them by priding themselves that they were rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing, but by yielding their flesh to the two-edged sword of the Spirit, who destroyed their shackles and cut away all earthly ties and bondages. Through terrible physical affliction Job came into a new and blessed relationship with his Lord. Isaiah reached the glory of his experience "in the year that King Uzziah died." Much food for thought lies in that statement, for it is only when the thing that once ruled our life as king perishes and passes away that we are able to "see the Lord" and enter into that new relationship with Christ that God has ordained. It was not by glorying in the past that Daniel reached his new relationship, but, in fasting and prayer and chastening his soul before his God, he saw himself corrupt, and felt the great strengthening hand of God laid upon him. Dan. 10:18

My brother, it is time to stop and listen. It is time to cease from endless works, religious labor and activity. It is time to seal the lips from saying. "We are increased in goods," we have gifts of the Spirit; we have healings and miracles; we have prophecy and tongues! How often I have heard men say, "We believe in salvation by the blood; we believe in the coming of the Lord; we believe in divine healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That is the fullness. That is the fourfold gospel. There is nothing more than this." And then they recite the seemingly impressive story of their works and labors at home and on the mission field, on radio and television, priding themselves in many works and meetings and in the number of their assemblies. Ah, my poor blind and naked brother, knowest thou not that thou art indeed wretched? Knowest thou not that even now during the days of thy life thou art quoting the very words that will condemn thee at the judgment? For then will the people of this Laodicean age protest against the judgment of the Lord, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out demons, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" And has not God already forewarned that He will say unto them, **"I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity (rebellion)?" Matt. 7:23**

Christ described the church of Laodicea with all her abundance of works, gifts, and possessions as a wretched church - and not wretched only, but poor and blind and naked as well. There they sat, satisfied with their abundance, only to discover in the end that their gold and silver were cankered, their garments moth-eaten, all that they esteemed riches naught but corruption, and themselves poor indeed. They have mistaken learning for the knowledge of truth. They have gifts and imagine this to be the grace of God. Wit and oratory are mistaken for wisdom and anointing. Ordinances abound, but they have forgotten the God of ordinances. Works abound, but the will of Him who purposes all things is far from them and they are poor indeed. This Laodicean period in which we now dwell is completely wretched. What other word could more adequately describe the condition of the present harlot thing that insists upon calling herself the church! Wretched is she in every sense and pitied by all who have discovered the truth, poor and poverty-stricken in soul and spirit while boasting of great riches, starving to death in the midst of her imagined abundance, blind and deaf because she can neither see her state nor recognize the danger of living in it. Lacking godliness and virtue, she cannot see afar off and has forgotten that she was once purged from her sins. Her gold and silver are cankered. Her wine is mingled with water. The garment of Christ's righteousness is changed for the filthy rags of profession, self-righteousness and church membership. But these will not suffice; neither will they endure the scrutiny of the judgment of God. Every man should bow in thankfulness to God that our blessed Christ, while pronouncing judgment, should mellow the harshness of His words by avowing His undying love for us all. It is remarkable and nothing less than divine that He should end His searching judgments with this heavenly assurance: **"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent." Rev. 3:19** In all our affliction He is afflicted. In all our sorrow His heart is made sad. Where we have been blind He longs to stretch forth His healing hand that we may see the invisible things of Him whose eye directs the course of all the ages. He pities our deafness and hardness of hearing and fain would unstop our ears that we might hear the voice of Him who spoke worlds into existence and sent millions of suns and myriads of stars racing in their orbits in obedience to His will. Even now He would open our ears in this hour of make-believe and pretence that we might hear Him say, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Blessed be the name of Christ, who wounds and heals, scourges and makes whole. He proves our sins upon our heads, convicting the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, but does not forget to unveil the fountain that is open in the house of David for all sin and uncleanness. All is not lost if men will but repent and turn, willingly leaving the system of Babylon and Laodicea to **"go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Heb. 13:13**

"I counsel thee," says Christ, "to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Rev. 3:18 These are the words of Christ to a lukewarm system. This is the counsel of God to an erring people who have wrongly imagined themselves to be rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing, but knowing not that in His eyes they are miserable and wretched and poor and blind and naked.

"Buy of Me gold tried in the fire," that thou mayest be truly rich! Gold has always been symbolic of true riches. Though it is a metal of few uses and little worth, yet among the nations of earth it has become a standard by which men measure their wealth. In both the temple and the tabernacle gold was used in abundance to typify

and represent the body of Christ, that great spiritual temple not made with hands which is now rising to form a habitation for God in the Spirit. All the riches of God are in Christ Jesus, His Son. In Him and in Him alone all the treasures of the eternal realm are made freely available to all who embrace Him. What peculiar paradox is this that Christ should command the wretched and poor to buy fine gold tried in the fire? However impossible such a command may sound to human reason, the truth is that none but the wretched and poor in spirit may buy the tried gold He now freely offers. The voice of God through the prophet Isaiah, clear as a vesper bell, comes ringing down the corridors of time, "...He that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." **Isa. 55:1** It is not to the "rich and increased in goods" that the promises of God are made, but to the poor in spirit who knows he is poor, the blind who knows he is blind, and the deaf who knows his ears are stopped.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Here, my disconsolate brother, is a promise which none but God Himself could make! You in your poverty may buy His gold, yea, fine gold tried by God's fire, both perfect and pure, gold that is the gift of God, gold by grace freely given in answer to your faith. Waste no more money on that which is not true bread, for the bread of God is He, which came down from heaven to give life to all the world. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread (Jesus Christ) which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof, and not die." **John 6:49-50**

The world itself could scarcely contain the books that should be written concerning the riches of God in Christ. Paul, who taught us that we should never trust in the uncertain riches of this world, 1 Tim. 6:17, seemed to break forth into ecstasies when speaking of the riches of God. "O", he cried, "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" **Rom. 11:13** Why, even scholarly translators seem to be transported by an overpowering emotion as they interpret the things concerning His unsearchable riches. Edgar Goodspeed's translation of **Rom. 11:32-36** portrays the unspeakable riches and wisdom of God in these sublime words: "For God has made all men prisoners of disobedience so as to have mercy upon them all. How inexhaustible God's resources, wisdom, and knowledge are! How unfathomable His decisions are, and how untraceable His ways! Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? Or who has advanced anything to Him, for which he will have to be repaid? for from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen!" These are the riches of Christ freely bestowed upon all who in this hour of Laodicea will buy of Him gold tried in the furnace of God.

White raiment, too, is freely offered in the stead of the filthy rags of human righteousness. Fine linen, the Lord has said, is the righteousness of the saints. Rev. 19:8 "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." The fine linen in which John saw the bride arrayed was nothing less than the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord. God hath made Him to be wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Christ, our Saviour, has taken away our sin and now we dwell in Him, and in Him there is no sin. 1 John 3:5 We know that we abide in Him by His Spirit, which He hath given us. True believers in Christ have passed from death across to life, and, if we have passed from death, then we have also passed from sin which brings death, having victory through Him over sin, the flesh, and the devil.

When man sinned in the very genesis of human history, the first discovery he made was this: "They knew that they were naked." If we are embarrassed beyond words to stand naked in the presence of men, how fearful a thing it is to stand naked in the presence of God, stripped of His glory and the righteousness of Jesus Christ! It was this sudden revelation of their nakedness that caused them to hide among the trees of the garden, there to evolve the human notion of sewing fig leaves together to make themselves aprons that, hopefully, the shame of their nakedness might be hidden. But the garments they had made removed not the lurid guilt from their hearts nor cleansed away their sin. They felt no more confident with their aprons than without them, and, when they heard the voice of God (who is the Son of God) walking in the garden, they hid themselves from His presence, being ashamed of their fig leaves and their wretched show of righteousness.

We should not assume that the Lord knew not where they were when He called, "Adam, where art thou?" He who knows all things knew full well where Adam was, but, more important still, the Lord wanted Adam to know the awful truth of where He stood in God's sight. He wanted him to confess his wrong, his nakedness, and his

disobedience that he might receive the promise of a better covering, the perfection of righteousness fully satisfactory to God, even the white linen of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. No other righteousness is acceptable to God our Father. "Now a righteousness coming from God has been brought to light apart from any law, both law and prophets bearing witness to it - a righteousness coming from God, which depends on faith in Jesus Christ and extends to all who believe. No distinction is made; for all alike have sinned, and all consciously come short of the glory of God, gaining acquittal from guilt by His free unpurchased grace through the deliverance which is to be found in Christ Jesus. He it is whom God put forward as a Mercy-seat, rendered efficacious through faith in his blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness - because of the passing over, in God's forbearance, of the sins previously committed - with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus." **Rom. 3:21-26** (Weymouth Original) No man, having partaken of the righteousness of Christ through faith, will ever stand naked and ashamed before God as Adam did. We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. We have an high priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. "Here is the High Priest we need. A man who is holy, faultless, unstained, beyond the reach of sin and lifted to the very heavens. There is no need for Him, like the High Priests we know, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins and then for the people's. He made one sacrifice, once for all, when He offered up Himself. The law makes for its High Priests men of human weakness. But the word of the oath, which came after the law, makes for High Priest the Son, who is perfect forever." **Heb. 7:26-28** (Phillips).

In the beginning God called to Adam that he might see his wretched state and his condition of nakedness in the eyes of the Lord. So now Christ rebukes and warns and threatens the shamefully naked and unclothed condition of the Laodicean church that she might repent of her sins and by faith receive from God the pure white raiment of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I am forced to wonder if perchance the shameful delight taken by those who publicly and shamelessly go cavorting in the nude today may be all too typical of the spiritual condition of the unashamed nakedness of the Laodicean church system of our pathetic day. How indescribably dreadful it is that men and their systems should presumptuously try to modernize the immutable God of glory! How vain and sinful, how jejune and silly it is to hear preachers prate about revamping and updating the church to make it adaptable to the demands of the hour! What devilish notion is it that allows hot dogs and hamburgers to be taken with communion? What wretched abasement is it that permits rock and roll in the aisles of a building that is supposed to be the house of the Lord? And you also who profess to be fundamental in the faith, are you not filled with denominationalism, sectarianism, and divisions? Do you not compass land and sea to make proselytes? Do not your preachers constantly howl for money as though God depended on it? I tell you that, if Jesus Christ should suddenly appear, He would be as busy driving the money changers from your midst and casting out the other clutter you have accumulated as He was in days of old. "Take these things hence" is the word of the Lord. "It is written: My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see." **Rev. 3:18** For saith Christ, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent." **Verse 19** Nothing in our day is so desperately needed as the repentance and godly sorrow of Christians because of the abominations that surround and encumber them on every hand.

Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Only yesterday, when the British lion roared from Westminster, all the world listened and gave heed, but because of the lukewarmness, the blindness, and the nakedness of the Laodicean church, appalling sin, looseness, and immorality has entered in and stolen away the heart and fiber of the people until we, the proud citizens of the mighty British Commonwealth, a commonwealth raised up by God's hand in fulfillment of God's promise, have become a third rate power in the earth, and the influence and power which God gave as a blessing to the whole world has withered as a green herb. Nor can we say better things for our brother nation, the United States of America, which at its founding was called "one nation under God". The tepid lukewarmness of the Laodicean system has so eroded the moral fiber of her people that crime is rampant, the basest men are exalted to high places, judgment and justice are thwarted, and insurmountable problems arise like specters of doom every passing day. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know; My people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick,

and the whole heart faint." **Isa. 1:3-5** And all this iniquity and confusion stems from the lukewarm and wretched condition of Laodicea, the church system at the end of the age. Be zealous, therefore, and repent!

My heart is made exceedingly glad, and of this I witness with joy, that out of the sickening lukewarmness of Laodicea there is an ever increasing number of men and women who are being awakened to the sin and iniquity, the lukewarmness, the blindness and miserable poverty of this present wretched system which dares to call itself "the church". There is an awakening in the earth today. People who have walked for many years with the lukewarm throng of Laodicea, thinking there was nothing else for them to do, are being awakened by the Spirit of God. Their eyes are being anointed with God's eyesalve. They are beginning to see that there is a perfect personal relationship, which men may have with God that does not depend on systems or congregations or vain assemblings in their steeplehouses. Their hearts are learning that their relationship with Christ and His body does not depend on assemblings or communions or baptisms or laying on of hands, which are merely kindergarten teachings, but that they must leave the principles of religion and go on to perfection. Heb. 6:1,2. Let us therefore rejoice that the Spirit of God is preparing Himself an elect company in the earth that they may overcome in this age and sit with Him in His throne in the age to come.

Though the direst judgments are pronounced upon Laodicea, it is exceedingly wonderful to notice that to the overcomers who hear His voice the sublimest promises are given. However, let it be clearly understood that these priceless promises are not given to the Laodicean system but to the listening, hearing individuals, men and women who perchance for life have been part and parcel of the system, but now their eyes are being opened, they are seeing things as they really are, their ears are being unstopped, and the voice of the Son of God is gently sounding in their hearts. How good it is, oh Christian, when Christ begins to speak and when He reproves you! Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth and scourgeth every son He receiveth. He uncovers our sin that He may also take it away.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock," saith Christ. He for whom the church was formed now stands outside its precincts. No longer does He call to the system, but to any man, any woman, any boy, any girl, any race, any nation. You may be cut to the heart, Mr. preacher, because of the things I have said, but it is hard for you to kick against the goads. Better far for you to repent and open wide the door. You may be infuriated, oh believer, but it is the pricking of God's Spirit that you feel as He witnesses to the truth. Repent, then, and open the door to Him who knocks. You will have to leave the church system, of course, with all its machinations. You will have to walk alone with Christ, but in my ear I hear the voice of Christ saying to us now, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." That insistent knocking of the door of your heart, that unrest and uncertainty you feel in your spirit is the voice of God's Son warning you that all is not well, that the Laodicean church system is heading fast for judgment and the removal of its lamp from the candlestick of the Lord.

"If any man hear My voice and open the door," saith Christ, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20 Let the light of divine revelation shine into the darkness of our hearts as we consider the excellent glory of the promise He gives us. "I will come in to him." It is Christ in you that is the hope of glory. Col. 1:27. As it is written, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people." I understand very little about the Godhead. Such things are too high for me, and I would to God that other men would stop their vain talking also, and admit that such knowledge is beyond their understanding. But I do know that there is One who is called the Father and there is One who is called the Son, and I do know that our blessed Christ prayed for the members of His body, saying, **"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one..." John 17:21-23**

Christ in you the hope of glory is the word of the Lord, and now at the end of the age the wondrous promise is to us all. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him..." This, my brother, is the identification with Christ of which we have long been writing. This is the unity for which our hearts sincerely crave. The indwelling Christ produces sonship. By it we become as surely one with Christ as Christ, God's Son, is one with the Father, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" was the prayer of our Saviour. Ah, precious unity with Him, the blessed Saviour, the divine Redeemer

and Advocate who presents us faultless in Himself before the throne of the majesty on high! My inner man weeps with joy when I consider how far this blessedness is removed from the wretched blindness, poverty, and lukewarmness of the Laodicean system.

We shall not invite Christ in as a guest, for it is not as a guest that He has come to dwell. He has come as the King of heaven to set up His throne. Therefore, let all the former clutter of doctrines of men, endless genealogies, and works of righteousness be cleared as profane from His holy temple. It is time for the King of glory to set up His throne and reign within us, for we have heard Him say, "Know ye not that the kingdom of God is within you?" Before ever the kingdom of God is established as a theocracy to govern the world, it must first be established in the hearts of individuals like you and me who, though walking among men as He once did, are ruled neither by men nor systems, but by Christ whom God has appointed heir of all things. He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, and when all things are subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15:25, 28

Hail, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free:
From our sins and fears relieve us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

Now Thine own eternal Spirit.
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

(Charles Wesley)

How wonderful are His words, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me!" Eating and drinking signifies communion, and communion above all else signifies sharing. When a family seats itself about the table, each person shares the food one with the other, and together they partake of whatever has been provided. Thus they share and thus they partake. Paul's statement, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" **1 Cor. 10:16**, is rendered by Goodspeed in these words. "Does not the consecrated cup mean that in drinking we share in the blood of Christ? Does not the bread we break mean that in eating we share the body of Christ?" So Goodspeed translates it, while both Weymouth and Moffatt use the word participate, saying, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not participating in the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break, is it not participation in the body of Christ?" These three descriptive words, communion, sharing, and participating, shine as a heavenly revelation, giving us the knowledge that to "sup" with Christ is to commune with Him, to share in Him, and to participate in and of Him. They "did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." **1 Cor. 10:3-4**

"I will come in and will sup with him," saith the Lord, "and the bread which we shall break is Myself, for I am that living bread which came down from heaven, that a man should eat thereof and not die." The question, "how can this man give us His flesh to eat", cannot be answered by the natural man and yet how clearly it is seen and understood by those who commune with Him and in their communing partake of Him! They and they alone find their hearts burning within them as He opens the word, which is Himself, to their spirits. It is when Christ shares Himself with His people that they become one with Him because they partake of Him and participate in Him. We become one with Him of whom we partake and one with all that blessed family who, in supping, participate in Him. This is the true body of Christ.

As we become acquainted with God through His word, the truth is progressively unfolded before our eyes that Jesus Christ is both the beginning and the end of all the creation of God, everything in Jesus, and Jesus everything. It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. God hath made Him unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Yea, and all else besides! God has made Him the truth, the light, the way. He is the bread of life, of which if a man partake, he shall live forever. He who is the water of life once spoke to a needy woman, saying, "**Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**" **John 4:13-14**

Does your heart cry out for redemption, oh man so burdened down with the sin and corruption of this age? Jesus Christ is your redemption. God has made Him so, and, if you will confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Jesus Christ not only saves you. Jesus Christ is your Saviour. Not only does He redeem men, but He is their redeemer and their redemption in one. Your heart cries out for the priceless pearls of wisdom only to find that the wisdom of men is foolishness with God; but God hath made him to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. No man who lives without Christ can be called wise, be he ever so learned; and no man whose life is devoted to Christ can be called foolish, be he ever so ignorant, for in His heart dwells the source of eternal wisdom and understanding. He who has come to abide forever prepares Himself to sup with us and share Himself until we become one with Him.

Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and sweet were the hours of communion they spent in His presence; but Lazarus had fallen ill with a sickness whereof he died. When Jesus heard the news, after two days He returned to Bethany where they lived, and Martha, hearing of His coming, went out to meet Him. "Lord," she sobbed in her distress, "if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." "**Your brother shall rise again,**" Jesus smiled, but Martha, disconsolate still, replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." And Jesus, sad that she had not seen the truth, spoke words that would teach every believing heart that the resurrection is not so much an event as it is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "**I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?**" **John 11:25-26** With these words He made us all to know that he who sups with Christ shares in Him who is Himself the resurrection and becomes a participator in His life.

"I am the resurrection!" Thus He spoke
In lovely Bethany one cloudy day
To weeping sisters; yet those living words
Healed not their wounds nor dried their tears away.
Naught did they see but death. The chasm wide
Was deep and dark and cold. They did not know
Eternal life was standing by their side.

"I am the resurrection!" Yet they wept,
Though life eternal looked into their eyes;
For resurrection came to visit earth
When Jesus left His home beyond the skies.
So life walked down that day with human feet
To where death trembled in the grave's dark gloom;
Life challenged death; he dropped the keys and fled,
And with Christ's life a man came from the tomb.

(Charles S. Price)

"I will come in to him and will sup with him" is the promise of Christ to "any man" of this Laodicean period in which we live. Fiercely He has rebuked the lukewarmness, the riches, the works, the increase in goods, the wretchedness, the nakedness, and the blindness of the professing church of this hour, the system in which

many who read this book are still involved, a system so distasteful to Christ that it turned His stomach and He now spues or vomits it out of His mouth. Take no pride that you are a member of such a system and that you assemble weekly with it, for Babylon the great is not only the mother of harlots, but the mother of all the abominations of the earth as well. Rev. 17:5. Why then do we wonder that Christ is still insisting, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and receive not of her plagues?" Your first step toward the glory of which I write is to "come out."

Now in the end of the age He has turned away from the corruption of the church system to "any man", saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him." Once again the bread of life is broken to us and He who is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega now shares Himself with all who bid Him enter. Your soul longs for truth; He is truth. You sigh for life; He is your life. Your spirit cries for wisdom; God hath made Him to be wisdom. Your heart cries for purity and sanctification; God has made Him sanctification. "I am the resurrection" is His word. He does not want to give you things; He gives you Himself, and with Himself all things.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Amen."

CHAPTER FOUR IRON MINGLED WITH CLAY

During the years that have gone we have had opportunity to feast upon the rich revelation of the Lord. We have endeavored to write with earnestness and conviction the truth we felt God had given us. The great truths of sonship, the mind of Christ, the purposes of God, the will of God, mystery Babylon, and many others are necessary and of great importance that we might understand God's great program and that we might be able by His infinite grace to lay hold of those eternal realities which He has set before us.

It is extremely sad that after two thousand years of church history the spiritual understanding of the general mill-run of Christians is infantile in the extreme. Their hopes and aspirations centre around a few pet theories and doctrines that they have adopted, and their main hope is that they will go to heaven when they die after they have stayed here as long as possible, but the great eternal purposes of God have never been revealed to them. Their minds have become immune to truth and so inoculated against revelation that their lives are wasted away in the shallows of ritualism and in the sloughs of tradition. Christians have spent their lives "straining at gnats and swallowing camels," plucking out splinters from their neighbor's eye while forgetting the beam that is in their own. Woe to us all, for we have made the word of God of none effect by our tradition and halted far short of the living fountains of water.

During the past weeks my mind has been greatly stirred about many things. All men and women who are walking in the Spirit today must certainly be aware that we are living in momentous hours. Personally I believe that this present day is the most important day of the dispensation. We do not belittle, discredit, nor depreciate the importance of the years that have gone, or do we in any way dishonor the great and mighty manifestations of God's Spirit throughout the entire age of grace. Never can we speak too highly of the revivals, the reformations, the revelations of truth, or the outstanding men and women of God this age has produced. But the great truth of the moment is that the dispensation of grace, the church age, is passing swiftly away and the dispensation of the kingdom of God is at hand. In centuries past we were journeying on a long and toilsome road, but now we have come to the end of it. Through centuries and millenniums we have seen the kingdom afar off. Now it is close at hand. We have patiently waited for the distant day of the coming of the Lord. Now He is even at the doors. Our minds have struggled to find the meaning of the great Babylonish harlot, described throughout the Bible and coming to a dread fullness in the book of Revelation, but now we see the monstrous thing forming before our very eyes and no man lifts his voice against it.

We have long quoted the scripture, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation," but the reality of that truth is beginning to come to pass and He is making Himself known unto those who love Him and long for His presence. The special revelation of Christ to His believers is really only a preparation for our being caught away to Zion where the kingdom will begin and from whence it will spread

over all the earth. It is a preparation for the hour when two shall be working in the field; one shall be taken and the other left. And two shall be sleeping in one bed; one shall be taken and the other left.

The saints are being prepared to take the kingdom. By "saint" we do not mean just any and every Christian. The saints are a very special company and are identical with the sons of God. The vast majority of Christians are far too taken up with their childish religion to make any attempt to be fully partakers of the mind of Christ. They are too busy praying that God will do what they want Him to do to ever be concerned about the will of God for them. Such believers are without doubt saved, but they are saved so as by fire. Only those who have made the will of God and the mind of Christ their prize will ever attain to sonship and a part in Christ's heavenly kingdom. These are the true saints. For this reason the Spirit of God has been calling us apart from church activity and traditions. He wants us to know His voice and He wants us to be known of Him. "My sheep know My voice, and they follow Me, and I give unto them aionian life and they shall never perish." Multitudes of people freely quote that scripture, yet of a truth there is not one Christian among a hundred today who knows the voice of Christ separate and apart from all other voices in the world. It comes as a great shock to see how easily Christians are deceived by wolves in sheep's clothing and dragons that speak like lambs. For the most part they are as easily deceived by Satan as Little Red Riding Hood of fairy tale fame, who was deceived by the wolfs pretending to be her grandmother. The average Christian of our day goes about with his mouth open ready to swallow any poison that is put into it. He lends his ear to the exaggerations and lies that are foisted upon him by pulpit and by air-waves. He seems to grope about for the spectacular. He lends his ear to such a jargon of voices, such a Babel of sounds, such a quagmire of ideas and opinions that he cannot know good from evil. He has become so filled with human opinions and so completely devoid of the spirit of understanding that he cannot discern the voice of a sheep from the voice of a goat, neither can he tell the voice of Christ from the voice of antichrist.

If a man is ever going to know the voice of Christ, he must for a time at least drown out all other voices. He must banish his own opinions as well as the opinions of others. He must discard the will of other men and crucify his own will. He must tune his ear in to heaven and listen to the gentle voice that speaks to the inner spirit and by thus doing he will begin to know who is speaking, whether Christ or Belial. Have you noticed how a mother recognizes the cry of her own baby even though there are a dozen other babies in the nursery? She knows that one voice because she has heard it so often that her ear recognizes it apart from all others. Sheep come to know the voice of their shepherd separate and apart from all imitators or hirelings until it is impossible to deceive them. This is because they have heard that one voice and that one voice alone; therefore they know it and know not the voice of strangers. But Christians are forever listening to a Babel of voices who clamor for their ear while Jesus is left standing in the shadows, weeping as He did over Jerusalem and saying, "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathers her little ones, but ye would not."

There is an ever-increasing growth in understanding among all people who are leaving the racketeering systems of a Babylonish church that they might come apart for a while to listen and hear the gentle voice that speaketh from heaven. Thus they learn to receive His mind and be filled with the knowledge of His will. Indeed, we may not notice much growth in ourselves but other men are bound to take notice that we have been with Jesus.

When Moses had been up on the mountain with God, He wist not that his face shone; but others knew that it shone. The religious, fanatical, idolatrous crowd at the foot of the mountain had no shining faces among them as they danced about their golden idol, but the man who went alone with God had to hang a vail over his face because of that glory, that faded only after he returned to them. The Lord Jesus came from the glory and wonder of the transfiguration to the presence of a glum and disappointed multitude who had spent hours trying to cast out a devil, but without success. What Christians need today more than all else is to get away from the excitement of meetings and crowds of people and get alone with God and stay alone with Him until He makes manifest the secret of His will, stay alone with Him until He speaks and speaks again, stay alone with Him day after day until they know His voice and can recognize it as distinct from all the other sounds of earth.

During the last few years I have had many requests to go preaching or to attend religious gatherings, but each time I have felt the Spirit of God telling me not to go. He tells me that He does not want people to hear my voice. He wants them to hear His. Indeed, there may come a time again when He will say, "Go", and when that

moment comes, it will be a joy to fulfill His will. But the greatest joy I know just now is to know that many people are learning to walk alone with Him, silencing all outward voices that they might listen when He speaks within.

If we look through the pages of holy scripture or even peruse the pages of history, we will soon learn that all men and women whom God ever chose were lonely people who knew God separate and apart from orders, rituals, ceremonies, traditions, crowds, congregations, meetings, and instructors. What has become of that people who need not that any man should teach them? Where are the people who know that the anointing teaches them all things and is truth? These are the people we must see, for these are the people who know God. If we would take time to consider the greatest heroes of faith the world has ever known, we would know immediately that these statements are true. Enoch walked with God. Noah alone was righteous in his generation. Abraham was a friend of God. Israel was a prince with God. Moses spoke face to face with God. David was a man after God's own heart. But all these men were men who knew what it meant to be separated and alone. They learned never to trust people or to put confidence in men. They trusted neither horses nor chariots, but put their trust in the Lord and were as Mount Zion that could not be moved. They knew what it meant to flee before their enemies. They tasted the bitterness of temptation and persecution. They felt the frustration of misunderstanding and the biting disappointment of seeing familiar friends become traitors. We expect enemies to be enemies and our bitterest foes are often honorable foes, but to discover that the kiss placed upon our cheek by a familiar friend was a signal to the enemy to attack us is a blow that leaves us dazed and disconsolate for many years. Nevertheless we know that even the bitterest things are working together for good to those who love the Lord. As Ahithophel betrayed David and Judas betrayed Christ, so the Ahithophels and Judases who cross our pilgrim pathway teach us that cursed is the man who putteth his trust in man, but blessed is the man who maketh God his trust. We should never spend our lives bemoaning those who have betrayed us, but rather pass our time in thankfulness that we have learned to trust in the living God. Should I spend the rest of my days bemoaning, berating, and deriding the men who have betrayed me, I should have all my time taken up and come to the end of my journey a miserable old man full of bitterness, devoid of understanding, and empty of trust in the living God.

If we really understood the magnitude of the things that lie immediately before us, we would be willing to make all sacrifices that we might be partaker of His glory. Many thousands of people in the earth today are convinced that the kingdom of God is very near, but I greatly fear that only a very few of us realize how great that kingdom is to be or how much our future blessedness in that kingdom depends upon our faithfulness and consecration here and now. There are countless thousands of Christians who want to reign in the kingdom, but I fear that multitudes of them have no real understanding of what such a reign would mean. It is never hard to find people who want to be rulers. The world has always abounded with people both in the church and out of it who would love to seize the rod of iron and beat into submission everybody and everything that would oppose their way of thinking. There is no difficulty in finding such dimly carnal wretches. Even Saul of Tarsus before his conversion was a man of that caliber. I have heard Christians say, "I would like to begin to reign right now!" But God have mercy on the earth if their wish should be granted, for they would be less equipped to rule the earth than Joseph Stalin. Their only understanding would be to beat every opposing force into submission to their will. Let us not become possessed with these foolish, childish, inane notions, for they are only a condemnation to us.

Before long the world will have the opportunity of knowing what it is like to have a dictator with an iron fist, ruling with a carnal mind, drunken with the blood of saints, and reigning over the kings of the earth. But it will not be Christ. It will be the ruthless ruler of the combined might of the two world forces of political and religious Babylon. I predict that before long we will see a lying devilish union between the iron rule of Communism and the clay rule of Democracy, and along with it we will see a lewd and bawdy marriage between the iron rule of dictatorial Catholicism and the weak clay rule of a democratic Protestantism. Thus we will have the two feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, iron mixed with miry clay, Dan. 2:33, one foot representing religious Babylon and the other foot representing political Babylon. Here we have the two beasts of Revelation 13 working in harmony and the second beast making all the earth worship the first beast. There will be a time of literal hell on earth during their reign. Neither rich nor poor, bond nor free, small nor great will be spared, but all will be forced to bow to their diabolical will. See Rev. 13:16-17

While this dictatorial power of Babylon is endeavoring to crush all beneath its feet, the 144,000 sons of God are being prepared on Mount Zion to take the kingdom and reign with Christ. Rev. 14 This is the stone which Daniel saw cut out of the mountain without hands. Dan. 2:34, 45 The mountain is Zion, and at the very moment when Babylon is at its dreadful zenith, standing on its two shaky feet part of iron and part of clay, the stone cut from the mountain, Jesus of Nazareth with all the sons of God, will roll out and smite the image on its feet. The iron and clay will fall apart and all the empires of this world, all human systems of government, will crash in a heap like the dust of the summer threshing floor and the wind (the Spirit of God) will drive them away. Please read Dan. 2:35, 44. Then shall the stone (Christ) become a great mountain that will fill the whole earth, Dan 2:35, and of the increase of His government there shall be no end.

The world will soon learn experimentally the dread horror of being ruled by the carnal mind and after that it will be ready to submit itself to the rule of the mind of Christ. Let us all assuredly know this; no man, absolutely no man, will be given authority to reign with Christ except he has completely crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, and the carnal mind with its enmity toward God has been destroyed. Only those who have become one with Christ's will and who love His purpose, being filled with His mind and His will, will be found worthy to reign with Him, for verily, if one carnal mind could reign in the kingdom of God, that kingdom would fall before it was a year old. For six thousand years the carnal mind has proved its inability to rule. Disorder, desolation, and death follow in its wake. As death and hell follow the rider of the pale horse of Rev. 6:8, so disorder, confusion and desolation follow the rule of the carnal mind.

It is always difficult to write an article with emphasis, force, and conviction so that the eyes and understanding of the reader will be enlightened, but it is fortunate for us all that at this particular hour there is a spirit of wisdom and understanding coming among elect people who are the truly called of God. That spirit of understanding, which is born of God's own wisdom, enables them to comprehend things, which are actually incomprehensible. It irons out the wrinkles of misunderstanding and shows the truth to the inner spirit even though we have no power to adequately explain it. Have you not noticed this to be so? Many times during the last months the Spirit of God has witnessed to my heart that certain mysterious things are true even though I had no power nor reason which would or could explain them. Conversely many times the Spirit of God has witnessed to me that certain things were a lie and were born of the spirit of deception, though outwardly they look right and even appeared to be scriptural. There never was a time in all history when men needed so much to be possessed of the mind of Christ as now. It is my firm conviction that during the last few years the spirit of strong delusion has descended upon the earth. It is overcoming the minds of many millions of people, making them believe a lie. This spirit of delusion leads them to think that evil is good, good is evil, wrong is right, and right is wrong. This sinister spirit of confusion, born of Satan, is the very spirit of Babylon, and it will without doubt grow much stronger.

I do not consider myself to be a prophet, but I know I have the Spirit of God, and I predict that we will see an almost unbelievable speeding up of all the machinery which will unite the opposing factions of Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Orthodoxy. Most of our readers are aware that the book, Mystery Babylon, foretold that this very thing would come to pass, but we freely admit that we did not expect it to come with such unbelievable speed as it has. It is most amazing to notice that, though the sensational preachers of our day have always eagerly grasped every bit of sensational news to pad their sermons and attract a crowd, to my knowledge there has scarcely been one voice that has been lifted either by press or by radio against the coming abominable reunion of the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth with all her harlot daughters.

Not only has there been an absence of voices lifted against this union, but on the contrary men who are considered great and influential in the church system speak with great favor of the coming union of the two systems. The following newspaper clipping will give some idea of what I mean.

"Bonn, Germany. Evangelist Billy Graham said Friday that it would be a great tragedy if the ecumenical policies of the late Pope John were reversed. 'Pope John brought an entirely new era to the world,' Graham told a news conference. 'It would be a great tragedy if the cardinals elect a pope who would react against the policies of Pope John and bring back the walls between the Christian faiths'."

I think it should be plain for even the dullest mind to see that, when men like Graham, who have the confidence of millions of Christians throughout the entire earth, begin to assure the minds of those people that this lewd union is a great step in the right direction, then we are going to see an endless procession of sincere people, their minds befogged with the spirit of delusion, join the wedding procession to union with Rome. Let no man deceive you, but rather know this: once the spirit of delusion settles upon the earth you will be absolutely amazed as to whom you will see on the band wagon of Babylon's union. The only people on earth who will escape this delusion will be the people in whom is the mind of Jesus Christ. These are the elect sons of God. These are they who have God's name in their foreheads.

Right at this very moment we are at the moment of fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus when He said, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not for there shall arise false christs and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before, wherefore if they say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, He is in the secret chambers believe it not." **Matt 24:24-26.**

Do you know that Christians have become so miracle minded that they would gladly run from one side of the continent to the other if they could contact a great miracle worker or a healer by so doing? Christians have become so desperately and pitifully gullible in this regard that hosts of them have made themselves candidates and easy marks for delusion. Let me ask you this question: If you are addicted to looking all about you for signs and wonders, miracle workers and healers, and if you are willing to believe that all such men must of necessity be of God, otherwise they could not do these things, how are you going to recognize the false prophet when he comes calling down fire in the sight of the people and making all the world wonder after him? If you are going to depend upon the things that men say, or if you are going to accept the erroneous theory that seeing is believing, then you are in for trouble. You dare not believe even all you see, for the thing you have seen may not be of God. The word of God distinctly tells us that there will be spirits of devils working miracles that will go forth unto the kings of the earth. Rev. 16:13,14. And may I add this solemn warning! The kings of the earth are not necessarily the crowned heads of the earth, but Peter has told us that we are kings and priests, and I for one am sure that many such kings and priests are even now deceived.

I am not against signs, miracles, or healings, but I tell you that millions of Christians have gone awfully after these things and, having placed them in pre-eminence above Christ, they have made themselves open to deception. A wicked and an adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, but no sign shall be given but the sign of the prophet Jonas. When all these great deceptions begin to come on the earth, there will be only one place of safety for the people of God. That safety will be found in the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit is truth. Actually we have no need that any man teach us what is right or wrong, for the anointing teaches us all things and is truth. Mark carefully what John said in his epistle. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:26.**

Practically every day I receive literature through the mail. Some of it (very little) makes my heart rejoice. Some of it repulses my spirit and I know it is evil. Other some is meaningless, neither good nor evil, but written by someone wishing to have his name before the public. Let me explain what I mean by this. We cannot go by what people say nor by the way things seem to be. For instance, there are several magazines sent to me that are filled with reports that ordinarily should make one's heart rejoice. They boast of remarkable things, most of which seem quite scriptural, but there is something wrong somewhere. Something brings an unexplainable spiritual heaviness that the mind does not understand. You rebuke yourself for the way you feel about it, but the feeling persists. Once this happens to me, I never go on trying to prove to myself that the thing is right or wrong. From there on I just leave it alone. It is not up to us to make decisions for or against things. Our one responsibility is to walk before God and mind our own business. God knows whether such an one is right or wrong and He will judge according to infinite and unerring wisdom.

As further proof of the way the world is heading toward the great union of all the forces of Babylon, we quote the following news item. The author and traveler, Ray Johnson, writes this significant statement. "A year ago

when I was traveling through Europe, I was appalled to find that many of the Protestant leaders there were apologizing for Martin Luther and the Reformation. They were saying that the Christian thing to do was to return their churches to the Roman Catholic Church. We all know that there is a great movement on to unite the Protestant church. Denominations with similar beliefs have been urged to unite. This has been done in many cases. Now we understand that five or six of the largest denominations, some of them having very different theological views, are preparing to unite. The feeling seems to be that the main thing is to be united. There is less and less concern to preach that which one is convinced is the truth. Anything, which will cause any division among believers, is wrong. We have heard rumors that the uniting of these several great denominations will be called the Christian Catholic Church. From other sources we have heard that it is to be called the United Church of Christ. Just what name they will take we do not know. But we do know that the plan is to unite as soon as possible with the Roman Catholic Church. These church leaders seem somehow to believe that they will then have fulfilled the Lord's Prayer of John 17 where Christ prayed that they all may be one. You can be sure that the Roman Church will welcome such a unity as long as the Pope is made the head. The Ecumenical Protestant leaders seem to be willing to make almost any concession for the sake of unity. The apostate church of the end time seems to be taking its final form."

The above quotation portrays the whole picture very much as it is — unity at any price. It is the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophetic word which says, "They shall gather together, but not by Me." **Isa. 54:15.**

In the days of Daniel King Nebuchadnezzar had a terrifying vision that troubled him greatly. He called in all the wise men of Babylon, but none of them could tell him his dream nor give him an interpretation of it. Daniel and his friends went to prayer, earnestly requesting of God that the vision with its interpretation be shown to them. At last the secret was revealed to Daniel and, being ushered into the presence of the king, he recounted before him, not only the dream, but also the interpretation of it.

It is impossible to understand any spiritual thing with the natural mind and it is certain that we need the mind of the Lord and the presence of the Spirit to open our understanding now that we may see the depths of meaning in this vision.

Daniel recounted the vision before the king in these words. "Thou, O king, sawest and, behold, a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee and the form of it was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms were of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay. The brass, the iron, the silver, and the gold were broken in pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them; And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." **Dan. 2:31-35**

Now in the interpretation that followed Daniel showed the king that he, Nebuchadnezzar, was the head of gold. He represented the Babylonian Empire. Then there was to follow a lesser empire, represented by the silver of the breast and the two arms. This we may be sure represented the empire of Media-Persia. Following this was the Grecian Empire represented by the thighs of brass. Then came the iron empire of Rome represented by the two legs of iron. The two legs represent the eastern and western sections of the Roman Empire. Then last of all were the feet, which were made of the unsubstantial mixture of iron mingled with clay so that the feet were partly strong and partly weak.

This great and terrifying image was in itself a representation of the system of world empires from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, down to the end of the age. It would not be right to pass on further without making an observation which must be evident to all. It is without doubt most remarkable that the head of this great world system was Babylon. It goes without saying that what the head is the whole man is. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." **Dan. 2:37, 38**

For us the feet should be the most significant part of this whole image, for they represent the world systems that exist in our day. For many years the book of Daniel has been a closed book. It was shut up and sealed till the time of the end. Dan. 12:9 But during the last few years it has begun to open and spring into life. Thus we find ourselves living among the very things of which it speaks. The two feet of this image portray the world systems from about the end of the Roman Empire to the end of this age. The feet were made of part iron and part clay, partly strong and partly weak. We may not know all the meaning inferred here, yet it is plain for all to see that we are now seeing the final and complete formation of these mingled feet of Babylon right before our eyes. Any dictatorial form of government is iron. It rules with a mailed fist. It breaks in pieces and subdues all things. Dan. 2:40 On the other hand we are forced to admit that our beloved democracy is the rule of clay. It is a rule where people come and go much as they please. They worship as they please, they vote as they wish, they say what they think, and they do as they like. It is not hard to see that the uniting of these two systems would be as the feet of the image, partly strong and partly broken. It would be political Babylon.

But this image had two feet, both of which were iron and clay. Now just as the political world has its dictators and its democracies, so also has the religious world its dictators and democracies. Roman Catholicism comes under the dictatorial iron rule of the Pope. But practically all forms of Protestantism are more or less democratic and the people think and do much as they please. This is the rule of clay!

There is positively no doubt that spiritual Babylon is on its way to the kind of unity portrayed by the feet which were part of iron and part of clay. Spiritual Babylon is forming right before our very eyes. You have only to watch the newspapers and listen to the reports to see the evidence of it on every hand. Thousands are being sucked into this whirlpool even now. And make no mistake! Following the second session of the Ecumenical Council in Rome, there will be a great speeding up in the progress toward the union of the iron of Rome with the clay of Protestantism. People's minds have been well prepared. Protestant leaders the world over have raised their voices in favor of the union. People have been "softened up" and they are being prepared to march back to Rome. Make no mistake about it, for it is sure to come. Do not flirt with this harlot system. It will drag you into its vortex and you will be swallowed by it. The hour has come to "come out and be separate and touch not the unclean thing." Both elements are already unclean, but the mixture will be filthy.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." **Rev. 18:1-6**

We mentioned above that this great image had two feet, both a crude mixture of iron and clay. One foot represents spiritual Babylon and the other foot represents political Babylon. You may disbelieve this statement, but we will see before long that there will be some sort of an agreement between Capitalism and Communism. Iron and clay cannot mix but they will certainly try. It may be that they will do little more than render lip service to each other and tell lies at the same table. There may even be a war first, but they will undoubtedly unite. Even at this very moment, in spite of all the fire and brimstone that issues from their mouths as they denounce each other, there are signs of growing romance. The oriental east will draw away from the west that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared, but the west will draw closer together until the iron of Communism is mixed with the clay of Democracy and we will have the two feet complete, the iron of Catholicism mixed with clay of Protestantism on the one hand and the iron of Communism mixed with the clay of Democracy on the other. Certainly a weak, rotten, shaky pair of feet to bear the weight of the world systems, but there they are none the less.

This, however, is not the end of the union, for the two systems will become one. Our understanding of Revelation 13 is limited indeed, but two dreadful beasts are described in that chapter. The first beast received his power and authority from the dragon (the devil). The second beast deceived the people who dwelt on the

earth by means of his miracles. Rev. 13:14. (This should be a solemn warning to all people who hold miracles in great reverence.) But the second beast gave his authority to the first beast and commanded all who dwell upon the earth to worship him, verse 12, and caused all both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. Rev. 13:16-17 Now the first beast, which receives worship, is the religious one. This is religious or spiritual Babylon with its head in Rome. The second beast is the political one, who refuses to let people buy, sell, or trade in any manner unless they have first sworn allegiance to the first beast. Whether they are rich or poor, bond or free, great or small will make no difference. Verse 16. They will all be required to do homage to this beastly and dreadful system.

Let us make it perfectly clear here that the real ruling force will not be political Babylon, but spiritual Babylon. That is why it is said in **Rev. 17:18** "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth". Revelation chapters 17 and 18, though too long to quote here, show very clearly that spiritual Babylon is to be the real force in the earth, and she will reign over the kings of the earth just as she did before the days of the Reformation when practically every king in Europe took his orders from the Pope of Rome. As it was then, so will it be again, but much, much worse than before. The two feet of Daniel 2 and the two beasts of Rev. 13 amount to about one and the same thing. They complement each other.

There are few books in the Bible, which so confirm each other as do the two books of Daniel and Revelation. Both are sealed up until the time of the end and have remained a mystery for many centuries, but both are beginning to unfold in a sort of corroborative testimony so that each explains the other and greatly adds to its message.

The awe-inspiring vision of Nebuchadnezzar did not end with the vision of the feet of iron and clay. The greatest event of all was yet to come, for he saw a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, which smote the image on its unsteady feet. The blow fell upon the feet because they represent the ruling power at the time of the end when these events take place and the vision is fulfilled. The moment that blow was struck by the stone from the mountain, the whole Babylonish system fell and crumbled to dust beneath its own weight. It became like the dust of a summer threshing floor and the wind blew it away. Then the little stone cut from the mountain itself became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Dan. 2:35,44-45 This, of course, is the beginning of the kingdom of God, which will eventually fill the whole earth. The stone is Christ with all the elect sons of God. The mountain is Zion. Thus it is said, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." The kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold. "The great God hath made known to the king (Nebuchadnezzar) what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure." **Dan. 2:44-45**

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision of Daniel 2 the stone (Christ) cut from the mountain (Zion) smote the image on the two feet and thus destroyed the whole system of Babylon. It is therefore most significant that immediately following John's vision of the two beasts, who controlled the worship and commerce of the whole earth, he says, "I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion and with Him 144,000 having His Father's name written in their foreheads." **Rev. 14:1-7** Then immediately following the marvelous description of this 144,000 sons of God, he saw an angel fly through heaven saying, "Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." **Rev. 14:8-20** If you read the remainder of the chapter, you will see vividly the process of the destruction of this Babylonish system by the stone which was cut out of Mount Zion without hands. The stone which Daniel saw and the 144,000 sons whom John saw are identical.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that "Christ" includes the Head (Jesus of Nazareth) together with all the members of His body. This is the true Christ. This is the fullness of Christ. "Behold, I and the sons which God hath given Me." Jesus is the first born of a vast family of sons. This is the vision John saw upon Mount Zion - Christ with the other members of His body ready to take the kingdom and reign. Let it be known here, however, that what God calls the body of Christ is not what Christians call the body of Christ. The church system would include all its converts as members of the body of Christ, but the Father has chosen an elect company of sons who bear His name in their foreheads and in whose mouths there is no guile. The confused Babylonish church system of our day is full of lies, exaggerations, hypocrisy, false teachers, false prophets

speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron. But that company that stands on Mount Zion is a company chosen out from among all this. They sing a new song. They are undefiled. God's name is in their foreheads, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

I must frankly tell you that I believe that the church system of our day has sunk to its lowest ebb. It is ripe for the deception of antichrist. It is worldly minded; it loves pleasure more than it loves God. It loves feasting more than fasting. It exaggerates its successes. It exalts men above Christ. It compasses land and sea to make a proselyte and frequently the proselytes are more the children of Satan than they were in the beginning. The whole system is full of professional mendicants who beg money in the name of their program just as a blind man on the street corner begs in the name of his blindness. Only yesterday I received a long letter filled with a lying false prophecy, which told me all the wonderful things that would happen to me if I would send the writer an offering for his radio work. Cursed be such wicked men! But many are deceived by their guile even though their wickedness should be evident to the simplest mind. The church system is filled with programs of human making. Its costly buildings dot the streets. Its ministers love to wear their long robes and to be called Father, Reverend and Holy in public while their private lives too often hold nothing in common with their profession. More than one widely known preacher of our day has become a millionaire, and that by devouring widow's houses, touting his programs to gullible multitudes, and for a pretence making long prayers for the people. Jesus said they were whited sepulchers - beautiful outside, but full of dead men's bones.

Ah, wicked generation! They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient and to all good works reprobate. No wonder Jesus asked, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" And no wonder He said, "Many will come in that day saying, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity." These are the words of the Saviour, and these words are truth.

There is a burning desire in my heart to help all men to see what the true church really is. What is this glorious church of which Paul spoke and which he declared was without spot or wrinkle or any such thing? What is this church of which Jesus said, "Upon this rock will I build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it?" Is it this visible thing we see with our natural eyes, which is described in the parables of Matt. 13 as being full of tares, goats, weeds, bad fish, and the leaven of malice and wickedness? Or is it a treasure hid in a field? It is not the great outward thing that sprawls itself over the earth in the sight of all men. It is the hidden thing, which God sees. It is the treasure hidden in the great visible field. It is the priceless pearl hidden among the muck and filth of the oyster bed. It is the few heads of wheat that have managed to live among the crowding moisture-sucking tares. It is the few sheep among the flocks of goats who know the Shepherd's voice and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. It is the few clean fish gathered from the net in the end of the age. Please read Matt. 13.

Man loves the visible and glories in what he sees but God sees the invisible and loves what man cannot see. Perhaps the most scathing comment Jesus ever made to the visible Jewish church of His day was that "publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." **Matt. 21:31-32** And thus without doubt it will be in the visible church system of our day. Let us cease to look at the church as that which is visible, and let us see the true church, the elect of God, who amid all this outward show is as a treasure hidden in a field. Let us see it as the hidden seven thousand who in Elijah's day had never bowed the knee to Baal, even though Elijah himself knew it not and thought that he alone was serving the Lord. For as it was in the days of Noah, who alone was righteous in his generation, and as it was in the day that just Lot came out of Sodom, so shall it be in the days that the Son of man shall come. Then they were eating and drinking, marrying and divorcing, and knew nothing until the flood came and destroyed them all.

I have a strong conviction that we are at the end of the dispensation of grace. The kingdom of God is at hand. The church age has served its purpose of bringing forth its elect sons, and, having served its purpose, it is at an end. Men are still looking for another great revival in the church, but it will not come. The next great revival will be in the beginning of the kingdom age when whole nations will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord (Zion) and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths; For the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." **Micah 4:2**

(Mount Zion is a magnificent snow-capped mountain one hundred twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem). Psa. 133:3.

Along with the great kingdom revival mentioned above when all nations come to know God, there is also another very special event when all Israel shall come to know Him, too. This national conversion of Israel is described by Zechariah in these words: "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one is in bitterness for his firstborn." **Zech. 12:10** "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." **Zech 13:1** "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."
Verse 6

There is a great revival coming when the whole earth will turn to God, but it is not coming in the church age. Revivals for this age are finished. You will have to agree that there has been something sadly lacking in the revivals of the last several years. There have been big and wonderful reports, but there has been something missing, for sin continues to increase and coldness is everywhere rampant among the church members. The revivals of the Reformation in the days of Luther, the revivals in the days of the Wesleys and Whitfield in England, the revivals of Finney and Moody in America, and the great outpouring of the Spirit that began in 1900 were revivals of a different order. Then multitudes turned to God and the courses of entire nations were altered. England was saved from a bloody revolution by the Wesleyan revival. America banished the demon of liquor in the days of Billy Sunday. But the revivals of the last few years (whether they are revivals or not may be questioned) have served to popularize religion so that the song "It is No Secret What God Can Do" has been glibly sung on the dance floor and in the theatre just as it has been sung in the church pew, and the song "Just A Closer Walk With Thee" has been used to conclude evenings of frivolity and abject nonsense. There never was so much church building as today, never so much money spent on religion in all its aspects, but there never was so much spiritual poverty. Everywhere there are forms of godliness, but everywhere there is a lack of power.

We are indeed living in momentous hours. The great Babylonish image is standing on its two unsubstantial feet of iron and clay. A spirit of deception has fallen upon the world and Satan has come down with great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time. Men and nations have become "lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." **2 Tim. 3:2-5**

In my opinion it is completely unscriptural to look for a revival at the end of the church age. As it was in the days of Noah (see Gen. 6) and as it was in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man. We are approaching the hour when we may well ask ourselves in the words of Jesus, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" We are certainly seeing the fulfillment of Paul's prediction: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

There was a wonderful day when Israel was preparing to leave Egypt, when a great event happened that has its parallel in our day. Just before the Passover, when the firstborn of every household was sealed, Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven and there was a thick darkness in Egypt for three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place. It was darkness that could befall. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Exodus 10:21-23. God has begun to divide the light from the darkness. There is every evidence that gross darkness that can be felt is descending upon all who love and follow the systems of this age, but in the souls of those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth there is ever increasing light.

CHAPTER FIVE GUIDED BY THE EYE OF GOD

A traveler on a dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lea;

And one took root and sprouted up
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at eventide
To breathe its early vows
And age was pleased at height of noon
To rest beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs;
The birds sweet music bore.
It stood a glory in itself,
A blessing evermore.

As I thought upon the words of this pretty poem, which I learned when a boy in school, it took the form of a parable in my mind. It came to pass that when the oak tree was grown it, too, bore many acorns, which the birds of the air and the chattering squirrels carried far away, and, as they dropped the acorns here and there, a mighty forest of oak trees sprang up where once no trees had been. Men in course of time, seeing the value of the forest, began to harvest the trees. So excellent was the wood that demands for it became great till thriving industries sprang up about it and great wealth was laid up in store because of it. Towns sprang up here and there with all their bustling industry. So fine and hard was the beautiful wood that nations from afar sent their ships to carry its products to their shores and from it master craftsmen fashioned magnificent works of art. So bountiful was its supply that rich and poor alike shared its benefits. Some was used in homes of humble men and some was laid for floors in the palaces of kings. Yet that traveler on the dusty road, who long ago strewed acorns on the lea, knew not ever that it was from his thoughtless act that all this blessing to mankind had come.

Even thus it shall ever be with those who are led by the Spirit of God. They know not how great a blessing may come to the world because of the Spirit of God that led them and prompted them to do the things they did. I must testify that a whole lifetime of walking with God has taught me that, if we live in touch with His Holy Spirit, we never need have a worry about our being led by Him, for He is always leading, often causing us to do inadvertently things we thought little of at the moment, but which in the course of time brought endless blessing to certain ones, who in their turn brought blessing to others until the end results, all unknown to us, became as the stars of the heavens for multitude and as the sands of the seashore innumerable.

Many a shaft at random sent
Finds mark the archer little meant,
And many a word at random spoken
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken.

Many years ago in the city of Chicago there was a diligent young man who worked as an assistant in the manufacture of shoes. Much of his work was in the back of the shop. Hence he was not often seen. It happened one day, while he was working, that a somewhat timid man walked into the shop and offered the young man a gospel tract. He received it graciously and stuffed it in his pocket to read at his leisure. As he read it that evening, he began to see his need of God and was converted to Christ. He began holding little gospel meetings and preaching on the street. Standing on soap boxes on street corners, he proclaimed the message of Christ to needy men, and hardened sinners came as he reached out his chubby hand to welcome them and point them home to God.

It wasn't long before he was traveling far and wide, proclaiming to needy men the mighty message of the cross as thousands in response knelt at the altars to give their lives to Christ. He traveled across the seas and brought the blessing of his ministry to far away England and Scotland. At the Chicago World Fair he preached the gospel to sixty-thousand people at one time. That man was D. L. Moody, a name that still remains a household word in millions of homes over the earth. We cannot begin to recount here the blessings that have followed throughout the years as thousands of men and women came within the sphere of his influence. The name of D. L. Moody is known all over the world, but the name of the humble man who handed him a tract that day in the shoe store is unknown and forgotten by us all. Do you think God has forgotten the man who planted the seed of God's kingdom in that seeking soul? No, indeed, He has not forgotten, and in the glory of the ages

to come he will be a full partaker in all the boundless harvest that has followed because one day, when all looked dark and useless and possibly he felt discouraged, the Holy Spirit led him to hand a simple, written message to a young man he did not know, but whom God had predestined to shine as one of the brightest lights of the age of grace. Can we wonder at all that the Lord has said, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God?" **"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars unto the ages of the ages."** **Dan. 12:3**

We shall shine as .the stars of the morning
With Jesus, the glorified One.
We will love Him forever and ever,
Eternally shine as the sun.

Long ago in Ur of the Chaldees, where the mighty river Euphrates empties its sullen stream into the Persian Gulf, dwelt a man by the name of Terah, who was eight generations removed from his forefather Shem, the son of Noah. Gen. 11:10-26 Terah was an idolater and, according to the writings of Jasher, he had a whole house full of idols, which he guarded with jealous care and worshipped continually. The historical writings of Jasher give us the following information: "And all the sons of the earth in those days greatly transgressed against the Lord, and they rebelled against Him and they served other gods and they forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth; and the inhabitants of the earth made unto themselves at that time every man his god; gods of wood and stone which could neither speak, hear, nor deliver. And the sons of men served them and they became their gods."

"And the king and all his servants and Terah (Abraham's father) with all his household were then the first of those that served gods of wood and stone. And Terah had twelve gods of large size, made of wood and stone, after the twelve months of the year, and he served each one monthly, and every month Terah would bring his meat offering and his drink offering to his gods; thus did Terah all the days. And all that generation was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and they thus made every man his god, but they forsook the Lord who had created them. For there was not a man found in those days in the whole earth who knew the Lord (for they served every man his own god) except Noah and his household and all those who were under his counsel knew the Lord in those days... And Abram the son of Terah was waxing great in those days under the house of Noah, and no man knew it and the Lord was with him. And the Lord gave Abram an understanding heart, and he knew all the works of that generation were evil, and that all their gods were vain and to no avail." Book of Jasher, Page 23. (Note: Shem outlived Abraham by thirty-five years. Jacob and Esau were ten years old when Shem died.)

When the appointed time comes for the great Lord of the universe to launch any part of His predestined plan, He always has His vessels prepared and ready for the task. When it was time for the flood to come upon the whole world, though wickedness was exceeding great and the thoughts of every man's heart were only evil continually, and the sons of God were wickedly intermarrying with the daughters of men, and evil giants, the offspring of this intermingling with strange flesh, were in the earth, and the earth was corrupt and filled with violence and all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, even then the Lord was not without a witness. There was yet one man who walked with God - a man by the name of Noah, who **"found grace in the eyes of the Lord; and Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God."** **Gen. 6:8-9.** Just think of it! In the midst of a world filled with corruption, when every thought and imagination of man's heart was only evil continually, when violence stalked the land like a devilish specter, in the midst of it all there was yet one man who knew God and walked with Him, steadfastly refusing to go the way of the world.

Our heavenly Father has never throughout the ages and dispensations left himself without a witness. He always has a people of His own, even if it is but one man. We are now reliving the days of Noah. These are the evil days of which Jesus spoke. These are the days when violence is a way of life and the elected leaders of the land desire to have it so, and, because they were raised in rebellion themselves, they have no will whatsoever to punish the evil doer and restore order to our midst. Crimes of the most evil and dreadful sort are passed off as a sickness and the most brutal and conniving criminal is mollycoddled and babied while countless millions of dollars are spent trying to rehabilitate him. The thing has become so out of proportion now that the jails are full and running over and there is no alternative left but to put these evil doers back among the

people to perpetrate their crimes again, whether they be murderers or rapists, bank robbers or drunks. The absurd and evil proposal once suggested here in Canada was that elderly people and welfare recipients should be asked to take these reprobate people into their homes.

Let it be thoroughly known that, once the laws of God are repudiated and defied and men choose to do their own thing, then God turns the nations over to a reprobate mind to do every evil thing that is unwise and inconvenient. For thus the Lord has said: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." **Rom. 1:28-32** Those who read the first part of the chapter will be able to see how the evils of atheism, agnosticism, Darwinism, idolatry (verse 25), lesbianism (verse 26), and homosexuality (verse 27) arise from rejection of God. The first chapter of Romans is an overwhelming description of the evils, which have brought God's judgment upon the world in Noah's day, in Abraham's day, in Sodom's day and in our day. Let there be no mistake. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

In the midst of all the evils of days past and present the Lord God has never left Himself without a witness. Acts 14:17 He always has a witness and He always has a people. That people is always small in number, sometimes reduced to the seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed to the image of Baal and sometimes reduced to just one man as it was in the days of Noah.

Thus, when all the world was wicked in Abraham's day and men greatly transgressed against the Lord and served other gods and forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth, and the inhabitants made unto themselves every man his god, gods of wood and stone which could neither hear nor deliver - in that very day, I say, the Lord said unto Abram, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 12:1-3**. So Abraham obeyed God and went out, not knowing whither he went. Heb. 11:8.

It may not be necessary for us to consider the details of the three great covenants the Lord made with Abram as recorded in Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 32:12. Suffice it to say here that God gave to Abraham three kinds of seed. Those who were to be as numerous as the dust of the earth are represented by those who are descended from him through Ishmael and Keturah. Then there was the seed that was to be as numerous as the sands of the sea. These are God's earthly people, Israel, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. It is totally wrong for anyone to imagine that the handful of people whom we call the Jews is all there is to Israel. These people are by no means numerous. The people who are now known as Israel are not really Israel at all. There are, of course, many among them who are true Jews and are of the house of Judah and Benjamin, but the other ten tribes, spoken of by Jesus as the lost sheep of the house of Israel, are also in the world. Jesus and Peter knew where they were, and these have become great nations, especially Ephraim and Manasseh. The Jews are neither a great nation nor are they innumerable. To Ephraim it was promised that he would become a company of nations or a commonwealth. The only Commonwealth of Nations on earth today or in any other day is the British Commonwealth of nations. We actually possess all the promises made to Ephraim in Gen. 48 and 49 as well as promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob long before Ephraim was born. Manasseh was the brother of Ephraim and to him the promise was that he should become a great nation. Surely none would be so hardy that he would deny that the United States of America is the greatest single nation on earth. China and Russia are both big and powerful, but there is no possible way that they could be called great. There are far too many weaknesses in their chain both physically and, above all, spiritually. Every promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is now the possession of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic peoples and no other nations on earth have become heirs of those promises. God was not making idle talk when He

said that Abraham's seed would be as the sand of the sea shore for multitude and that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed.

There yet remains another seed that was to come from Abraham. We must always remember and never forget that God's promise to bless the world was through that particular seed, Isaac, not through Ishmael nor the sons of Keturah, for "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Paul, speaking of this particular seed through which the blessing would come, made special mention of Christ. When the Lord led Abraham out, after he was separated from Lot, He told him to look up at the stars and try to number them. Then He said, "So shall thy seed be." I once heard an astronomer make this staggering assertion: "We reckon that the stars of the heaven and the sands of the seashores are about equal in number." Thus Abraham was promised three kinds of seed - the dust seed, the sand seed, and the star seed. He was indeed to be the father of an earthly people, but above all he was to be the father of a heavenly people as well, for "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." For two thousand years our God has been forming a heavenly people, the true church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. Sects and denominations have nothing to do with the true church. Denominations are all man-made systems and they are all Babylon. The church is a people related to God by Jesus Christ. They are a people born of Him, born from above and born free, and when at last they are all counted, they will be found to be a multitude innumerable as the stars of the heavens for number.

There is coming a time of unspeakable glory, plainly revealed in God's word as the times of the restitution of all things. The times of the restitution of all things are as certain and sure as the rising of the sun and the going down thereof. It thrills the soul to notice that at the time of the call of Abraham, when all the families of the earth were so desperately wicked, attempting as they did to build a tower that would reach to heaven - even in that deplorable day of abounding wickedness - God spoke to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." I do not understand the ramifications of it all, but I know that God Himself has spoken, saying that through Christ, who is also the seed of Abraham, He has reconciled the all things unto Himself, of things in earth and things in heaven and things under the earth. Before ever the world began our heavenly Father conceived in His own infinite mind every minutest detail of the purpose of the ages. He has left nothing to happenstance, nothing to chance. There is coming a day when through this wonderful seed of Abraham all families of the earth will be blessed in that fullness of time. There will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. In that blessed hour of restitution:

God shall wipe away all tears;
There's no death, no pain, no fears;
And they count not time by years,
For there is no night there.

The glorious New Jerusalem, the city foursquare, shall fill the earth with the light of the Lord. The people will walk in the light of it and the nations shall bring their glory and honor into it. There men will need no sun, neither the light of the moon, for the Lamb is the light thereof. These are the things, which eye hath not seen or ear heard, neither have they entered the heart of man. These are the things God has revealed to them that love Him. These are the unspeakable things, unlawful for man to utter, the things that belong to the third heaven, which is the realm of the stars and the realm of the Spirit.

Jesus shall reign wherever the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
'Til moons shall wax and wane no more.

From north and south the people meet
To lay their trophies at His feet;
While western empires own their Lord
And savage tribes attend His word.

Do you see, my beloved brethren, the vast extent of blessing, which accrues to the credit of him who is led by the Spirit of God? Is it not a remarkable thing, nay, rather a thing utterly supernal and incredible, that God should speak to Abraham, saying, "Get thee out of thy country" and that Abraham should go forth, not knowing whither he went and with practically no revelation at all as to the vastness of the infinite purposes God had in mind? How could Abraham have known that the step of obedience God was requiring of him that day would lead eventually to the day of the restitution of all things when every family that has ever walked the earth would be blest? O that men who now hear the call to come out of Babylon would manifest the same spirit of obedience!

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. I am not including those pretenders who with a passion to do their own pleasure and fulfill their own desires proclaim their actions to be the leading of God. They remind me of the man who prayed that the Lord would give him the wife of His choice, then added, "But, Lord, make it Mary." Silly, isn't it? Yet that is the attitude of the vast majority of Christians in our day and all previous days as well. They mistake their own will for the will of God. Our Father in heaven has His own peculiar way of leading

His people and, should every Christian rise to review the march of time as it has passed, he would recognize the ever present though unseen hand of God moving in all the affairs of life with a certainty that is as unimpeachable as God Himself. I do not say that it is impossible for one to get out of God's will. There can be no question that many thousands have done so. Oh what shipwreck people have made of their lives because of their determination to have their own way about some detail, which at the moment seemed to overpower them! How many young men and young women have been mis-mated in marriage, bringing upon themselves a difficult and troublesome lifetime just because they were infatuated and frivolously mistook their own will to be the will of God? How many girls have foolishly married drunkards in the credulous self-delusion that they would reform them and as a consequence have spent the remainder of their lives in fear, poverty, and terrible disillusionment? My advice to God's people is always this: Never do anything in a hurry. **"Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war."** **Prov. 20:18.** God is never in a hurry. He plants a seed in the ground and patiently waits a thousand years for it to grow to maturity. Some of those mighty redwood trees in the forests of California were saplings when Adam was on the earth. The Lord, who said that Abraham's seed would be as numerous as the stars, did not hurry to give him the promised seed to start the race. He waited till Abraham was an hundred years old. He did not hasten to give Jacob a wife. He let him labor for her for seven years. If we desire to be led by God's Spirit, we must live in the Spirit. If we would have the mind of Christ, it is completely essential that we have no mind of our own.

Many and devious are the ways and paths by which the Lord in faithfulness leads the people He has chosen. I could tell some blessed tales of how He led me through the mountains and valleys of my life. He has led me by the skinny hand of dearth and poverty. He has directed my course by means of storms and pushed me into His way by the evil hand of those who hated me. He has led me by direct intervention and by speaking words of command into my heart. How often do my wife and I, as we kneel together before His throne, offer our humble thanks and abounding appreciation for all the way His star has guided us over the fitful, restless seas of life's journey!

All the way my Saviour leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy
Who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell;
And I know whate'er befall me
Jesus doeth all things well.

Let us pursue a little further the thought of having no mind of our own. The man or woman who desires to know the mind of Christ, fervently desiring that His mind should dwell within, must first come to the blessed place of surrender where he has no mind of his own. The Christian who seeks to embrace the will of God must lay aside every trace of his own will. We are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Therefore we are not our own. We are His own purchased possession; we belong to Him. Paul, when he wrote to the Philippians, earnestly exhorted them in these words: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that was in Christ Jesus was undoubtedly the Father's mind, for Christ said, "I do always those things that please the Father." Therefore it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. Think of it! All fullness was to dwell in Him! Not as the reward for being a rebel, not as a recompense for loving His own will, but "in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O God." Because Christ delighted in the will of God, then through Him the Father took away the first to establish the second. He removed all former orders and laws that had been given because of rebellious men and in their place He established an eternal order, founded upon men who love Him and cherish His divine and blessed will. The Lord Jesus Christ did have a will of His own just as we have a will of our own. The fact was perfectly portrayed in the garden of Gethsemane when He prayed these words: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done." I sincerely doubt that there is any consecration in a Christian which stirs God's love and affection so much as when He sees His people lay their own wills in the dust and take up His will instead. It will without doubt require the grace of God in their hearts, but there is grace aplenty in Him sufficient for all our needs, for He is full of grace and truth. These paltry, frivolous wills of ours can only bring us into death. They destroy our love, annul our service, cause us to lose our crown of rejoicing, and shrivel our spiritual experiences to the point of non-existence.

I do not know why oft round me
My hopes all shattered seem to be;
But though God's plan I cannot see,
Someday I will understand.

What greater triumph did Jesus Christ ever experience than those hours when in agony and bloody sweat He triumphed gloriously over His own will? And, in thus triumphing over His own will, He triumphed over the cross as well and attained the resurrection, the ascension, and His seat by the Father's right hand, eternal in the heavens. We may say without hesitation that the frightful agonies of the cross were all overcome in the garden of Gethsemane. When man has died to his own will, to his own mind, to his own thoughts, yea, it seems to me that when a man has died to himself, he will never fear death. It will have lost its sting because he has already passed beyond its power in yielding his will. He has been to the garden. He has been to the cross. He has passed through the tomb. He is risen with Christ. He is a citizen of a new realm, even the celestial realm. He has become a citizen of a heavenly country. While he still wanders through the wilderness of this world, his glad heart is singing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The sting of death was sin, but now there is no sin. The strength of sin was the law, but now, because there is no sin, there need be no law, for he that is dead to himself is freed from sin. Do you think there is a dead man in all the cemeteries of the world who still remains under the law? I know not. Neither is there any man who with Christ has died to his own will who is under any law, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death.

When our Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross, the omniscient God placed all the sin of every man on Him, and having done so, then He crucified Him. God laid my will, my mind, my carnal nature, my old man on Him and, having done this, then He crucified Him. My heart prays that Christians might see that holy truth by the Spirit, for this, my beloved brethren, is absolutely true: If God by His Spirit will reveal to your heart this very moment that every man who ever breathed was included in Christ when the Christ was crucified, then you will see by the Spirit that you, too, were included in Him and the beautiful revelation will dawn upon your spirit that you, too, were crucified with Him - not yesterday nor today - but two thousand years ago. Thus it is an undeniable fact that you are now crucified with Him at this very moment. You should stop and think it over. You should pause here and ask God to make it live in your spirit, for let me assure you, saint of God, that the moment your faith reaches out to embrace the indisputable fact that your old man was crucified with Him by God Himself, then you will know for certain that all these carnal things that have troubled you so long are, in fact, dead things and their show of life is a falsehood.

When the axe is laid to the root of a tree, the tree is immediately dead. It falls to the ground and, though for a number of days the green leaves seem to flourish upon it, it is dead and no power on earth can restore its life. Thus, when you see by faith that you have died with Christ, you will know that the things, which dare to trouble your spirit, are only dead things. Therefore put them off and put them away from you. To these crucified and

risen ones Paul now writes, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man..." **Col. 3:8-10** He also gives this most blessed instruction: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." **Col. 3:1-4** Glory, my brother, is not a feeling of blessing. Glory is the image and likeness of Christ Jesus. Thus we pray that all men may see that we ourselves, together with our wills, our minds, our carnal natures and our old selves are in fact and in truth already crucified with Christ. The moment we see it and believe it, the blessing of it will be ours.

How shall I describe the blessing that came to my own struggling heart when Jesus Christ revealed to me that, when He died on the cross two thousand years ago, I was included in Him and was crucified with Him and in Him and because of that all the carnal things with which I had struggled so long were in fact dead things. When I died in Him, they died, too, but when I arose with Him, my own will, my own mind and my carnal self did not rise but remained in the tomb. It is by faith, my brother that it might be by grace.

When Paul wrote, "I am crucified with Christ," he was not trying to tell us that he went to an altar of prayer one day and so struggled that he came off victorious. The whole seventh chapter of Romans disproves such a theory. No, he was telling us just what I have stated above. The moment Paul saw by faith that when Christ died Paul also died, then how could he fail to see that the work was done and the crucifixion of his old self was a thing of the past? We don't get rid of our old nature by striving with it. We won't overcome it by becoming a monk or a nun and locking ourselves away from the world. When we see the truth that we were once included in the first Adam when he sinned, for in Adam all die, then our eyes will be enlightened to see that through faith we were included in the last Adam when He gained the victory over all carnality and sin, and, knowing this we can say in truth, "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Gal. 2:20**

Thus with our old will and our old mind now crucified and with God's will in our heart and the mind of Christ in our head what now is to hinder us from knowing what the will of the Lord is? What could separate us from His will or hinder us from abiding in it? "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Rom. 8:38-39**

There are so many ways by which our Father leads these blessed souls of His love, these people of His care. We have thought on the blessedness of how we entered this new life in Him, being identified with Him in the death of the cross and in His glorious resurrection. Therefore we should better understand how the leading of God's Spirit and the will of the Lord are accomplished in our lives. For me to live is Christ and to die with Him has been great gain.

First let us consider divine intervention. In the book of Acts, chapter eight, we are told how the angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." **Acts 8:26-31**

What a blessed story this is and how wonderfully it portrays the moving of the Spirit of God in the life of a man who desires nothing so much as to be led by the Spirit of God! Because Philip was living in touch with God, the Spirit was able to speak to him, and so familiar had the voice of Christ become that he hesitated not a moment. If indeed he had hesitated or awaited his own time, he would not have met this Ethiopian at all. The man would not have found the Saviour, but would have returned home still at a loss for the knowledge of God. There are many Christians in Ethiopia today and it is believed that it has been so ever since the memorable day the

Ethiopian returned home, rejoicing in the knowledge of Christ. Thus we see how important it is to be led at times by some direct intervention on the part of God. We should point out here, of course, that there is a great difference between being led to speak to a traveler about his soul and being led regarding some decision which will involve one's entire life. It is concerning this latter that we are exhorted never to be in a hurry.

Secondly, God leads His people through calamity. Many saints have learned that God through some great tragedy directed them into His will. For this reason we should always keep foremost in our minds that very necessary truth, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." **Rom. 8:28** How glibly we have quoted this scripture to others, but oh how difficult it becomes, when calamity strikes, to sit down and say, "I wonder what eternal good the Lord will bring from this?" When calamities befall us as once fell upon poor Job, when houses and lands are swept away, when stealthy thieves come and steal away our camels, our asses, and our cattle, and death comes to snatch our loved ones from our bosoms, when strength and heart are breaking, it is not at all easy to see the guiding hand of a loving Father through our bitter tears. It is no simple matter to declare that even this is working together for my eternal welfare. How difficult it is to see that only the temporal things are vanishing, that it is the old, unreal things of time that are fading from our sight that the things which are eternal may remain! No, it is not easy. Only faith in Christ will make us see the truth of it. Furthermore, when the evil hand of sickness and pain is laid upon us till nights become nightmares and months and years are spent in utter misery, it is difficult to see that this, too, is a light affliction but for a moment that is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory as we look not at the things that are seen but at the things which are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

It was not easy for Paul to understand that his thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure, was for his own good. He prayed mightily that it would leave him, but God replied, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore Paul triumphantly said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." **2 Cor. 12:9-10** Calamity, my good friend, is very, very often the hand of God, leading us in ways we do not know.

Without doubt it was God's will that Paul should go to Rome to preach the gospel there and to minister to the saints. Paul had often spoken of going and said on one occasion. "I must see Rome also." But Paul's thought as to how he would go to Rome was evidently not God's plan. If Paul had gone to Rome in his way, he would have ministered to the common people as he planned to do, but the Lord intended that this servant of His, who had so often been in chains, would be landed right in the presence of Caesar and his household. To bring this miracle about the Lord created a regular chain of calamities. When Paul appeared in the temple at Jerusalem, a huge mob of misguided people came upon him to take him. Some swore that they would neither eat nor drink until they had murdered him. To avoid these wretches the centurion sent Paul to Caesaria to appear before the governor Felix to be judged. The upshot of it all was that poor Paul was detained in jail for the next two years, awaiting his trial. But in that jail he spoke to kings and queens and governors as the Lord had told him when He called him years before. And how shall we know till the ages to come what eternal blessing may have accrued from it all? Besides this, we must remember that Paul wrote epistles from that jail, words of truth and life that remain with us unto this day. The man who foolishly believes that the only way one can minister to God is by standing behind a pulpit is mistaken indeed. I have reached many times more people by writing than I ever did by preaching. Men who hear preaching are often like men beholding their face in a glass, who, after beholding it, go away and straightway forget what manner of men they were. If Paul had done nothing in his life but preach sermons, we would have had no record of his message now and the truths he preached would have been forgotten long ago, but while he was in jail, he wrote those living epistles of truth which to this very day are filling God's temple with light. How merciful and good God was to lock him up in jail where his preaching was silenced and where few people had any contact with him at all. While there he wrote those burning, flaming words of truth that changed the lives of men for time and for all eternity. The pen is much mightier than the sword and its words, sleeping on the hidden page, awake betimes to speak hundreds of years after the tongue is forever silent. We must then conclude that this term in jail was the leading of the Lord. It was the will of God for him and it was the mind of Christ.

Finally the long awaited day came when Paul was sent to Caesar. We do not have space to quote the story fully now, but everyone who wishes to read a tale of high adventure should read this remarkable account of Paul's journey to Rome, recorded in Acts, chapters twenty-one to twenty-eight. It is a story of mobs and violence, of jail and shipwreck, of physical healings and conversions to Christ. It tells how Paul was sent to Rome on a certain ship. It describes in detail how the fierce storm, Euroclydon, buffeted them for days, finally wrecking the ship on a small island called Melita. It tells how by a miracle the barbarians were convinced that Paul was a man of God. It tells of the healing of the father of Publius and of the many healings and conversions that followed during the winter months while they waited. The story proceeds to tell how Paul was sent to Rome to stand trial before Caesar, and it was apparently in Rome that he died. One verse of scripture stands out in my mind that seems to be exceedingly wonderful. "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." **Phil. 4:22**. It leaves one wondering what may have been the blessed result of his standing trial before Caesar, the great Emperor of Rome. "All the saints salute you, especially they of Caesar's household"! Hallelujah! It was all God's will. It was all God's leading, for the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord.

Thirdly, God leads through envy and betrayal. What Bible story could depict this side of the truth better than the story of Joseph and his brothers? No Bible narrative has been better loved than this and almost all of us have known it from our childhood. Could anyone believe that this Joseph, a boy of seventeen years, felt happy as he was led away to Egypt, hated, betrayed, stolen and sold by his own brothers? He felt just as we would feel if the same thing happened to us. He stood on the auction block and was sold as a common slave. His buyer was Potiphar, believed to be Pharaoh's chief executioner. Because he was faithful to God, he was thrown into prison and the Lord was with him there. When he came forth in God's appointed time, he was miraculously landed in the palace of the king, and Joseph was made the second ruler over all the land of Egypt to save his people and deliver the world from death.

His father and brothers were led to Egypt through the calamity of the terrible famine in their land and they were re-united with Joseph as the story says. When their father, Jacob, died, his brethren feared that Joseph would put them to death for their former wickedness, but, instead of revenge, he saw the hand of the Lord in the entire course of events and he knew that the whole long and dreadful story was the loving kindness of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit as He brought them all into the center of His will. When Jacob was dead, Joseph's brethren sent a messenger to him, saying, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said. Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them. Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. . . . And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." **Gen. 50:16-21** Thus we must conclude that even through those who betray us the Spirit of God will lead us, for "I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 23

THINK ON THESE THINGS

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE PERSONAL TO YOU

"Of the writing of books there is no end," the wise man said, and the apostle John concluded his gospel with the words, "I suppose, if all the books were written that should be written, even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." There never does seem to be any end to the subjects upon which one should write, for the need of the hour presents them continually to mind. Each seems to be as important as the other, for they are all essential to our spiritual growth in Christ. Yet for all our reading there still remains a great gap in our spiritual understanding that can be filled only by the Lord Himself, who takes the things of God and shows them unto His chosen people.

I have experienced an ever-increasing longing in my heart to help the people of God into a closer communion with Him and into a better understanding of His ways, His plans, and His purposes, that in union with Him and Him alone we may enter the glory He is preparing for those who love Him and long to be with Him in righteousness, holiness, and true judgment in that wonderful age when the eyes of all men are opened and all things begin to be restored unto Him.

It is high time for all the people of the Lord to take a sober look at themselves, for to my own great sorrow I am made aware that there are many foolish and vain talkers among God's children who are mistaking their own personal ambitions for the will of the Father, vainly imagining they have attained a place in God that they have not attained. We should never pay heed to any man who tries to tell us that he and his little group are manifested sons of God, for this is nothing but pride, vain glory, and foolishness. Thus far God has manifested only one Son, and that Son is His first begotten, the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of the fullness of the "in Christ" experience is far beyond the scope of our writing here - indeed, far beyond our ability to write at all. Its fullness has not been reached by any man now living and will not be reached until God brings us to the fullness of that blessed virgin state where male and female are in one as Adam was before Eve was taken from him, and, indeed, as Jesus, the second Adam, was when He came into the world. Theirs was the pure virgin state. Theirs was God's sonship in truth. In Christ there is neither male nor female because they both exist together in that pure state of sonship. The one hundred forty-four thousand sons who stand on Mount Zion are said to be virgins. They were neither male nor female because they were pure sons of God as was Christ Jesus, or Adam before the woman was taken from him. They are the in Christ company who have become a kind of first fruits of that pure virgin state of sonship. As was the first Adam in his pure virgin state of sonship, and as was the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, in His virgin sonship, so also shall be the sons of God, the third Adam, in their pure virgin state of sonship as they stand with Jesus Christ in perfection on Mount Zion to govern the world in righteousness. For the law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Those people who have vaingloriously laid claim to this blessedness before the time are hindering both themselves and all who believe them, for the moment we lay claim to something we do not possess, we come to a spiritual standstill and can go no farther. Pride has blinded our minds, shutting out the revelation of God. Wonders of almost unbelievable glory lie before each one of us, but when the foolishness of pride enters into the heart, causing us to imagine that we have attained that which we have not attained, we begin to drift

aimlessly about and lose our way in the uncharted seas. If we will but cast our eyes about us, we will soon see that people who make great claims as to what they have attained often remain at a standstill year after year, or else they have gone the way of thousands of others who seek to build an earthly kingdom over which they can make themselves lords.

THE TRIAL OF FAITH

God has irrevocably ordained that every son whom He receives must be tried by fire. The trial of our faith is just what the expression implies. It is the test or trial of our faith. We may boast of our faith, but God tries our faith to see what kind of stuff is in it. Therefore let not him who girdeth on his armor boast as he that putteth it off. When we have fully won the victory and carried away the prize, it will be time enough to glory; but now we are in the time when faith is being tested to see what sort it is. If we faint in adversity, our faith is small no matter how many boasts we made in the day of plenty.

The trial of our faith was not sent to destroy us, but to prove the genuineness of our confession. The world is full of professors who loudly proclaim the richness of their faith, but man is always looking on the outward appearance while the Lord looketh on the heart. His eyes behold and His eyelids try the children of men. Psa. 11:4. He narrows His eyelids when He hears the confident profession of His people and devises a sure way by which faith may be divided from vanity and presumption. Have you noticed how the eyes proclaim every condition of the soul whether it be love or hate, fear, anger, disgust, concern, surprise, pity, joy, sorrow or understanding? Do not think that the Lord believes every profession we make, for His eyelids express their question and the trial of our faith begins.

For countless ages Christians have asked, "Why do the righteous suffer?" They suffer, first, because God is looking for the true, the pure, the resolute, the strong, and the faithful. He who bears up faithfully and falters not in the dreadful heat of his trial will be as gold tried in the furnace of affliction, pure and without dross. Secondly, suffering has its own purifying effects. It has its own way of separating us from the flesh, causing us to see that it is but dust and profiteth nothing at all. He who grieves and whines over his light afflictions has never known God's purpose in them, neither does he understand the meaning of the text, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

In this fidgety and impatient age when thousands of people are literally killed in their frantic efforts to save a second of time, we have forgotten the meaning of patience. Christians, too, in their haste to see God move have thrown patience to the winds and have tried to bring about the promised sonship through some other means as Abraham did through Hagar. They have mistaken ambition for duty and personal desire for the will of the Lord. But let us pause in our human haste to learn the truth of this sacred scripture: "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." On every hand we hear Christians saying we must have a revival! We must get souls saved! We must be up and doing! Nonsense, man! God can do any of these things by the slightest turn of His will. What we need is patience that, after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise. The work of patience is a perfect work. The end in view is that we also may be perfect and entire, wanting in nothing. Patience does not manifest itself alone in our ability to hold our peace when someone offends us, nor in keeping our temper when friend husband forgets our birthday, nor in sitting patiently, waiting for the light to turn green. Patience manifests itself in those who, knowing the will of God, are willing to wait out their whole lifetime and many more lifetimes besides, knowing that all God has promised will surely come to pass. It is willing to bear up under the humiliation and the taunts of those who do not understand, knowing that after we have endured patiently we will receive the promise.

Tribulation, trial and patience walk down the pathway of life hand in hand. Those who ask for patience will surely be made partakers of tribulation. Though they may think they will be handed patience on a silver platter merely for the asking, they will find in the end that tribulation is the only platter upon which the Lord offers patience. The precious ambition of tens of thousands of Christians is, not only that they might enter into the kingdom of God, but that they might be counted worthy to reign with Him in the glory of His kingdom. It was for this very reason that Paul went from church to church in his day, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and showing them that they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22 It is one of the marvels of revelation that Paul placed tribulation at the head of a

wonderful list of spiritual attainments for which every true lover of God really longs. He taught that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which God hath given unto us. Rom. 5:3-4. This marvel of revelation is like a step-ladder, the rungs of which are tribulation, patience, experience, hope, and love, bearing us from the earthiness of tribulation to the heavenly splendor of the love of God. Oh, wonder of wonders, how great Thou art!

The moment the heart is awakened to the vast benefits of tribulation and the mind begins to understand its infinite working, then we understand for the first time how man in the furnace of affliction can be joyful in his tribulation, even as Paul who said, "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest; we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." But for all this he said, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." **Cf. 2 Cor. 7:4-5**

What a marvelous wonder it would be if we could by God's grace and wisdom raise the sights of groveling Christianity from the boresome bondage and chains of church tradition that all might see the glorious hope of their calling and the riches of God's inheritance in the saints! Oh, that men might lift their hearts to God and stand in awe as they hear the wonderful proclamation, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." **1 Pet. 1:3-7**

Therefore, "beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." **1 Pet. 4:12-13** Those dear souls who hope to be companions with Christ and His saints in the glory of His kingdom will find first of all that they must be companions with Him in tribulation and patience, (Cf. Rev. 1:9), for we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Almost every week precious people write to me to tell me of some shadowy valley of despair through which they are passing. Their tribulation sometimes seems far beyond what any human being should be called upon to bear, but I dare not write and pour out sympathy to them lest I undo the work of sonship the Lord is preparing. Stand still, oh tempest tossed soul, and you will see that One like unto the Son of God is walking in the furnace with you, joyfully beholding the passing away of your dross and tin and the appearance of the priceless fine gold of the love of God.

Those precious souls who are ordained to share the likeness and glory of Christ have many companions in their tribulation. The beloved apostle, who wrote these words, "I, John, who am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," **Rev. 1:9**, knew what trial and affliction were, and he knew the amazing benefits that come from them. Jeremiah wrote, "I am the man who hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath; He hath led me and brought me into darkness but not into light. Surely against me is He turned; He turneth His hand against me all day. My flesh and my skin hath He made old; He hath broken my bones." **Lam. 3:1-4** But then, realizing the goodness of God, he rejoices in his suffering and says, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; He is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever." **Lam. 3:26-31**

This is a wonderful spiritual lesson to learn, and it is an excellent instruction for all doting parents who turn themselves inside out to make things easy for their children. That is the worst thing they can do for them and the surest way to bring them to destruction. Even in the natural world the greatest men are the men who have known struggle. It gives them a true sense of values and a true understanding of the hard realities of life. These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS

It should not be necessary to spend time trying to convince people that we are now at the end of the age. The coming of the Lord is very nigh. The kingdoms of this world, torn by strife and confusion, are about to become the kingdoms of our blessed Lord and His matchless Christ and we shall reign unto the ages of the ages. The passing years bring increasing signs of the end of the age. Evil forces have been turned loose at an alarming rate; so much so that we are all becoming like battle-hardened veterans who can fall asleep amid the roar of cannons and the bursting of shells. Turmoil, tribulation, riots, violence, strikes, earthquakes, storms, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons and war, together with drunkenness, recklessness and immorality have become a way of life to us to such an extent that, though we hear the most dreadful things, we matter-of-factly turn off the radio and forget all about it.

The kings of the east, Rev. 16:12, long dormant like sleeping giants, are rousing themselves from slumber, for the day is at hand when they will come to the valley of Jehoshaphat to battle and to discover that Christ is Lord of all. The day of judgment and reckoning is here. These things are not going to get better, but much worse until finally all the turmoil will end by the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but the world and the people of God are about to see the long looked for antichrist appear on the scene. He will not come from the Near East nor from some Communist state, but from the very heart and confusion of the church system. We should know by now that TREASURES OF TRUTH the organized church system is the great mystery Babylon. The mother of harlots is Rome; the harlots are her Protestant daughters. The coming king, the Nebuchadnezzar of the whole thing, is the Pope of Rome, either the one now reigning or one of his successors.

The visit of the Pope to the United Nations is the most significant thing we have seen for centuries, for as the Vatican is the head of spiritual Babylon, so also the United Nations is the head of political Babylon. The two are soon to be united under one head. There need be no question about that. Any man who thinks at all knows that the United Nations-Organization is a dead issue. Its knees are weak, its hands are tied, and its sword slumbers in its scabbard. Its pleading, feeble voice is a laughing stock to the whole world. It is as weak as Rome would be without the voice of the Pope. The United Nations is waiting for its king to set it in order, and what more potent king could take the throne of this potential Babylon than the Pope of Rome, who is already head and king and the very voice of God to five hundred million Catholics in spiritual Babylon, and is about to be accepted by another three hundred and fifty million Protestant daughters of Babylon, who even now stand with open-mouthed expectancy, wondering after the beast.

"Little children, it is the last time," wrote the apostle John, "and as ye have heard that antichrist will come, even now there are many antichrists." **1 John 2:18** When John wrote these words, though there were already many people in the church who had the spirit of antichrist, the coming of the real antichrist was still in the future. This scripture, though all truth, has caused many people to look forward to the coming of an antichrist which has in fact been in existence right in our midst for over sixteen hundred years - a system masquerading as the church, having at its head a man who blasphemously claims to be Christ's representative on earth. In the end of the age one of these claimants of apostolic succession will emerge to take control of both spiritual and political Babylon, and, reverting to the devilish paganism of the dark ages, will cause all, both small and great, to worship the beast and receive his mark or the number of his name in their foreheads.

We freely admit that there are many things that are hazy and not clear. The wisdom of the Lord has ordained to keep it that way for the present distress, but we have no need that that day should overtake us as a thief, for we are not the children of darkness, but the children of the day. Let us then be sober and not fail to recognize that every event that happens both now and in the near future will be just one more rung in the ladder and one more step on the road that leads to the conclusion of all things that pertain to this swiftly passing age.

Among the burning exhortations of Peter on the day of Pentecost was this: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," (that is, refractory, unyielding, and perverse). If ever there was an untoward and

perverse generation, it is the one in which we now live. Minorities have become so perverse that they are a tyranny to the majority. Picketing, sit down strikes, and civil disobediences are rampant everywhere, and not only in the world. They are now making their appearance in the very buildings where public worship is conducted. In the city of Saskatoon a sit-down was staged by some individuals of two different denominations, demanding to hold communion together.

HOW WE SHOULD LIVE IN THIS PRESENT HOUR

In **2 John 7-8** we have this exhortation: "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to your selves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

The greatest blessing that will ever come to you will come on the day that you wake up from your present frustration and begin for the first time in your life to look to yourselves. God's people today have become like the person in the Songs of Solomon, who said, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept." **S. of S. 1:6**. It is time to pray, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flocks to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" **Vs. 7** Christians have become so busy with the rush and program of the church system, striving to convert the world and perfect others that they have forgotten that their own vineyard has gone to weeds and lies desolate and unkept. They are so intent upon listening to the mouthy puppeteers of the land and so readily swayed by their oratory that they do not know the voice of Christ nor where His true flock feeds. Like the parents of Jesus they have taken their journey and left the Lord behind, but unlike them, they return not to find where they lost Him. It is time to pray, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul lovest, where Thou feedest."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being weary with His journey, once sat on a well in Samaria, whence a woman came to draw water. The conversation that followed between them is without doubt one of the most remarkable stories ever told. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," said the woman, "but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." To this Jesus replied, "Woman, the hour cometh when neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain shall men worship the Father... but the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." **John 4:21-23**

"In Jerusalem or in this mountain!" How sadly often the words are repeated in our day! Oh, man of God, are you still so infantile in your understanding that you think you must go to some certain place to worship God? God no longer dwells in temples made with hands. Such things are no longer even figures of the true, and while you still think they are, you rob yourself of the priceless blessing of knowing that you yourself are the temple of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit. The hour has come when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

The foundation of the true church began to be laid when Jesus Christ arose from the dead. Henceforth the Lord dwelleth not in temples made with hands, for we are the living temple of God, and in Him we live and move and have our being. When once the disciples took Jesus to see the wonderful buildings of the temple, they proudly said, "Master, behold what manner of buildings are here." But Jesus, knowing that the day for temples of brick and stone were past, replied, "Seest thou these great buildings? I tell you that there shall not be one stone left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

People always do the things that they think are the most important whether they are aware of it or not. The thing that is first in their own mind is the thing they do even though they protest otherwise. Whatever they love and cherish the most is the first to be accomplished. A drunkard will fill his stomach with liquor and let his children go hungry because he loves strong drink. The sluggard will sleep even though he knows he is coming to poverty because he loves sleep. The slothful man will not roast that which he took in hunting because he is too lazy. He only enjoys the fun of the chase. Thus it is with the people who profess to love Christ. Their church activities come first. Yes, they come before the Lord because that is what they love; but their personal relationship to Christ means little or nothing at all. It is easier to give ten dollars to the missionaries than to spend time and effort dying to self and coming into the pure relationship of a son to a Father. People are willing

to prophesy in the name of the Lord and do many wonderful works, but they think not at all of the terrible day when they will hear the Lord say, "I know you not; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Billions are being spent on temples of worship while spiritual life languishes in the dust.

There is an almost unbelievable rash of church building today. Everywhere church leaders are doing like the foolish rich man - tearing down their old barns and building them greater to find room to bestow their goods. The mighty reformer, Martin Luther, said, "The apostles preached on the Day of Pentecost in the market place and in the streets of Jerusalem. Philip preached to the eunuch in the chariot. Paul preached in private homes, by the river, and in prison, just as Jesus had commanded in Matt. 10:7, and it is my opinion that they were as good preachers as those we now have. But it was to be thus. Great buildings with imposing arches are for sermons full of delusions and satanic knowledge, but the word of God is unable to find a single lodging house in all of Bethlehem where it can be born."

We are at the crossroads. We are at the time of decision. The voice of God is calling, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues." The voice of Paul, ringing with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calls to us over the centuries, "Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you; and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Almighty."

During the last few years people in increasing numbers have become awakened to the bondage they were in while they remained in the man-organized system. More and more have broken its shackles to come out and have made themselves free. We may certainly be thankful for this, but let there never come a time of letting down in our experience. It is very easy to begin well, but afterward permit some insignificant thing to come between us and God. Of the Israelites it was written: "They did all eat the same spiritual meat and they did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." **1 Cor. 10:3-8.** Cf. Num. 35:1-9

It is easy, brethren, to let the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in choke the word until it becomes unfruitful. It is easy to become so busy with our affairs that our time for family worship and our family is choked out. Our time for meditation, reading, and devotion becomes taken up with the vanity of providing a good living for the body, and all unawares the glory seeps out of our hearts. While we may not notice it, others do, for our conversation and outlook on life has noticeably changed. "You did run well; who did hinder you?" Paul asked the Galatians. And many, I fear, there will be who began the race well and continued well, but the foolish incessant rush of providing a better and better living for the flesh and for old age has like a wily thief stolen the precious things from our hearts until they no longer have any appeal to us.

WATCH!

Over and over again the scriptures command us to watch. I used to wonder what Paul meant when he used the term "in watchings oft," but, knowing the sly subtlety with which the cares of this world and the lusts of other things enter in to squeeze out the priceless things of the Spirit of God, I know there is no more need to inquire. Constant watchfulness is ever a demanding necessity, for Satan walketh about considering every man even as he did in the days of Job. Rest assured that he earnestly considers us, and the moment he sees any way to hinder our fervent spirit toward God, he will certainly do it with dispatch.

Tarry ye here and watch with Me is still the command of Jesus, but that command is not as easily obeyed as appears, for the disciples now, as then, are always heavy with sleep concerning the things of God, but wide awake concerning the miserable things of a passing world. "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," He said. Mark 13:37. And Paul in his many exhortations urged, "Watch ye, standfast in the faith," and, "Let us watch and be sober." It is easy to watch when the presence of the enemy is felt on every hand, but it is most

difficult to get any man to watch for an enemy he does not believe exists. We become like the men at Pearl Harbor who, though they were on guard against enemies, could not be aroused to the hideous, impending dangers that seemed to them to be non-existent. But they did exist, and in a moment they came with frightful devastation. Let us then who are aware of the day not fail to put on the whole armor of God. Let us watch and be sober.

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." These solemn prophetic words were the words of our Lord. By them He designated a time for work, which He called day and spoke of a future time, which He called night, in, which no man could work. Perhaps I cannot convince you of this, for you may believe like thousands of others that all things will continue just as they have in the past, but there is a time coming, if it is not already here, when no man can work. In the present hour there is more effort being put forth to proclaim the gospel, or what men call the gospel, than at any other time in the history of the world, and yet any man with eyes to see and a heart to understand must surely see that spiritual life is waning everywhere and faith in God is decreasing. Evangelism is becoming a financial racket. Religion for religion's sake is becoming popular among the people. The night cometh when no man can work. John 9:4. Be it far from me to try to hinder the efforts of any man who feels he is doing the will of God, for that is between himself and the Lord, but we are without doubt at the evening of the age and the night of tribulation is even now cloaking the world with its deepening shadows. Do not be amazed, therefore, when you find that it is next to impossible to accomplish great things, or even small things, for the very law of the harvest is, first, the firstfruits; second, the ingathering; and last, the gleaning. After that there is no more harvest until a new age dawns. It is now the time of preparation of the sons of God, the time of judgment, the time for the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, for the Lord God of heaven will soon set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and the people whom He hath chosen will reign with Him unto the age of the ages.

THE WONDER OF LOVING HIM

In this tremendous hour many anxious voices inquire, "How may I know whether I am on the right track or not? How may I know whether this one or that one is false or true? How can I be sure of this doctrine or that doctrine?" With these and many other such sincere questions the minds of honest souls are often troubled. Ah, my friend, how wonderful it would be if they could only know the wonderful satisfaction of just loving Him! For eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. He has not prepared such unseen and unheard of glory for men and women who are technically right, for people who are doctrinally right, or for people who spend their lives working their fingers to the bone to accomplish their religious ambitions, but He is preparing such effulgent glories for those blessed ones who love Him.

Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up. "If any man think that he knoweth aught, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know, but, if any man love God, the same is known of Him." Or, as Weymouth translates it, "If any man loves God, that man is known by God." **1 Cor. 8:2-3** Observe this great truth, then, that they who boast of great knowledge and learning become puffed up, a thing which God abhors, but those who love God are built up by His Spirit with more wisdom than all their fellows, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

In the Gospel of Luke the story is told of a woman of Capernaum, who was a sinner, who came as Jesus sat at meat in the house of Simon the Pharisee. She stood at His feet weeping, washing His feet with tears and wiping them with the hair of her head. Then, breaking an alabaster box of ointment, she kissed His feet and anointed them with ointment. "Now, when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee! And he said, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for My feet; but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath

anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little... And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." **Luke 7:36-50**

We can never quite fathom the wonders of a story like that. This unknown woman, this unnamed sinner, knew nothing of the washing of ceremonial pots, the offering of incense, or the law of Moses. She knew nothing of going to Sunday School or listening to learned discourses from eloquent preachers. She knew only that she was a sinner, a little worse, perhaps, than most people around the town. She knew, too, that the life she lived was not the life she wanted, and she was quick to recognize the only Person in the universe who truly loved her and could give her peace. She did not know how to pray nor recite the sinner's prayer, but she by love's compulsion poured forth from her heart the priceless treasures of love, an incense sweeter far than the fragrance of the ointment that filled the house. In that hour she learned that love is stronger than sin. She learned that love poured forth is more pleasing to God than all the theology of the world. And the revelation of that glad hour unearthed this priceless gem: If any man love God, that man is known of Him. As in water face answereth to face, and as deep calleth unto deep, so the love of God responds to the love of man, sending him forth in heavenly peace.

I have no hesitation in saying, and you need have no hesitation in believing, that no evil or error can ever come to those who truly love God, for God will love them and will manifest Himself unto them. He will not suffer them to be moved or deceived because His eye is upon them and with a godly jealousy He guards them. For the Lord has declared, "Because he hath known My name, He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him My salvation."

In some parts of the world, even today, professional mourners are paid to attend funerals that by their lip homage and crocodile tears they might add to the solemnity of the occasion. What hypocrisy is such a thing as this! Grief is always simple and from the heart, but the moment anyone tries to magnify its intensity it becomes hypocrisy. I think the religious system today is full of professional lovers whose protestations of love for God are as hypocritical as the mourning of paid mourners, for, as such mourners have no true sense of sorrow, but wish only to be seen of men, so also are such lovers who, though they proudly profess their love for God, think nothing of breaking His law. They know not at all that love is the fulfilling of the law. He who loves God in truth fulfills all that is written in the law because every word of the law is written within the heart of the true lovers of God. When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment in the law, He answered with great discretion, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." Even the blindest man can see that he whose heart is joined to God in love can never do aught but that which pleases God. Instinctively he will love his fellow man. He cannot take the name of the Lord in vain, for it is the Lord he loves. Neither is it possible for him to covet that which is his neighbor's, nor to bear false witness, nor to do any other thing that the law forbids - not because the law has said, "Thou shalt not do so and so," but because the fervent love of God constrains him and he can do naught but that which overflowing love within commands.

Perhaps you have wondered ten thousand times why there is strife in every church assembly in the land. You have sought and diligently inquired for the cause. You have listened to the preacher exhort the people to walk in harmony. You have heard him exhort the congregation to show love to one another, but the exhortation was in vain and an utter failure, for the bickering and petty differences continued endlessly, never seeming to find a place of healing or peace. Do you know what the trouble is? It is that the people do not love God. They are taken up with much serving and are troubled about many things, but they do not love God. I did not say they were not converted. I said they do not love God. They have not sat at His feet to adore Him. They have not marveled at the glory of His eternal purpose. They have tried to create unity with fellow believers before they had unity with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

It would be very hard for one to imagine this woman of Capernaum, who washed the feet of Christ with her tears, ever finding time to quarrel with any fellow believers. She was far too devoted and taken up with Christ to worry about the faults of other people or the unkind things they said about her. She loved Him with all her soul and with all her might, and all who thus love God love their neighbor as themselves. It is impossible to do otherwise, for love suffereth long and is kind. Love envieth not, vaunteth not itself and is not puffed up. Love

does not behave itself in an unseemly way. Love seeketh not her own, and is not easily provoked. It beareth all things, believeth all things, and endureth all things. Love never faileth, for love is stronger than sin, greater than difficulties, victorious in tribulation. It is patient, kind, and full of long-suffering. It is stronger far than death itself. We will never learn to love God by listening to eloquent sermons, nor will we possess love by merely seeking it in prayer, for God is love and love is God, and he who dwelleth in God dwelleth in love, and God in him. We come to love God when we absorb our life in Him, when we behold the glory of His eternal purpose, when every word of His lips and every meditation of His heart is precious to our souls and spirits.

The church people, like the world, have gone on without God. They have mapped out their insignificant course, made their plans, determined to reach their goals. Like Samson they shake themselves to go out against the enemy, but they wist not that God had departed from them.

Men may prophesy and speak with tongues of men and angels and still be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal because true devotion to God is lacking. Though they turn on the enthusiasm until they shake the building with their noise, yet the tinny note of the clanging cymbal is ever present with them because the love of God is not in their hearts.

Christians may understand all mysteries, have all knowledge, and have all faith so that they can remove mountains, and still be absolutely nothing. Yea, they may give all their gifts to the poor and in defiance of their enemies give their bodies to the burning only to find that it profiteth them nothing. Giving the body to be burned is no sure proof of love for God. Many a stubborn Communist has died for what he believes, but there was none of the love of God in his atheistic heart. So, too, one can die as a Christian martyr and still be devoid of that true motivating love that has inspired so many in time past. Thus love is greater far than spiritual gifts and love is greater than any achievement, regardless of what sort it is.

Perhaps your first impulse upon reading this message will be to resolve that henceforth you will show more love. Never make that mistake, my friend, for as water cannot be given from an empty vessel, so no man can give what he does not possess. Seek rather to dwell in God, for He that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. If we live and move and have our being in Him, then the love of God in which we continually dwell will radiate from us as naturally as light radiates from the sun. We do not have to tell the sun to try to show light. It cannot help but show light because it is full of light and it is light. Neither do we tell God to try to show love, for God is love. Even His severest judgments are in love and mercy. He who dwelleth in God needs never be told to try to show more love, for love is of God, shining as a bright light that cannot be hid, beaming forth its radiant glory from all who dwell in Him.

Surely almost every man and woman in the land would be intensely interested to know the order of events which are soon to come upon the world - the day and hour of the coming of the Lord, the time of the great tribulation, the secrets concerning God's elect, and the manifestation of antichrist. But should we be able to answer all these mysteries, possessing all knowledge and understanding of them, yet lack that all essential unity with God, it would profit us nothing at all.

The continual prayer of my heart and my incessant longing day and night is to see men and women, long bound by the dark chains of church tradition, begin to awake from their sleep and arise from the dead to walk in newness of life in unity with Christ. Let the curse of God rest upon blinding tradition and human program, and let men instead walk in love and unity with Jesus Christ.

Upon a certain day an earnest scribe came to Jesus with this important question: "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment: and the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth; for there is one God; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."** **Mark 12:28-34**

CHAPTER TWO GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM

It is very doubtful if there is any other command more frequently spoken to God's people throughout all ages and dispensations than the command "come out." From that dark day in the Garden of Eden when man went out from the presence of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord has been calling man back again to Himself by progressive steps of separation and consecration. I doubt that any man will ever enter into the glories of the coming kingdom without repeatedly hearing in divers places and at divers times the impelling voice of God commanding him to come out. Come out of the world with all its overt and shameful sin! Come out of the denominations with all their divisive tendencies, their creeds that they worship, their doctrines of men, their programs that have taken the place of true worship and of God Himself! Come out of the sects with their shriveling narrowness of understanding and vision, their continual harping on discordant strings, their worship of individuals and leaders who, if removed from the scene, would cause the collapse of the whole set. Come out! Come out! Come out is the continual call of God.

Many, many times in my life I have heard men boast that they had not changed one whit in their beliefs since they were first saved many years before. They believed exactly the same things and lived after the same fashion. To many Christians this boast seems to be a remarkable achievement, but in reality it is an enormous pity and a thing of which for the most part we should be completely ashamed, for such a testimony is contrary to everything that God is and does. All nature and everything in creation lift up their voices to cry aloud against such a testimony. The witness of nature is not a witness to a sort of static stability, which never moves and never grows, but is indeed the exact opposite of this. The Lord Jesus described the growth of the kingdom of heaven by this expression: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The words quoted above actually portray the plan of God for everything from plants and animals to things, which concern the kingdom of God. We expect the acorn to grow into a mighty oak tree. We expect the kernel of wheat to mature into a harvest. We expect the tiny helpless infant to mature to the stature of a full, grown man. According to astronomy the universe itself is expanding at the rate of fifty thousand miles a second, which certainly could be more accurately described as an explosion rather than an expansion. Even Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God, did not remain static, but "grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

Let us not then boast ourselves in the vanity of standing still, for all things that are static and without growth are in the process of death. Perhaps I will be greatly misunderstood in venturing the following statement, but I am positive it cannot be rightly denied. If we are today walking in company with the same crowd we were with years ago, then it is doubtful that we are making any spiritual progress. I do not hesitate to say this because every evidence of the Bible, every evidence of church history, and every evidence of experience proves beyond any possibility of denial that the inevitable trend of all denominations, sects, organizations and groups, denominational or undenominational, named or unnamed, large or small is always backward and downward. Indeed, there may be tremendous numerical growth, enormous increase in wealth and influence, but there is always a corresponding declension in spiritual life and experience until the fires of yesteryear have become but the ashes of today. The alarming truth of this statement is forever emphasized by the ancient exchange between the Pope of Rome and the godly Thomas Aquinas. The Pope, relaxing in the magnificence of his pontifical palace, remarked, "Well Thomas, the church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none'." To this Thomas Aquinas replied, "No! Neither can it say, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk'." See Acts 3:6 This statement is true, not only of Rome, but it is equally true of every religious revival and every religious sect from the days of the apostles until now. No man can possibly read the Epistles of Paul without concluding that even in the lifetime of the apostles declension after declension had set in until even Paul himself was calling, **"Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing." 2 Cor. 6:17**

We have positively no thought whatever of proposing that Christians should follow the fruitless habit of wandering from one sect to another in search of spiritual food. This is a useless practice. There is a great difference between coming out of one group only to wander about in search of another and coming out from

among them all that we might seek God and walk with Him as Abraham and Noah did. Many, many people have become disgusted with the group they have been with for years and have left them, but they usually make the mistake of immediately starting out in search of another group which they hope will be a little more to their liking. This is a useless procedure, for surely we must know that all these groups, though different in name and in the exaltation of some pet doctrine, are really only going in circles, and should we remain with them for years, we will find eventually that we have not progressed in wisdom, in stature, nor in favor with God or man. The coming out that God demands is a coming out unto Himself. It is not coming out unto groups. It is a coming out unto God. Anything short of that is not coming out at all. It is only a change from one parching desert to another.

With all my heart I believe that the truths, which are to follow in the remainder of this chapter are among the most important things that God has ever given me to say. Let us then settle in our hearts to consider all that follows with an open heart and with a true spirit of prayer. Let us ask the Spirit of God to make our hearts burn with the truth. Oh, that the inspiration of the Almighty might be given us so that we might see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and comprehend the incomprehensible! It is not in vain that God said to Daniel, "The wise shall understand." Nor is there any disability with God that He should fail to open our understanding that we might understand the truth. The things of which we now speak are the more important because we are without doubt living in the final moments of this dispensation. The Spirit of God witnesses that it is so. In the hearts of thousands of elect men and women there is an expectancy that is indescribable. There is a feeling that every voice may be His voice, every footstep may be His footstep. There is a feeling even in the hearts of men and women who have never lived for God that some great event is impending. Many men and women are being warned and prepared by dreams and visions. Revelation and understanding are being given to many in preparation for the things that are shortly to come to pass.

It has never been my policy to try to set dates. I do not think that is a scriptural thing to do. But we should remember this: Though Jesus said, "No man knoweth the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh," Paul said by the Holy Spirit, "Ye have no need that that day should overtake you as a thief." **1 Thes. 5:4-5** When all creation is groaning out the unutterable longing, "Even so come, Lord Jesus" we may rest assured that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. There is no need that we should be caught unawares or that that day should overtake us as a thief, for we are not the children of darkness, but the children of the day and of the light. Let us remember that in all ages and dispensations of the past God forewarned His elect people concerning the great events that were to come. Did not God warn Noah of the coming of the flood many years before it came? Did He not tell him to build an ark and to save his house? And did Jesus not say, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man cometh?" Is there any reason to believe that Moses was not forewarned of a ministry to come when one day it came into his heart to deliver his people? So also it was in the day when Jesus was born. There were those faithful ones who were prepared for His coming and who were watching and waiting for the long-expected moment to arrive. Simeon was in the temple serving God, having the witness in his heart that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. While the religious world of scribe and Pharisee continued its dreary round of ritual and ceremony, there were those whose hearts were quickened by the secret voice that whispered, "Jesus is coming soon." Their hearts, like our own, grew restless for the hour. Faith within waxed and waned like the moon, but hope was constant as the stars, assuring their hearts that God's promises are immutable and His failures are unknown. So it was that, "while Shepherds watched their flocks by night", He came just as the promise said He would. And once again He is coming, first to appear to all who look for Him and then to appear to all who look for Him not.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps and the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." **Matt. 25:1-13.**

For almost two millenniums now men have debated the meaning of the parable of the ten virgins. With their carnal wits they have sought the answers to the questions: Who are the virgins? Who are the foolish and who are the wise? How was it possible to buy oil at so late an hour? And many other questions. Each man came to his own conclusions, no doubt, but I greatly fear that in our inquisitive desire to understand the details of the parable we have missed entirely the lesson it teaches. It is far more necessary that we receive the spirit of a truth than that we insist on the exactness of the details. It is far more necessary that we be ready to meet the bridegroom than that we understand who the wise virgins are who rise to meet Him. It is far more necessary to have our vessels filled with oil than to know just who those foolish virgins were who had no oil in their vessels. It is better far to have an ear tuned in to the voice of the Spirit than to come to conclusions as to when this event will be. For centuries men have sought to understand the truth instead of being possessed with the spirit of truth. The world abounds in learned men who know the doctrine of Christ but have not Christ in their hearts. There is no lack of professors who can elaborately explain the fall of man and the redemption of Christ, who have never been delivered from sin nor partaken of the power of redemption. To know the theory of the resurrection is one thing. To know Christ, who is the resurrection, is another. Let us then seek to be partakers of the spirit of truth rather than clutter our minds with theories about the truth.

The time has certainly come for us to do some plain speaking, and the time has also come for us to do some very attentive listening, for we are without doubt at the end of this dispensation. It is time to trim our lamps and go out to meet the bridegroom.

When a truth, which has lain dormant for centuries suddenly springs to life in our heart that is because the Holy Spirit has revealed its truth to us. Paul was carried into the third heaven to receive a whole dispensation of truth that would abide two thousand years, but that was not the end of all revelation. The Holy Spirit has been coming to humble people for ages to take the things of God and show them unto them. The spirit of understanding will increase as we draw near the end of the age, for Joel said, "Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams." It is absolutely wrong to seek either visions or dreams, but the Spirit of God will grant them in His own wisdom to humble vessels He has chosen.

Whatever theories men may hold about the parable of the ten virgins is of little concern to me personally, but I do most emphatically declare that it has been made very clear to me that the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh" is at this very moment going forth to the virgins, and with that cry the accompanying command, "Go ye out to meet Him." This truth burns like a fire within and especially significant at this moment are the words, "Go ye out to meet Him."

It is not at all my purpose now to try to explain all the details of this parable, but there are a few outstanding things that should be awakened to our hearts that the Spirit of God might reveal them to us.

Firstly, have you noticed that no bride is mentioned here, but only ten virgins? When we think of virgins, we usually think of women, but again we ask, have you noticed that the 144,000 of Rev. 14, who are without doubts sons of God, are described as virgins, and that because **"they were not defiled with women!" Rev. 14:4** And furthermore, these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These virgins of Rev. 14:1-5 are sons of God, and so also are the virgins of Matt. 25. God is without doubt preparing His sons now. He is calling them to go out to meet Christ. He is preparing them for that uniting of the Son with the sons, that joining of the Head, which is Jesus Christ, with the members of His body, which are the sons of God and members in particular of Himself. They are becoming bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, and spirit of His spirit. They are to partake of His resurrection, His life, His mind, His glory, His government, and they will reign with Him in the age, which is even now knocking at our doors. There is no bride as yet, for as Adam was first formed, then Eve, so Christ must come into all His completeness with His many sons and then the bride will appear.

There is without doubt a secret coming, a secret revelation of Christ, not to the world at large, but only to those undefiled virgins who are looking for Him. Jesus Himself taught these truths to His disciples when He said, **"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world]"** Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man**

love Me he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come and make Our abode with him."

John 14:21-23 This is the secret coming of Christ to specially chosen and elect people, and we are without doubt at this moment hearing the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

Let us notice further that, when Jesus went up to the Feast of Tabernacles, He did not go up openly but as it were in secret. The Feast of Tabernacles as recorded in Lev. 23:34-44 took place in the seventh month of the Jewish year after harvest. It is the feast of the coming of the Lord. When Jesus went to the Feast of Tabernacles, He went in secret. John 7-10 All His brethren wanted Him to go up openly and show Himself, for they said, "There is no man that doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly." This is always the reasoning of man, but it is not the reasoning of God, for after His brethren had gone up to the feast, Jesus Himself went up also, not openly, but as it were in secret. While the Jews were asking, "Where is He", He was walking among them. While they were murmuring against Him, He was standing in their midst listening, but completely unknown. John 7:10-13

Nevertheless, His identity was not kept secret for all the feast, for about the middle of the feast He stood up in the temple and began to teach with such power and authority that all men were forced to take heed of the wisdom, the power, and the authority with which He spake. I have no hesitation in saying that the secret coming is taking place at this moment and the world and the professing church know nothing of it. At the very moment in which they say, "What think ye? Will He come to the feast? When will He come? How will He come? For whom will He come?" even at that moment He has secretly come and has appeared unto all who have been looking for Him and who have heard the cry, "Go ye out to meet Him." In reference to this secret coming to the believers the apostle Paul has declared by the Spirit, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring them to full salvation."

We will no doubt be asking ourselves the meaning of this command, Go ye out to meet Him. How are we going out? Why are we going out? Going out for what! Going out to what! With these questions in our minds let us consider some of the alarming conditions of the present day which the Holy Scripture has foretold.

It is not my purpose to ridicule the beliefs of others, but without doubt the people of God have been largely living in a world of delusion and make-believe. Christians have concocted doctrines, which are partly founded on truth and partly founded upon their own fancy and desire. Somehow we have got ourselves to believe that the end of this age will find a vast number of Christians of all denominations and sects going up to heaven in a glorious rapture, and that the world will then be left to antichrist and the sinners will be without hope. I have no hesitation in saying that this is not the picture the Bible leaves us. Indeed, the true picture is very opposite to this.

The word of God speaks of a time at the end of the age when evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse. 2 Tim 3:1-8 These men without doubt appear in the religious world of the professing church. The Bible speaks of a time when men would have a form of godliness without power. This condition exists universally in the professing church. The Lord Jesus described the end of the age in these words: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be," and on one occasion He asked the pertinent question, "When the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?"

Let us solemnly consider the conditions that will exist at the end of the age both in the professing church and in the world. We will then be in a better position to see why it is so essential that the elect of the Lord must hear the midnight cry, "Go ye out to meet Him."

In the book of Revelation there are three chapters, which deal with one of the most sobering mysteries of all times. Chapters 17, 18, 19 That mystery is the great mystery of Babylon. There is no mystery in the world today, which is so deceptive as this, and no other power holds so many people in captivity and abject spiritual bondage. We have said many times before and now say again with even greater emphasis that the mystery of Babylon is the mystery of confusion. Babylon consists of all the religious systems of the earth and in particular of those systems which are called Christian. In its gigantic circle are included all religious denominations of whatsoever profession or faith they may be. It matters not a straw whether they profess to be cold, hot, or

lukewarm. Neither does it matter whether they are Catholic or non-Catholic. Within the all-embracing arms of this harlotish octopus are included all sects and cults, whether named or unnamed, and in its intricate network may be included all those little groups that profess to be completely independent of all else.

When the apostle John saw by vision the truth concerning Babylon, he saw her as a harlot sitting on many waters (many people). He saw her as being drunk with the blood of the saints, and he saw that the nations of the earth were drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication. What an awesome picture this really is! Here is this harlot sitting astride the nations of the earth, drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. She is sucking away the very life blood of millions of Christians, leaving them weak, insipid, and spiritually anemic. Whether we realize it or not, this is what has become of the strength and power of the church. It has been given to the harlot, Babylon, and she has become wealthy, fat, and drunk at the price of our blood.

Not only has this harlot system drunk the blood of the saints, but she in turn has made them drunk with her wine. Whenever one becomes drunk with wine, he is incapacitated. He does not walk right, talk right, nor think right. His understanding is impaired. His manners become corrupted and he is in no wise his true self. But the pitiful thing about drunkenness is that the person feels self-sufficient, wise, and intelligent. He knows not that his voice is thick, his actions ridiculous, his conversation absurd, and his presence undesirable. What a parallel this is to the modern church system. The people have become so intoxicated with the church system, so enamored with her programs, her doctrines, and her creeds that they can think of nothing else. The system has taken the place of God and the harlot sits on Christ's throne. The monster we have built is devouring our flesh and drinking our blood.

Since writing the booklet *Mystery Babylon*, many startling developments have taken place. The sessions of the Ecumenical Council in Rome have been concluded with significant results. It is my firm conviction that the time has come for the reuniting of Rome, that great Mother of Harlots, with all her harlot Protestant daughters. However much this statement may hurt us, however much it may make us shudder, be assured of this: This sinister union is about to take place and nothing can stop it. There are many, many people who are trying to fight such a union, but there is positively no use whatever in trying to fight against an event that God Himself has said would come to pass.

Day after day I become more and more convinced that the call from heaven, "[Come out of her, My people,](#)" **Rev. 18:4**, and the call to the virgins, "Go ye out to meet Him", are really one and the same thing. It is impossible to hinder the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the dreadful doom and destruction of Babylon. There is only one thing for the saints of God to do, and that is to obey the trumpet call of God that even now is ringing in our souls. Leave the whole wretched harlotish thing, and obey the command of the Lord. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins."

It has been nothing short of amazing to see the trek toward Rome during the last few years. Kings, queens, princesses, bishops and presidents have their private interviews with the Pope of Rome. Only recently the archbishop of Canterbury, the highest authority in the church of England, paid a visit to the Pope of Rome. Upon meeting together his opening salutation was, "Your Holiness, we are making history." How significantly true those words were will surely be seen in the very near future.

Protestant churchmen from all over the world, sitting in as observers on the Ecumenical Council in Rome, have declared that they see no reason whatsoever for division between Catholic and non-Catholic, and of a truth there is no reason, for they both belong to the same enslaving system.

Surely it has not escaped our notice that Protestant churches are frequently in session, seeking to find ways by which they can unite with each other. Much publicity was recently given by press and radio concerning the possibility of union between the English Methodists and the Anglican Church. Similar discussions are under way both in America and other lands. These facts may cause alarm to some, but they are taking place before our eyes. Without doubt we are going to see the plans for union gather momentum in the days immediately ahead. Very soon we shall see before our eyes a system so powerful that nothing will dare to defy it, and "all the world will wonder after the beast."

Now I shall venture a step further and declare that the power of Babylon will not end with the union of Catholic and non-Catholic, but this system is going to stretch out her arms until she encompasses all nations, and all nations shall drink of the wine of her fornication. I say without any hesitation whatever that before long we are going to see Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Shintoism, and many other cults come under the power and authority of Babylon until, swaggering in her power, she sits astride all nations, as a universal religion. I have on my desk a picture cut from the pages of the Edmonton Journal, which shows Rev. G. There Moratuwa, a Buddhist monk from Ceylon, bending to kiss the ring of Pope John during an audience in Vatican City. What is the reason for this obeisance? Certainly there must be a reason for a Buddhist priest to visit the Pope of Rome just as there is a reason for so many Protestant dignitaries to pay their homage by a visit to him. The reason is the hope of eventual union, the eventual union of all religious systems in one great Babylon until all the world will wonder after such a mighty system.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that there is going to be a union of the religious systems of the earth under one great head, and this Babylonish harlot is going to have an accord with the great red dragon of Communism. This picture is aptly brought before our eyes in **Rev. 17:3**. "So He carried me away into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The woman is Babylon and the beast is Communism. Is it any wonder that the scripture says, "They that dwell on earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life." **Rev. 17:8** While we remain finite, we are always of limited understanding, but the word of God clearly portrays that at the end of this age we are to see this confusion of united religions, mystery Babylon, as a drunken harlot sitting like a lewd, unchaste bawd astride a scarlet colored beast having seven heads and ten horns, Rev. 17:3, elsewhere described as a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns. Rev. 12:3 We would be very amiss in understanding if we overlooked the satanic connections here, or the fact that red is the symbol of Communism and the dragon the emblem of China. These unions are taking place before our eyes, and very soon all the world will wonder after the beast. Rev. 13:3

Now let us remember that all these things must come to pass. There is positively no use whatever in trying to stop them. Jesus our Lord told us what our attitude should be when He said, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh." **Luke 21:28** The fact that all these things must come is not a signal for grief and sorrow. It is a signal for rejoicing because we are rapidly approaching the hour when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and we will reign forever and ever.

We so often forget that all things, absolutely all things, are working according to God's plan. God is at the helm. He has declared that these things must be. Without them the wonder of His purpose concerning good and evil could never come to its fullness. I feel only pity for those poor unenlightened preachers who are making frantic efforts to "turn the tide". They recommend spending vast sums of money and using every available means to counteract the trend of the age. Honest as some of these men may be, they cannot turn a tide which God has set in motion, for all these things are ordained of Him and have a definite end in view.

Could we carefully consider the many signs given by the Lord, it would be plain to even the darkest mind that we are now in the very end of this age. Between the dispensations of law and grace there was a little period of about three and one half years in which John the Baptist and Jesus preached. That interim period was neither law nor grace, but belonged to both. So also between the dispensations of grace and the kingdom of God there is a little interim period in which the manifested sons of God will minister in the power of the resurrected Christ. The doors to that period are opening, and indeed it may have already begun.

In **Matt. 24** we read that the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age?" Verse 3 The remainder of the twenty-fourth chapter is a solemn prophetic answer to their question. In verse 4 He told them not to be troubled when they heard of wars and rumors of wars, but in verse 5 He foretold a time of greatly increased war on a universal scale such as had never before been known. Beginning in August 1914, we have the first true picture of nation rising against nation. Before this time armies of professional soldiers fought bloody battles on chosen fields, but now nations were rising against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms. Voluntary service became a thing of the past and conscription the order of the day. Twenty years after the close of the First World War the earth was again plunged into a second World War. No longer

was the battle confined to front line trenches where men locked in fearful combat, fought and cursed, bled and prayed and died, but flaming hell was carried on the wings of death to lay in smoking ruins the hopes, the aspirations, and the dreams of centuries. And when at last the truce was signed and the weary warriors wandered home, did peace reign serene as we had hoped? No! Far from it! Trouble increased still more until today, though open war is not declared, we are living in a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation and never again shall be. Dan. 12:1

We have become so accustomed to trouble in the earth that we scarcely notice it any more. As a man with an old infirmity forgets its nuisance and pain, so we dwell in the midst of a world reeling in trouble and know it not. There is very seldom any good news today but rather news of trouble, rebellions, floods, famines, pests, crime, murder, arson, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, volcanoes, bomb tests, highway accidents, political strife, and the ever present threat of sudden nuclear war which threatens to annihilate the earth and everything in it. Is it any wonder then that Jesus, when recounting the things, which precede the end of the age, declared, **"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved."** Matt. 24:22

Following this He told of the rise of false christs and false prophets who would show many signs and wonders and deceive the people. It is regrettable that many Christians have become so sign and wonder minded that they would run almost any distance in hoping of seeing a miracle. Unscrupulous men have capitalized on this foolish tendency, setting themselves up as great ones and deceiving the people for personal gain. Worse still, they have so educated the people to seek after miracles that many have come to believe that anything which savors of the supernatural must of necessity be of the Spirit of God. Thus their minds have become fertile fields for the seeds of deception and, when the great antichrist comes performing signs before them and calling fire down from heaven, they will follow him doubting nothing.

The next sign of the end to which Jesus referred was the sign of His people Israel. (A good example of this symbol may be found in Jer. 24 where Judah is likened to two baskets of figs.) When Jesus cursed the fig tree in the incident related in Matt. 21:19-20 saying, "Let no fruit grow on you henceforth for an age," symbolically He was putting a curse upon Judah, who for all the age of grace would bear no fruit. But later He said, "When you see the fig tree putting forth her leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise when ye shall see all these things, know that it (the end) is near, even at the doors." It is not necessary to remind anyone that Israel, the fig tree, is putting forth her leaves, for in 1948 she became a nation with a national home, a national flag, and her own government. The wonder involved here - that a nation without a homeland could wander among all the peoples of the earth for two thousand years without losing its identity - is nothing less than a wonder of God, and, further, that that nation should be now established in its ancient territory in spite of fierce opposition from overwhelming forces can be attributed only to the power and wisdom of the Lord.

Jesus told us that, when we should see these things, we were to know that the end of the age was even at the doors. **Matt. 24:32-33** But the next verse, **verse 34**, is most significant of all, for it declares, **"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all things be fulfilled."** The generation referred to here as 'this generation' without doubt refers to that particular generation which actually sees these things begin. Verse 33. This, of course, is our generation. Millions living today, including myself, were alive when Palestine was made the national home of the Jews in 1918 at the close of World War One. It was Jesus Himself who made the declaration, "When ye see these things, know that it is even at the doors."

Among these indisputable signs of the end of the age our Lord added another great sign: **"As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be."** **Matt. 24:37** The day of Noah was a devil-may-care day. It was a day of eating, drinking, marrying, and divorcing. These were the things for which people lived, and it is just the same today. The sixth chapter of Genesis gives many **details of the days of Noah that are in exact accord with the conditions of our day. Any thinking man reading Gen. 6:5-6, 11-12** can see without explanation that our day is the duplicate of Noah's day. **"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."**

We do not have space now to continue pointing up the overwhelming evidence that we are at the end of this age. The sands of time for this dispensation are quickly trickling through the hour-glass and the great day is without doubt at hand.

It was against this background that Jesus unfolded the truths of the parable of the ten virgins. Matt. 25. It was against this background that they waited for the bridegroom. It was while they were waiting and slumbering that the midnight cry went forth. Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye forth to meet him.

Many people are expecting to hear a mighty voice from the sky proclaiming, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh", but this is not the way it will be. He is first coming to those who look for Him while the rest of mankind sleeps on through the midnight hour hearing and seeing nothing at all. The midnight cry is going forth right now. The command is sounding in the ears of our spirits, "Go ye out to meet Him."

Why is it that we must go out to meet the Lord? The answer should be very evident to all who love and seek Him. Dare we for a moment imagine that He will come and be partaker with Babylon? Will He join in with a system that has dethroned Him, a system that is filled with confusion, a system that has fashioned itself to suit the carnal mind and taught the commandments of men for the doctrines of the Lord? No! Never in a thousand ages! If we are to be one with Him, we will have to leave every trace of Babylon behind and go out to meet the Lord.

When our blessed Lord came to the earth centuries ago, He was not accorded the luxury of being born in the great temple at Jerusalem nor yet even in some humble synagogue. Full well it was known unto God that His Son would find more welcome among the lowing cattle and bleating sheep than among the scribes and doctors of established religion who had long ago made the word of God of no effect by their traditions, for they, though filled with form and ceremony, were empty of God. So, while priests performed their rituals in the temple and rulers droned out their litanies in the synagogues, angels announced His birth to shepherds and wise men from a far country laid their trophies at His feet.

When the mighty ministry of the Son of God began, was He hailed as some great one by the religious leaders of the day? Far be it from that. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. They hated, contradicted, disputed, and blasphemed Him. They ever sought occasion against Him and attributed His work to Satan. Was it in the temple where His first miracle was performed? No! It was at a wedding where wine flowed freely and all was gay, but where hearts unbiased by creeds and ceremonies that could never deliver them from sin were open to see and hear the truth. For publicans and harlots will find the door of mercy while organized religion finds Him not at all.

Those who found Him in that day had to go out to find Him. They found Him preaching in the meadows. They sat on the hills to listen to words such as no man had ever spoken. He healed the sick who thronged about Him in the wilderness and He spread a table for the hungry multitude on the green sward. He led His disciples to transfiguration on a mountain and, while Galilee with her watery fingers played sweet music on the keyboard of the shore, He preached from a little boat because the people thronged Him.

Upon the mountain Jesus sat, the hillside, by the beach,
Grass-carpeted cathedral where He could speak and teach
Those burning, flaming words of truth that priest and demagogue
Would never tolerate at all in church or synagogue.

Those who wanted to find Him when first He came to the earth had to go out from their systems of organized religion, for He was not welcome there. Men have not changed a whit in the intervening centuries. Churches are churches in name only. They would not know Him if they saw Him, nor welcome Him if He came to them. All who will find Him must go out unto Him as they did when He came two thousand years ago. Wherefore the Holy Ghost says, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach, for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." **Heb. 13:13-14**

Do you realize that, after Israel came out of Egypt, it was a bigger task to get Egypt out of them than it was to get them out of Egypt? How often they longed for the flesh pots of Egypt! How often they said, "Would God we had died in Egypt!" How often they murmured and said to Moses, "Have you brought us out here in the wilderness to kill us and our cattle and our little ones with thirst?" Yes! It was a big job to get the people out of Egypt, but an even greater task to get Egypt out of them. Since God has revealed to me the secret depths of Babylon with its many abominations and enormities, I have found that it is one thing to get people to see what Babylon is and another thing entirely to get them to leave its bondage and confusion, and still another thing to root Babylon out of their hearts. In spite of all the things I have written people still write me to enquire which denomination I belong to, and, after I have assured them that I have left them all and gone out to meet the Lord and Him alone, they still insist that I must belong to some group or sect somewhere. Then again other well-meaning people will commend the article Mystery Babylon, yet enclose an envelope full of church advertisements 'that fairly reek of the systems and programs of Babylon and all its multi-headed confusion. There is positively no doubt that Mystery Babylon is a blinding, confusing mystery that has painted over men's eyes so that they cannot see, and stopped their ears so that they cannot hear. It has dulled their minds so that they cannot understand and, though men wallow in its miry depths, they remain oblivious to their state.

We might well ask ourselves the question, "Is the church Babylon?" The answer is an emphatic no! But all who adhere to its organized confusion think that Babylon is the church. This is what makes Babylon the dread mystery that it is, but God will enlighten our eyes if we will but ask Him for understanding. When Israel was carried away into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, she was forced to remain in captivity and had adopted the ways of her captors. Still no one could say that an Israelite was a Babylonian. So it is today. The people who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ have become captive to a system that has ruled and regulated their lives, sucked away their blood, and stunted their growth. In this system everybody is concerned about our standing with the church, and few care about our standing with the Lord. It has become extremely difficult to convince anyone that we are a Christian at all if we do not attend the services of some denomination. But let it be known that, just as God called Israel to leave Babylon and return to Zion, so now He is calling His saints to leave this great, mysterious, harlotish system that straddles the earth and go out to meet the Lord. The angelic call, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues," is sounding in many hearts and an ever increasing stream of pilgrims is leaving the disorder and confusion of organized religion and is going out to meet the Lord.

The longer we walk with God, the more we read His word, the more we seek His face and pray, the more firmly convinced we become that the true church is not a visible thing at all. It cannot now nor could it ever be circumscribed. There is no use whatever in trying to count its numbers, for God alone knoweth them that are His. Even among the smallest number of people, regardless of their profession, we will find the Judases, the Ahithophels, the Achans, the Simons, the Demases, the Dio-trephes, and a host of other pretenders and fakers, who appear good on the surface, but are not the children of the Lord. The true church, like the kingdom of God, cometh not with observation. Its members cannot be counted. They are a treasure hid in a field and God alone knows who they are. He calleth His sheep by name and leadeth them out. They know His voice and follow Him and a stranger will they not follow. Their names are not found on the record books of earth, for they are the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.

The parables of Matthew 13 accurately describe the growth, of the kingdom of heaven from the days of Christ to the end of the age. The kingdom is likened to a sower that sowed good seeds everywhere, yet only a quarter of it matured and of that only one third brought forth a hundred fold. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a field in which grew both wheat and tares side by side until the end of the age, at which time they were separated by God's angels. He likened the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard seed which though so tiny, grew so large that it became a dwelling place for all manner of fowl both clean and unclean. He likened the kingdom of heaven unto leaven, which is symbolic of malice and wickedness, which a woman put in the meal until the whole thing was leavened. He likened it also to a drag-net which caught from the sea both good fish and bad which were separated at last, some gathered into vessels and some cast away. Then He showed the genuine and true kingdom to be like a hidden treasure and a pearl of great price.

Our relationship to denominations, sects, creeds, people, churches, congregations, and all such things means less than nothing. Our relationship to Christ means everything. Let us rise and go out to meet Him.

Our condition in Babylon is aptly described by the story of the prodigal son who came of age and went out to have a rollicking good time. He devoured his living with harlots. (Mystery Babylon is the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.) But before long he found out that they had contributed nothing to him, but instead had brought him to desolation until at last he found himself in a swine pen feeding hogs. It was while he was there that he heard the voice of God speaking to him and with determination he declared, "I will arise and go to my Father." That is what we must do. Let us go unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach.

There is a call ringing down the corridor of the years that had its beginning centuries ago. For the Lord had said to Abraham, "Come out from thy kindred and from thy people and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee." God through the apostle Paul said, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you." The voice from heaven is calling, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her plagues." And now at this midnight hour we hear the voice of His Spirit, crying o'er the tumult and the strife of the age, yea, even above the voices of Babylon's harlot daughters, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet Him." Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

S.O.S. 2:10

CHAPTER THREE TILL INDIGNATION BE OVERPAST

The burden of my heart - a burden which, I confess, never departs from me - is that men and women who see the end of the age approaching would abandon themselves completely to God to become one hundred percent disciples of Jesus Christ. Oh, that men would learn the simple lesson expressed in this word of wisdom: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." **Matt. 6:24** Mammon is the god of riches. How hardly shall they who have great riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. You will certainly ask, "Why is that?" The answer is simple and there is but one. The riches of this world provide much for the flesh, much for the body, and much for the natural man, but the flesh, which is the body, is an implacable enemy of the spirit, warring against it night and day so that it is never free to seek and embrace God's kingdom. Oh, that God's people would learn that friendship with the world is enmity with God! How true were the words of Paul, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth!" **1 Tim. 5:6** No one is more dead than she who from the abundant riches of this world's goods spends her time satisfying the insatiable flesh.

There is one thing above all else that is lacking among the people of God in our day. It is the spirit of true repentance. Godly sorrow for sin and worldliness is the sorrow that brings the glorious light of abounding salvation into our hearts. Paul made this remarkable statement: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." **2 Cor. 7:10** Experience has taught me that each new ascent into the realm of the Spirit, each new revelation received from God, must be and always is preceded by a true spirit of heartfelt repentance. No sinner can come to God without repentance of his sin and repentance of a sort that never will be repented of. Perhaps you have thought that once a man is converted he will never more have need of repentance, but that is a pitiful error. I have repented far more during my long pilgrimage with my God than I ever did that blessed night when He found me straying and brought me home. That blessed and wonderful night, November 21, 1926, when I knelt to give myself to Christ, I gave myself to Him forever; and, as I remember it today, forever was the deal we made. Mine it was to repent and believe and His it was to save and deliver. Never once in all these years has He failed me, and, though my life has been of little worth, never once have I looked back or desired even for one second to return to the weak and beggarly realm of this present evil world.

There was a day when Jesus called to a dead man, "Lazarus, come forth!" And forth he came from the darkness and night of death, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. I do not know what truth you see in this, but, though perhaps you know it not, it is true that, on that day when Jesus gave His life to you, there were many smelly grave clothes wrapped about you and many bondages that savored of the old death from which He delivered you. As a stranger in a strange land still bears the marks of the country from which he came in speech and dress and tradition, so we, too, at the beginning of our pilgrimage into these celestial realms of God found among our wares many things that savored of the land of sin from which we came. That is why Paul

said, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." **Col. 3:5-10**

In this new realm into which we came when we believed all old things begin to pass away and, behold, all things become new. We have entered a new life, a new country, and a new citizenship. Old things pass away only as we let them pass away, and they become new as we desire the new. In this new realm there is no Greek and there is no Jew. There is no circumcision (made with hands) and no uncircumcision. There is no barbarian, no Scythian, no one in bondage to written laws, no one free to walk after the flesh; but in this new realm Christ Himself is the realm. In this new country Christ Himself is the country. The new kingdom we have entered is the kingdom of Christ. This new law we embrace is the law of Christ. The banner or flag that waves over us is the banner of God's love - not a banner that waves from a flag-pole in our streets, but a banner that burns like the fire of God in the secret place of every heart. The law of God was never done away. The law of God was simply removed from cold, dead, lifeless tables of stone, where it heralded doom to unregenerate helpless men, to the tables of the believer's heart, never more to be a burning, smoking, fiery law before which the unregenerate world would cringe in helpless terror. The law of God, written by God on the tables of the heart, becomes the very innate nature of every believer, for thus saith the Lord: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." **Jer. 31:33**

The Ten Commandments, written in Exodus, chapter twenty, can never be done away, because of the ten commandments are the nature of God. "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind" is a law that can never be abolished because God is love. Neither can it ever be fulfilled by unregenerate men. For this very reason Jesus Christ the Son of God is given to us, as the scripture has said: "Unto us a Son is given." The moment any man or woman believes on Christ and invites Him to come in to his heart, Christ Himself becomes not only our Saviour, but our very nature as well, and henceforth to all who walk in Him it becomes our first nature to love God. No longer does our heart cringe before the command, "Thou shall love", for love has become our nature, flowing as a river from our regenerated heart. No more do we vainly try to show love. We love God and our neighbor as ourselves because it is our nature to love even as it is His nature to love. He who now abides in us has given us His nature, and Christ, who gave His life for us, has now given His life to us. How often I have heard Christians say, "We must try to show love." Rubbish! Rubbish, my dear friend! Trying to show love is but a fraud born of the carnal mind. Do not try to cultivate love. The whole idea is wrong. Ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart. Bid Him take possession of your life. Ask Him to set up His kingdom within you. Then His banner will be unfurled both over you and in you and the love of God will flow forth from that one pure fountain, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in you. All imitation is useless. All feigned submission to laws written on pieces of paper or on tables of stone is useless and hopeless beyond expression; but, when the nature of God dwells in your heart because Christ, who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of God's person, dwells in your heart, then God's nature becomes your nature and God's law, which is God's nature, is removed from the flinty tables of dead stone to the living tables of believing hearts to flow as a boundless river of life to a world cursed with sin and dead to God.

It is exasperating to me to hear some teachers talk about the law of God. The carnal mind is forever preaching that every dispensation of the past was a failure. Innocence, they teach, was a failure; conscience was a failure; human government was a failure; law was a failure; and I suppose grace would be considered a failure, too. The truth is that none of these dispensations was a failure. It is carnal man who is the failure. Everything everywhere finds its complete fulfillment in the Christ life. In Him is the grace of God fulfilled. In Him is true innocence with fullness of knowledge. In Him is the dispensation of promise fulfilled. In Him human government finds its fullness, and God will govern the world by that man He has chosen. In Him the law of God, which is the nature of God, finds its complete fulfillment, and grace and truth are by Jesus Christ alone. Yea, in Him is the wisdom of God, the knowledge of God, the righteousness of God, the truth of God, the fullness of God; and God, our blessed Father, has given us His Son that His Son may dwell in our hearts and

that we may dwell in Him, and we, being thus in Christ, shall both have and be His nature, His wisdom, His knowledge, His law, His grace, His love, His soberness, His virtue, His longsuffering. Christ is all and all is Christ that Christ may be in all and all may be in Christ. The unity of Christ with His Father is expressed in these words: **"Thou in Me and I in Thee."** **John 17:21** The unity of ourselves with Jesus Christ is expressed in these words: **"The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they might be made perfect in one."** **John 17:22, 23** "I in them," the Saviour said, and this is the whole need of man. It is the need of both sinner and saint alike.

There will be men and women reading this book who long to find true salvation and peace with God. Perhaps you have joined this group or that, hoping to find that peace of soul that only Christ can give. It is possible that by joining some church organization you did find some temporary relief or mental satisfaction, but religious organizations can never bring peace to your soul. Jesus Christ alone can give you peace. He is the Saviour of the world. Church systems are false christs who deceive many just as Jesus said they would do. Matt. 24:5. They make their members believe that they are safe because they have joined them. They teach their followers to adhere to their petty traditions, a few little do's and don'ts, certain days to keep or clothes to wear, certain foods to eat or not to eat, but the heart, the poor, poor, unregenerate heart remains unchanged and the sinner unconverted. These systems are false christs. They are all false christs without any exception. They are the many false christs of which Jesus spoke when He declared that in the latter days there would be many false christs and many false prophets. The false christs are the religious systems that call themselves churches: and the false prophets of which Jesus spoke are the preachers that preach for the systems. The systems are false christs because they are false saviours, making men believe they are safe when in fact and truth they are lost. The preachers are false prophets because they proclaim the false teaching of the systems they represent.

People sometimes accuse me of an attitude of hate because I never say anything good about the Babylon system, but can you give me any sensible reason why I should try to speak good of that which God's word declares is wholly evil? Truth is the light, but falsehood is the night. I do not hate cobras or rattlesnakes, but I solemnly warn you that their sting is deadly. Therefore toy not with them nor go near them, but keep as far as possible away from them, for to associate with them will bring you death. In one of our readers at school there was a little verse, which said:

Speak the truth and speak it ever
Cost you what it will.
He who hides the wrong he did
Does the wrong thing still.

So, if the price of telling the truth is to be wrongly accused of hatred, then it is a price I shall gladly pay that I may take my place with such lovers of men as John the Baptist, who said in love, **"Oh, generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father."** **Matt. 3:7-9** Even their connection with Abraham was no value, for salvation is not of human blood. Listen now to Jesus, that foremost of all lovers of mankind, who, when speaking to the Pharisees, who took such delight in washing cups and pots and eating certain meats, thus deceiving the people with false assurances that they were righteous, said: **"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city."** **Matt. 23:33, 34**

Don't waste your ink exhorting me to speak kindly of the denominations and religious systems, for they are, indeed, false christs. The poison of asps is in their tongue and their sting is the sting of death. At their feet lies the full responsibility for the appalling condition of anarchy, rebellion, godlessness, love of pleasure, immodesty and immorality now extant. The salt has lost its savor. The systems have not honored Christ as the only Saviour. They have used Him rather as a drawing card for their earth-born programs as the night clubs of Las Vegas use Elizabeth Taylor or Elvis Presley. Woe to Babylon, for she is fallen! Woe to the mother of harlots Rome for she is a deep ditch and a narrow pit. Prov. 23:27 Woe to the daughters of the mother of harlots all Protestant denominations. Woe to all those who adhere to her ways, and woe to me if I tell not the truth. She

has made all nations to drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Rev. 14:8 Deliver yourself from her power, for strong is the Lord whose judgment even now is falling upon her. "Come hither," saith God. "I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So He carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast full of names of blasphemy, (these are denominational names), having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, and having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her head was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." **Rev. 17:1-6**

It will not be our purpose here to speak further of this great, many-headed, many-named system that dares to call herself the church, but I will vouchsafe one more statement: This great multi-headed, multi-named fornicator is guilty of and responsible for all the dreadful social ills and upheavals in our nation at this present frightful hour of tribulation. I have no good word to say for the riotous, the rebellious, the hippies and yippies and weirdies that wander our highways, loll about on filthy pads, plagued with loathsome diseases and enslaved with every mind - and soul - destroying drug, demanding everything and giving nothing but trouble and destruction. Yet for all their loathsome degradation I believe I speak the truth when I say that the reprobate alienation and estrangement of their minds, and consequently of their lives, can be laid en masse at the feet of this many-named, many-colored, multi-headed harlot system, who calls herself the church, not because she has failed to make disciples, but because she has sought to draw men to herself rather than to Christ. She has literally compassed land and sea to make proselytes in every realm, and, having done so, she has made them more the children of the devil than they were in the first place. Matt. 23:15 She has not made them to be lovers of Christ. She has not made them to be lovers of God. She has hidden from their eyes and blinded their minds to God's eternal purpose for the government of the universe through the sons He has chosen and has placed before their eyes instead an eternal heaven for Christians like themselves and a blazing hell for those not like them. And God has refused to bless their human tradition and imagination. They have failed to tell mankind that God has a purpose for every man that comes into the world, a set day for his birth, a set day for his death, and a set time for his enlightenment; and in the place of this eternal wisdom they have preached a hit and miss jumble of human notions, which they dare to call the gospel, that envisages a paltry handful of saints fast closed up within jasper walls while the billions of earth who never heard that God had a Son are left to wail their tortured lament to the diabolical tunes of hell with its raging fires forevermore. Because the system has not taught the truth, mankind has turned to fables. Because it has not shown the way of life, men have embraced the ways of death. Because the truth has not been loved, error has been exalted. Because now they do not want to retain God in their knowledge, He has sent them a reprobate mind to do all manner of things, which are not convenient.

Make no mistake about it! I think the hippies and everything that pertains to their sordid ilk are an abomination in the earth, but I am certain that their odious lives and shocking revolt lie at the feet of that hypocritical, drunken harlot system which dares to call herself the church. While she calls herself by the name of Christ to take away her reproach, she eats her own bread, which is not the bread of life; she drinks her own water, which is not the water of life; she wears her own apparel, which is not the righteousness of Christ, and she preaches her own gospel, which is not the truth of Christ. Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the hold of every foul spirit and every unclean and hateful bird. Is it any wonder, then, that the wrath of God is soon to be poured out without mixture upon her? Is it any wonder that this hypocritical thing has produced hypocrites? Is it a marvel that this rebel against Christ has produced rebels? Is it strange that this reprobate has produced reprobates in the earth?

Behold, the day is at hand when her children will rise up and burn her with fire, for "thus saith the Lord: Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth (world-wide anarchy). They shall lay hold on bow and spear; for they are cruel, and have no mercy, their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men of war against thee, O daughter of Zion. We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way: for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side. ...

They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: They are brass and iron; they are all corrupters." **Jer. 6:22-25, 28** Is not this prophecy an exact picture of what has become of the world in our day? Revolt, rebellion, fear, danger, weapons, death, high-jacking, kidnapping, assassination, cruelty and an absence of mercy? And is it not true that these people have arisen, not from one country but, as the prophet has so aptly described, from the sides, all sides, of the earth! Every nation has them and, make no mistake about it, they are inspired by the king of the north, which is Russia, even as we are shown in verse 22.

I say without fear at all that both Russian Communism and hippyism with all other anarchy and rebellion can be laid in the lap of that apostate system which dares to call itself the church. Say not in your heart that we need more evangelism and greater efforts to win these people back to the church. That is not the seat of the trouble. The truth is simply that this haughty harlot, drunken with wine and swaggering with pride and the riches and the filthiness of her fornication, needs to repent and turn to Christ, for judgment is even now falling. She will be burned with fire, for strong is the Lord who judgeth her. Rev. 18:8 Therefore my exhortation to all men is that they should flee from all connection with the church system lest they be partaker of her sins and her judgment, which even now is falling upon her. Please read Rev. 17:1-7; Rev. 18:1-24 She is false. She is a blind leader of blind men. She is drunken with her own wine and jiot deliver men from their sins. She is full of false prophets and false teachers. She has slain all that is true and has left nothing but her useless tradition to destroy the souls of men. God does not command us to reform her. He commands us to "come out of her."

Behold Elijah, the prophet of God, who fulfilled the wrath of God in Israel, slaying with his sword four hundred prophets of Baal and four hundred fifty prophets of the groves! And has not God declared that in the latter days He would send Elijah once again? Mal. 4:5. And shall he not come in the same spirit to destroy all that is false - Babylon with her false prophets, her false teachers and her high places on every street corner? Turn to Christ and Christ alone, for the true church of the living God consists not of denominations nor of those who dwell therein, but of those whom Christ has cleansed from sin by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of His Holy Spirit. In one Spirit they have been baptized into one spiritual body and thus by the Holy Spirit have they been joined to Him. This is the true church and the true mystery of God - an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. To this the Spirit says, "Come."

Many who read these lines have never yet come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I would therefore take time to show you the beginning of the way of God. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Jesus Christ is the true and only way. Long ago, when our Lord was upon the earth, He said on one occasion, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." But Thomas said unto Him, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." **John 14:4, 5** The way of salvation, the way of justification is not difficult; neither is it cluttered with many doctrines or idle traditions. Jesus Christ is Himself the way. Furthermore, Jesus Christ is the truth along the way, and the life at the end of the way. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Act. 4:12

Now the apostle Paul gave this faithful word of truth to Timothy when he wrote, saying, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners... 1 Tim. 1:15 This is the truth. It is truth worthy of being accepted by all men everywhere, regardless of race or creed or background. Christ, the righteous Son of God, came into the world to save sinners. For a man to be saved there are two things he needs to know and one thing he needs to do. He needs to know first that he is a sinner, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3:23 Secondly, he needs to know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour. Acts 4:12 Thirdly, he needs to believe that the moment he places his faith in Jesus Christ he is justified from sin and saved out of its power. Rom. 3:24-26

To all those burdened hearts who long for deliverance from sin and for the knowledge that God has forgiven them and accepted them as His own blood-bought child let it be thoroughly known that "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." It may be you have joined "a church", but it gave you neither true peace nor deliverance from your sin. You probably adopted the rules and regulations of the church system you joined. You were instructed to keep certain days, wear certain clothes, abstain from certain foods or drink, but none of these human restrictions ever brought the peace or

transformation you needed or the assurance your heart so earnestly craved. Turn your eyes away from all these human traditions, for they are of no value to you whatsoever. Men have always been washing cups and pots and hands and hoping by such restrictions they might be found acceptable in the sight of God. Mark 7:4-5. While these things may be good health rules for the body, they have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of the soul. Paul taught us in **Col. 2:16**, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Christ and Christ alone can save you just as you now are and without any pre-conditions. All that God requires is a heart that longs to be free from sin and a faith that believes that Jesus Christ will save all who call upon Him. When the Philippian jailor came trembling before Paul, he cried from the anguish of his soul, "What must I do to be saved?" To this Paul gave the only answer that can possibly be given to that question: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved. Acts 16:25-31

Now may I add that all who thus believe and are saved immediately become members of the true church, as we are told so clearly in **Acts 2:47**; "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." It was not the apostles who added men and women to the church; it was the Lord. It is still the Lord who adds men to the true church, even the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. All church joining as we see it today is an abomination to the Lord. It is a man-made fake. All denominational names are the names of blasphemy that adorn that mysterious harlot. That is the vision John saw and that is the account he gave of her in **Rev. 17:3** "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of the names of blasphemy." I am told that every day in the United States of America a new religious denomination is registered with the government under a new name. I once had a book in my library giving the names of doctrines of every denomination from the Church of Rome to the Church of the Holy Jumpers. God Almighty, forgive your people forever identifying themselves with man's abominable substitute for the true church! Forgive them and awaken them that their eyes may clearly see that, in the moment when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, God, the almighty Father, accepted us even as He accepted Jesus, forgiving our sins and adding us to that great spiritual organism which God calls His church! Oh, how many millions have been deceived as they tinker with these human systems! Never has a man ever been saved by any one of them! All men who have ever been saved or will ever be saved have been saved when they left all else and believed on Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all mankind, especially those who believe. 1 Tim. 4:10

The true church is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is the house of which Jesus spoke, saying, "In My Father's house there are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ..." **John 14:2, 3**. We can never under any circumstance enter the Father's house by joining the organizations of earth. We cannot enter it by being good or bad, by doing this or that. We enter it when we believe on Christ and receive Him into our hearts as our own personal Saviour, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. The greatest hope I can offer to sinful men is found in this "faithful saying" written down by Paul through the inspiration of God: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." All who believe on Him are justified in God's sight and cleansed from all iniquity. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved."

Dear reader, I think we should do some very serious thinking in this present hour. We have without any reasonable doubt arrived at the most serious hour in all the history of this troubled world. Everywhere about us the shadows are lengthening. Wherever we look we see the literal fulfillment of prophecies and predictions made by men of God, who centuries and millenniums ago foretold and forewarned of the terrible calamities that would accompany the consummation of this present age of grace. I shall not endeavor to prove that we are in the end of this dispensation. That, I think, would be a waste of time both for you and for me. The startling evidence lurks like a specter on every hand. Everywhere we look we can see it. Everywhere we listen we can hear it. The physical senses feel it, and the spirit knows it. Even the ungodly and the sinner know the end is very near. Perhaps the most distressing thing among us is that "on with the ball" attitude of mankind that smugly declares that "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world." But things are not as they were and it is time for God's people to take cognizance and prepare their hearts with care that they might be found both awake and watching in this the most dreadful and yet the most wonderful of all hours in the history of mankind.

One day Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives answering the questions of His beloved disciples. He had told of the destruction of the temple, a temple made by human hands, saying there would not be left one stone upon another that would not be thrown down. Matt. 24:2. "Tell us," the disciples said, "when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)?" Through the remainder of the discourse, as found in Matthew 24, Jesus told them of the many signs that would appear to herald His coming and the end of the age. False christs that would deceive many! They are all about us as religious systems. He told of wars and rumors of wars, of nation rising against nation and kingdom rising against kingdom. He warned of terrible famines, of great earthquakes in divers places. He taught that truth would be despised, that the true saints would be hated, that people would be easily offended, and that false prophets would arise. In Elijah's day there were four hundred false prophets of Baal and four hundred and fifty false prophets of the groves, but in our day the false prophets are legion. They are highly trained and highly respected, but they are blind leaders of the blind, deceiving men by presenting a false security and making them trust a lie. The church system is full of false prophets, and scarcely anyone notices it or calls attention to it.

Then the Lord warned us further, saying, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." He warned that men would have to flee for their lives without time to take their clothes. He told us that there would be great tribulation and that it would be tribulation of a kind such as had never appeared on the earth before, nor ever would again. My brother, do not ask yourself when this tribulation will begin. It is even now everywhere about us and growing worse by the hour. Every day presents some new, insurmountable problem. Never were there so many locked doors as now, never so many people armed for their own safety. Never was there so much violence and crime of unimaginable proportion. Never was there so much laxity in law, never so much intrigue, never so much lying in high places. The earth, the seas, the lakes, the rivers and streams, and the air are polluted to an unimaginable degree. The French underwater explorer, Jacques Cousteau, returning to France after three and one half years voyage through the oceans of the world, said, "The oceans are dying." He said that between thirty and forty percent of all sea life has disappeared in the last fifty years. If we read this statement in connection with Revelation, chapter 16, we will see how true his words are and how near we are to the end of the age.

In the sixteenth chapter of Revelation we have the epic account of the seven angels pouring out their vials and of the dreadful results that followed. Read it and see for yourself. [These seven angels poured out their vials on seven different elements, \(1\) the earth, \(2\) the sea, \(3\) the rivers and streams of waters, \(4\) the sun, \(5\) the seat of the beast, \(6\) the Euphrates, and \(7\) the air.](#) As we read the graphic account of the pouring out of these vials, it might be well to ask ourselves the question, "What are we looking for, or what are we expecting to happen when the angels pour out their vials? I do not think I am in error when I say that these vials are already being poured out every day. The name of the game is "pollution" and a few hours of serious investigation will show us that pollution of the earth, the water, the sun, and the air is doing to the elements the very thing that the book says will be done when the vials are poured out. The first vial was poured out upon the earth with the result that grievous sores and plagues came upon men. Canada is among the least polluted of all nations, yet animals are being found here with DOT in their bodies up to almost 700 times the safety level. Birds are dying. Three hundred species have become extinct in America alone. Animals are dying. Humans are dying. Hospitals are overflowing and people are becoming sick with many diseases hitherto unknown to mankind. All this is because of the pollution of the earth. Truly an angel has poured out his vial of wrath on the earth.

The second angel poured out his vial on the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, that is, congealed, clotted, and corrupt. Beautiful Lake Erie is already dead and filthy with corruption and the other lakes are fast perishing with it. We stated above that the oceans have already lost thirty to forty percent of their life and are polluted one thousand miles out to sea. The third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and streams, and they, too, became as blood. Many once beautiful rivers are now little more than open sewers unfit for drinking or bathing. The fourth angel poured out his vial on the sun, and power was given to the sun to scorch men. In connection with this inspired statement the following comment from the magazine The Plain Truth is of great interest. "The carbon in jet aircraft exhaust catalyzes (decomposes) the ozone in the upper atmosphere. The presence of ozone is our protection against being fried by ultra-violet light coming in from the sun." Compare verses 8 and 9. The fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat of the beast. The seat of the beast is government, and I would say it includes all present day government. The governments of all nations have become unbelievably corrupt until truth is on the scaffold and wrong is on the throne. The right of the

criminal is meticulously preserved while the rights of the innocent are lightly set aside. Justice has fled from the earth and in its place is every wanton greed and every unclean and hateful thing. This depravity has already resulted in men's hearts failing them for fear of the dreadful things coming on the earth as they wring their hands in despair and gnaw their tongues in distress and pain.

And the sixth angel poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates and the water was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. The meaning of the drying up of the Euphrates is somewhat obscure, but let there be no mistake that even now the way of the kings of the east — China, India, and other great eastern powers — is being prepared. More and more China is reaching out toward the middle east to meddle with evil fingers in the affairs of those nations that surround Israel even as Russia has already done. The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air. It would be superfluous for me to speak of anything so evident as the present pollution of the air. The truth is manifest to us all. Layers of pollution from high flying jets can be found as high as 43,000 feet, even over the oceans and the polar regions. The Apollo 10 astronauts observed that it was easy to spot Los Angeles from hundreds of miles in space because of the smog hovering over the metropolis.

I have touched on these truths but briefly, but henceforth we must read the sixteenth chapter of Revelation with the definite understanding that the vials are being poured out even now upon the earth with the drastic and terrible results set forth in the prophetic revelation.

My exhortation, then, to all who read these lines is this: Live in all sobriety and holiness before the Lord. Purposefully refuse to set your ambitions on earthly goals, for your life is a vapor; the kingdom is forever. Refuse to glory in your possessions or in the things you hope to possess. Cleanse your hearts by violently putting away the abounding evils of the day. Refuse to waste your precious God-given hours indulging your eyes and ears and other senses in purposeless and useless things. Give yourself to prayer and to the study of the word, ministering continually unto the Lord. Lay hold on life and relax your hold on this realm of death.

"Come, my people! Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be over past. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. **Isa. 26:20-21**

CHAPTER FOUR UPON THIS ROCK

It is written in God's word, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10**

That wonderful truth grows ever more profound as God reveals its hidden depths to us by the Holy Spirit. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." **Deut. 29:29** The revealed things and they alone are the things which we can enter into experimentally and make our own. We actually become the truth we see. But the hidden mysteries must remain hidden until the wonderful hour of revelation when the blessed Holy Spirit reveals them to our hearts.

It is my firm conviction that all spiritual understanding is sealed off from the natural mind. Natural minds cannot understand spiritual things. Their understanding is hermetically sealed on the natural side and spiritual things must remain closed to them until the Lord reveals truth to the heart. Man may know the things of man, but the things of God knoweth no man, as Paul has so concisely stated, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11** Then he proceeds to show that we have received, not the spirit of bondage to fear, but that Spirit which is of God that we might know the things, which are freely given us of God.

Oh, the endless hours that have been spent listening to lectures by learned doctors of the law and by bishops and canons of the church who understand only the letter but are devoid of the Spirit! Endless years have been

spent studying musty old volumes and thumbing through well worn texts, reading the thoughts and interpretations of other men, but still not finding the truth. Dear brethren, truth must remain forever hidden until the Spirit makes it alive; and when the Spirit makes truth alive and reveals it to our hearts, then we know the truth because it has come alive and God has revealed it by His Spirit. The Spirit of life has raised that which is dead in resurrection. What study and books had failed to do over long, weary years of burning the candle at both ends, inspiration from on high has done in a moment of time. The world today abounds with men and women who believe in an historic Jesus. They know full well that such a man once lived and walked the paths of earth. From early childhood they were taught that He was God's Son that He was a just man and went about doing good and delivering all that were oppressed. They have learned by reading that no disease ever to blight the life of man was able to stand a moment before His wonder working power. Even the fiercest storms grew peaceful and still at His command. The wisdom of the world became foolish, even grotesque, in the light of His wisdom, while the wisest of men were baffled by the questions He posed and the answers He gave. But sad it is to tell that, though the world abounds with learned scholars who have studied the historic Jesus all their lives, those blessed people who really know Him are few and far between. Only as the Holy Spirit reveals Him can we know Him and only by revelation can we understand the things that concern His glory. It is when we see Him as He is that we become like Him and from glory to exceeding glory we are changed and changed again by His Spirit dwelling in us.

Our blessed Lord had departed from Galilee where He had faithfully labored with the teeming tides of restless, weary men who thronged Him hourly to hear and see the glory of His ministry. The sick He had healed by the touch of His power. Devils fled at His word. The hungry He fed again and again. He had refuted the quarrelsome arguments of the scribes and Pharisees, those blind leaders of the blind who always caused their followers to fall into the ditch of unbelief and human misunderstanding. But now the Spirit had led Him from Galilee into the region of Caesarea Philippi, that pretty little town nestled sleepily at the foot of majestic Mount Hermon, which is Zion. Deut. 4:48 Of this mount the Psalmist prophesied, saying, "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever more." **Psa. 133:3** This was the holy mount (1 Pet. 2:18) that Jesus had chosen for the super-eminence of His transfiguration where three men and only three were to behold the more excellent glory of the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

A little work of preparation remained to be done in the hearts of the disciples who in a few days would accompany Him to the pinnacle of that holy mount. What benefit would suffice if on that day of glory there were men in His company who knew not that He was Christ? Therefore with one ponderous question He searched the understanding of their hearts. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" He asked. And they whose ears had so recently heard the opinions of men immediately replied, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias: and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." **Matt. 16:13-14** Ah, you see how miserably lacking is the comprehension of the natural mind! The natural mind can only guess and come to faulty human conclusions, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. The natural mind is able to walk among the wonders of God seeing and hearing continually, yet remaining unable to comprehend that the wonders about Him are wrought by the hand of the Lord. Thus they drew their human conclusions as to who this stranger was who so often displayed God's glory in their midst. Some, beholding His works of power, thought Him to be Elijah. Others, seeing Him weep over Jerusalem, thought Him to be Jeremiah, and others, hearing His prophetic word, imagined Him to be one of the ancient prophets. Still others, seeing the numberless crowds and the many baptisms, imagined Him to be John the Baptist, risen again from the dead. Their human conclusions may have been sound enough to satisfy the reasoning of the natural mind, but they were wrong - all wrong - and nowhere near the truth.

This point I emphasize as a thing of great importance in these closing hours of the age when deception abounds on every hand. Now above all former times is the hour of false christs, false prophets and false teachers. Guesswork in such a time as this will not suffice. We need much more than human opinions, commendation or praise. We must have more than human knowledge and more than the opinions of well-meaning but carnal men. We must have spiritual revelation if we would grasp the truth of spiritual things, and, lacking this heavenly attribute of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will come to the dead end of error just as surely as we breathe. Never go by the deductions of other men, for their deductions may not be of God. Never conform to the reasonings of the multitude, for they are always wrong and as changeable as the weather. The

vital question is not, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" But, "Whom do you say that I, the Son of man, am?" Thus before His own disciples He placed this burning question: "Whom do you say that I am?" And Peter with that ready response flowing freely from a heart burning with revelation, burst forth in ecstasy with that marvelous confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Oh, what a confession that really was! "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" What a transformation the knowledge of this truth works in the hearts of believing men! To know Him is life eternal. To believe on His name is to be saved. To see Him as He is is to be like Him. To confess Him before men is to be confessed by Him before the throne of His glory and before all the holy angels. "I know my Redeemer liveth," cried Job, as the glory of God unfolded before his wondering eyes, "and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another..." **Job 19:25-27**

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." God in heaven is the source of all spiritual revelation and understanding. Truth does not come from the musty pages of well thumbed volumes. They may guide you, indeed, but the knowledge of who Christ really is is a knowledge that comes down from the Father of lights. It shines into the heart, revealing the knowledge of the glory of God shining like the sun from the face of Jesus Christ.

Some men said, "He is a good man," while others said, "Nay, but He deceiveth the people." Yet another affirms, "No man can do these miracles except God be with him," but to them all Jesus replies, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Until mortal man with his natural mind and his human way of looking at things is born from above, he will not only fail to see the kingdom, but fail to see even the simplest things of the kingdom. Have you not heard men preach of sonship, yet, even while you listened, your heart told you they lacked the true spirit of sonship? The truths they tried to teach had neither been revealed to them nor made real to their hearts. Time and again you may have heard men preach the kingdom of God, but their words had no force because the kingdom of God was not dwelling in their hearts. It was not within them as Jesus said it would be. You may have listened to ordained ministers address their people with learned words of polish and eloquence about Christ and salvation while they themselves knew not the Saviour, nor had they the knowledge of sins forgiven. "In our set," said one, "it is chic to be born again." Ah, poor benighted soul! She knew not the transforming power, which lifts men out of the realm of childish twaddle into the realm of heavenly respect and glory.

Out of the depths into glory above
I have been lifted in wonderful love;
From every fetter my spirit is free,
For Jesus has lifted me.

Out of the world into heavenly rest
Into the land of the ransomed and blest;
There in the glory with Him I shall be,
For Jesus has lifted me.

Out of myself into Him I adore,
Here to abide in His love evermore;
Through endless ages His glory to see,
For Jesus has lifted me.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the swarthy old fisherman replied, as the glory of divine revelation swept over his ransomed soul, and from that gushing well of eternal truth the Son of God replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Oh, Father, blessed Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name! May it please Thee to reveal Thy Son to us who read that we may confer no more with flesh and blood nor even depend upon those who were in Christ before us, but of Thy fullness more and more receive and grace for grace, for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Thee.

It is a wonderful thing to know Christ, not as an historic Christ who once lived and is dead, but as Christ who is alive forevermore, to know Him as the Christ of the present who, though He died for us in weakness, yet now lives by the power of God. The fact that Jesus lives is above all else the difference between the Christ of God and those base pretenders who have foisted their messiahship upon a gullible world. Mohammed is dead, as dead as a door nail! Confucius is dead, as dead as a stone! Buddha is dead, as dead as the coffin he lies in! But Christ is alive forevermore. The greatest proof that He lives is not only that He was seen by hundreds after His resurrection, but in the marvelous transformation that endures in the lives of those who have repented of sin and believed on His name. "Because I live, ye shall live also," and so it truly is. In the believing heart His eternal life is manifested and those who have received that life shall never die. If Christ be not risen, our hope is vain. But now is Christ risen to become the firstfruits of them that slept. The grave may hold them for a spell, but, as God lives, they shall hear the trumpet of the Lord and the voice of the archangel and, rising in incorruption and glory, they shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Thus we sorrow not as those who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him on that resurrection morn. "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." "Behold, He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

Revelation flowed like a river that wonderful hour just six days before the transfiguration. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," said Peter, and Jesus, quick to drive the lesson home, assured him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." The reader may be surprised to find with what willingness the heavenly Father reveals His Son to earnest, seeking hearts. **"He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." John 14:21** If men with searching hearts would come in faith to God, asking the Lord to reveal Himself through His word, then God would honor their faith and show them His glory, but when God is approached with skepticism and unbelief, He withdraws Himself that their blindness and unbelief may continue. **"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Jas. 4:8**

Be it known, then, that only by revelation can Christ be seen. If we seek him, we will find Him. If we knock at His door, He opens to us. If we ask of Him, He gives us neither serpents nor stones, but living bread. The more we seek Him, the more of His blessed self He reveals, until at last in the glory we shall behold His face and be exactly like Him, for we shall see him as He is.

That which is true of Him is likewise true of all spiritual things. Salvation by faith is a revelation to the sinner's heart. The baptism of the Holy Spirit comes as a revelation to the believer. Divine healing is a revelation to the ill or infirm and the faith to receive it is given as a gift from God. "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," David prayed, and thus the word of God comes as a revelation to the heart. I would be almost willing to guarantee that scriptures "hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction" would be revealed as clear as the light of day if men would approach the Lord in meekness and penitence, seeking for understanding. Have you never read this blessed verse? **"Then opened He their understanding that they might believe the scripture." Luke 24:25** And yet again, **"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true..." 1 John 5:20** Is that not a wonderful statement? Is it not a blessed thing that He has given us an understanding and in that understanding He proposes these two things - first that we may know Him that is true and, second, that we are in Him that is true? This kind of understanding cometh only from the Lord of light, in whom is no darkness, no variableness, nor even a shadow.

It was not Peter alone whose spirit was enlightened that day to make the grand confession, "Thou art the Christ," the importance of which cannot be overestimated. Wonderful indeed was the revelation the Father in heaven gave to Peter concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, but give heed now to the revelation the Father gave to Jesus concerning Peter. "I say unto thee that thou art Peter." Was it not wonderful for Peter to know Christ? And was it not equally wonderful for Christ to know Peter? What more glorious knowledge is there than this: "I know My sheep and am known of them"? "Thou art Peter," which is by interpretation a stone. Peter was a living stone, 1 Pet. 2:4-5, and Jesus knew it. Many years later Paul referred to Peter as a pillar, and so he was.

It is of tremendous importance that we should know Christ and know Him to be the God-given head of the body, but do not underestimate the importance of the knowledge that Christ knows us, too, and recognizes us in our particular place in the spiritual body of Christ, the holy temple that is now rising to form a fixed abode for God in the Spirit.

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." **1 Cor. 12:27-28.** All these and many more are the gifts, the ministries and callings distributed according to the will of God among the members of the Christ body. And those precious members of the Christ body will do well to know that they are known of Him. He both cherishes them and admires their place in Him even as precious jewels are admired in tiaras and crowns. "A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth." **Prov. 17:8.** We belong to Him. We have been purchased with a great price, even the precious blood of Christ. Whether we be Peter, John, Thomas or Mary, if we belong to Him, He knows us and sees our particular place in His body. "I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I may err somewhat in my own understanding, but my heart tells me there is much misunderstanding concerning "this rock" Jesus spoke of here. I know Jesus is the Rock and I know Peter was a stone, a mighty pillar in the temple of God, but in my heart I believe Jesus was alluding to another rock, the rock of revelation, which we have seen so wonderfully displayed here. Flesh and blood had not revealed the Christ to Peter nor does flesh and blood reveal those chosen members of Christ's body. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

While we are knowing Him and admiring Him as the head of the body of God's sons, He is looking with joy and favor, admiring us who are members in particular of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." **1 Cor. 12:12** No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. So also does Christ love the members of Himself. He admires them and confesses them both before men and before the angels in heaven. "Thou art Peter," or whosoever thou art, and a member in particular of the rising temple which is His body. In one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and we have all been made to drink of one Spirit. Therefore there is one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is over all, above all and through all and in us all. Eph 4:4-6

A great deal of mystery still surrounds the giving of the keys of the kingdom to Peter, that whatsoever was bound on earth should be bound in heaven and whatsoever was loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. Here at the moment of Peter's confession of the Son of God, Jesus placed in Peter's hands the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Now the Romish notion which pictures Peter standing at the gates of heaven with a ring full of keys, admitting or rejecting whomsoever he will, is a childish, human fable not worthy of the smallest consideration. No such crude idea is even remotely hinted in this passage.

The key that unlocked to Peter the mystery of Christ's identity was the key of revelation. The truth, which had not entered into the hearts of other men, was revealed to Peter by the Holy Spirit, so that, when He was asked the question, "Whom do you say that I, the Son of man, am?" Peter's response was immediate and without the slightest doubt or hesitation in his mind. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This was not taught to him by men, but divine revelation had unlocked the mystery to him so that all the dimness and doubt had fled away and he knew with the assurance of God. Revelation, then, is the key that looses heavenly things long bound up in the storehouse of heaven beyond the reach of carnal minds that cannot understand any of the things of God. When the Spirit reveals mysteries to us that which was bound up like some forbidding mountain of ice then flows as rivers of living water as the sunshine of divine illumination shines upon it. The mystery that was bound on earth was bound (kept) in heaven also, but the moment it was loosed on earth, then it was loosed in heaven. Do you think that heaven itself filled the heart of Peter that day when this earth-bound man had his understanding loosed to comprehend the difference between Jesus, the man, and Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God? When Peter turned the key of revelation in that door of mystery, his wondering eyes

beheld a sight that far exceeded any expectations. The glory of the truth of Christ's sonship never departed from him from that moment.

Now the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls. 1 Pet. 1:9 But this salvation, which has been revealed to us was not always known. Justification by faith did not become the general experience of the saints until after Pentecost. The Holy Ghost had not been given until then because Jesus had not yet been glorified. But with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His ascension into heaven a new dispensation with a new revelation and a new experience came into being. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of Christ actually began to enter into and live within the believer. This had not been the experience of the Old Testament saints. Jesus Himself had made this very plain to His disciples when He said, "The Spirit is with you, but He shall be in you." There is a world of difference between the Spirit's being with you and the Spirit's dwelling in you.

Evidently the Old Testament prophets had prophesied of this great and mysterious grace, which was to come in a future age, but, though they prophesied about it, they could not understand it, and, though they diligently sought God for understanding, the key to the mystery was never given to them. Thus Peter, explaining their lack of understanding, made this statement: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." **1 Pet. 1:10-12**

When truth becomes present truth, then that which was beforehand bound on earth and in heaven is loosed on earth and in heaven by the key of revelation. The things which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, are revealed to us by the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

It has become a source of heaviness to me recently to discover a number of Christians who seem almost ready to tear the epistles of Paul out of the Bible. They cannot understand how he fits into the New Testament picture. Some have even concluded that this mighty man was an imposter. Let us never imagine that the message of Jesus and the twelve apostles was in any way in contradiction to the message of Paul. Christ came preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He came proclaiming its laws and announcing the manner of its government. I do not hesitate to say that every act in the life of Jesus and every word He spoke portrayed and extolled some outstanding principle concerning the kingdom of God. When He healed the lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the demon possessed, He was openly demonstrating that in His coming kingdom there would be no sickness, deafness, blindness, or demon possession. Every miracle and every inspired word was a prophecy of the glory of that wonderful age, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill the whole world. That age will be governed by twice-born men, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, who in God's wise purpose are being gathered and assembled during this present dispensation which we now know to be the dispensation of the grace of God. Jesus preached the glory of the kingdom of God and Paul's gospel assembles its elect inhabitants.

One day Jesus spoke a special parable to people who thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear in His day. "He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money..." **Luke 19:12-15** This nobleman who went on the long journey is none other than Jesus Christ. The ten servants are the house of Israel. The test of true servants is faithfulness or faith, because we can never be faithful without faith.

During the long time that the nobleman has been away on his long journey, which now has been almost two thousand years, the faithful seed of the kingdom has been assembled. These are the people referred to by Paul as the "in Christ." It is not the Lord's intention in this age of grace to save the world and everybody in it.

That never was the Lord's mind. His intention during this age of grace is to take out a people for His name, and this taking out is being accomplished through the gospel of the grace of God given to Paul.

Paul, willing to explain fully his own calling and show how the whole gospel of the grace of God was committed to him, wrote these enlightening words to the Ephesians: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." **Eph. 3:1-8** The unfolding of the unsearchable riches of the grace of God was given to Paul above all other men, and that marvelous grace of God with all its intrinsic values was given to prepare those who shall be rulers in His kingdom, even the kingdom Jesus came to preach and over which those who suffer with Him shall reign.

The harmony of God's word is like a beautiful symphony, filling all the earth and sky with the cadence of its melody as it echoes and re-echoes among the everlasting hills.

If any man who ever lived experienced the blinding light of revelation, it was certainly Paul. The story of his conversion on the Damascus road, of the glory of the light that shone upon him from heaven and the audible voice of the Christ who spoke to him, is too well known to need repeating here. So great was the assurance that flooded his heart as a result of that heavenly visitation that twice he related the story in great detail as he stood on trial before opposing forces who questioned and condemned his God-given authority, once standing in chains, Acts 21:33, while testifying before a multitude of Jews, Acts 22:1-24, and once again while giving testimony before King Agrippa and Festus. Acts 26 Thus three times in the book of Acts the story of Paul's heavenly vision is recorded and advanced by the Holy Ghost as proof of his heavenly calling and apostleship. Indeed, Paul himself calls upon this revelation of Christ as definite proof of his own apostleship when he says, "Am I not an apostle?... Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?..." **1 Cor. 9:1** And again, "Last of all He was seen of me also as of one born out of due time." **1 Cor. 15:8** The entire gospel and dispensation of grace was given to Paul by revelation. This is clearly demonstrated in his writings to the Ephesians, chapter 3:1-4, as already quoted.

The Bible is a book of revelation from beginning to end. It is a prewritten history, unfolding as a scroll the eternal purposes of God as age succeeds age and dispensation follows dispensation. Progressively throughout the scripture the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are revealed. The purpose of man's beginning in the Garden of Eden is unfolded through succeeding generations until at last he stands in God's image, heir of all things and lord of the universe.

How pitiful is the man who sees in God's word nothing more than a maze of trial, error, and failure, but who can never see in these things the unfolding of an eternal purpose! The man who fails to see the purpose and all-wise intention of God in our mists of affliction, failure and suffering cannot possibly love God. Do you, my brother, see man in Eden as nothing but failure? And Eden itself with its innocent inhabitants as nothing but a lost cause? If so, your love will always be imperfect while you accept that kind of understanding. Was the destruction of the world by a flood God's admission of a failure or was it the immutable progression of a design? Did the Lord really choose the nation Israel, calling them His chosen people and making an everlasting covenant with them to endure as long as the sun and the moon and the seasons, only to cast them off and admit His own failure because He could do nothing with them? Nobody could trust a God like that, much less love Him. When, however, we hear Paul say, "If the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead", **Rom. 11:15**, the design unfolds before our eyes and we worship God, who moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. In the light of such understanding and heavenly purpose as this Paul's words become full of meaning as he says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be brought in." **Rom. 11:25**

Revelation is a mighty rock in a dry and thirsty land. Without the waters of life that flow from it Christian experience dries up, withers and decays. Where no stream of revelation flows, no growth appears on the tree of life and no changing from glory to glory as the Spirit reveals what eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Without the spirit of revelation Christians form hard, set, stereotyped doctrines to which they rigidly adhere, not even understanding why they believed the things they do. Well do I remember an older sinner who once emphatically told me, "I was born a Lutheran, I have lived a Lutheran, and I will die a Lutheran." Well, I have nothing against a Lutheran, but whatsoever is static is dead, and after only three days in death "by this time he stinketh." They are certain there is no light beyond what their fathers saw a thousand years ago, but even that light was never revealed to them or made living to them by the Spirit and so they shrivel and die in the frail light of what they have been taught, and not what they have personally seen and experienced.

Now in contra-distinction to this attitude of spiritual deadness, blindness and inertia let us listen to Paul as he gives thanks and offers prayer that the Ephesian saints may advance into ever increasing spiritual understanding. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." **Eph. 1:15-23** What a vast scope of information is given us in this passage! But see how earnestly he prays that they might be given the spirit of wisdom and understanding to enable them to understand the mighty mysteries he set before them. Ask the average Christian what the church is and he will probably name a series of man-made denominations. Even the dictionary defines the church as "a building for public worship; a local congregation; a denomination." Ask him what the purpose of the church is and he doesn't have the remotest idea. Ask him what the body of Christ is and he flounders in a sea of vagueness and misunderstanding. Paul knew how impossible it is to understand those mysteries without the spirit of revelation, and that is why he prayed that God would give them such spiritual understanding from heaven.

We have done little more than introduce the subject of revelation as yet. We should have considered the revelation of Christ to Nathaniel and Matthew, to Phillip and Andrew, to Mary and Martha, and to doubting Thomas. We should have explored the experience of Job to see how he was transformed by the revelation of the Lord, and of Isaiah, who saw the Lord high and lifted up and was transformed by the glory of his revelation. We should have spoken of Daniel, who almost wrote the book of Revelation before Christ was born, and we should have considered the beloved John, who saw and related things that are only now unfolding in our time.

There is a secret to revelation, which every saint should know. Let me tell you what it is. The Lord has hidden all His secret things just beyond the reach of the natural mind. They are higher than any human understanding. They cannot be seen with the natural eye. Between the terrestrial realm and the celestial realm there is a fast closed door through which natural men cannot pass. The carnal mind can never understand the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Forbidding as this is, there is a key that will unlock the door, and that key is divine revelation; but the key of revelation or illumination is placed far beyond the reach of the careless, the half-hearted, and the indifferent Christian.

Observe now one Bible instance which clearly demonstrates how the diligent may obtain the key to understanding. In the ninth chapter of Daniel we are told how this saint had been studying the book of Jeremiah, but he understood only part of what he read. Instead of laying the book aside and forgetting about its contents or trying to guess the meaning, Daniel said, "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity..." **Dan. 9:3-5** Through the whole chapter, verses 1 to 19, the confession of this godly man continues, as he humbled himself

before God in repentance and cleansed his soul by power divine. Those who read this soul-searching prayer will become aware that Daniel was not seeking understanding from God so that he would be able to astound and bewilder admiring audiences with a sense of his personal greatness. It was for God's glory, and that alone, he sought to understand the things that had been spoken to him. Pride and selfish ambition were put far off from him. My brother, I fear that much of the stuff that in our day passes for revelation is nothing but utter human imagination that serves to drown men in perdition and helps them not one bit toward a greater fullness in Him. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." **Isa. 8:20**

But listen to this godly man as he searches his heart? "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do, defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." **Verse 19** "And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord, my God, for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." **Verses 20-22**

It is abundantly clear from this passage as well as from Daniel, chapters 10 and 11, that the key to spiritual understanding and the illumination of truth lies just beyond the reach of the natural man. Dear saint of God, there is nothing so valuable as fasting and prayer, together with earnest confession of our own earthly mindedness and carnality, to turn the key in the lock that opens the gates to celestial realms. If God's people will humble themselves with fasting and prayer, not to extol personal righteousness as the Pharisee, who prayed with himself, saying, "I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess," but rather to humble themselves in the sight of God that He might give them His understanding and open their minds to His wisdom, then they will find the door is unlocked and the things which long have been hidden will begin to "come alive" as the Holy Spirit reveals them. Even the scriptures, which on the surface appear exceedingly simple contain hidden depths of truth that are never revealed to the sluggish and carnal seeker; but to the diligent wisdom and truth reveal their secrets as the soul humbles itself in the presence of God.

Humble thyself and the Lord shall draw nigh thee;
Humble thyself and His presence shall cheer thee;
He will not walk with the proud or the scornful.
Humble thyself to walk with God.

"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We cannot see the true church without an understanding from heaven. We cannot see Christ the Son of the living God until the Father reveals Him. All the beauties of God's purpose lie hopelessly shrouded in mystery until our minds are touched by the spirit of understanding. All the jewels of truth lie bound in heaven's vault until the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man are revealed unto us by His Spirit. The closer we come to the end of this swiftly closing age the greater becomes our need of spiritual understanding. The world abounds in darkness and dreadful deceptions. Darkness parades in garments of light. Wolves walk about in sheep's clothing. Devils masquerade as angels of light. "But ye have no need that any man teach you, for the Spirit teacheth all things, and is truth, and is no lie."

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," said Peter. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona," said Jesus, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth lo all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." **James 1:5**

CHAPTER FIVE THE PRODIGAL SON

In the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke we have the story of three lost things - the sheep which was naturally lost, for all we like sheep have gone astray; the coin which was helplessly lost, for of itself it had neither power nor wisdom to reinstate itself and, had it not been for the diligently seeking woman, it would never have been found at all; and, finally, we are told in great detail of a son who was willfully lost.

The parable reads that a certain man had two sons, a younger son and an elder son. The Father referred to here is without doubt God, the Father. The elder son represents the sons of God who came from Israel, the church of the Old Testament. The younger son represents the sons of God who come from the church of the New Testament. These two sons are symbolic of the two companies of 144,000 (see Rev. chapters 7 and 14) who at last stand one on the right hand and one on the left of Jesus Christ in the glorious kingdom of the Father. From them shall the whole earth be over spread with the light and the glory of God as the law of the Lord goes forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The hour is at hand when Christ, having abolished in His own flesh the enmity between the two sons, will have made them completely one in Him, "for He is our peace who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace." **Eph. 2:14-16**

How glorious are these two sons in their beginning and again in their end, yet how far from God they both wandered during the years of their preparation. The elder son was carried away to the horrible captivity of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, Jer. 52:10-30, thence after a short return to be scattered among all the nations of the earth. The younger son was carried to the even more horrible captivity of spiritual Babylon, which is Rome, the queen mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth. In her is found abundantly of the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. She is a hole for bats and a hiding place for every unclean and hateful bird. She sits as a queen exerting her sway over the kings and governments of the earth. Rev. 18:1-8 When she is in power, she tramples all opposition beneath her bloody feet, torturing, inquiring, burning and murdering all who dare to follow God instead of her. This monstrous beast, this enormous harlot, who received a deadly wound in the days of Martin Luther, now has been healed of her deadly wound that all the world might wonder after her until He that is holy burns her with fire, for strong is the Lord that judges her. Rev. 18:8. It was into such captivity that the younger son wandered. There was a brief return to God and truth in the days that followed the great Reformation even as there was a return to Jerusalem when Ezra led Israel back from the captivity of Babylon, (see the books of Ezra and Nehemiah), but after that brief respite from captivity, as Israel was scattered among the literal nations of the world, Jas. 1:1, so the church and her sons together were scattered among the Protestant denominations, which spiritually we may call nations. These sects without exception comprise the harlot daughters of the great mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Just as all nations of the earth except Israel had their beginning at Babylon, Gen. 11:1-9, so all the denominations or spiritual nations had their beginning with spiritual Babylon, which is Rome, and the sons of God who had their beginning in Christ have been carried away captive into these harlot systems to waste their substance (spiritual gifts and ministries) with riotous living and to devour their inheritance with harlots. It would not be an overstatement to declare that perhaps the most blinding error in the world today is that Christian people everywhere still imagine that these harlot systems are the true church. When, oh when, will God's people ever learn and clearly see by the Holy Spirit that the true church is a hidden treasure? It has nothing whatsoever to do with these bastard things that everywhere and in all places insist on usurping the name church. They are not churches any more than Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was Israel. They are a worldly harlot system that has captured the church and carried it away into captivity and confusion. Babylon means confusion. So great, indeed, is the confusion of sight that none can tell whether the fields are fields of tares or whether they are fields of wheat. So confused has become the hearing that none can discern between the voice of sheep and the bleat of goats. So confused has become the understanding that few can distinguish between the true shepherd who feeds the sheep and the false shepherd who bleeds them. So multiplied have become the voices of false shepherds that the sheep no longer know the gentle voice of Christ from the voice of strangers, but accept the false as true and the true as false. These abominable harlots have sunk so low in recent years that they are willing to make an accord with any passerby, joining themselves in unholy marriage with each other, with the world, and with other religious systems that know nothing of Christ, and even now are fondly embracing Rome, the great mother of all harlots, that the scripture might be fulfilled, "They were marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all."

Just as long as we accept these systems as the church and look upon them as the church, we will always feel obliged to continue to attend their gatherings. But the moment we see that the true church is a thing apart, a hidden mystery, the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, the few stalks of wheat among the crushing fields of tares, the few remaining sheep in the vast pastures of goats, then we too will be ready to "come out of her" that we be not partaker of her plagues. Strong is the Lord that judgeth Babylon, for she is responsible for all the sins and iniquities of the earth.

My heart greatly rejoices that during the past few months more and more people have written me to say that they have heard the voice of the Lord calling them to come out of all these systems to walk before God as Abraham did, and what joy it is to hear them say that they have obeyed the call! There can be no possible doubt that the one thing above all else that hinders the progress of the sons of God is the desolating fact that they have remained captive to these harlot systems. For this reason they have not known God. They have not known his voice. They have wandered devoid of His will. They have been dead to the leading of His Spirit, for in 'all these things they are thwarted and made ashamed by the will of that odious woman with whom they are constantly associated.

For decades and centuries the Spirit of the Lord has been speaking to individuals here and there, calling them to leave these worldly systems that they might walk as sons with Him and Him alone. Those who dared to obey the voice of the Lord, rejecting the sects and systems that they might follow Christ alone, were looked upon as foolish fanatics and taunted with the worn-out phrase that they "were so heavenly minded that they were no earthly good". They were looked upon as mystics and eccentrics that might as well be absent, for they were no good anyway. Yet among them were those who knew God, who could discern between the wheat and the tares and that which was of God and that which was not. Every religious move from Noah to now has been led by men who abhorred the harlot system. During the last few months that trickle of sons who are divorcing themselves from the harlot system is growing into a stream, for more and more people are hearing the call of God to come out of her, and more and more people are being obedient to that call. My heart always thrills when someone writes to tell me that they have heard and obeyed God's call, for they soon become mature sons who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. The Spirit of the Lord has forbidden me for the present to go much among the people, for He does not want that men should follow me. He wants that all men should follow Him. Why should any man wish to be a disciple of mine, for I am only a disciple of Christ. Learn to follow Him, for all who are one mind with the Father are likewise one mind with each other. Soon there will be a great host forsaking these sordid systems, for the angels of God will fly through heaven repeating the call, "Come out of her, My people." Rev. 18:1-8 This is the day of coming out. The spirit of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Paul (2 Cor. 6:17-18) is in the land. God, the great eagle, is stirring up these old nests, pushing the fledgling sons from them, that they may soar into the glory of His heavenly realm.

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." **Rev. 18:2-5**

The story of the prodigal son is the story of those of us who all through this age of grace have been called to sonship. This story is not the record of a sinner wandering away from God and finally coming to justification by faith. This is the story of a son. It is the record of the whole company of sons, beginning with Pentecost right down to the end of the age, for those sons, though many and raised up under ten thousand varied circumstances over many centuries, are but one son, for "we being many are one body in Him."

The younger son at Pentecost said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me", and so it was that they tarried together, being of one heart and one soul as they waited for the promise of the Father, which was their portion from God. Well they knew that Jesus, their Lord, had said, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." **John 14:16-18** They had heard His command that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father, "which, said He, ye have heard of Me." **Luke 24:49-53** And so it was that,

after He had led them forth as far as Bethany and had lifted up His hands and blessed them, He was parted from them and taken up into heaven, and they returned to Jerusalem and, finding an upper room where they might wait for the promised Holy Spirit, they continued in supplication and prayer until the day of Pentecost, which is fifty days after the Passover, for it was on the preparation of the Passover that Jesus had been crucified. See Acts 1:12-14 and Acts 2:1-4 There in the upper room they tarried, and there the younger son requested the portion that was rightfully his, and the Father, pouring their inheritance upon them, filled them to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. Thus they entered immediately into a realm of sonship, which few men since that day have so quickly entered.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all of one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" **Acts 2:1-8**

The divine weight of heavenly glory that followed that mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit is really far, far beyond the power of human description. Nothing but eternity itself will even begin to relate the abounding goodness that came to the world as a result of the heavenly portion given to the younger son that day. On that very first day three thousand souls were added to the Lord and the day following another five thousand followed in the way of repentance and life. Multitudes of priests believed, and the Lord added to the church every day such as should be saved. Acts 2:47 Miracles of every description were performed by the young sons of God. Healings were the order of the day until they brought the sick from every quarter that at least the shadow of Peter falling on some of them might make them whole. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common, and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:32-33 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all of one accord in Solomon's porch, and of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them and believers were the more added to the Lord; multitudes both of men and women insomuch that they brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem bringing sick folk with them, which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one. Acts 5:12-16

The church had become like a vast tree that grew in the garden of the Lord. It grew its fruit and yielded its increase. The gifts of the Spirit were in evidence everywhere and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. But sadly enough even in the days of the apostles decay began to set in. The Jewish legalists began to rob the church of its new, found grace. The freedom of the Spirit that had made them one heart and one soul began to give place to councils and governments. Men began to separate themselves by becoming followers of men, saying, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ." **1 Cor. 1:12, 13** Sin came, too, for Paul found in the church at Corinth sin that was not even named among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1, and for all this they were puffed up and sorrowed not unto repentance.

Not many days after the young son had received his portion from the Father, he began to wander away. When the apostle John saw by revelation the entire history of the church from his time until the end of the age, he wrote to the church at Smyrna, saying, "Thou shall have tribulation ten days," **Rev. 2:10** During the first three hundred years of church history there were approximately ten declensions and ten great persecutions sent to restore a straying church to God but, when at last in 315 A.D. the Emperor Constantine was converted, or at least professed to be converted, persecution ceased and the terrible journey into the dark ages really began. Thus it was not many days after the great portion was given at Pentecost that the younger son took his journey into afar country and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

Many years before the Saviour came into the world and long before the church age had begun or the glories of Pentecost had been imagined, the prophet Joel was seized by the spirit of inspiration. Seeming to scan the coming ages as through a prophetic telescope, he saw the glory of the new, born church. He saw the millions that turned to God until by the end of the first century one-twentieth of the entire Roman Empire was christianized. He saw the love that flowed like an ointment among all the brethren. He saw the healings, and the signs and wonders that were everywhere present. He saw the martyrs fearlessly die, glorying in a martyr's crown until surely his soul must have been lifted to heaven as he in the Spirit partook of the wonders of the coming age. But as he looked upon the wonderful scene, things began to change. He saw certain evil elements eating away at the very vitals of this beautiful garden of the Lord. In his vision he saw four destructive insects. Tiny things they were, but they gnawed away at the very life of the church until there was nothing left. In his amazement at the sight of this dread destruction he penned these words: "Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." **Joel 1:1-4** However much we may dread to believe it, this strange verse contains the entire history of the church until this very hour in which we live. Certainly there have been revivals and brief periods of restoration, but the vision of Joel was right and exact as we shall now see.

Botanists tell us that the palmerworm is a grub that attacks the fruit of the tree. It has the habit of boring into the core of the fruit. Decay then sets in and destruction and rot is only a matter of time. The apostle Paul gave us a list of nine spiritual fruits. They begin with love and flow out like a broadening river: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance. Gal. 5:22-23 All this fruit abounded in the early church and came as part of the inheritance the Father divided to the sons of God. Love that is born of the Holy Spirit has nothing in common with the fraudulent, fictitious farce that men call love today. Love is of God and every one that loveth is begotten of God. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another. Love is not a thing. Love in its first true essence is God. I loathe this smug, smiling humbug that says, "You've got to show love, brother." Love is not a garment that can be put on and off at will. It is not a jewel that is either worn or hidden. Love is God, and he who lives and moves and has his being in God is love in all his being, and all his deeds whether in mercy or judgment are born of God. Christians may well admit to their eternal shame that they have patterned their love from Hollywood's dream rather than from the indwelling Holy Spirit. He that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love.

We shall not try to speak of love here, for no man has ability to describe that, which is purely God. He who could thoroughly describe love could thoroughly describe God and that is forever impossible. The church upon whose head the precious oil of unity was poured at Pentecost was not made one by the power of organization, but by walking and dwelling in the love of God. It needed no organization at all, for men walking in the Spirit and in the love of God found their leadership in Christ and were instructed of Him, and so, walking in love and the fear of God, boundless power and signs followed their lives.

It was only when the dread palmerworm began to gnaw at the fruit of love that they found themselves resorting to various forms of organization. It is most tragically noticeable that it was after no small contention and disputation, Acts 15:1-2, that a deputation was sent to the apostles at Jerusalem to decide the question of circumcision. For years I thought this was a correct pattern for the church to follow and in a way it was, but today I see that it was only necessary because many among them were no longer walking in the love and wisdom of God. The palmerworm had rotted the fruit in their lives until now they must resort to wrangling and disputing and decisions that changed nothing in their hearts.

Once the people of God begin to walk in the corrupt wisdom of the carnal mind instead of walking in the unity that flows like a river from the love of God, they have without doubt begun their journey into a far country far away from love, joy, or peace, far from longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and far from faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. In short, they are far from God. Into such a sorry state the young son wandered, but for all this his gifts had not forsaken him and would not for many years. Like Samson of old he still retained

his power, but like Samson he was headed for the embrace of a deceitful harlot that would betray him and leave him destitute, empty, blind, and powerless. Judges 16:1-21

The locust is not in the least like the palmerworm. They fly in swarms attacking everything that is green. They eat the green grass, the shrubs, and the green leaves of trees, leaving them stripped and naked. Jesus once likened the kingdom of heaven to a tree, and John in Revelation spoke of a tree, saying the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Rev. 22:2 If there ever was a tree whose leaves were for the healing of the nations, it was the church after the glory of Pentecost, for men were healed in body and in soul and made one in the image of God. The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit were the leaves of the tree, just as the nine fruits of the Spirit were the fruit of the tree. If one will but superficially examine the nine gifts of the Spirit, he will clearly see that no eventuality could possibly arise in the whole earth that would be beyond the scope and power of these nine remarkable gifts given as an inheritance to a church walking in the love of God. When one considers the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the discerning of spirits, divers kinds of languages, and the interpretation of languages, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, it is clear without a moment's hesitation that there is no power on earth that can resist or stand against such things. The armies of the Assyrians were as helpless as babies before the miracle-working Elisha, and the united armies of the whole earth would be powerless before a miracle-working church. What sickness could stand before their healings? What impossibility could defy their faith? See Heb. 11. What language barrier could bar their missionaries, or what veil seclude the future from their prophets? The church with the fruit of love and the leaves of the gifts of the Spirit was as omnipotent as God Himself while they walked in one mind with the Father.

But just as the palmerworm attacked the fruit of the tree, the locust attacked the leaves, and the gifts of the Spirit became conspicuous by their absence and earthly things began to take their place. The bishops began their struggle for power and a new type of leadership began to emerge. The ugly head of the papacy began to emerge in Rome, exerting more and more authority, blasphemously claiming the very mantle and authority of Christ until nothing was left but form. No longer could the church say, "Silver and gold have I none", and no longer could it say, "In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk." The spiritual locust had done its work and done it well. The prodigal son had wandered into a far country. He had wasted his substance with riotous living and now the dreadful famine was approaching in the land.

The cankerworm lives on the new growth of the plants. When the spring comes and the new shoots appear on the shrubs, the cankerworm attacks them. Surely this must refer to the fresh outcropping of revival that so often took place among those sincere souls who steadfastly refused to become subject to the desolating power of cruel organized Rome. It is a most terrible thing to see that the church, which began with such love and glory, had now become the cruel persecutor of everything that was godly. The church which had once seen eighty martyrs a day die in Alexandria now conducted its own ruthless inquisition, sending its armies to destroy all opposition to its will, burning the saints at the stake, tearing them limb from limb on the rack, or crushing their bodies in the iron maiden. Those who visit the Tower of London can still see today the winding stair that led from the church to the torture chamber in the dungeon below. Thus it was that the loathsome cankerworm of organized bigotry and hate greedily gobbled up each tender sprig that grew up where the light of God's glory shone through upon them.

The great caterpillar of the Middle East is big and powerful and very destructive. It bores into the tree and into the roots to greedily eat up the life of the tree at its very source. As the fruit disappeared, then the gifts, then the holiness, so now even justification by faith disappeared from the church. In the Concise History of the Church by A. E. Knight, page 148, we read these words: "The light of the gospel was sadly clouded by the errors and superstitions of popery; and it is but too probable that the zeal of Boniface was more the result of devotion to Rome than of devotion to Christ. The churches built by his sanction and direction were more noticeable for their images than for their evangelists and teachers; and the sign of the cross was more familiar to the eye than preaching to the ear. The relics of the saints were more freely distributed than copies of the scripture, and it would not be going too far to affirm that, in many instances, the so-called converts from heathenism had only changed their form of idolatry. Doubtless there were cases of conversion, but it is certain that many professing Christians were Christian only by compulsion." So it was that the dark, dark, terrible ages came to find a church away from God, a prodigal son in a far, far country.

As the prodigal son wandered farther away from God, difficulties increased. Christians have always adopted the silly idea of trying to substitute some carnal thing for the priceless gift they have lost. Did not Hosea say, "For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples: and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities." The moment the glory of God disappears the people immediately begin to build up the visible. When they forget God, they build temples, and when they lose His protection, they build fenced cities. Hosea 8:14 The further men get away from God the more human corruption they drag in to take His place, and the more corruption they drag in the further they get away from God. So it was that when this young son had spent all, he began to be in serious want, and there was no one to give anything to him.

His next step down was to join himself to a citizen of that barren, famine-impooverished land. And this is just what has happened to God's sons as the ages have passed. The church system has sunk so desperately low that it knows not from whence it has fallen. As man remembers not the glory of Eden, so the church remembers not her beginning. She has joined herself to the world to such an extent that in name only is it any different. The world system has become the church system. She runs her business as the world runs hers. Its members have become so buried in the affairs of this life that one might well believe they are part of it. The greed that exists in the world exists in the church. The self-seeking, wire-pulling, quarrelling, envy and jealousy so often displayed is unbelievable. Indeed, one Anglican bishop in a recent speech declared, "There should be no distinction made between the church and the world. They are two parts of one and the same thing." How opposite this is to the words of Jesus, who said, "Marvel not if the world hate you; it hated Me before it hated you." And again, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." The apostle John said, "All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; this is not of the Father, but of the world." When, then, prominent ministers begin to make the world and the church one and the same thing, certainly we have joined ourselves to a citizen of that country. Now the young son had no sooner joined himself to a citizen of that country than he found himself feeding swine. He whose soul had once thrilled to the words:

My sheep know My voice, and day by day They abide in the fold; they go not astray. I love them because they have made Me their choice, And follow My call, for My sheep know My voice, now found that he no longer was feeding sheep, but swine, who had the nature of swine, the understanding of swine, and the filth of swine. Not only did he find himself associated with swine, but he also found himself so stricken with poverty that he had naught but husks to feed them. Where were the green fields of the sheep and the quiet streams? Where was the meat of the word, the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts? While the swine munched contentedly on their husks, he was so hungry for something to satisfy his starving soul that, had it been possible, he would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat.

I take no pleasure whatever in decrying the sins of the hour in which we live. Neither is there pleasure or satisfaction in talking of the horrible depth into which the church has fallen, but I cannot withhold from saying that the church folds of today, in spite of their magnificent buildings, have more in common with swine pens than with sheepfolds. Moreover, the abominable trash fed to the people in the name of the gospel from the most evangelical to the most formal and dead far more resembles husks than the eternal truth of the word of God. My soul is appalled at the utter trash that is coming forth from pulpits to tickle the listener's ear. The miracle is not that some perish with hunger, but that any survive at all. Truly did the prophet say, "[The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn. The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.](#)" **Joel 1:9-14.**

There has to come a time when we reach the bottom of the pit into which we have fallen. There must be an hour when we have gone in the wrong direction just as far as possible. Sooner or later we must realize that we have gone so far in this wretched backsliding that we can go no further. If this young man could have gone any lower, no doubt he would have done it, but, as his innermost being ached with hunger and his eyes beheld the contented munching of the swine as they filled their bellies with husks, he suddenly 'came to himself' and

began to realize just how far he had really fallen as he had wandered deeper and deeper into the systems of a worldly church until he was sucked into the whirlpool of her giddy activities to starve for spiritual life and food from heaven. Where was the rich bounty he once enjoyed as a true son of the Father in heaven? Where was the fire of Pentecost that made the sinner tremble, where the burning love that brought sweet unity, where the gifts of God that healed the nations, the purity of life that made sons of God as distinct from other men as sheep are distinct from swine? The unity of love had faded away and the substitute unity of organization had taken its place. He could see now that he had devoured his Father's inheritance with harlots, the harlots of religious denominations with which the very kings and priests of earth have committed fornication and adultery. Relationship with them is spiritual adultery because adultery is the mingling of seed, and the moment a man who is joined to the Lord begins to be joined to these sordid systems of earth, he mingles the seed of God with the corrupt seed of earth and thus becomes a spiritual adulterer. When a woman who is joined to a man begins to play fast and loose with another man, she is guilty of adultery. Even so he who is joined to the Lord, yet has intercourse with the godless systems of the world, is also guilty of adultery. **"He hath devoured Thy living with harlots,"** said the older son, **Luke 15:30**, and so he had. The harlots are the religious denominations of the church systems. Nothing on earth can equal their ability to rob a man of his true inheritance with God. Well did Solomon say, **"Give not thy strength to women nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings."** **Prov. 31:3**

Thus at last the young son came to himself to vividly see the pitiful condition he was in. Would to God that tens of thousands of spiritual young men would 'come to themselves'. Would to God they would wake up to behold the damning effects of their association with these harlot systems. God has awakened many in this present hour to the realization that they are wasting their strength in spiritual swine pens. He has awakened them to see that they are being fed spiritual husks fit only for swine. Yet for all this many run here and go there, hopefully seeking this preacher and that, this healer and that, this program and that, this new scheme and that, always deceived, always deflated, always disappointed. When, oh when, will people really come to themselves and confess that they are perishing with hunger and no man is giving them anything? I am frankly amazed to find that, though many people plainly recognize the coarse and shoddy nonsense that is poured out in the name of the gospel, they continue to attend and listen, remaining faithfully married to this harlot thing. It is time to 'come to yourself.

"I will arise and go to my father." This is the decision that above all others must finally be made. There must come a time when all prodigal sons will make up their minds with honest conviction to arise and retrace their steps back to our heavenly Father. Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Certainly not. Neither can the swine be changed to sheep, or swine pens to sheepfolds. What then are we waiting for? It is time to leave the swine to contentedly munch their husks. It is time to leave those behind who want to stay to feed them. It is time to rise up in firm decision and conviction and walk out of the whole sordid business. It is time to arise, not to change the swine pen into a sheepfold, or to reform the harlots of the land, but it is time, high time, past time to rise up and go to our heavenly Father.

Before the day comes when God according to the word of the prophet will restore the years that the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar have eaten, Joel 2:25, the sons must return to the Father. We have seen in the vision of the Laodicean church; the church at the end of the age, that Christ is standing outside the door. We have noticed that he is no longer speaking to the church as a group, but He is speaking to individual hearts, individual prodigal sons. Have you never heard Him say, **"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me?"** **Rev. 3:20** **To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne."** God is not calling sinners here. He is calling His sons, His prodigal sons. He is not speaking en masse. He is speaking to individuals.

The time has come and now is when all who possess the hope of sonship will of necessity be obliged to forsake the harlots and swine pens with which they are entangled, forsaking all else that they may enjoy the true relationship of a son with the Father. We are going to have to desist from earthly leaders, making Jesus Christ our Lord and Head. We are going to have to throw our doctrines in the garbage as Paul did, Phil. 3:4-9, and be instructed of the Lord. We are going to have to refuse the mind of man and all his earthly opinions that the mind of Christ may dwell in us richly. Too long we have been fed stale skim milk from a theological eye-

dropper. It is time to go back to Father where there is bread and to spare, not only for sons, but for the most insignificant servant as well.

Repentance became uppermost in the heart of this young man until it filled his being with remorse. He longed to tell his father that he had done the wrong thing in wasting his precious inheritance with women. In the depths of his heart he knew he was no longer worthy to be called a son. So great was his sorrow for the years wasted with harlots that his soul would have rejoiced forever had his father but placed him among the lowliest servants. The thing above all else that leads to true repentance is awakening. We can never repent of anything until we have had our eyes opened wide to its evil. We must know not only that we have sinned, but that we have done wrong in sinning. We must become fully aware that our greatest wrong is that we have offended God. Well might the apostle James repeat the cutting words to all who are joined to these harlot systems today: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" Paul once said, "He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," and from this precept I will add that all who commit fornication with these harlot systems are sinning against the body of Christ, for he which is joined to an harlot is one flesh.

A few years ago, because of light and understanding the Holy Spirit had poured into my heart, I fell afoul of the people with whom I had long associated. Being forbidden to preach these truths among them, I felt it my duty to begin to raise up other assemblies who would receive such precious revelation. Nevertheless, as meetings continued, it became more and more evident that we were missing the mark in some way. But was not this the way it had always been done? Were we not taking the only possible road open to us? What else was there to do? As we earnestly sought God about it all, these words of a scripture came forcefully into my heart: "**Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you to pieces and there be none to deliver. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.**" **Psa. 50:22-23** Then He spoke to my heart, showing me definitely that, if we did not drop the whole business of meetings, He would tear it all to pieces. It was plain to see that God was seeking a people who would walk before Him, and glorify Him with lives of praise. He wanted, not more meetings and another sect, but the return of all His prodigal sons from the far country into which they had wandered to live before Him as sons of God.

Immediately upon receiving this new understanding, I contacted the assemblies with which I was associated, telling them the understanding I had received and requesting that for the time being at least we would cease from formal gatherings, assembling only as the Spirit of God should lead. To this they gladly consented. And now I must testify that, since the people have begun to desist from their association with these sects and denominations, together with their hireling ministry, their worldly organization, and their multiplied programs, a great change has taken place in many lives. Men and women who floundered along as helpless as infants all their lives are finding the strength and power of sonship in their new relationship with God. Instead of knowing traditions, programs, and human ideas they are coming to know God, and instead of being one flesh with a harlot system they are becoming one spirit with the Father. It is time to arise and go to the Father with the heart-felt confession, "Father, I have sinned."

Our heavenly Father knows that somewhere in His infinite plan it has been necessary for His sons thus to wander that they might learn how fruitless are our lives when wasted in building up earthly systems, all of which will be left without one stone upon another. Every denomination that man has built will be wiped out in the end, for the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Our association with the multitudinous activities of organized religion means nothing. Our relationship to our heavenly Father means everything. He arose and came to his father, hallelujah! But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him; and the son said, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found, and they began to be merry." A whole eternity of heavenly merriment will have begun for all the creation of God when the sons have returned from their poverty, the husks, the harlots, and the beggars rags to wear the robes of kings and priests, and the ring that bears the signet of the authority of the eternal Father, having their feet shod with the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace. Gone forever are the husks of swine and in their place that fatted calf of the abundance of eternal truth.

We are living in a day when Christianity has degenerated into a respectable social system that belongs to the present world order. No longer are Christians looked upon as a separate people, called out of the world, but Christianity and the church system have now become recognized as an integral part of the world system, and Christians love to have it so. But the truth forever persists that the world is the enemy of all righteousness. Therefore, all who would be one with the Father must cease to be one with the systems of earth. For this very reason Paul said, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **Cor. 6:17-18**

Not Athen's blooms, but those of Calvary
And Gethsemane bring the victory
That causes prodigals for home to pine,
And turn their backs for aye on husks of swine.

CHAPTER SIX SEEKING — LOVING — ABIDING

As the prophet Daniel drew near the end of his earthly ministry, he set his heart to seek God with prayer and fasting and was visited by an angel whom he describes as a man. Dan. 10:5 From the remarkable description given in verse 6 this heavenly visitor must certainly have been the same wonderful being seen by John the apostle and described by him in **Revelation 1:13-18**, for Daniel said, "His body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." This could have been none other than the Lord Himself, and it is worthy of note that in verse 17 Daniel addressed this celestial visitor as "Lord."

So important was the message given to Daniel on this occasion that its truth was not left to angels, but given by the pre-incarnate Christ Himself. Because the message concerns the end time, even the days in which we now live, the vision was a representation of the Christ as He will appear in His wonderful fullness at the end of this age of grace. Christ in His completeness will be a multitude, a vast family of chosen sons, one glorious body of which He is Lord and Head. The voice of that many-membered body will be the voice of a multitude.

Vast and varied were the details unfolded in the vision of that day. As we now look back upon it as history, we see clearly the infinite accuracy of the prophetic forecast given in that hour, but Daniel, held dumb and spellbound with fear and awe, ventured at last the question of his heart: "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" Dan. 12:8. Though the answer to his question seems at first to be negative, in it, in fact, is a vast realm of truth wide open to all who are wise in God. "The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried..." **Dan. 12:9-10** I need not remind you that this separation, purification, making white, and being tried is now at this moment in progress as men and women are being called by Christ to leave the systems, the sects, the denominations and to abandon traditions, cavilings, and all the rest and "go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

None of the wicked shall understand. The wicked continue to do wickedly and their wickedness is increasing by such enormous strides that our very imagination is staggered. So great is the present iniquity of the earth that we may be sure the seals have been broken and the bottomless pit has been opened that every iniquitous and devilish thing may come forth unhindered. Day after day we asked ourselves the question, "How much further can men go in their iniquity and rebellion against God? How much more filth can be connived and produced by the corrupt carnal mind? How much more violence and spoil will spue out over the earth?" The answer to our question is simply this: The pit is bottomless. Rev. 9:1-2

Though none of the wicked shall understand, there is a blessed hope for those few people who are wisely deserting everything that savors of the world system that they might flee away to their eternal refuge, even the "secret place of the Most High." Of these wise ones it is written, "But the wise shall understand." **Dan. 12:10**. In these present days of turmoil and trouble such as have never visited the earth hitherto there is nothing more precious or wonderful, nothing that can bring such quietness and peace as an understanding heart. The man who is in confusion is always the man who does not understand what is happening. Men and even children are

being pressured into insanity because they do not understand. Do you know that today the majority of people entering mental hospitals and institutions for the insane are young people? These are people who understand nothing of what life and the world and godliness are all about. The loving companions of understanding are rest and eternal peace. From understanding flows the knowledge that all that is transpiring is according to the word of the Lord, and everything everywhere is working together for good to those who love Him.

In this time of trouble, Daniel was told, "Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," **Dan. 12:1**, and he was also told that many should be purified, verse 10, and that many would run to and fro, and that knowledge would be increased. Verse 4. Since the splitting of the atom and the coming of the computer man's knowledge has so greatly increased that during the last ten years the accumulated knowledge of the past six thousand years has been doubled. Wonderful as this may seem, let us not forget that the doubling of the knowledge of the carnal mind has succeeded only in multiplying the world's trouble and sorrow. Man would be an optimist indeed to imagine that the present generation, under whose wisdom nations and empires are falling apart as they strike and bomb and riot themselves into oblivion, is possessed of one-tenth the fortitude and stability that urged their forefathers to carve empires from the tractless wilderness and forge nations that would shed their blessing over all the earth. In the face of the vast increase of knowledge in every known science evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. There is more war, more divorce, more broken homes, more drunkenness, more mind and soul-destroying drugs, more sickness and disease, more poverty in the midst of plenty, more slums and ghettos, more pollution, more ungodliness, more crime, and, in short, more of every bad and evil thing. How true are the apostle's words, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," **1 Cor. 3:19**, and again, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." **1 Cor. 1:25**

Now when the angel said, "Knowledge shall increase," there is no reason for us to imagine that only the knowledge of the world would increase. There is knowledge far surpassing the knowledge of the world. It is the knowledge of God. It is concerning the increase of this knowledge that we now wish to speak. "The wise shall understand," saith God, and surely in this, the end of the age, a chosen people will arise who are by no means ordinary, but men and women whose lives are held in such communion and contact with God that the most intimate secrets of the hour will be vouchsafed to them.

During the past months an ever, increasing conviction has come stealing over the meadows of my soul, telling me in no unmistakable terms that the wise, the godly, the elect of God, are about to enter upon a new realm of understanding and wisdom, a new and abiding relationship with Him.

Long, long ago Jesus said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." **Matt. 16:19** Surely this is a marvelous statement and, if we give earnest heed to it, we will discover there are many keys offered to us in God's word. The plan of man is to keep the keys well hidden. He does not lock the door and leave the key for the burglar to see. But God, though He has seen fit to lock the doors of wisdom and understanding against the wise of this world and against the possessors of the carnal mind and all those who tenaciously hold the traditions of the religious systems of the earth, has also seen fit to leave the keys to His wisdom, His understanding, and His kingdom in plain sight of those who have the spirit of revelation. Some one has said, "The best way to hide a thing is to leave it lying around." This may be true or false, but, though God in wisdom has left the keys in plain sight, man has become so blinded by tradition, doctrine, works, rules, regulations, and opinions that he cannot see nor grasp the keys that open the storehouses of the Lord. He cannot touch the magic lock that releases the fountain of living water, nor can he ever discover the source of that faith that makes rivers of living water to flow from his innermost being.

As we walk through the wilderness of this world, it is becoming increasingly evident to some, if not to many, that we are being prepared to enter into new relationships with our heavenly Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. It cannot be for naught that the Spirit is calling, "Come out of her, My people." As He called His people out of Egypt's bondage in the long ago, so today He is calling His chosen people out of the systems of religion today. His purpose then in leading them out of Egypt was that He might lead them into Canaan; His purpose today is that He might lead them into a new relationship with Himself. Let those who read the following lines pray earnestly that God would grant them the spirit of wisdom and revelation that the eyes of the

understanding may be opened and enlightened to see the truth that is now set before them, for herein lies one of the great hidden treasures of the kingdom of God. The opening of this door to our understanding makes wisdom and spiritual sense of all we have previously written. Furthermore, the revelation of this truth to our hearts will display the utter necessity of freeing ourselves from every last vestige of the Babylon of the world system and the Babylon of the religious system.

In the simplest possible language the truth is this: When God made man in the beginning, man lived and moved and had his being under the glory, the sovereignty, and the dominion of God, but, the moment man fell, he became the groveling, sweating slave of the world system, under the shadow of which he labors in vanity until he returns to the dust from whence he came.

We have no way of knowing just how many years or perhaps centuries Adam lived in the blessed first state of sonship to enjoy the surpassing glory of God's dominion, but let us be assured that it was long enough for him to discover and remember forever how excellent it was to live and move and have his being beneath the shadow and dominion of Him whose wisdom is omniscient, whose power is almighty, whose purposes are immutable, whose holiness is unspeakable, whose grace is everlasting, whose peace is all-encompassing, and whose love is eternal. And what shall we say of health, joy, and happiness that flowed like a crystal river from the very fountain of God's throne? Words such as sickness, pain, death, sorrow and war were unknown in the vocabulary of Eden, the garden of God. Such words as fear, hate, strife, and debate were never spoken. Man, walking in the glory and love of the kingdom and dominion of God, derived his wisdom from God's mind, his boundless health and physical strength from the indwelling presence and glory of God's Spirit. Such, then, as my limited and only partially enlightened heart can describe it, was man's exalted place of ecstasy as he lived and walked in the wonderful glory of the dominion of the Lord. Long, long the heart desires to linger, if only in meditation and memory of that supernal state, and loath we are to return from the garden of our dreaming to the harsh realization that we no longer walk in its sunshine and its shadow. But, courage, saint of God, for the flaming sword no longer menacingly flashes, turning every way to guard the path to the tree of life! Blood more sacred and powerful than that of goats and bullocks has been shed to pardon all our sin, and better blood than that of Abel was given to us by the Son of God on that night when in anticipation of His death He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Drink ye all of it."

The life, praise God, is in the blood, and that precious blood of life was given not only for me, but to me as well till even now in my innermost being my spirit leaps in the anticipation that the day is not far hence when that same blood, which was given for the life of the whole world, will course through the veins of all who live in Him, bringing incorruption, immortality, and eternal life.

It now becomes necessary to consider the second part of the truth we have proposed above, namely, that, when man fell, he became the groveling slave of this world's system. It would be a waste of time and space to endeavor to relate with any degree of fullness the extent of corruption into which man has fallen. Let it suffice that we say enough to open the eyes of our understanding to an awareness of our present cruel bondage to the world system. It is when we grasp the truth that we are given the faith to act upon it. It was after Noah was warned of a flood that he built an ark in faith to preserve his household. It was when Lot was warned of the impending destruction of Sodom that he fled from its precincts. When you and I are awakened to the enslaving power of the world system in which we daily grovel as slaves, we will embrace the promises and use the keys, which open the door of our prison house and the gates of the kingdom of God as well.

So man in his disobedience and willfulness departed from his lordly place of sonship in the dominion of God, and, in departing, he fell immediately into the bondage and slavery of the world system. From that day to this, like the prodigal son, he has been a tired, sweating, burden-ridden slave to the ever, increasing ramifications of the world system. Consider the lot of man today and you will see that his whole existence is a struggle. Like a drowning man, violently struggling to keep his head above water, he thrashes about, grasping for every straw that he hopes will save him, until he sinks beneath the sucking whirlpool to be laid in the realm where "the dead know not anything." The world system is the same cruel task-master whether it be in those dark lands where men, women and children with hollow eyes and stick-like legs extend their bony hands to passers-by for a morsel or a crumb to ease the nagging of their bloated bellies or whether it be in those affluent lands where over-stuffed bodies loll in ease and roll in coaches, "having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin." Do not the affluent complain of the "rat race", the taxes, the smog, the pollution, the crime, the violence,

and the filthy ghettos? Do not the hearts of these affluent people fail because of the pressure of the system until the heart attack has become the most devastating killer among us? Are not the hospitals crowded with people suffering every imaginable disease and torment - ulcers from worry, cancers from smoking, disgusting venereal diseases, the righteous fruit of our degraded morals? Our homes are broken by the millions. Every third marriage ends in divorce, and in some counties there is a divorce for every marriage. Can we not see the travail and hear the groaning of men, every one of whom is a bond slave to the world system - that deceiving devil of which the religious systems and denominations are a thriving part? They are false christs, ever barring the way to true unity with God the Father and God the Son.

All governments of earth, whether they be democracies, monarchies, dictatorships or any other, are all part and parcel of the world system. However honest they may try to be, their citizens live in bondage to them and, when finally the weight of their bondage becomes unbearable, they rise in rebellion to throw it off, only to adopt another of earth's systems, which will in turn bring them into bondage and make them its servant.

Child of God, give the ear of your spirit to the wisdom of the Almighty, for, when you do, God will make plain to your heart the enormous and all-encompassing extent of this world's system. Your eyes will see as never before the deceiving taskmasters under whose cruel whip you daily struggle. Do we not speak the truth when we say that life under the dominion of this world system is but a struggle for these three things - food, clothing and shelter? Food for the stomach, clothing to warm us and hide our nakedness, and shelter for our physical man that we perish not from the cruelty of the elements. Even while we read these lines and meditate upon their sad truth, from one-half to two-thirds of the world's population have no other thought in mind than to worry about where their next meal will come from. The rags they wear on their emaciated bodies are scarcely fit to be used as floor mops and the shacks and dungeons in which they dwell, if they possess such at all, offer only the scantiest protection from the savage ravages of the unkind elements.

If by some miracle the wealthy nations of earth could empty their bins and give every scrap of surplus food that exists in their lands, it would ease the hunger of their suffering neighbors but very little, and for a very short time serve only to prolong their struggle for these three insatiable demands of the world system - food, clothing, and shelter. I am all for giving to the poor and needy of the earth and do so with meticulous care, but, as long as this world system abides, the words of Jesus are ever true: "The poor ye have with you always." No effort to create a "great society" either at home or abroad will alter that fact. As long as this world's evil system exists and man remains estranged from God, he will live beneath the scourge of these insatiable taskmasters - food, clothing, and shelter. It was to these very things Jesus referred when, speaking to those who were re-entering the realm of God's love and dominion, He said, **"Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** **Matt. 6:31-33**

In contemplating this sublime truth, which fell in wisdom from the lips of our blessed Lord, were you not aware of the subtle unbelief that welled up in your heart? Was not your mind filled with "but, but, but?" Is it not true that your mind, so steeped in the ways of this world system, guarded and comforted itself by insisting, "But you must take thought. You must lay up in store. You can't be careless", etc., etc., etc. Jesus was not telling us to be careless or lazy. I cannot endure the sluggard whose field is full of weeds or the slothful man that "roasteth not that which he took in hunting," but, wretched as such indolent people are, they are probably little worse than the man who works himself into a nervous breakdown in his determination to lay up food and clothing and shelter in ever increasing abundance. Our Lord was not telling us to be dilatory, but He was showing us what is wrong with the whole world. Fallen men seek first the things of the world system. After that, if they have a spare moment, they render lip service to the things of the kingdom of God, but their hearts abide still with the business of the world. Thus their lives become an endless struggle beneath the iron heel of the system with the question ever uppermost, "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?" And we shall quickly add that when one has attained these things as much as necessary and needs no longer trouble about them, then he begins to seek them more abundantly and in excess of his need. He wants more and better of everything - more food, clothing, and shelter; better food, better clothing, and better houses to live in. In short, he seeks greater gratification of all the five senses of the flesh - more things to see, more to hear, more to

taste, more to smell, and more to feel. In his unending search for more of these he finds no time to consider that all who live after the flesh have but one promise: They must die.

Since then all man's sorrow and confusion derives from his wickedness in forsaking God's dominion and willfully abandoning the glory of His kingdom in favor of this useless, fruitless, rewardless and evil world system, what better instruction could we now receive than this: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"? Could such words of divine instruction be anything less than the wisdom of the eternal God? This instruction is, indeed, the first key to all God's abundance in wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, health, immortality and eternal life. Oh, what beggarly mendicants we Christians have become, who stand at the very gates of our Father's kingdom begging crumbs from the unmerciful hand of this world's system!

Listen to the voice of the Spirit and you will hear secret things shut up from the very gates of Eden. Look and you will see man so immersed and floundering in the world system that he dare not halt his slavish labor to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. He is so busy paying taxes that he does not know of a fish with a piece of money in his mouth. Matt. 17:27. He is so busy counting pennies with which to buy bread and finding them insufficient, John 6:7, that he does not know the Lord who multiplies loaves and fishes. So busy is he toiling all night and catching nothing that he has not discovered how God can give to those who seek first the kingdom miraculous draughts of fishes so great as to sink the boat beneath their weight. In short, he does not know the God of the kingdom, or that he will once again live and move and have his being in God as Adam did in the beginning.

Though our words are many concerning the world and its system, let us not forget that, when man forsook the dominion of God, it was not his body alone, but his spirit as well, that came under the dominion of the world system. The religious systems of earth, including the church system, are just as binding and tyrannical as the world systems. In fact, they are one and the same thing with it. It is a dreadful thing that Christians, after many years of religious life, should suddenly discover themselves to be slaves to a system rather than servants and sons of God. Christians have become such bond-slaves to the system, which they call the church that they are hindered from walking with God. They spend so much time re-hashing truths that they never come to know Him who alone is truth. So engrossed have men become in church projects, church doctrine, church meetings, church buildings, church orchestras, church Sunday schools, church Bible schools, church missions, church counseling, church visitation, and a hundred other things that, if they met Christ on the street, they would not recognize Him, but would hurry on their way to some function of that multi-headed monstrosity that saint and sinner alike insists is "the church."

May we once more call your attention to a very great and common error. There is but one church. That church consists of the first born whose names are written in heaven. Heb. 12:23. It is entirely wrong to speak of a denomination as "a church." It is wrong to refer to a sect as a "church". It is wrong to ask, "To what church do you belong", as though there were more than one church. It is wrong for a man who has come out from among them and who has fled from Babylon to declare, "I left the church." You did not leave the church, my brother, for you are the church. You left the system. You left Babylon. Do not write to me and say, "I came out of the church", for I will not believe you. It is the believers who constitute the church. It is the believer who is the church. The thing from which you came out is the system. Call it the church system if you must for reasons of identification, but it is really the world system, and the world system always has been Babylon, or confusion.

Even the blindest man must have noticed that every revival sent by God through the ages had its beginning outside the system which men erroneously call the church, but, as time passed away and love waxed cold, it gradually drifted away into the system. It developed traditions, embraced doctrines, built fences to keep its own people in and to declare to all without, "You cannot enter here unless you believe as we do and see eye to eye with us. We are right, and wisdom will die with us." Even in Paul's day Christians sectarian in spirit were hanging out their shingles, declaring, "I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; I am of Cephas; I am of Christ."

Did not the church, which for three hundred years walked under the dominion of Christ, fall beneath the ravages of the system we today call Rome? And why Rome, indeed? Was it not Jerusalem where Christ died and where the Spirit was outpoured? Is it not to Jerusalem that Christ will come again to set up His kingdom?

But the church of the living God fell beneath the delusion of the world system to become an harlot with one mother and a thousand daughters. How unutterably blind have God's people become that they cannot see that the very thing they love and cherish is indeed part of the system of the world! If we need further proof of it, we will find it in the endless cry of the church system for money, money, money. Every service has its appeal for money. Almost every broadcast has its appeal for money; and what printed paper is it that does not disgrace itself and show its colors by enclosing self-addressed envelopes, or by making appeals for your tithes and offerings? Shame on such a cursed system that makes the kingdom of God to be dependent upon and part of the world, and shame on you, too, oh man, that you have not known in what realm you dwell! The years have convinced me that they who do God's will never lack the means to carry it out, but those who beg and pry for money to carry out their aims are but children of the world's wicked system. They are promoters of their own causes. It is time to wake up. It is time to discover that God's people are dwelling in a far country. They are living on husks and feeding swine. It is time to go back to Father where there is bread enough and to spare for every son in His kingdom.

Many years ago Israel, who had walked under the direction of God, declared their desire for a king like all the nations round about them. **1 Sam. 8:1-6** "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.. . And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed unto the Lord." From the days of Moses unto the last days of the prophet Samuel Israel had been a theocracy. Their nation was ruled and governed by the laws of God. God Himself had been their Lord and King, administering all His will through His servants the prophets and the judges in Israel. Wonderful had been the success and victory of this tiny nation at all times as its people walked with God. No enemy had stood before them, no sickness had molested them, and the fear and dread of them was upon all the nations round about. "He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, He reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." **Psa. 105:14-15**

Now at the close of Samuel's life the scene changes. The elders of Israel gathered themselves before Samuel, saying, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations." What a dreadful decision this was that the only theocracy on earth should reject the government and Lordship of God, embrace the world system, and demand to be like all the other nations! But is not this the spirit of people in all ages! How many are there even among those who read this message who can bear to be different? The world is full of conformists. "Everybody does it" is the worn-out phrase. Even children must dress as all the others. Older people, too, must do as others do. Everybody does it, so you do it too. Everybody comes under the system, so you come under it, too. Everybody bows to the image of Babylon, so you bow down, too. How refreshing it must be to the heart of God to find that, when the whole nation demands a king, there is one man who refuses all kings but God, the King of kings! How blessed, when all men bow to the image of Baal, to find seven thousand "queer" people who refuse to bow! How precious, when all men in groveling abasement and subserviency make request and prayer unto Nebuchadnezzar, to find one man who has his window open toward Jerusalem as he kneels down three times a day to make request only to Go& Dan. 6:10. How wonderful, when a whole nation is falling down to do obeisance before the giant golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, to find three men who are standing erect! Dan. 3:1-17.

The millions of earth find it very easy and convenient to flow along with the masses, but with all seriousness let me warn you that it will be the men and women who walk with God, masses or no masses, who will reign with Christ in the glory of His kingdom. The days in which we live are tremendous days of testing. Our examinations are being written and passed or failed every day without our knowledge that we are being examined. Samuel was full of grief when Israel demanded a king to reign over them, and with words of terrifying import he warned them of their folly, saying, "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the

tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." **1 Sam. 8:11-18.**

How frequent in the above passage is the use of the word take] He will take your sons, take your daughters, take your fields, take your vineyards, and take your servants. Yes, and he will take you as well. Is that not a picture of the system under which we dwell? Whether it be political Babylon or religious Babylon makes no difference. The rulers take, take, take, take — to waste and waste more and more. Under the world system all and everything that belongs to God goes to the gluttonous and insatiable system while God abides in the shadows to be worshipped and adored by a few foolish, but elect, people who refuse to bend the knee to the image of Babylon. Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, He who will soon reign in that kingdom of God which shall embrace the whole earth, left us this implicit and wise instruction: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

There is a vast difference between those who belong to the religious system and those who walk before God ignoring systems and loving only Him. This truth is greatly emphasized by the following question and the eternal truth of the answer. "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:22,23.** This conversation between Jesus and Judas reveals the very source and foundation from which a Christian life grows and increases more and more in grace and strength, wisdom and holiness. It is the indwelling presence of God the Father and God the Son. The key that unlocks this magic fountain of divine glory is revealed in these words, "If any man love Me." Why does God fail to reveal Himself to those who have settled down to the denominational system, which is in truth the world? Why do they go on decade after decade proclaiming the truth that God revealed to them in A.D. 1700, or 1906, or 1948? It is because they have become old wine skins and, if they dared to accept new truth, their lovely old wine bottle would burst. They do not know that they have come to love the wine skin more than the wine and the deadness of their profession more than God and His ever, ncreasing revelation. They who long to have Christ reveal Himself to them must first love Him enough to abandon the system; otherwise they will die in their bondage to it.

The question of Judas was prefaced by the revealing words of Jesus: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." **John 14:21** The knowledge of God and of things eternal does not come by much study. It does not come by much wading through the endless volumes of the works of men, nor yet by devoted constancy to meetings or mass. The knowledge of God comes simply by loving Christ. He who loves Christ and lives in adoring contemplation in His presence is wiser and more knowledgeable in all eternal things than he would be though his instructors were ten thousand. There is a strange and wonderful element in love, which miraculously calls forth all secret things. We do not tell our deep secrets to those who hate us, but we reveal them betimes to those who love us and who are loved of us. Thus it is with God and with His Son, Jesus Christ, who willingly opens His heart and manifests Himself to those who love Him.

There is nothing complicated about love. Like grief or sorrow it is simple, unassuming, and sincere. The silent tear that falls unbidden from the eye of the sorrowing expresses in the simplest and most eloquent terms possible the grief which fills the heart. John was the disciple "whom Jesus loved" simply because John was the disciple who loved Jesus. It was he who in simplicity and purity of love laid his head on Jesus' breast, and he alone heard the words, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." **John 13:26** He it was who stood with Him in Pilate's hall when all others had fled; and he alone, with some women who loved Jesus, stood by the cross. It was to John that Jesus committed the keeping of His aging mother. **John 19:26-27** It was John who was so quick to see and believe the resurrection, **John 20:8**, while Peter departed, wondering in himself. **Luke 24:12** It was John who said, "It is the Lord", when they saw Jesus standing on the shore. **John 21:7** In the light of these things is it any wonder that it was unto this beloved disciple that the last acts of this age were revealed, or that he above all other apostles should exhort men everywhere to walk in love, for there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth our fear?

Wisely did the scribe speak when he said to Jesus, "Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he had answered discreetly, He said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.**" **Mark 12:32-34** Consider the boundless wealth that lies hidden in this gold mine of God's eternal truth.

Oh, that men who name the name of Christ and who profess to serve Him would really love Him in spirit and in truth! Then would He be unto them their eternal source and endless supply, their beginning and their end, their first and their last. Day after day, week after week, I hear the din and clamor of people crying, "We need one another! We need one another! We must have fellowship! We can't get along without one another." But few I hear breathing out the adoring contemplation, "I need Thee; oh, I need Thee. More love to Thee, oh Christ; more love to Thee." Have you ever taken time to consider that the incessant clamor for fellowship with men arises from the dearth of fellowship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ? The age of law was full of men crowding the altars with burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but having no love for God in their hearts. The age of grace and the church system are likewise full of men and women crowding what George Fox aptly described as "the steeple houses" men and women full of many good works and alms, but in whose hearts there is but little love for and fellowship with the Christ of God. It is time to turn from the abominable vanities of the system that we may return to the beauty of OUT first love and find once again its simplicity as it is in Jesus Christ.

A sister of many years, who had spent much of her Christian life absorbed in activities and surrounded by many people, wrote to me recently to say, "I am beginning to find that it is not people I need; it is Jesus Christ." And was not this the very gist of Christ's message to that dear girl, Martha, who always stood ready and eager to serve? "Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

The following paragraph from a letter received from a young man in Christ is worthy to be read by all men, for it bespeaks the important truth of the hour in which we live. "For some unexplainable reason I have lately been possessed of a conviction that a new drawing near to Him is in order, as though we were on the verge of something of eternal significance. If I could tell time, as He could, I would suggest that the time has come for the end of the double mind. We have been of a divided mind and a divided loyalty and a divided attention long enough. The time seems to have come for us to be of a new devotedness, a new mind, and a new spirit." How true this paragraph is! And may I add that many, many thousands more, now scattered in all corners of the world, are of this same conviction. The time has indeed come for a new devotedness and a new drawing near, an end to the double mind and a new choosing of that good part that shall never be taken away from us.

In this great hour of universal turmoil and upheaval I am positive of this one thing: God is shaking everything that can be shaken, that only the things which cannot be shaken may remain. What is more unshakable than love? For God Himself is love, and he who loves God with all his heart is made perfect in Him. And now abideth faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.

No man who ever lived unfolded such superlative truth as our Lord Jesus Christ. The truths He uttered were far beyond the wisdom of philosophers and sages, for Christ Himself both were and are the truth. Of Moses the poet Alexander wrote:

Never earth's philosopher traced with his golden pen
On deathless page truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

But Paul declared that Moses was a servant in God's house; but Christ was a Son in His own house, which house we are. Wonderful as were the words of Moses, the servant of God, nothing can compare to the heights to which Jesus led us. A life time is insufficient to fathom the depths of the sermon on the mount, and eternity alone will make clear the mysteries of the wonderful body of Christ of which Jesus spoke, saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions." The Father's house is not a massive mansion somewhere beyond the blue. It is something more wonderful far than that. It is the abode of God, which we, the members of Christ's

mystical body, are becoming. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit. He showed Himself to be the shepherd of a vast flock of sheep, and also He proclaimed Himself to be the door by which the sheep should enter into His fold. He showed Himself to be a veritable fountain of living water, of which if any man drink, he will thirst nevermore. He proclaimed Himself to be the bread of God, which came down from heaven, of which if a man should eat, he would never die. He spoke also of His blood, which was to be given for the life of the world. And He gave us the key by which we might be partakers of better blood than that of Abel, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Drink ye all of it." Partake of it, all of you, for it is given to you for the life of the world.

After telling us all these sources of eternal life, He likened Himself to a vine with many branches running in all directions, even branches which run over the wall to bring His life-giving fruit to all creation, saying, **"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit. He purgeth (pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word, which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in ME. I am the vine. Ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."** **John 15:1-5**

Perhaps it is superfluous to remind you that branches cut off from the vine wither and die, losing all ability to bear the precious fruit of God. The diligent and loving people who read these words must consider how great and important they are: "The branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me." Wonderful were the words of Jesus when He said, **"I am the door: by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."** **John 10:9** But more wonderful still were His words to the church at Philadelphia: **"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out."** **Rev. 3:12** There are thousands, perhaps millions, of saved people who continually go in and out. They go in to find pasture and take a little sip of spiritual water to momentarily cool their parched tongues, but their main interest and often their main love is found without in the vanity of this present evil world. Christians who once basked in the wonder of their first love hate to admit that today they love the world system, but the time they spend delighting themselves in the ramified abundance of its diversifications rather than joyfully following the ever shining light of revelation is proof enough before God as to what they love best. Which of these two - the one of God, the other of the world - occupies more of your time, the Bible or the Television? You need not give your answer to me. It is before God you stand; therefore, give Him your answer. But be sure of this. You cannot serve two masters. It was not for jest that Jesus thrice repeated His question to Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" Peter had three times denied the Lord, and the evasive answer he now gave was only partly true. Peter was greatly embarrassed by Christ's insistent questioning, for he had been "going in and out," but now, if God would make him a pillar in the temple, he must "go no more out."

There must come a time and that without delay when the true members of Christ's mystical body "abide in Him." They must go no more out, for in Him alone we live and move and have our being. We are now in the most serious hour of all history. I cannot believe that the days of Noah were more appalling in violence, in crime, in immorality, and evil imaginations than in our day, nor can I believe that the tremendous hours through which Moses lived were more important than those in which we now live. Wonderful beyond the high praises of angels and archangels was the work and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Endless was the fruit of His death and inscrutable the work of His resurrection. But we now live in the hour when the work of the immutable architect is nearing its completion. The body of Christ is almost ready to stand upon its feet to be filled with the breath of the Eternal. It is ready to open its mouth that the words as of a multitude may come forth, even the sound of many, many waters. The mystical body of Christ, the sonship company, is God's masterpiece of all ages past or present. This is the company who will reign with Christ for one thousand years, that by them the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This is the company who at the end of the millennial kingdom will become the Bridegroom. This is He who comes forth from His chamber to receive the bride, even that Holy City, New Jerusalem, which is the living bride of Christ, adorned and prepared for her husband. The body of Christ, the sonship company, is the temple of God. The bride is the New Jerusalem.

I fear that the vast majority of Christians fail to abide in Him. In the twentieth century, alas, the home has all but vanished. Seldom are eyes moistened by the plaintive singing of "Home, Sweet Home", but in millions of cases home has become a convenient flop house, a place where people go when there is nothing else to do, a place

for children to grab a free meal and sleep in a free bed, a place to argue and fight, a place abandoned by Dad and Mom as they rush to work, often on different shifts, until it is a common thing for husbands and wives to see each other so seldom that they communicate by leaving notes for each other to read. Such as this is not home.

Now, am I wrong when I assert that this same spirit that has wrecked the home life of millions has also invaded our relationship with Christ? Are saved people abiding in Him or are they merely going in and out? To many Christians God has become a sort of doting old father to whom they can run when there is nowhere else to run and nothing else to do. Is our relationship to Him on the level of writing notes? Is it true that we know of no other abiding than those few minutes spent on Sunday morning or Wednesday evening in that place we insist upon calling the church? It is not right that the spirit of the world system, which reigns like a fat and pompous old king, should be allowed to rule over the members of Christ's body, for the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine. "The man who does not share My life," said Christ, "is like a branch that is broken off and withers away. He becomes just like the dry sticks that men pick up and use for firewood." John 15:6 (Phillips) See how apt an expression that is! Those who do not abide become like "dry sticks" that men gather up and burn for firewood.

"Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5 Perhaps in all the history of the world there was never a time when men were doing more work for God and accomplishing less. The schemes and programs of the church system are legion. Never are we allowed a moment's peace and quiet from their demands that we might walk and abide in Him. Our ears are continually bombarded by the din of the money changers crying money, money, money. The world system imagines that anything and everything can be accomplished with money and the religious system has adopted the same attitude until people are led to believe that even God is depending on the filthy lucre of this world's abominable system. **Prov. 30:15** says, "The horse leach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give," and one would be caused to wonder if perchance in our day this tantalizing bloodsucker may also have some sons who claim to be the ministers of Christ. When do the people hear these preachers exhorting men to abide in God? When do they instruct their followers to live and move and have their being in Him? How few of God's people have ever learned the lesson, "without Me ye can do nothing"! How many of them reverence the truth that the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine? How few are they who share the promise that all who abide in Him bring forth much fruit!

The preachers of the church system are so busy telling God what He should do that they have no time to patiently discover what He would have them do. Their vast projects for missions and evangelism are the product of their own imaginations; therefore, their clamor for help and money from the people never ceases. Their projects, which they declare to be works of faith in God, are in fact carried on by begging from the people. That work is not a work of faith. Would God that all who read these lines would be awakened to see the abominable fraud of all such programs. These money-hungry preachers cannot find a counterpart for their rapacious ways either among the Old Testament prophets or the New Testament apostles, much less in the Lord Jesus Christ. The surest and most overt designation of a false ministry may be found in his incessant clamor for money.

"If ye abide in Me," said Jesus, "and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7 How great a promise is this and yet how forthright is its rebuke! The cause for unanswered prayer is not to be found in the unwillingness of God, but in a people who do not abide in Him, who continually wander in and out, a people who, because of reasonings of the natural mind, know not the mind of God. In such a sad state the vast majority dwell. All over the world today Christian people try desperately to claim the promise, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done", yet they know little but disappointment and unanswered prayer. They do not abide in Him; therefore, they do not know His mind. Thus in consequence all their prayers and all their requests come from the desires of their own minds and the lusts of their own hearts. As a result their prayer, not being of God's mind, goes unanswered.

Full well did James write, saying, "Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." **James 4:2-3** There is only one clear reason why it should be the people who abide in Him who are blessed with answered prayer. It is this: They make only those requests that the wisdom of God has put in their hearts. Like Elijah they can say, "I have done all these things at Thy

word." **1 Kings 18:36** And like Jesus they can say, "I do only those things that please the Father." "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." As Jesus, weary with His journey, sat upon the well in Samaria, a woman came with her pitcher for water. Day after day through the years she had come to fill her vessel and carry it laboriously home to wash the dishes, scrub the floor, make the tea, water the goats and chickens, and return again to repeat the same drudgery. How well her task portrays the life of all God's people who daily labor beneath the mundane yoke of the system! "Give Me a drink," Jesus requested, but the woman instead gave him an argument as if to debate with Him the age, old dissension between Jews and Samaritans. Is not this the altitude of all who labor in bondage to the system*! You believe this and I believe that, so we can minister naught to each other. We are cut off and eternally separated by our doctrine. Then said Jesus, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said, Give Me to drink, you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water." "Sir," she argued, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. From whence then hast Thou this living water?" Can you not see the image of sectarianism here? This is the well, the only well, and there is only one way to get the water out of it, and that is by dipping it out with this vessel I have in my hand.

But Jesus knew, as you and I should also know, that, if ever there is going to be a change, there must first of all be an awakening, a revelation of our bondage, and a corresponding thirst for freedom and a burning desire for truth that here and now in this present world we might live and rejoice in God's dominion. It is fruitless and useless to ask men to leave the system and flee out of Babylon until they first have been awakened to its enormous wickedness and despotic power to bind men in groveling slavery to all its abominable will. Therefore to awaken this woman to her need Jesus said, "Go call thy husband and come hither." "I have no husband," she replied. To this He answered in great kindness, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly." How well His words of wisdom had done their work, for the moment she was awakened to her sin and bondage, spiritual perception and understanding began. "Sir," said she, "I perceive that Thou art a prophet." But, oh, how quickly she again took refuge behind the prison bars of the system! "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," she argued, "and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Who is right? Who is wrong? Let us settle this ancient religious argument. But Jesus knew that the answer to her need lay not in worshipping here or there, in this place or in that place. In this mountain or in Jerusalem was immaterial. But her need, like yours and mine, lay in communion and fellowship with God, abiding in Him who was her Father, your Father, and my Father, yes, and the Father of us all. Therefore, He filled her heart with the wisdom of this truth: **"Woman, the hour is coming, and now is, when neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father; but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."** **John 4:23-24**

"The woman then left her waterpot." What a statement that is! Here was one who, bound by the drudgery and the arguments and the doctrines of the system, found the key to freedom, the source of living water, and eternal truth, for, as soon as she heard that God was seeking a people loosed from the thralldom of tradition, of places of worship and things to believe, and that God Himself, being Spirit, is seeking a people who worship in spirit and in truth, she left her waterpot, that symbol of her perennial drudgery and bondage to tradition, and from the fountain of her new found relationship with God streams of living water began to flow as she testified neither of places, people, things, or doctrines, but cried, "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?"

Here at the end of the age we stand together. While men are compassing land and sea to make their proselytes, bidding them worship here and there, in this mountain (building) or that, by this doctrine or that, Jesus is offering to you and me the key to abiding in Him. "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 24
FRAGMENTS THAT REMAINS
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-7

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CHAPTER ONE
AN OPEN LETTER

If all the things that should be written were written every one, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." **John 21:25**. Thus wrote the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Chapter one of this Volume 24 is intended to be, as the title indicates, an open letter to all who read it. May it be to each one an earnest exhortation rather than merely a teaching. All the apostolic epistles were in reality letters, often addressed to individuals, sometimes to congregations and even nations. I pray that the pages of this chapter may be as a lamp to the feet of the believer and a light unto his pathway.

It is becoming increasingly clear to all who have a mind to understand that every indication and sign is pointing to the hour of the great unveiling of the sons of God. Your heart may often grow heavy and your eyes dim with waiting for your hopes to be fulfilled, but, as sure as God is on His throne, we are rapidly drawing near the end of this age with all its human rule, and we are coming quickly to the glorious kingdom age when the mind of Christ will reign and rule supreme. It should certainly not be difficult for us to see that, if men are to reign with Him in rest and peace in an age when Christ rules and God's will is done in the earth even as it is in heaven, then they must certainly here and now possess His mind and His will; for if there were even one carnal contrary mind among all the rulers of the kingdom, one mind that was not subject to Him, one mind that was contrary to Him, then the glorious kingdom of God would immediately become filled with the same wars and fightings that everywhere exist in increasing measure throughout the length and breadth of the world today. The kingdom would become filled with the same bickering, enmity, and strife that have always filled the pulpits and the individual lives of the members of the visible church.

The world has been governed by the carnal mind for six thousand years. Wars and rumors of wars have never ceased and never will while the carnal mind reigns. Israel in the Old Testament was often at war among the tribes and especially between the north and the south. At one time the tribe of Benjamin was almost entirely wiped out. So also the existing church for the past two thousand years has fought and bickered, quarreled and hurled insults. On occasion she has even taken up the sword and fought bloody battles in the open field, and on some occasions has even attempted to carry the gospel to the heathen on the point of a spear. The visible church has been governed by the carnal mind and there can never be peace and unity where even one carnal mind exists - certainly not when it bears authority.

Have you ever attended a session of parliament and listened to the arguing, the insults, the innuendos, the contradicting and all such like? As I once sat in the gallery of the legislature and listened to highly paid men wasting their time blasting each other, refuting each other, even threatening to fight each other, I wondered how men who professed to be statesmen doing the nation's business could descend to childish squabbling like little children arguing over a ball game. But that is the carnal mind. It can never agree. It can never be one, not even with itself; and when it comes to the mind of Christ, the carnal mind is not only a dissenter, but a bitter and hateful enemy.

We cannot be too explicit and strong in our exhortation regarding the mind of Christ. No man will rule with Christ in the kingdom unless that man has received the mind of Christ in (his present age. Let us not deceive ourselves about that. As sure as God is on His throne and we are breathing His air, no man will reign with Him in His kingdom unless he has received the mind of Christ in this present age. The kingdom of God is the mind of Christ. The kingdom of God is the will God. The kingdom of God is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.

There are many useless ideas and misconceptions about the mind of Christ. Men can be found all over the earth who claim to have the mind of Christ - carnal men who resort to carnal means, who go right on carrying out carnal purposes, who are all entangled with Babylon's harlot system and have its name inscribed on their foreheads, who proudly bear the names of sects and denominations and go on building the visible things; men who trust in the visible realm and put confidence in the ability of money to propagate the program of God, who go all out for big and biggest, for large, giant and super, who clamor for crowds and human acclaim and love to be called Reverend or Doctor or Father or Teacher. Ah, wretched condition! It has nothing to do with the meekness and gentleness of Christ and nothing to do with His mind. It is rather the carnal mind that sits enthroned in the temple of the Lord.

Paul said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ." Many times before I have emphatically stated that the mind that was in Christ was the Father's mind, and Paul is exhorting us, yea, commanding us, to let the same mind, the Father's mind, dwell in us as it dwelt in the first Son, Jesus Christ Himself. What our mind is is what we are. What our mind is, is what we think. Therefore, if our mind is carnal, we think carnal, we act carnal, and we are carnal. But once the mind of Christ dwells in us, we think Christ, we act Christ, and we are sons of God and a joint heirs with Christ. We become other sons in that vast family of sons. Praise His name! Those who enter into this realm are born of God and cannot sin because they are born of God. Any man who sins has not yet seen Him and not yet known Him. Christ could not sin because of the mind of the Father. Neither will we be capable of sin when the same mind dwells in us.

The first necessity in receiving the mind of Christ is to realize that we have lived under the influence and power of the carnal mind. It has governed our thoughts and actions and has even deceived us into believing we possessed the mind of Christ. It is necessary to seek the cleansing of the blood of Christ that the old leaven of the carnal mind might be purged away by the blood, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. Do not deceive yourself into believing that you can rise in a moment from an altar of prayer and go out filled with the mind of Christ and completely free from the carnal mind. This just does not happen. The carnal mind is a strong man armed that keeps his house and keeps his goods in safety and he will never be dislodged until a man stronger than he (the mind of Christ) binds the strong man and casts him out and destroys his goods. See Luke 11:21-22

When Paul said, "Let this mind be in you," there was a whole world of truth in the little word "let". It is not striving to attain; it is striving to "let". I do not need to tell you that there is a titanic struggle involved for the following reasons: If we are going to "let" the mind of Christ dwell in us, then we will have to refuse to "let" the carnal mind dwell in us. That should be easy to understand. The carnal mind is concerned with the things of the earth and the things of the physical body of flesh. It seeks to satisfy the physical through gratification of the five senses of the body, for the sake of which the whole industry of earth is geared. Our whole trouble has been that we have been willing to let the carnal mind dwell in us. We have nourished it and fed it the things it desires with the consequence that it has grown stronger with the passing years, while the mind of Christ, being starved, has grown weaker within us until we never come under its influence or power. Just a glance into the realm of nature would surely teach us that it is the plant or animal that is fed that grows, and the thing that is starved is stunted. All natural things have spiritual counterparts. It is positively true, therefore, that to feed the carnal mind will make it grow to enormous proportions, but to starve it causes its crucifixion and death.

There are certain means by which the mind of Christ can be nourished and fed within us. Without these means we cannot even hope to see the mind of Christ coming to maturity. In **Hebrews, chapter one**, the writer unfolds some of the most astonishing wonders of God's purpose for His sons. He shows that God is preparing His sons to be lords and rulers of the glorious ages to come even as it is stated in **chapter two, verse nine**:

"For this subjecting of the universe to man implies leaving nothing not subject to him." (Weymouth) Just think of that! God has not planned to subject the coming ages to angels, but to man, to those men who have "let" the mind of Christ dwell in them and so have become sons of God walking in all His will. Is it any wonder, then, that, after outlining these wonderful purposes of God for man, the Holy Spirit should ask, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Have you ever considered the tragic results of neglect? Neglect is such a simple, easy thing. We do not have to go to a lot of trouble to neglect a thing. Usually neglect requires simply doing nothing. A man may pay ten thousand dollars for an elegant automobile and ruin it simply by neglecting to put a dollar's worth of oil in the crankcase. Hundreds of lives are lost every day because someone has neglected some very simple thing. A faulty electric wire is neglected and a house burns down. A faulty brake is neglected and a tragedy occurs on the highway. At school we used to recite:

For the want of a nail a shoe was lost;
For the want of a shoe a horse was lost;
For the want of the horse a rider was lost;
For the want of the rider the battle was lost;
And all for the want of a horse-shoe nail.

"I passed by the field of the sluggard, by the vineyard of the man without sense; and lo! it was all overgrown with thistles, its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. I looked, and reflected upon it; I saw, and learned a lesson. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of hands to rest - so will poverty come upon you like a footpad, and want like an armed man." **Proverbs 24:30-34** (Goodspeed)

However tragic neglect may be in the natural realm, it is not even a worthy comparison with the dire results of spiritual neglect, for they bear the import and impact of eternal things. They are freighted with eternal values beyond the power of angels and principalities to explain. It is no wonder, then, that the apostle warned, "How shall we escape if we neglect..." A man who is neglectful about spiritual things will be stricken with poverty in spirit. He will be empty and void of spiritual understanding. He will be without perception of spiritual revelation and truth. He will become sluggish and tend more and more to partake of the things that sustain and feed the carnal mind.

It is a most dangerous thing to neglect the word of God. Show me a man who neglects regular and systematic feasting upon the word of God and I will show you a man incapable of contributing anything to the spiritual uplift of anyone. I will show you a man who cannot understand the purpose of God and one unable to advance in truth, a man who cannot recognize truth when he hears it and who is easily deceived by error because he does not know the word of God. By its many symbols the word of God is pictured to be a lamp for light, Prov. 6:23, a mirror to picture us as we are, Jas. 1:5, a laver for cleansing, Eph. 5:26, a critic or discerner to criticize and exhort us. Heb. 4:12. It is food for the hungry, Job 23:12, milk for infants, Heb. 5:12-13, bread, Isa. 55:10, honey, Psa. 19:10, strong meat, 1 Cor. 3:2. It is fire, water, a sword, a hammer, a seed, and many other wonderful things that show in symbolic language the absolute necessity of reading the word of God.

We must not depend on what others tell us. We must know for ourselves. We cannot depend on prophecy alone. We must know what is written so that the Spirit can quicken it to our hearts. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to the word, it is because there is no light in them." **Isa. 8:20** How often I have seen people searching in the Old Testament for New Testament books and vice versa! What a disgrace it is for men to be so neglectful of the thing they profess to love and desire that they have not even read the written account, cannot remember what it says, and do not refresh themselves with its food and drink abundantly every day! It is no wonder they have nothing uplifting to talk about and truth finds no response in them.

During the last few years I have been discovering that the time of day one reads the word of God is a most important thing. I make this prediction without hesitation or equivocation: If you, the reader of these lines, would spend at least one half hour before breakfast reading and prayerfully meditating on the things you read, your whole Christian life would change and spring into new abundance even as a wilted plant responds to

showers, and bodies, emaciated from starvation, to nourishing food. You would find further that the word of God would cleanse you, for it is not only a mirror, but a laver of cleansing as well. Those who prayerfully read the word of God automatically find themselves bowing their heads in penitence and prayer as they read, for the word of God is a discernor or critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. A man or a woman who goes all day without prayerfully reading the Bible does for his spirit the same thing that a day without food does for the body. It leaves it weak and unresponsive with flagging and failing desires. "The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth." **Isa. 24:7-8** So also it is with those who starve the spirit. It languishes and is unresponsive.

The reading of the word of God should not be left until the evening. It should be done in the morning even as Israel gathered manna in the morning, for when the sun was up, it withered away and disappeared. If you do your reading first thing in the morning, you immediately open the gates that let in the flood tides of God and, though the rest of the day may require you to walk through the wilderness of this world, you are unaffected by it because streams of life are flowing in the desert and waters in a thirsty land. If on the other hand you leave your reading and communion with God until later in the day, you will find that, as the manna disappeared with the rising sun and the beginning of the day's business, so will disappear your ability to partake of the living waters that flow from His glorious throne and of the bread of life which He Himself is. There is abundant reason why Jesus Himself often rose a great while before day to get alone with God before the crowds gathered and activities began. I have no hesitation in saying that if Christian people would go to bed one hour earlier and rise one hour earlier to get in contact with God, their understanding would be enlightened. They would respond to true revelation and be filled with it themselves, and sonship and the manifestation of the sons of God would become a present and living reality instead of a dead issue that may happen to some lucky people in the far future.

One of the greatest means of grace ever given to Christians is the privilege of prayer. While I suppose much could be said about prayer, I am inclined to think that we could say much less and be more helpful. Very, very few Christians really pray or know anything about prayer. We need one great revolutionizing lesson about prayer and we need to forget most of the rubbish that has been taught us in the past. I have positively no hesitation in saying that most of the prayers that are offered are not prayers at all because they concern our own desires, our own wishes, our own troubles, and our own will. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He showed them an actual pattern to follow - first, in adoration and worship; secondly, concerning the coming of the kingdom; thirdly, a phrase of untold, unimaginable importance, "Thy will be done." But, alas, the prayers that are made in ever increasing number both from the pulpit and by the private individual are all too often a dissertation of our own will and a demand that God will do what we think and imagine He ought to do. We pray that God will save the heathen, not knowing that God has His own plans for the heathen, and that even now, as sure as they are bedeviled by the unrighteousness of an Adam they never knew nor heard of, so also they are redeemed by the righteousness of a glorious Son who declared that, when He was lifted up, He would draw all men unto Himself. Read the wonderful story of Rom. 5:18-21. How my heart leaps as I read Paul's account of the work of Christ! He keeps repeating the blessed words much more! Much more! Much more! Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Rom. 5:9,10,15,17,20

We pray and plead for years for some man or woman to be saved and we imagine the thought unthinkable that perhaps God has a different purpose in mind altogether. We beg and plead that God will revive the church as we see and know it, not knowing that the true church is an invisible mystery joined to God in the Spirit and in the mind of Christ, but that the visible, existing thing that is everywhere called the church is really only mystery Babylon. The truth of the matter is that God is refusing to call people into it, but rather He is calling to all who have ears to hear, "Come out of her, My people, and be not partakers of her sins." What I am trying to say is that prayer is not prayer except it concerns definitely and directly the will of God. All other prayer is idle words that must be accounted for in the Day of Judgment. It is as useless as the prayers of the Pharisees, who loved to stand in the markets and make long prayers to be heard of men. Most prayers offered in pulpits are of this order and are only prayed because they are part of the service. Any man can be called upon to pray whether or not he knows the will of God.

It should be very evident, then, that the only kind of prayer that is acceptable with God is one that comes flooding up from those fathomless depths of the spirit within, breathing out with unutterable longing the

sighings and desires of the Holy Spirit within as He prays according to the will of God. I know what those sighings are, and all others who have experienced them know. They are unexplainable to natural minds, but "as the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, oh God." "The vast importance of what we have just tried to say is expressed by Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in these words: "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us according to the will of God, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because He (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." **Rom. 8:26-27**

You will begin to experience this kind of prayer if you take my advice and begin reading and meditating and getting the stream of life flowing early in the morning instead of waiting until the business of the day like the sun has dried the manna up so that there is none to be found. How different will be the life of the man or woman who thus contacts God in the early morning as compared to the man who sits up late to watch the soul-destroying trash produced by Hollywood's fertile factory of evil, acted out by characters whose personal lives are the quintessence of evil, adultery, fornication, and secret sins too numerous and filthy to mention. A man who thinks he can be entertained by these corrupters of the whole earth and still have the mind of God for prayer for himself and for the people has become a deceiver of himself. Television is a most remarkable invention, but it has become a thief of time, a thief of manners, a thief of morals and it is even a thief of physical exercise.

Our spiritual life is a very sensitive thing. It grows by continual contact with God. The spirit of man and the Spirit of God are the same essence, and the spirit of man can only be nourished by the Spirit of God and the things that pertain thereto. I wish you could see this point: Spiritual setbacks come upon us in the simplest fashion. If a man eats poisonous food or receives in his body a thrust from a sword, his body receives a setback from which he takes days or weeks to recover. Consequently we avoid such things as much as possible. Can you not see, then, that spiritual wounds and spiritual poison deal a destroying blow to the soul, to the spirit, and to the spiritual mind, giving it a setback from which it will take a long time to recover? The solemn question is asked in scripture, "Can a man take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned?" Indeed, he cannot. Neither can he partake of the rot and filth of the flesh and not receive a setback in the spirit from which he may never recover. "Shame and dishonor will he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away." Anger, wrath, blasphemy, and filthy communication from any source should be put away because they are poison to the mind of Christ, and to indulge in them in any way deals a destroying blow to the spirit from which you may never recover. Those who hope to be sons of God and reign with Him in the glorious kingdom, where all is peace and God's will, will certainly have to put away the flesh, for it is God's enemy that the mind of Christ may dwell in them richly.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he made this very revealing statement: "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheous shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." **Phil. 2:19,21** The last part of this verse which says, "All seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's", literally staggers my imagination. We are well aware of the selfishness and greed almost universally rampant in the professing church in our day, but most of us have believed that things were much better and Christians far more devout in Paul's day. When he wrote this pitiful confession, he was undoubtedly referring to men who claimed to be the ministers of the gospel. These men no doubt could preach as good a sermon as Paul any day of the week and perhaps many of them were much more popular, but down deep within under the cover of outward show they were self-seekers. Beneath the outward cloak of righteousness, consecration, fire, and devotion lurked the love of self. Their attitude toward the gospel, the people, and the welfare of the church of God was the attitude of an hireling rather than the devotion of a true shepherd. Among them were men like Demas, who forsook Paul and departed because he loved this present world. **2 Tim. 4:10** All that is in the world, let us remember, is the lust (desires) of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These are not of the Father but are of the world, and the world with all its passionate desires is rapidly passing away. Strange, is it not, that one who would take the honor of preaching the gospel should beneath the surface cloak of wholehearted devotion to Christ be found to be an admirer of the world and a lover of self? In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul exhorted them in these words: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." **2 Cor. 13:5** Caution, my brother; for your carnal mind will never be

persuaded to examine or condemn itself, but there is, nevertheless, a place of self-examination in the presence of the court of heaven. The value of waiting long hours before God in prayer can never be overestimated. Neither can the results of fasting with pure motives be overestimated because fasting will bring about a condition of abandonment to the will of God. In fasting earthly things lose their attraction. Big things are cut down to their proper size and are seen in a better perspective. It is in such times of pure devotion that a man can examine himself in the revealing light of the Holy Spirit, and in such times the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and shows them to our hearts.

Perhaps Demas was unaware that he loved the world. I am perfectly sure that, when he came to Paul to tell him that he had decided to quit the apostolic party, he did not say that he was leaving because he had a secret love for the things of this present world. Like people in all ages he doubtless produced some more plausible excuse. Nor was he ready to admit to himself or to anyone else the true cause that really lay beneath his decision to depart. We are all like that, if we will be honest. The love of self and the love of this present world is in the heart of every man until the cross of Christ has eradicated it completely, and he who in his heart imagines that the love of the world is not in him is a deceiver of himself.

The first law in the world is self-preservation, and the second law is like unto it - the preservation of the species or the race. For this reason, though few people understand it, there is a strong urge in all creatures to reproduce their kind. For this self-same reason many shallow and foolish people affirm that sex is the second law of nature, but this idea is a perversion of the truth. God made sex in the beginning, not as a toy to be played with, but as an irresistible force for the procreation of the race.

Seeing, then, that these things are so, why should we be surprised to find self popping up and shouting his claims at every opportunity? Now some will ask, "Why, then, should I not consider self?" The answer is simply this: Since we have come to Christ, we are not our own. We have been bought with a price. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 Our only reason for existing henceforth is to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God's. In Weymouth's translation of 1 Cor. 7:22 we have these remarkable words: "A slave who has received his calling in the Lord is the Lord's freed-man, and the same way a free man, if called, is the slave of Christ. You have been bought with a price. Do not become slaves of men. Where each one was when he was called, there, brethren, let him stand... close to God."

In the article, *The Meaning of the Cross* (Volume 4, *Treasures of Truth*), we pointed out how completely God in His great plan of redemption has identified us with Christ in death, in resurrection, in ascension, in righteousness, and in all other good things. It is a message that should be read and re-read until its truth is indelibly inscribed in our hearts, because our ever present human tendency is to forget the truth of our identification with Jesus Christ, and go slipping back again into the error of dependence upon our self-efforts and self-righteousness. The truth is that self is self and flesh is flesh and there is no possibility of changing the situation. The one and only remedy is death, and that death is not accomplished by our struggles and human efforts to die and obliterate the old. It is accomplished by participation in the death of Christ. It becomes part of our experience when the truth dawns upon our spirit that, when Christ died, we all died with Him. And let us assure our hearts that, when we claim complete identification with Christ, this is no vain imagination. We are not putting our confidence in a lie, but are simply believing what God, who cannot lie, declared when He made known the truth, "I am crucified with Christ." The fatal mistake made by tens of thousands of God's people is this: They wrongly imagine that, when Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ", this crucified state was something he himself had accomplished by years and years of ascetic severity, struggling to overcome self, the carnal nature and fleshly lusts. But the blessedness he enjoyed was not accomplished that way. It was accomplished before the foundation of the world when God included all men in His Son Jesus Christ. The moment we see and by faith accept the fact that we have already died in Christ, our troubles will be over and so also will our struggles be over, for they are already in the past. Everything we are in Christ and everything we might ever hope to be is given to us by God's grace and is made real in our experience the moment we have faith to believe it is so.

In the **fourth chapter of Romans, verse 16**, we have these revealing words: "**Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;**" The whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is simply this: God's grace has bountifully supplied every blessing, every requirement, and every demand in Jesus Christ, and all those blessings, requirements, and demands are ours through believing faith. What a

universe of truth is wrapped up in the simple phrase, "It is of faith that it might be by grace!" How else but by faith could God ever impart such infinite gifts of His grace?

For centuries now there has been a well, cloaked lie walking about in the shining garments of truth. Though theologians (if there be such a thing) have invented many ways of saying it, the meaning is the same. The teaching is that we should imitate Jesus that we should try to do as He would do, and that we should always ask ourselves the question, "What would Jesus do?" All this kind of talk may seem very good and appear very noble, but it will get us exactly nowhere. In fact, it is a great detriment to us because it causes us to take refuge in a false security, namely, our own self-righteousness. I have listened to men clever in the art of mimicry, who could make an audience scream with laughter by their imitation of some person or thing. I have heard preachers doing their utmost to imitate the voice and manner of other preachers more prominent and successful than themselves. But, however clever their imitation was, it changed nothing. They remained what they always were - just imitators. We once listened in amazement as well as amusement to a competition among budgie birds to discover which was the best talker in the British Isles. They had been taught to recite verse after verse of Mother Goose Rhymes and, upon completing the assigned number of such verses, they ended their speeches by giving the announcement for the British Broadcasting Corporation, "This is the B.B.C." It was amusing and very interesting to note that the birds in London spoke like Londoners, the birds from Wales spoke with a Welsh accent and the birds from Scotland had the definite Scotch accent. It was a remarkable imitation of human voices, but they were still birds - neither Englishmen, Irishmen, Welshmen, or Scots, not even human beings - just little birds and good little imitators.

God forgive us that we have all been guilty of preaching sermons about the beatitudes, holding them up before the minds of the people as a target at which Christians should aim, or as an example after which we should seek to pattern our lives, a height to which we should all struggle to attain. We have preached our sermons from 1 Cor. 13 and exhorted the people to try to show love and endeavor to make their lives conform to its blessedness. May the Lord forgive us for this! The Sermon on the Mount was not given as a pattern to which we should struggle to conform nor as a height of goodness to which we should try to attain. It is an unfolding of the glories and riches awaiting those Christ-filled lives who not only have died in Him, but who have in faith shared the glory of His resurrection and who here and now walk in Him. "It is of faith that it might be by grace."

For can the sermon on the mount be lived in human life?
Can sinful man ascend so high above his sin and strife?
Is there the possibility that he can strive and strain
Through a thousand consecrations that life to attain?
Forgive us, Lord, if such we think; for that is not the way.
Oh, give us ears to really hear what Thou didst say that day.
We want that life, oh, vision blessed! From us, Lord, never part;
For we can only have it when Thou livest in our heart.

We can indeed live every maxim of the sermon on the mount and fulfill every precept of 1 Cor. 13 if first we believe that, when He died, we died with Him, and, when He arose, we arose to walk in the newness of the life in Him. By such identification we are not as we were, but we now live and move and have our being by the power of God in Christ. Henceforth it is not "I", but Christ, and the life, which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. God forgive us that we have spent so much time laying down rules and guidelines about dress, the length of skirts, and the fix of the hair. The heart is never made better or cleaner or whiter by the style of our clothes, but, conversely, the style of our clothes will be greatly affected and made better by the condition of our hearts.

In my early ministry I had in one of my congregations an elderly gentleman who was very exact about his dress and all outward forms of holiness. He sat as a model of Christian perfection for all to behold. Never was he seen to wear a tie, or cufflinks, or even a collar pin. Such evidences of worldliness and lack of sanctification were all of the flesh and the world and were contrary to the Spirit of Christ! But I shall never forget the feeling of surprise I had when one night he honored us by visiting in our home. Opening his pocket-book, he drew from its folds the dilapidated wreckage of a letter which he had evidently carried for many years. The paper was so old and worn that in an effort to preserve it he had patched the pieces together with tape. After telling us in

grimy detail the story of an old enmity between himself and another brother, he read aloud the letter which the brother had written to him years before. Perhaps it was unkind, bitter and vitriolic, but the question left in my mind was how could a man professing such outward holiness be filled with such inner resentment that he would carry a letter for decades, keeping it patched as a sacred relic of the bitterness and hate that lived in his soul. What good, pray tell, is outward show since "God looketh on the heart"? Does this not shout aloud the worthlessness of self-effort, self-reform, and self-righteousness? The heart is only changed into the image of Christ when we by faith become identified with Him in His death. His resurrection, His life. Thus we become partakers and sharers in His image and His likeness. "It is of faith that it might be by grace."

Solomon from his store-house of wisdom said, "**Where there is no wood the fire goeth out, and where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceaseth.**" **Prov. 26:20** As long as there is wood to burn, the fire will keep on burning. As long as self still lives and thrives, there will be carnality. Take away the wood and the fire goes out. Identify yourself with Christ in death and the life you live henceforth will be the life of resurrection through faith in Jesus Christ.

I am writing, not in the hope of gathering enthusiastic friends who will vigorously promote a cause or a message, not to solicit funds or financial aid to reach more thousands of people with this message, but I write these things because of a burden that is upon my heart for a people who, having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and trusted Him for their eternal salvation, have become hopelessly lost in the dense fogs of church tradition. Darkness has so covered the earth and gross darkness the people that they have lost sight of the true purposes of God. Imagining that temporal gain, crowds, numbers, and acclaims are criteria by which we measure our acceptableness with God, they never remember that in His sight all such things are chaff that the wind driveth away, something to be gathered up in the end and burned in the fire.

May every child of God who reads these words take heed to them. We have now arrived at the end of the dispensation of grace. We have come to the time when we should call a halt and go no further with the thoughtless throng. We are at the moment when we should dismount this merry-go-round of supposed church activity. It is time to take prayerful thought before God and ask ourselves these questions: Just where has it got us in the last ten or twenty or forty years? What has it produced in the world? What kind of fruit has it borne in the nation? What has caused this whirlwind of unbelief and godlessness that is sweeping the land? Where is the unity of faith among these systems? Is this thing of which we are a part the true church? Or is it part and parcel of the harlot system?

Do we realize that one of the major curses of our day is that Christian people as well as worldly people are actually afraid of silence? They get fidgety if there is no noise in the room. They turn up the radio, turn up the television, put on a recording, carry on idle talk, get drunk, or anything except be silent. Why are God's people so afraid of silence? Why must they ever be in a noisy meeting with singing and music, or listening to a preacher who like as not knows less than those who listen to him? Why do we have to hear music in the supermarkets, in the offices, blaring from the pocket transistors of pedestrians on the street and on the bathing beaches? Why do women who spend their days at home insist on having the disconcerting din of rock and roll and other such nerve-wracking noises filling their ears? Why do they say, "I can't stand silence"? It is simply because they are afraid to be alone with themselves, with their thoughts, and with their God. They are afraid that, if there is no noise, they might think. If no one else is talking, God might speak, and they are afraid of that.

Is it any wonder that God said to Abraham, "Get thee out from thy country and thy kindred and from thy father's house", and, when he got out and away from his noisy friends and away from his country, then the Lord spoke to him and told him what He wanted and what He planned to do. It was when Moses was in the backside of the desert that he saw the burning bush. It was not in Pharaoh's noisy court amid excitement and princely splendor, but at the burning bush, that God spoke to his heart. It was after all goodly things of earth had been swept away and all his comforters had become his enemies that the Lord answered Job out of a whirlwind. Job 38:1. And it was after God spoke that Job uttered those immortal words: "**I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**" **Job. 42-5-6** It was in the year that King Uzziah died that Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up. Isa. 6:1. It was when Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness that angels ministered unto Him. It was not in the hub-bub of church activity that the Lord revealed the gospel of grace to Paul, but in the awesome

loneliness of the wind-swept deserts of Arabia. Gal. 1:17 It was not in his fervent duties among the churches of Asia that the Revelation was given to the apostle John, but in the dreary loneliness of the little isle of Patmos.

It is time to stop, look, and listen. It is time to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. It is time to get off the merry-go-round. Long ago at the mount of Horeb the Lord said to Moses, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount." Deut. 1:6 Horeb was the place where they drank living waters from the smitten rock, of which Paul later wrote saying, "And that rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:4 But now it was time to stop compassing and re-compassing that mount and to go on and on and on to the Promised Land.

After such a life of whirlwind activity as was my former lot among the religious denominations and sects, I have often wondered why God in His sovereignty not only cut down the tree in whose branches I lodged, but laid the axe to the root of the tree as well and sent me off in the year 1960 to this wilderness Horeb, this mountain of God in the backside of the desert, whispering in my ear even as I departed, "No man hath left houses, or brethren, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My sake and the gospel's but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life." But early this morning, Feb. 2nd, 1969, as I waited before Him in the stillness, He made me to understand that a people is being prepared in the four corners of the earth, a people unlike any people ever before them. The seed of the kingdom, of sonship, and of truth is being sown in their hearts. One is planting, another is watering, and God Himself is preparing the increase, which suddenly will burst forth in life to fill the world with its ripened grain.

We are living in the most important hour of the entire dispensation of grace. It is the hour of harvest, the hour of maturity of sons, the time when the full corn in the ear, the many sons of God, is ripening into the image of that first corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died in the long ago. King David, a man after God's own heart, wrote in Psa. 72:16-18, "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Bless be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things." That handful of wheat in the top of the mountains is the true body of Christ. It is the sonship company in His image. Bishop J. C. Ryle of Liverpool, England, wrote, "It is a church whose existence does not depend on forms, ceremonies, cathedrals, churches, chapels, pulpits, fonts, vestments, organs, endowments, money, kings, governments, magistrates, or any act of favor from the hand of man. Its existence depends on nothing but the presence of Jesus Christ and His Spirit; and they being ever with it, the church cannot die."

This has been a long letter, but the enormous importance of the hour calls for something more personal than the ordinary teaching.

May the wisdom and knowledge and grace of God keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TWO THE PREPARATIONS OF THE HEART

"The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." Prov. 16:1

In this chapter we will concern ourselves, not with the "answer of the tongue" as mentioned in the scripture above, but with four important things concerning the "preparations of the heart" to make it a fit vessel to receive truth. May I confess, before I begin the first of four exhortations, that I have recently had the experience of beginning to write a message concerning a truth of great importance and feeling compelled to lay it aside for the time being because of the inability of the majority to receive the truth of it.

This will not be the first time that truth has had to be withheld until the hearts of men were prepared even as a field is prepared and made ready to receive and nourish the living seed placed in its earthly womb. Well do we remember the occasion when our blessed Lord said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:12. And Paul likewise, having commenced to teach the Hebrew

Christians concerning the excellent wonders of the priesthood of Melchisedec, was forced to cut short his teaching while he rebuked them soundly for the dullness of their minds and lack of spiritual understanding, saying, "Of whom (Melchisedec) we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." See **Heb. 5:1-14**

DELIVERANCE FROM TRADITION

How unspeakably sad it is to find that in our day, two thousand years after the above rebuke was written and with the kingdom of God coming on apace, millions of Christians are still babes at the breast! Worse still, I fear, they are not even at the breast where they could receive the true milk of the word, but are on the bottle, receiving milk, which was never intended for spiritual growth. My heart sinks and my soul is filled with a sadness which is beyond expression when people who have been professing Christians for many years, often claiming the fullness of the Spirit, write to me demanding to know what I think about water baptism, what I teach about the Sabbath, what I think about Easter, why I do not write something about the way people dress, what I teach about the rapture of the church, where I stand on the communion, what I think about the gifts of the Spirit, and the laying on of hands! Honestly!! Did we never read Heb. 6:12?

Did you ever wonder what Jesus must have suffered in His Spirit when in the days of His earthly ministry He traveled through the land demonstrating the power and glory of that kingdom age which is yet to come, healing every imaginable disease, delivering men from the power of sin and Satan, demonstrating the mastery of the sons of God over the elements of sea and air, walking on water, miraculously feeding vast multitudes, speaking with the authority of the sons of God, and unfolding mysteries hidden from ages and dispensations, and then, right in the middle of that display of supernal glory, we are told, "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." **Matt. 15:1-2** Such a childish, petty, peevish, irrelevant question! What a sinking feeling it must have given our Lord to find men who were leaders and teachers asking such questions, casting away the key of knowledge, and blocking the pathway to the distant peaks of revelation by stumbling over such human tradition as the washing of pots and cups and hands! They did not care how much a poor man suffered the pain and inconvenience of a withered arm just so long as their childish tradition about the Sabbath was respected. It was perfectly all right for a lame man to lie forty years in misery at the pool of Bethesda, but he must not be healed nor carry his bed on the Sabbath day. A blind man could grope in darkness from his birth and they cared not a straw for that, but the Man who made him whole must certainly be of the devil because He healed him on the Sabbath day.

How I admire our wonderful Lord and Christ for walking rough shod over their worthless traditions and calling them hypocrites, vipers, serpents, and liars for drawing nigh to God with their lips while their hearts were far removed from Him! Indeed, they were whited sepulchers full of dead men's bones, clean on the outside but vile and rotten and stinking within. I tell you, if Jesus were preaching in the church system today, Christians would still come demanding to know how He stood in relation to their doctrines, voiding the glory of the kingdom for the sake of their tradition, and making Him an offender for a word.

What does it matter what I think? What I think or what you think will change neither jot nor tittle of the truth. If men are guided by what I think, they will probably be wrong. The question to be decided is whether or not what I am saying is the truth. If it is, then let us walk in the glory of its light. Let us repent of the gross carnality that everywhere darkens our pathway that we may walk in the light of Him who dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto. **1 Tim. 6:16**

Never was there written a more faithful word of truth than this: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10** According to this scripture we must conclude that there is one way and only one way by which spiritual truth

can be received and understood by the human heart, and that one way is by the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God. It is when He, the Spirit of truth, takes the things of God and shows them unto us that we see, understand, comprehend and enter into those truths hidden from every natural mind from the very foundation of the ages. Decide then in your heart immediately that the deep things of God cannot be learned in schools, colleges, or universities. They cannot be dug out of books of learning. They cannot even be received from sermons though Isaiah, Paul, or Jesus were to preach them to you. Truth must be revealed by the Spirit; otherwise it cannot, simply cannot, be received.

"Why do you speak in parables?" the disciples asked their Lord. "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given" was His revealing reply. How helpless, then, we are if the Holy Spirit is not present to open these hidden things to our minds!

What hinders revelation? "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." **Isa. 28:9** This passage of scripture very forcefully teaches that true spiritual knowledge and true doctrine are never entrusted to men and women who subsist on spiritual milk. They are yet babies in spiritual things and no more capable of receiving the knowledge or doctrine of God than an infant of days is capable of understanding the arts and sciences of the natural world. According to Peter newborn babes are to desire "the sincere milk of the word", **1 Pet. 2:2**, and they need not be deprived of it, but according to Paul strong meat belongs to them who are of full age, Heb. 5:14, that is, Christians who are no longer "little children," but developing "young men" and mature "fathers". 1 John 2:12-13

Now let us notice what class of people it is who are to be considered spiritual babies and let us also notice in particular who those Christians are who are capable of digesting nothing stronger than milk and who consequently are never able to see "the deep things of God." What I now write will deeply wound many, but it will be a blessed wounding, indeed, if thereby the eyes of their understanding are opened and repentance may be followed by the receiving of great spiritual truth and the receiving of spiritual truth followed by spiritual maturity.

Hear now what the inspired apostle says: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal." **1 Cor. 3:1-3** There should be no difficulty for even the most sluggish and unspiritual mind to see that carnality is the curse that keeps Christians in spiritual infancy. It alone is capable of denying them that strong meat which can bring them to spiritual maturity. Let us now investigate what particular carnality it is upon which Paul puts such forceful emphasis. He does not here speak of adultery, theft, gluttony, uncleanness, lasciviousness, or any such thing, but he fastens his attention upon that one carnality which is the root cause of all carnality, successfully robbing Christians of spiritual growth during all the ages, that carnality which has made spiritual dwarfs of prospective giants and hidden from their eyes the glory of those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. That carnality for which he rebuked the church at Corinth is the same wretched carnality that in our day curses the entire professing church system. It is the carnality of sectarianism and denominationalism. I think it is completely reasonable to believe that 1 Cor. 3:3-4 is speaking of the sectarian spirit and the entire sectarian system. When Paul said, "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" he was emphasizing the divisive tendency that inevitably follows wherever and whenever men choose to call themselves by some name whether it be Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Luther, Wesley, Knox or Pentecostal, Apostolic, Baptist, or any one of a thousand other names that purport to describe some distinctive testimony. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" **1 Cor. 1:13**

I repeat without the slightest hesitation or without fear of any successful contradiction that sectarianism in all its forms, and denominationalism in all its forms, is the carnality that exceeds all other forms of carnality. It is the root of the tree of carnality and from its bad and discordant root of bitterness all branches of carnality derive their food and subsist as a green bay tree. It is this most devilish form of carnality that stunts all spiritual growth and keeps Christians drinking the milk of infancy when they should long ago have become spiritual fathers. Every Christian must repent of it and turn from it with all his heart if spiritual growth is to be attained.

How often I hear the time-worn objection, "We need these denominations to keep evil out". You lie, my friend! You do not keep evil out. Evil is rampant among you. It is God who is kept out and with Him the unfolding of His plan for the ages. You say we need these things so we will have a place for the five ministries to develop, but that statement is made only because people have failed to understand, first - what the true body of Christ is, and second - what a true ministry is. Surely you will agree that our true pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ, was an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher all in one as well as a worker of miracles, a healer and a speaker of wisdom, and all these ministries functioned perfectly outside the carnal conglomeration of man-made systems. He taught in the temple, raised the dead in the cemetery, by the highway, or in the bedroom, and proved His Sonship while walking the waves of Galilee. Seek not to defend and justify that which God has cursed and which in itself is the very root from which the confused and divided image of Babylon has sprung. What nonsense is it, which teaches that we need carnal institutions to promote spiritual ministries?

Let every one who has ears to hear stop and take earnest heed, because the Spirit of God now warns a carnal people, divided and held in infancy by the sectarian system, that, unless they repent of their division, mourn the carnality of their sectarian ways, and, forsaking all, go unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach, they are doomed to spend the remainder of their lives in spiritual infancy and in outer darkness insofar as the deep things of God are concerned.

Not only has denominationalism and all forms of sectarianism been used of Satan to dwarf and blind the minds of Christians, but the division which these wickedly uphold has also been the darkness which has blinded the eyes of sinners for whom Christ died. How can sinful men, who see nothing but war and strife and division among Christians, ever believe that Christ has given them peace? I exhort, therefore, that all men and all women do now repent of this wickedness, and, casting out the evil spirit of sectarianism from their hearts, flee unto Christ who is head of that mystical body, the true church, which will reign with Him, undivided, in the ages of the ages yet to come. Amen.

FASTING AND PRAYER

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. While we are "at home" in the body, we are absent from the Lord; and I think you will agree with me that most of us are much more "at home" in the body than we are in the spirit. But you will also agree that the spirit is much more important than the body, because the spirit is one essence with God's Spirit while the body is identical with the flesh. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Rom. 8:13** Even the statement, "The body without the spirit is dead", **James 2:26**, should lead us to understand that the body itself has no life except what it derives from the spirit. Thus every sin of the flesh is an outrage against the spirit whence it derives its life. Paul taught that, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11**

In the days of Noah men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, which things concern the body and the physical realm only. In our day likewise, as Jesus said it would be, men are eating and drinking, marrying, divorcing, remarrying, and spending themselves into poverty in a vain effort to please and satisfy the flesh, which, of course, can never be done. All labor and effort in our day is for the body and not the spirit. Whether it be food and drink, clothes, shelter, comfort and speed of travel, dope, drugs, wine, women, song, perfume, or tobacco - name it all and you find that all things are either directly or indirectly concerned with the physical realm of the body, which is the flesh, the implacable enemy of the spirit. Even the religious gatherings and conventions of our day put great emphasis on their plush motels for accommodation, their good eating accommodations, and the beautiful buildings in which their meetings are held. How often we hear the deceptive expression, "food, fun, and fellowship!" The truth is that food and fun have no more in common with spiritual fellowship than oil has with water. They are iron mingled with clay. Each is the antithesis of the other. I tell you with solemn sincerity that, while you are thus at home in the body, you will find an absence from the Lord. There may be much frothy verbosity in preaching. There may be clapping of hands, singing of hymns, and shouting and praise, but what good are any of these things if you are the same tomorrow as you were yesterday?

Now God has provided a very simple method by which men can begin to become strangers to the body and at home with the Lord. You will find nothing popular or beautifully acceptable about the truth I now describe, but, if you will persevere in it and consider the message it teaches, you will find yourself growing in grace, growing in understanding, departing from sectarianism, and coming into harmony with the plan of the ages. God has ordained fasting and prayer as a means by which the interests of the physical body, which is the flesh, are greatly decreased while the interests of the spirit, so long neglected, are greatly increased. You will probably not be immediately aware of any spiritual progress during a time of fasting and prayer. In fact, you may feel much more dead and listless than at any other time in your life, but it is the flesh only that is growing weak. It is not the spirit; and I guarantee that, if your heart is honest and your motives are pure before God, a new understanding of the spiritual will begin to possess you. Things that were hidden, dark, and cloudy will begin to scintillate with the light of God. Truth long obscured by the carnal mind will awaken to become a part of you.

Men are forever talking about the sonship message, but, O my brother, when you have earnestly fasted and cast off the carnal mind, you find that sonship is something more than just another message. It is the relationship of a mature son to his Father in heaven. It is the adoption by which God places you as "a son" in the spiritual body of sons of which Christ Himself is the head. People talk about the kingdom, but so often their talk portrays a dreadful dearth of the spirit of the kingdom. They talk much about coming out of Babylon, yet they adhere to and advertise every putrid thing that belongs to her harlot system.

God has ordained fasting and prayer as a means of casting down the carnal mind and raising up the spiritual mind. Fasting closes the eyes to the natural realm, displaying its deadness and ugliness while opening the eyes to the glory of those heavenly realms. If you show me a man who never fasts, I will show you a man who never quite sees the fullness and import of the present truth. Yes, he may be able to talk well. He may put it over, so to speak; but his talk, though all unknown to him, always leaves a pitiful vacuum, which need not be there.

Whenever the Spirit of God intends to emphasize the importance of any truth, you will find that it is brought to the forefront over and over again by teaching, by prophecy, by type, by allegory, and in many other ways. Take, for instance, the importance of the blood of Christ, which was shed for the sins of the world, not merely to save us from the penalty of sin, but to save us from sin itself. Over and over, times without number, in sacrifice, in offering, in prophecy, in type, in anti-type, in allegory we have this scarlet thread running through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. So also it is with any truth that concerns God's plan of the ages. You will find it line upon line and precept upon precept throughout the pages of the good Book until its many aspects shine out in one great revelation of Christ.

In view of the above I should think that fasting must be a matter of great importance - too great, indeed, to deal with at any great length in the space we have at our disposal now. So great it is that we must conclude that it was vitally connected with the life and ministry of every man of God whether he be a Bible character or whether his ministry be recorded elsewhere. And should I not say further that, in this day of ours when above all other ages our god is our belly and our glory is in the things that should make us ashamed, Phil. 3:18,19, it is high time for us to take account of our own spiritual dearth and avail ourselves of that simple, lowly practice of fasting and prayer, which always determines the difference between those who would enter into the realm of the Spirit and those who would remain in the realm of the flesh. I would not make such a statement as this without thought and consideration. Fasting, though a very simple and valuable act is undertaken by very, very few people simply because it is hard on the flesh, and "no man ever yet hated his own flesh". Why is that so many people manifest a hatred for their spirit by keeping it in bondage to that cruel taskmaster, the body, that can promise it nothing but spiritual decrepitude and impoverishment?

Moses, the man of God, fasted forty days on two occasions, and, if I am not mistaken, those two occasions had no interval between them, so that he actually fasted for eighty days without eating or drinking. In Deut. 9:9 Moses, relating his experiences to the children of Israel, told them that he had been in the mount with the Lord for forty days and forty nights. "I neither did eat bread nor drink water," he said. Upon descending from the mount, he found the people had corrupted themselves and had worshipped a golden calf, whereupon he took the two tables of stone and broke them to pieces before their eyes and fell down again before the Lord forty

days and forty nights. "I did neither eat bread nor drink water," he said again. See **Deut. 9:17-18**. There was a great deal of the sovereignty of God in this act because it is quite impossible for natural man to endure eighty days without drinking and in very few cases could it be accomplished without eating. But it is not this that we are trying to prove. The truth is that the most remarkable revelation ever given by God to man, at least up to that time, was accompanied by fasting from all bodily necessity.

The natural man is completely incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God; therefore, the more the natural man with all his beastly natural cravings is put out of the way the more the spirit, which is made after God's image and likeness, is capable of drawing nigh to God. Paul made the seemingly contradictory statement, "When I am weak, then am I strong." To the natural mind such a statement as this is silly, but it is silly only to the natural mind. The spiritual man knows that of all the enemies that bar the way to spiritual attainment the body of flesh is by far the strongest and most persistent and demanding of them all. It is an absolute fact that, while the flesh with its cravings is strong, the spirit is helpless and very weak. On the other hand, when the power of the flesh is at a minimum, then the spirit is freed of its bondage and chains and flies away to its own habitat in the realm of God. God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. It is this that Paul meant when he said, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

I will gain no friends by saying it, but the truth remains that in all human effort to accomplish something for the Lord there is a super-abundance of flesh. Where the flesh is strong human organization is great. Dependence is upon education, fine singing, fine speech, fine buildings, and above all else money is made the prime necessity. Well have they nicknamed it "the almighty dollar". Carnal men love to display their pictures. They love to be called doctor, teacher, apostle, prophet, evangelist, man of the hour. The ever present glorying in spiritual gifts and ministries is a fleshly thing. Harsh words, you say? Yes, but too terribly true, nevertheless. What Christians need in this hour when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people is not a manifestation of fleshly niceties, but fasting and repentance and prayer that there might be unity with the will of the eternal Father and oneness with the mind of Christ.

As we consider the value of fasting and prayer, our minds usually turn quickly to the account of Daniel the prophet. Daniel was a man dearly beloved in the sight of God. Whenever the Lord expresses His exceptional love for any man, you will always discover that His love is not favoritism, but rather it is the Father requiting the love He sees in the man's own heart. God loves the whole world and everybody in it, but He especially loves those who love Him, Prov. 8:17, making them special objects of His correction and thus also of His favor. Daniel was greatly beloved, Dan. 9:23, because he cherished no interest of his own. God's interest was his interest and God's concern was his concern. The whole ambition of his life was knit together with the purpose of God, and besides that he had no ambition. Though he was the third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon - by necessity rather than by desire - his heart was not in Babylon but in Jerusalem, and it was with his window open toward Jerusalem that he kneeled three times a day in his chamber to pray and give thanks to God. Daniel 6:10.

The plans and purposes of God are forever hidden from the natural mind. Please mark that statement well. The natural mind is completely incapable of grasping eternal purpose. That is the reason for so much childish thought among Christians. Daniel was no more privileged than other man, nor was he more beloved than any other man who has a heart like his. Furthermore, he was no more capable of understanding the purpose of God for the ages than you or I. This fact is surely evident by his prayer in Dan. 12:8 where he states, "I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

In the 9th chapter of Daniel we have a manifestation of the true spirit of fasting and prayer. Would you give special attention to the three prominent points that follow?

(1) [The occasion of his seeking God with fasting and prayer arose from his lack of understanding of a prophecy given by the prophet Jeremiah.](#) Dan. 9:1-2 His lack of understanding evidently troubled him greatly and caused him much concern. We should always give special attention in fasting and prayer when any great concern disturbs or troubles our hearts, for more than likely the concern we feel is a concern born of the Holy Spirit, and, if we will follow it faithfully by fasting and prayer, God will meet us with an answer and an assurance which

is of Him. It is positively of no avail whatever to fast and pray in an endeavor to persuade God to give you something you personally desire. Your prayer and your fasting must always be in accord with God's purpose for the ages, always remembering that the present is a most important part of the ages. God has a plan for now.

(2) Daniel set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Notice: - Our seeking of God must not be casual, but with purpose. Daniel sought with prayer and supplication. Supplication denotes humble and earnest seeking and requesting special favor. See further how he used all means at his disposal - fasting, prayer, sackcloth and ashes - not to persuade or bribe God into giving an answer, but rather to separate himself from the uncrucified flesh, which hindered his approach to God, and to place his spirit in harmony with God's will and purpose. Many times I have written and spoken my firm conviction that there is only one element in faith, and that one element is the will of God. He who concerns himself with the will of God will find no problem with faith.

(3) He made confession of sin and the committing of iniquity and of rebellion against the precepts and commandments of the Lord. Wherever the word iniquity is used in the Bible the true meaning is rebellion. There are many Christians who live without sinning but who continually live in iniquity (rebellion). God speaks to them about fasting, but they rebel and refuse to do it. That is iniquity. God speaks to them about prayer and the reading of the word, but they won't make the sacrifice. It is easier to read the newspaper, talk to friends, or watch TV. God speaks to them about tithing, but they won't do it. They rebel against it and console themselves by speaking against it. That is iniquity. God rebukes them for their backbiting and evil speaking, but they won't stop it. All this is iniquity because it is rebellion. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. 1 Sam. 15:23. Is it any wonder that this stubborn man, Saul, later turned to a witch to answer his problem! 1 Sam. 28:7-25. Notice in Daniel's confession how this truth is further emphasized. "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments." Dan. 9:5. A verse-by-verse study of this whole passage, Dan 9, will reveal much truth to the earnest seeker, and God will prepare his heart and reveal his need of cleansing to him.

The fast recorded here took place in the first year of king Darius, Dan 9:1 and the results were beyond description, but these we must leave for the reader to search out for himself. In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, Dan. 10, Daniel again set aside three weeks for another special period of fasting before the Lord. During this fast he allowed himself certain foods, but stipulates that he ate no "pleasant bread" (no dainties) and he abstained from "flesh and wine". Verse 3. Again because of limited space we must leave the remarkable results of this fast and the glory of the blessed revelation Daniel received for the reader to search out for himself in the remainder of the chapter.

I think we may safely say that all the prophets were men of fasting and prayer. David states that his knees were weak from fasting, Psa. 109:24, and that he humbled his soul with fasting. Psa. 35:13. Paul makes mention of his own fasting by the simple expression, "in fastings often". 2 Cor. 11:27. Martin Luther in his longings for God fasted until sometimes he fainted. John Wesley and John Knox were men who spent almost countless days in fasting and prayer. Charles G. Finney found that, whenever his great spiritual power was ebbing, a few days of fasting would restore it.

I am sure it would be right to conclude that all the successful fasting and prayer accomplished through the ages concerned God's plan for His present truth. There is always a present truth, and it is with the present truth that we should concern ourselves. In the days of Noah the present truth was that the whole world, because of its abounding wickedness, was to be destroyed by a flood of waters. It was with this purpose and this alone that Noah concerned himself, and in obedience to God he built an ark to the saving of his house. The present truth for Abraham was that God had chosen him to be the father of a nation by whom and through whom He would bless the whole earth. It was to this revelation that he was obedient in all things. The present truth for Moses concerned the deliverance and instruction of the same chosen people. They were his concern day and night, and for them he fasted and prayed. The present truth for Paul the apostle was that the dispensation of grace had been committed to him, and because of that trust he was in watchings with fasting and prayer, continually preaching and writing to fulfill the demands of the time then present. In Luther's day the present truth was justification by faith, and to that all his effort turned.

We should be very foolish people indeed should we allow ourselves to believe that the hour in which we live has no present truth. I am satisfied that no more important hour has ever dawned on the world's horizon than this hour in which we now live. It is, however, an hour as far beyond the understanding of the natural mind as the flood of waters was beyond the understanding of the disobedient of Noah's day. We simply cannot comprehend the message of these closing days of the age except it be by divine revelation. We may talk of Babylon all we wish, and think we have come out of her, but Babylon is a revelation. We may listen to sermons on sonship and imagine we have entered its blessedness, but these truths cannot be comprehended until the Lord God Himself breaks them open to the heart, enlightening the mind and giving understanding.

My dear brother and sister, I believe it is my duty before God to tell you that without fasting and prayer the present truth of sonship and union with Christ will never quite come alive to your spirit. You will always fall just short in understanding. While you preach that men should flee from Babylon, you yourself will yet embrace her harlot daughters. You will exult about the body of Christ as though it were a visible thing, but fail to know that for two thousand years that body has been rising in mystery completely outside the pale of human machinery, being perfected by ministries set of God and not made of man to form a fixed abode, a mysterious house not made with hands, for God Himself in the Spirit. Wake up, my sleeping brother! Tear the darkling veil from off your eyes! The body you are now trying to perfect is not the body of Christ, and the ministries you are desperately trying to establish are not the ministries, which Christ has set. Oh, that men would avail themselves of that mighty key to revelation available to every sincere heart, fasting and prayer!

UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF THE LORD Eph. 5:17

It was Solomon who said, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." Again he said, "When wisdom entereth into thy heart and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee and understanding shall keep thee." These are remarkable words of inspiration and truth. All who read them would do well to take time out to consider them carefully and prayerfully. There is nothing more frustrating and detrimental to spiritual growth than to walk in darkness and ignorance; but, if darkness and ignorance give place to understanding, then doubts, fears, misgivings, and frustration are all erased, and we walk in the light that shines from the face of the Lord.

How often during the journey of life circumstances arise that are beyond our understanding, bringing frustration, disappointment, and even anger! In our dilemma we reproach ourselves, we censor those who seem to be responsible for our fizzle, we accuse the devil, and we blame circumstances, but, when at last we learn that God's hand was in our trial, then we understand. Hence, had our understanding been enlightened in the first place, we would have saved ourselves from the frustration and complaining that served only to befuddle our lives.

As I am writing these words, the three astronauts, Lovell, Haise, and Swigert, together with the control crew at Houston are desperately struggling with all the skill at their disposal to bring the crippled Apollo 13 back to earth. A few days ago millions of people felt a sympathy for a disappointed Thomas Mattingly, whose years of training together with his ambition to take part in a great adventure, were frustrated by the miserable prospect of German measles. But today I think we might congratulate him for his good fortune. If understanding can grip our spirits and open our eyes that we might see that "all things are of God", **1 Cor. 11:12**, then we will not only save ourselves much frustration and misgiving, but will rejoice in the knowledge that, because "all things are of God", it certainly follows that all things must be working together for good to those people who love God.

When we consider how God made promise to Abram, not only that he would be the father of a nation, but that he would be the father of many nations, that his seed would be as numberless as the sand of the sea, and as countless as the stars of heaven, and that in his seed all nations would be blessed, dare we blame him if at times he grew a bit frustrated or disappointed as he saw the years pass by the score with no sign of fulfillment of the promise? But we read, "He staggered not". Yet I think the only thing that could have kept him steadfast during those long, long years of waiting was a faith that rested on understanding, unaffected by frustrating and changing circumstances. If I know anything about people, then I am positive that Abraham must have had many well, meaning friends who chided him with many uncomplimentary remarks about his fanatical notions.

No doubt they offered him much excellent advice as to how he should get back into the main stream of things. But here was one man who understood what the will of the Lord was. Permit me to say with all the emphasis born of many years of experience that he who understands what the will of the Lord is must certainly turn a deaf ear to all the free advice of well meaning friends and broken-hearted relatives who tearfully mourn, "What a blessing he could have been if he had only listened to our good advice."

There is a wealth of information to be found in the words of David, "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts to the children of Israel". No man ever comes to an intimate relationship with God by watching His acts no matter how great they may be. It is a knowledge of the ways of God that brings us to mature faith and understanding. The children of Israel based their faith on the acts they saw God do. They saw the plagues desolate the land. They trembled at the judgment that overtook Pharaoh. They saw the waters divide and marveled at the pillar of fire and covering cloud. They drank the water that gushed from the rock; but, the moment these signs were absent, they whined and complained like spoiled children because their confidence was not in God and His purposes, but in acts and miracles that tickled and pleased their imaginations. Moses was not of this coil. His faith rested in the eternal purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. To the children of Israel, if there were no "acts ", no miracles, no signs, no wonders, then God was not there. To Moses God was there, working the immutable purpose of the ages, acts or no acts, miracles or no miracles, healings or no healings, water or no water, manna or no manna.

The faith and simple trust that all things are of God and all things are working together for good to them that love the Lord is the faith that the Father is looking for in you and me. I am fully persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. And not only are these things unable to separate us from the love God, but all these things are ministering together and working together to mould us into the kind of sons God is demanding. They are all ministers of His to do His pleasure. Yea, they are among the all things working together for good to them who love God and who are the called according to His purpose.

If a man cannot see that the temptation of Satan in the life of Job was a necessity, then he has completely missed the point and failed to discern the value of temptation altogether. If we cannot see that the temptation of Adam and Eve was a necessary part of God's plan, then I fear we have missed the point and failed to see the plan. The temptation of the Son of God in the wilderness was a necessity, and so also are temptation, trial, suffering, misunderstanding, disappointment, poverty and all else necessary in your life and mine. When we understand what the will of the Lord is, we can say blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him. James 1:12

LAYING ASIDE THE WEIGHTS

My heart's desire is that all who read these truths may be filled with the conviction that God our Father is preparing a people to share the image of Christ and reign with Him. First we shall reign with Him in that age we call the millennium, which is the kingdom of God, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Second, we shall reign with Him in the dispensation of the fullness of times when all things will be gathered unto Him. Eph. 1:10 Then we will reign with Him in the ages of the ages when the whole universe becomes subject to the Father in heaven. 1 Cor. 15:25-28 If we imagine that our main ministry is now in this present age, we have accepted one of the greatest errors the system of Babylon was capable of teaching. We all should realize that, while we are given some opportunity to minister in this age, this age is principally a time of preparation for the true ministry to come. With this understanding we begin as true sons of God to lay hold on the hope set before us. Even our blessed Lord Jesus Christ lived with this hope in view. He knew that His main ministry lay in the ages to come, for thus it is written of Him: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2 Why did He sit down at the right hand of the Father? The answer is that He sat down by the Father's throne to take the reins of government, first, to reign by Himself over the mystical church; second, to reign with His brothers, the sons of God, over the kingdom of God; and third, to reign with the sons of God and the bride in the dispensation of the fullness of times. How clearly we see in this the ever increasing glory of His kingdom, and our understanding is enlightened as to the true meaning of this statement: "Who for the joy that was set before

Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." How marvelous are Thy works, O God Almighty, and Thy ways past finding out! Who hath known the mind of the Lord or who can instruct Him? For from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him unto the ages of the ages! Amen and amen!

Since, then, we have such marvelous hope pulsating in our breasts, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? If this is the age of preparation, should we not prepare ourselves? Ought we not in this one thing imitate our Lord, who for the joy set before Him endured all things? Let us avail ourselves of every means of grace, laying aside every weak and beggarly thing that binds us to this present age that we might partake fully of Him and share with Him in that abundant glory which is set before us. As for me, I shall gladly count all things but loss and utter trash unworthy of the least notice that I may share with Him in that infinite glory and reign with Him unto the ages of the ages.

Hear now the wise instruction of our brother, Peter, for it is true that God gave to him the keys (plural) of the kingdom. "Rid yourselves, therefore," said he, "of all ill-will and all deceitful-ness, of insincerity and envy, and of all evil speaking. Thirst, like newly-born infants, for pure milk for the soul, that by it you may grow up to salvation; if you have had any taste of the goodness of the Lord. Come to Him, the living Stone, rejected indeed of men, but in God's esteem chosen and valuable. And yourselves also like living stones be built up into a spiritual house, as a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it is contained in scripture, See, I am placing in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and valuable, and he whose faith rests on Him shall never be disappointed." **1 Pet. 2:1-6** (Weymouth) "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God... I entreat you as strangers and foreigners to restrain the cravings of your lower natures which wage war upon the soul; to live honorable lives that God may be glorified; to submit for the Lord's sake to the authority set up by man, (emperor or governors), for it is God's will that by doing well you silence the ignorant talk of foolish persons. Servants, submit to your masters with respect, not only to the kind, but to the unreasonable. Married women, be submissive to your husbands. Married men, love your wives and live with them with a clear recognition that they are not as strong as you are, but, being heirs together of the grace of life, treat them with honor, that your prayers be not hindered. Be kind, harmonious, sympathetic, tender-hearted, lowly-minded, not requiting evil with evil, but blessing instead, because you have been called to be a blessing. He who wishes to enjoy life (the life of the ages) let him restrain his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful words. Let him turn away from all evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to the their supplication; but the face of the Lord is set against evil-doers." See **1 Pet. 2:9-20** (Weymouth)

In the epistle to the Hebrews we have this simple and instructive statement: "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." **Heb. 12:1** Runners in a race always lay aside their garments so that the race may be run with the least possible impediment. The world's best swimmers often shave off all the hair from their bodies so that their passage through the water will not be impeded. If men to win a corruptible crown lay aside every weight with every hindering thing and strain every well trained muscle and nerve to win, how much more then should their example teach us to lay aside all hindering weights that we for whom an incorruptible crown is being prepared may better run the race that is set before us. See, then, what wisdom Paul uses in this urgent exhortation: "Lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."

You will rightly conclude from this passage that weights and sins are not necessarily the same thing. Christians are forever impeding their spiritual progress with seemingly harmless weights. "What harm is there in it?" so often they ask. But they are weights none-the-less, so completely able to handicap their progress in the race of life that they will be instrumental in denying them a place in His body and in His throne. There is no sin in eating, but, if a runner over-indulges even in such a simple pleasure, he will not only lose the race, but possibly fall out long before the finish line. Those who indulge the flesh to the detriment of the spirit can do nothing but fail, because ours is a spiritual race.

While Peter is saying, "Lay side all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings," **1 Pet. 2:1**, Paul is exhorting, "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your

mouth. Lie not one to another". **Col. 3:8-9** Again in verse 5, "Mortify (kill) your earthly inclinations (Weymouth); fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection (sensual passion), evil concupiscence (unholy desire), and covetousness (greed), which is idolatry."

We do not have space here to consider in detail any one of these weights and sins mentioned above, but it is time God's people disassociated themselves from all forms of the sex craze of our day. Sex in all its inordinate manifestations was the chief offender in bringing about the flood in Noah's day. Sex in every perverted form was responsible for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and sex rampant, perverted, twisted, mingled, exposed, unabashed, and depraved is hurling the present age into the fearful maelstrom of the great tribulation. Blessed is he who in this hour of filth and corruption watcheth and keepeth his garment spotless!

Paul, who said "put off" all these corrupt things that impede our progress, exhorted us to "put on" those things that would quicken our step and hasten our growth. "Put on" therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another ... And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts (remembering that He is our peace)... Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly... Col. 3:12-16 He who feasts upon the living word sups with Christ, giving Him place to dwell richly in the heart. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus... Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters... Col. 3:17-22 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without. Col. 4:5. Let your speech be with grace. Verse 6. Continue in prayer and thanksgiving. Verse 2.

Now "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." **1 Pet. 1:3-5** Seeing we have such a hope, we use great plainness of speech, and, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the image of Christ from one glory to another by the Spirit of the Lord. See 2 Cor. 3:18

Let us, then, cast aside all hindering weights that tradition has heaped upon us and, delivering our feet from the snares that impede our progress to the distant peaks sublime, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking only to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER THREE THE TRANSFIGURATION

The life of our Lord Jesus Christ from beginning to end was punctuated by many times of crisis. All these were ordered of God and ordained to accomplish some infinite purpose in the great plan of redemption. His virgin birth was a crisis event, of which we cannot now speak in particular. That birth, nevertheless, was the birth of a God man. By it God was manifest in the flesh. Through the miracle of this wonderful incarnation God came into the realm of man and by it man comes into the realm of God. Here in Christ Jesus God and man are united. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." **Psa. 85:10-11**

Many years after His birth came the crisis hour of His baptism and announcement of His adoption. After He was baptized, the heavens opened and a voice from heaven proclaimed His adoption and mature Sonship in these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then followed the crisis of the threefold temptation in which He proved Himself victor over the world, the flesh and the devil. The ministry that followed His baptism and temptation is the most remarkable phenomenon in the history of the world. All the shining lights of former years paled before this rising Sun of Righteousness as candles fade before the light of day. Following this came the annunciation of His death, then the marvelous transfiguration, the agonies of Gethsemane, His trial, His crucifixion and burial, His triumphant resurrection and His ascension into heaven, where He remains in immortality, awaiting the glad hour of His second coming. This He promised by this most

emphatic statement, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

While each of these momentous occurrences deserves to be considered separately and in detail, it will be our purpose now to consider with the little understanding we have the wonders of the transfiguration. God grant that, as we explore its available depths, our spirits may be edified and our desire increased for the glory and power of His coming.

The books of Daniel and Revelation each contain visions of a glorious One, which are most remarkable for their similarity. Daniel, during his fervent seeking for God by fasting and prayer, was lifted into the realm of the Spirit and, raising his eyes, he beheld "a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz: His body was like the beryl (chrysolite), and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." **Dun. 10:5-6**

It is not necessary that we point out here the similarity between the vision and that of John in Rev. 1. The agreement is clearly seen by reading the passages, but that John and Daniel were actually beholding the same glorified person there can be no doubt whatever. John, overwhelmed by this vision of the fullness of Christ, writes these awesome words: "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as aflame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters." **Rev. 1:12-15**

Can we doubt that this personage so vividly described by Daniel and John was other than the person portrayed by Matthew, Mark and Luke in their gospels and seen by Peter, James and John in the mount of transfiguration? These gospel writers tell us that, as He prayed, He was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun. and His raiment was white as the light. Matt. 17:1,2; Mark 9:2,3; Luke 9:28-30. Again it is clearly evident that this Christ of the transfiguration is the same radiant One whom John saw coming through the open heaven with the armies of heaven following upon white horses. His eyes were aflame of fire and on His head were many crowns.

He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. Rev. 19:11-16

Several crisis events preceded the transfiguration of Jesus, the Christ, all of which should be considered as essential to the great event itself. At the time of the transfiguration the end of Christ's earthly ministry was drawing near and the cross of Calvary loomed large on the horizon. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew the record states that Jesus had inquired of His disciples concerning the public opinion of Himself. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" He had asked. His disciples, well acquainted with public opinion, replied, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." But Jesus, after hearing this, asked this more pertinent question: "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Responding to this confession, Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." **Matt. 16:13-17** How remarkable this confession was can only be understood by those to whom God had revealed His Son. Such truth as this comes not by books nor by teaching. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is revealed to us only by the Spirit. "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **1 Cor. 2:11** And again, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10** It is sad, but true, that the pulpits of our land are occupied by men who question and doubt the deity of Jesus Christ. An incredible number of these men see Jesus as nothing more than the son of Joseph and Mary, while to others He is God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Without the spirit of revelation truth lies lifeless and dead. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. Flesh and blood can reveal no spiritual thing. Only the Spirit of God can do that.

Now notice what follows Peter's confession and Christ's commendation of him. We are told in Matt. 16:21, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." But strangely this same Peter, who had been blessed with such a wonderful revelation, is now seen to have no understanding at all of Christ's real mission to earth - that He might die for the world. Thus, when Jesus began to speak of His approaching suffering and death, Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." The utmost necessity of the cross was not understood by Peter nor by any of the disciples. This cross, like all spiritual truth, must be by revelation even as our identification with the cross comes by revelation. While Jesus spoke of the glory and the kingdom to come, the disciples were heartily with Him, but when He introduced the subject of His suffering and death, they drew back in unbelief and fear. If Christ could enter into His glory without suffering, their hearts were with Him, but if suffering and death were involved, they became afraid and withdrawn. It is of infinite importance that we learn early in our experience that suffering is essential to reigning. If we suffer with Him, we reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will deny us. The man or woman who shies away from the cross laid upon him by the Lord will find himself lacking on the great day of rewards. **"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."** **Matt. 16:24** Those who accept the cross are prepared to reign. Those who refuse it are weeded out. At the suggestion of a cross and suffering bold Peter at first drew back in horror, rebuking his blessed Master for even making mention of such possibility. He sought to save Him from the cross and hinder Him from the fulfillment of His greatest mission to earth. "For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Then Jesus, turning to Peter, said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

We are living in a sad and pitiful hour, a day when the cross of Christ is shunned. Christianity and the ministry in our day have become glamour things, glamorous enough that Hollywood stars play saints to increase their wealth. The world's pop singers feign religion and conversion because they make millions selling their records. Men no longer glory in the cross, but rather in the popularity they attain by feigning the new birth and pretending to be Christians. They desire no true identification with the sufferings of Christ, but want instead to enjoy the best of everything of this world and heaven at the end. And this, it seems, may have been a part of Peter's problem. He could envisage the kingdom and the glory that went with it, but from the cross that stood between he turned aside, hoping to avoid the suffering at all cost. He quickly rebuked the Lord for even mentioning it. Peter was hindering Christ's true mission because his thoughts were not the thoughts of God, but the thoughts of men. The cross was unsavory to him. He "savoured not" the things of God, but the things that pleased men. This stern rebuke given by Jesus to Peter should also suffice for us all. Let us now lay aside every weight and every sin and earthly desire that does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. It is the way of the cross that leads to the glorious throne and it is the way of the cross that fits men for the crown. There is no other way and there is no other name but His by, which we can be saved.

The rebuke given to Peter was very severe, but surely it needed to be given since his thoughts were ruinous to his hopes of future glory. So also to shun the cross is ruinous to us. His strong rebuke was immediately followed by these kind and blessed words of instruction: "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Then in verse 27 the importance of following Christ is vividly seen in these words: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works."

Following these words of rebuke and exhortation comes a promise, which must have staggered their understanding. "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." The transfiguration, which followed after six days, was a true revelation of the kingdom of God. Peter, James and John, who were privileged to go with Him into the mount, beheld in miniature, but with no diminishing of glory, the exact circumstances that will prevail in that coming reign of blessedness for which saints have prayed ever since Jesus taught us to say, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. ... for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever."

It is a most remarkable thing that, though John was the only one of the four gospel writers who experienced the glories of the mount of transfiguration, he alone omits all mention of it in his writings. He leaves the description of it to Matthew, Mark and Luke, who undoubtedly heard it from Peter, James and John. Peter, however, in his epistle made one brief mention of its glory when he wrote, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory. This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." **2 Pet. 1:16-18** In this great statement of truth Peter clearly states that what they saw in the mount was actually a revelation of the power and coming of Jesus Christ. They saw Him exactly as He will be in the glory of the kingdom age. Thus was the miracle of the transfiguration a view in miniature of the excellent glories of the millennial reign, which things we will now briefly consider.

We are coming ever nearer to the long awaited kingdom of God. All about us there is the knowledge that old things are rapidly passing away and the new day of blessedness so long desired and so long prayed for is at hand. The whole creation for six thousand years has ceaselessly groaned for the manifestation of the sons of God. The blessed manifestation has been long in coming, but it will surely come. Once in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die for the world, and when the fullness of time comes once more, nothing will hinder the manifestation of the sons of God. The Lord Himself will bring them forth in the manner so vividly described in Revelation, chapter nineteen, and again in this great display of kingdom things so clearly manifest in the transfiguration. In the day of the manifestation of the sons of God heaven and earth will rejoice and every creature will be glad. Throughout this whole age of grace Christ has purposely hidden His power and glory from the world, even as Habakkuk wrote, "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light: He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power." **Hab. 3:3-4** The Lord will not hide His power forever, but in the age to come His might will be manifested in all the world. Though His glory has been hidden throughout the ages, at certain times and on rare occasions that hidden glory has flashed forth into prominence before the eyes of the few who for reasons known to God were permitted to experience unspeakable things unlawful for a man to utter. So it came to pass that these disciples, who so lately had shrunk in amazement from the thought of crucifixion and death, were now given the opportunity to see for themselves the results that would come from His suffering and the travail of His soul. They were now to see the glory that would follow the cross, even as the scripture has spoken of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." **1 Pet 1:11**

The dazzling glory of this experience is gathered from the accounts of the three gospel writers. "He was transfigured before them," says Matthew, "and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." To this Mark adds this descriptive sentence: "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Luke in his account adds the significant statement, "His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." The significance of the word glisten is that that which glistens is merely reflecting light as a bright object might reflect the light of the sun, but that which glistens shines from light that comes from within itself. It was in this manner of animated illumination that Jesus was seen in transfiguration. The light, which He really, is was shining as the sun from within Himself. Can we wonder that a glad day is coming when there will be no need of the sun to shine by day or of the moon to shine by night for the Lord God giveth them light? All three gospel writers solemnly direct our attention to the outstanding prominence of whiteness and light. The light with which Jesus was clothed on this sublime occasion was none other than the light of life. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The garments that clothed Him on this supernal day of transfiguration were not the garments of earth, but the garments of life and immortality.

This, I am convinced, is the manner in which the first Adam appeared in his original glory, clothed, not in tattered wrappings of men, but the celestial vestments of life and light, naked insofar as man's attire is concerned, but clothed upon with that house from heaven, the light and life of God. When transgression overtook Adam, the covering of light vanished away, and the life in which he had hitherto lived and moved and had his being now faded and disappeared, and Adam was dead in trespasses and sins. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," the Lord had forewarned; and die he did, for just as surely as darkness is the absence of light, so death is the absence of life. The only life then left to Adam was that fleeting, transient

thing akin to animal life which now flowed sullenly through the veins of his body to maintain some semblance of life till his heart would forget to beat, but, as far as the life of God was concerned, Adam was dead - dead in spirit and dead in body. For this reason Paul, writing to the Ephesian Christians, made this remarkable statement: "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." In this same condition of death Christ finds us and we find ourselves when He first calls us and shows us the way of life. By means of repentance and faith that which was dead is made alive by the Spirit of regeneration and we, being quickened by the power of His resurrection, are made alive unto God. Eternal life - yea, the life which Christ is - is reborn within us and the working of that resurrection life, that marvelous power that raised Christ from the dead, will never end until the hour of our own transfiguration. Those who partake of the life of Christ are changed by His Spirit from glory to glory, more and more and yet more into the image of God.

With overwhelming awe these three men awakened from the drowsiness of their sleep, for they had been sleeping, Luke 9:32, to gaze in wonder at the magnificence of the transfigured form of their master. Luke tells us that "as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." **Luke 9:29** Matthew says His face shone as the sun. In their association with Jesus they had often seen Him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Day after day He had shared the sorrows of sin-cursed and broken man and had bitterly wept because of their unbelief. He had told them of the cross, which was soon to engulf His life and of the rejection and suffering that would precede His crucifixion. No doubt they had become accustomed to seeing Him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, distressed by the blindness of those who received Him not. But now, as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and He stood transfigured before them.

It was many years after this heavenly event that Peter wrote, "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty." The word majesty occurs only three times in scripture. Once it is translated mighty power, once magnificence, and once majesty. It speaks of splendor, beauty, glory and power and that which overwhelms the human mind, enlightening the believer to the beauty of holiness and worship, subduing the nature and inciting to the depths of veneration and adoration. The light that shone from the face of Moses when he returned from the glory of Sinai was a reflected light which, though glorious, soon faded from his aspect, but the light that lightened the countenance of Christ was not a reflection but the out-shining glory of that life-light which He is, radiating and glistening through the veil of His humanity, which hitherto had hidden His illustrious magnificence, until His raiment sparkled in splendor - not from an outward shining that fell upon Him, but from the inherent flashing forth of His own more excellent glory.

It is so very essential in our walk with God that times should come in our experience when Christ becomes far more to us than Jesus, the meek and lowly man of sorrows. That He is meek and lowly in heart none dare doubt who even carelessly have read the account of His wonderful life, but there are other scriptures which clearly show that His name is above every name. No authority in the universe is greater than His. His glory is the more excellent glory. It is the glory that excelleth. God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name, which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should swear, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. Phil. 2:10 with Isa. 45:23 His blood is better than the blood of Abel. His power is greater than that of angels. In Him dwelleth all the wisdom of the universe. He was before all things. He Himself is the beginning. He is the end of all things in that all things have their end in Him. All things were made by Him and all things were made for Him, and by Him all things consist. He is the head of the body, the church, the bride. He is the head of all principalities and powers. He raises up rulers and puts them down. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth.

The disciples of Jesus had become accustomed to seeing Jesus the man, Jesus the healer, Jesus the man of sorrows. They had heard Him tell of the splendor of the kingdom to come, but had never grasped the significance of its glory or the majesty and power of the Christ who was to reign in that coming age of restitution and reconstitution so wonderfully foretold by the prophets. So accustomed had they become to His presence and so out of harmony with the true Spirit of the Christ and the vision of His kingdom that, Luke tells us plainly, they had all fallen asleep in their prayers on the mount. "Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him." Luke 9:32. Brethren, I wonder if many of us, and perchance all of us, are now in this day of trial and crisis fallen fast asleep to the true circumstances so evident all about us. We become so occupied with facts and figures, which in themselves are good, but we so easily forget that it is the Spirit that makes truth living and real.

Have we become heavy with sleep and thus failed to behold Christ's glory? I know of a certainty that men could not speak of Jesus Christ so lightly if their spiritual eyes had grasped the glory of His majesty and power. No one who has tasted or in any way shared the exalted sacredness of His majesty and power could ever lightly refer to Him as "the man upstairs" as so many of these light-hearted and empty-headed preachers often do, though holy angels, mighty in glory and strength, bow in reverence before Him and cherubim cover their faces as they proclaim His holiness.

Among the most beautiful and awe-inspiring chapters in God's dear book, Isaiah chapter six stands out in its magnificence. Here the prophet tells of his vision of the Lord, which occurred in the year that king Uzziah died. Uzziah was a reasonably good king and Isaiah had often ministered to him, but so often the people we like and admire and the people upon whom we are prone to lean and depend are taken in death or removed in some other way from us so that we can see the Lord. This had been the experience of Isaiah the prophet and thus he wrote: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." **Isa. 6:1-5**. See now in this how man's glory quickly fades into nothingness before the glory of Christ? See how human opinions and reputation vanish into insignificance in the light of the glory that excelleth? And see also how unclean we feel in the presence of His holiness, where cherubim, always the guardians of all that is sacred, cover their faces and cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory."

It was not until the perfect and upright Job saw the Lord that he cried out in his uncleanness and despair, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42:6** Even Peter, upon seeing the miraculous draught of fishes, saw the glory of God's Christ and cried out in fear, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" **Luke 5:8** John likewise, upon seeing the radiance of Christ in the Patmos vision, fell as one dead before the majesty and power of the heavenly specter. Ah, my dearly beloved, refrain your lips from ever speaking of Christ or of God in any terms but those most sacred and in words conveying the highest respect and adoration for His wonderful name, the name above all names. He is the King of kings. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the fairest among ten thousands. Great men of earth should be treated with utmost respect, but Christ with utmost reverence. Should the President of the United States or the Queen of England come into my presence, I would rise immediately to do them honor; but should Jesus the Christ come into my presence, I would fall before Him in adoration to give Him worship.

I once read of an incident that impressed me. At a party given by Princess Margaret of England a young man lacking in proper respect, while speaking to the princess, lightly referred to King George VI as "your dad". With a flash of indignant fire in her eye at this ill-mannered disrespect for the king of a mighty Commonwealth, the princess retorted, "I suppose you mean His Majesty". Perhaps you will smile at this, but the word of God teaches us to give honor to whom honor is due, and so we should. How much more should we be fully awake to the transcending glory of Christ, for it is by beholding Him as He is that we are changed into that same image.

Luke has told us that, as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered and His raiment became white and glistening. Luke 9:29 But sad it is to say that, while He prayed and was transformed, His disciples had fallen asleep at their prayers and they remained unchanged, as natural and carnal as ever. No saint has yet fully estimated the transforming power of prayer and communion with God.

The word transfigure is derived from the Greek word metamorphoo, which means to transform, (meta, beyond, and morphe, form). From this Greek root comes our English word metamorphosis, which means to change from one form, shape or substance to another, as from a chrysalis to a butterfly. The transformation or metamorphosis of a worm possessing a voracious appetite for natural food to a butterfly that has appetite only

for nectar is the best, known example of a metamorphosis. In like manner our Lord upon the mount of transfiguration was transformed or altered from the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had known to the glorified Christ He was to be after the suffering of death, the power of the resurrection and the exaltation of His ascension into heaven. It is most important to see that He was transformed into the likeness that will be His in that glorious kingdom age when He will be King of kings and we in like glory shall reign with Him.

The Greek word metamorphoo appears only four times in the New Testament. In Matt. 17:2 and Mark 9:2 it is translated transfigured; in Rom. 12:2, transformed, and in 1 Cor. 15:51, changed. A thoughtful study and comparison of these four passages will yield a fruitful understanding. It is a most remarkable thing that the word transfigured, which refers to the glory of His transfiguration on the mount, should also be used in another form with reference to the experience of believers who are to come into that same image of Christ. Let us consider the wonder of this thing carefully, because it is certain that metamorphosis has already begun in us and will continue until the complete transformation has taken place. Too many of us are inclined to sit with folded hands, waiting for a change in some future day though God's word clearly shows that this process of change has already begun.

Notice then how in **Rom. 12:2** the apostle say, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Paul wrote to the Philippians, saying, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Now the mind that was in Christ Jesus was the Father's mind. Biologists have discovered that it is a certain hormone in the brain of the caterpillar that actually causes the metamorphosis from the chrysalis stage to the butterfly. This is a wonderful discovery, but how true it becomes when we apply it here to the mind of Christ, for it is the mind of Christ that begins the change, works the change and completes the change until our transfiguration is complete at the resurrection of the body, when the complete change from the corruptible to the incorruptible takes place. 1 Cor. 15:51-53 Make no mistake about it! It is the dead in Christ only who rise first. Not the carnal and corrupt dead. No, not even the carnal Christian, but the dead in Christ. Paul declares forthrightly in Rom. 12:2 that this transformation, this change, this transfiguration, this metamorphosis actually begins with the casting off of the corrupt and carnal mind and the replacing of it with the mind of Christ. Notice that he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Never yield your bodies to sin and to the many lusts and desires of the flesh, but present them instead to God as a holy and living sacrifice. We are living in an age of abominable conformity to the world and to every lust and passion of the world and the flesh, but these things have no place in the lives of Christians. God's people should be pure in body and in mind. He that is joined to an harlot is one flesh with her. Therefore Paul says, "Can I take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot?" We are exhorted to flee fornication, for he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body, and certainly against the body of Christ.

If you long to have your mind renewed, then put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man, which is renewed in the image of Christ. And, as you put off all these, then put on all these: bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, and above all these put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Quit watching the T.V. with its filth and corruption, its violence and immorality, for such things cater only to the corrupt and carnal mind and to every hurtful and deceitful lust. Read your Bible instead and become acquainted with all its heavenly precepts, for thus saith the Lord, "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." It is no wonder that the church system is so full of light-headed, light-hearted, carnal and sinful Christians, since they allow their minds to be filled with so many harmful and hurtful things, at the same time neglecting the hours of prayer and communion with God so essential to sonship and the exercise above all else that brings about the transfiguration of the mind. If Christians would take this one-eyed god before whom they sit in worship for hours every day and cast it into the fire, giving it no more place in their houses, and would instead spend the time they wasted watching its corruption in reading and prayer, conversing with their children or enjoying family worship, in one year's time they would be absolutely amazed at the change in their home life, in their relationship with God, in their communion with their wives or husbands and with their children. If God's people would enter into His mind, His glory and His reign, they must first cast away everything that hinders the development of the mind of Christ in them. I do not say they are not saved,

but if they live in carnality, they will be saved "so as by fire." No man who leaves this life with the carnal mind still on the throne will be fit to reign with Christ in His kingdom. Only those transformed by His mind will reign with Him. ". . . Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." **Eph. 4:22-24**

As Jesus prayed on the mount, He was transfigured before them. At that moment of transfiguration two celestial visitors appeared on the scene. Moses, who represented and gave the law, and Elijah, who represented the prophets, appeared in glory that is, transfigured with Christ. Moses gave the law, Elijah called the people of Israel back to the law, and Christ came to fulfill every jot and tittle of the law. Those who have Christ dwelling in them have the law written in their hearts and by their new nature do the things, which are written in the law. The law of God is perfect, enlightening the eyes. The testimonies of the Lord are right, making wise the simple. The law was given to lead men to Christ. The Ten Commandments were never done away. The only part of the law that was done away was the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which are not the same thing as the Ten Commandments. Christ died to fulfill the law and give unto us His Spirit and His life, by which His holy commandment could be written and engraved upon our hearts.

When these two heavenly visitors came to the mount, it must have been with profound amazement that the disciples gave heed to the solemn subject of their conversation. **Luke** records the discourse in chapter **9:30,31** thus: "And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." The very death, which Peter had said should never be was the topic of their conversation on the mount. No more important event could ever be in the history of the world for time past or time to come than the death that Christ was to accomplish at Jerusalem. This momentous event was worthy of discussion on the highest level imaginable because the time had come and the hour had arrived which God Himself had predestinated before the world began. The Lamb, slain in God's purpose before the foundation of the world to bring the universe back into harmony with God, was now to be sacrificed in actuality. These two notable men now conversed with Christ concerning the death He should accomplish to secure eternal redemption for His creation. There is no other way than the way of the cross. Glory in what else we may, we must return to this important fact, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

It amazes me that even in the light of such heavenly things poor Peter, awakening from his drowsiness and seeing the majesty of Christ and the transfigured forms of Moses and Elijah and hearing the conversation concerning the things that Christ would accomplish by His death, should yet be so dull in his understanding that he would put forward a suggestion that might yet avoid the cross. Perhaps I am mistaken, but it appears that his hope that Christ would avoid the cross may have been the notion that prompted him to say, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." I fully realize that the Feast of Tabernacles signifies the coming of the Lord, and this may have been Peter's thought, but more likely his natural mind still dreaded the cross, so to build three tabernacles and remain where they were would be a splendid way to avoid it. Christ was transfigured. Moses and Elijah appeared in glory. Surely that was sufficient. Let us then remain in this condition of glory and splendor forever. But nothing of glory can be any more than a vision in the night until the cross has been met, death has been accomplished, the blood has been shed, and life eternal released and shed abroad that all men may have life and return to the image of the heavenly Father. Thus if there is no cross, there is no glory, no kingdom, no crown, no restitution of all things. The hope of the universe centers around the cross. The cross is the center of the ages and the center and hub of all God's purposes for time and eternity.

It is more than coincidence that, as Peter spoke, a cloud overshadowed them and a Voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Peter had given his opinion and ten thousand other men have given theirs, but human opinions mean nothing and are worth less than nothing. The only begotten Son of God will be heard when all other voices fall silent. All other plans must be laid aside, all other human purpose abandoned and forgotten in the light of His superseding knowledge and truth. The end of all this heavenly visitation was glorious indeed and the result just as Christ intended, for "when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, **Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.**" **Matt. 17:6-8** That was a happy

ending to their fears of the cross, and it will be a happy ending to your fears and mine when we hear Him say, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." O how good it would be for us all if in this hour of many voices, so many opinions, so many Hollywood star evangelists we would obey God and, coming out from among them, would listen to Jesus only!

Nothing that ever occurred in the life of Christ or in all history portrays the kingdom of God so vividly as does the transfiguration. The promise was that some of them would not taste of death till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power. From this event we learn that in the kingdom of God Jesus will be glorified and He, being the head of the Christ body, assures the saints that all who are in Christ will be glorified in Him. Likewise also the saints of ages past will share that same glory. "The glory that Thou gavest Me I have given them."

The transfiguration of Christ manifests the consummation of His human life. He was born into the world as recorded in the holy scripture. He advanced through life from a babe in His mother's arms through childhood, through temptation and testing and the severity of public ministry to exaltation, transfiguration and glory. In this wonderful progression so evident in His life it is possible for us to behold the divine intention of every man. Beginning as we do in weakness and imitation in childhood, we pass through the uncertain years of youth, enduring temptation and gaining the victory through abiding in Christ. Then, when the race is run and the tumultuous journey is complete, we enter into the glory of resurrection by the way of incorruption and immortality.

Look, if you will, upon a tiny seed. It is without beauty and without radiance or glory, but in this tiny husk lie the gorgeous colors of the magnificent flower that will appear after the seed has fallen into the ground and died. In the transfiguration God's plan for saints blossomed in splendor like the sun, in whiteness like the light, in glory as a flash of lightning scintillating with radiance through the darkness. This is God's intention for man - first the glory of Christ, the pioneer and apostle, and then the glory of all mankind, each in his own order.

The transfiguration being a miniature view of the kingdom, it is no wonder that Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen." **Matt. 6:9-13**

CHAPTER FOUR THIS IS YOUR HOUR

At a definite hour appointed by God John the Baptist lifted up his voice in the wilderness, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." **Matt. 3:3** His message was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The long time of waiting was over. The first appearance of the King of glory was at hand. Dispensations in their successive order from innocence to law had come and gone, leaving with the world their own precious message of truth, truth as timeless and enduring as God Himself, truth which will endure when heaven and earth and dispensations are passed away, truth which was the expression of the divine mind and the perfect will of God. But now a new day was dawning; a new order was appearing on the earth. The time allotted for other dispensations had been fulfilled and the period of waiting was past. Though the sleeping world and the drowsy priesthood of the existing decadent systems knew it not, the hour had arrived for the Son of God, the King of the coming kingdom, to reveal Himself personally upon the earth. The time had not yet come for him to reveal Himself as King of kings and Lord of lords nor yet to set up His kingdom and to reign over all the earth, but the hour had arrived for Him to prepare that mystical kingdom, the body of Christ. It was time for the King to establish His throne in believing hearts and to fill them with the very spirit of the coming kingdom. The hour had come for the King to regenerate and separate a people in His image and likeness in preparation for the day when the kingdom of God would spread its glory like a mantle of light over all the earth. A people different from all people who had ever appeared on the earth were now to come forth, born of the Spirit from above, a people possessing the Spirit of His Son, a people who from their hearts cry, "Abba Father, Thy will be done in earth even as it is done in heaven."

Laws written on tables of stone were to be forever abolished. Henceforth the tables of the heart would be the living stones upon which God would indelibly inscribe His eternal law and His everlasting will. No longer would carnal men wince beneath the stentorian tones of a voice from without, crying, "Thou shalt not", but hearts,

transformed by the Holy Spirit and washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, would smile up into God's face to say with adoration, "I delight to do Thy will. O God; Yea, Thy law is written within my heart." **Psa. 40:8** Say not, oh man, that the law of God, the only perfect law in the universe, is done away! The law of God is the very expression of God's nature and the manifestation of His perfect will. The law is removed indeed from its place on tables of stone to be written forever in the hearts of the sons of God whence its pure fountains pour forth rivers of life from the very throne of the transformed life.

Well did the weeping prophet, Jeremiah, speak through his fountain of tears when with the far-sighted vision of a true prophet he beheld the coming of a better day, a day when God would make a new covenant with His people by which He would transfer the law from tables of stone without to the tables of the heart within. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it upon their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." **Jer. 31: 31-33** Is it any wonder that He went on to say, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." **Verse 34** The truth prophesied by Jeremiah is realized in the heart of every man where Jesus dwells, and they with the bard now lift up their voices in truth to sing the glad refrain,

"What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which long
I had sought Since Jesus came into my heart."

The law of God was never taken away in the sense that preachers try to tell us. The truth is that it was transferred from a dead stone to a redeemed heart. How often we hear these carnal preachers telling the people that, because God saw the people could not keep the law, He therefore abolished it. Nonsense, man! God could no more do away with His law than He could do away with His Son. His law is His word and His word is His Son. John 1:1 Even an unregenerate man can understand that to say to a thief, "Thou shalt not steal", does nothing to change his nature. The penalty undoubtedly restrains him, but his thieving nature is not taken from him. At heart he is still a thief and he will steal again the moment he thinks he can avoid the penalty. But, if we erase the command, "Thou shalt not steal", from the table of stone, planting it instead in the believer's heart, then he who stole will steal no more because his very nature has become one with the commandment and the truth has transformed his heart. The word of God, which is none other than Jesus Christ, is in his heart; therefore, his whole nature abhors the thought of theft, not because of the penalty that must be endured, but because of the God-like nature that came when the incorruptible seed, the word of God, Jesus Christ the Lord, came to live the life of God in his heart.

The greatest commandment of all is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." Can a man who is full of the world and absorbed in fleshly lusts, whose god is his belly and whose glory is in his shame, be made to love God by showing him a commandment written on a stone which says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"? Can you love your neighbor just because you are told to do so? Can a woman love a man or a man love a woman simply because someone suggests that he should? What is the use of saying to the godless, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God", when his heart is far away from God and God is not in his thoughts? If such a man is ever to love God, then the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart", must be transferred from the written commandment, staring at him from a tablet of stone, to the living commandment, even the word of God, dwelling in and transforming his heart. That is what Jesus, the Christ of God, came to do. That is why He said, "The kingdom of God is within you." The first appearance of the kingdom of God in this earth is when God sets up His kingdom in the human heart, transforming it by His Spirit and liberating it with His perfect law of liberty.

According to Daniel the prophet the day is coming when the stone cut from the mountain without hands will break in pieces the image of Babylon that now fills the whole earth. After it has broken the image, the stone

itself will become a mountain that fills the whole earth, and I mean literally the whole earth. Dan. 2:34-35. But be assured of this: Before the stone, which is the body of Christ, fills the whole earth, the stone, Jesus Christ, must first establish His throne and His kingdom in the hearts of His chosen sons. There in my heart He will smite the image of Babylon on its feet. The old man and the old nature vanish as the dust of the summer threshing floor. The incorruptible seed, the living stone, Jesus Christ, flourishes within the heart until we say it is "not I, but Christ".

Need anyone say to such a transformed being as this, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart?" Does not such a one already love God more than his tongue can tell? Do you think you need to say to him, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself? Does his soul not abhor theft? Does he not cringe at the thought of lying or of covetousness? The law then is not done away at all except from tables of stone. It is transferred to the tables of the heart there, like God's kingdom, to flourish and grow, there to become a mountain that fills the whole of his earthly being. If such is not the case in our own hearts, then Christ does not yet reign in us.

So John the Baptist came preaching, "The kingdom of God is at hand," and Jesus Christ lifted up His voice with the same message: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel." The economy of God abounds with times and seasons. Would God that mankind would learn that absolutely everything, which concerns God's program for the ages is timed to the exact day and hour. We can no more hasten the events on His timetable than we can hasten the rising of the sun. It is as impossible to slow down the program of God or hinder it in any way as it is impossible to slow down or hinder the setting of the sun. I hear people pray, requesting God that the coming of Christ might be delayed that a few more souls might be given time to repent. What a foolish, thoughtless prayer that is! The day and the hour of His appearing was set by God and known of the Father long before Jesus of Nazareth walked the earth He had made. Matt. 24:36. Though our hearts may often echo the prayer, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly," yet in these words we but express the longing of our hearts for His coming, but the time appointed for that coming was set before the foundation of the world and cannot be altered even an hour.

Few facts were better known by men of God of old than this: God has appointed both times and seasons during which everything in His plan must be accomplished. As time and tide await no man, so God waits for no man. Happy is the man who is alert and awake to present truth. Blessed is the man who is not ignorant of the times and seasons, which God has in His own power, knowing that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. Blessed is the man who, seeing the fig tree putting forth her leaves, discerns that summer is nigh and prepares himself for it. Such a man as this will not be found sleeping when the Lord comes, but girded and ready to go forth.

No man who ever lived was more certain of the predetermined hours set by God than was our Lord Jesus Christ. More than once He spoke of "the hour" with such certainty that one would think He was watching some great time clock upon whose lace was inscribed the detailed plan of the ages and whose great hands pointed unerringly to the hour in which each event was to take place. Can you hear Him as He instructs His disciples for (he last time? Listen as He leaves with them the eternal truth contained in John's gospel. Rejoice with them as they hear His promise of the coming Holy Spirit who would abide with them. Stand in awe as He warns them of denials and betrayals to come. Hear Him comfort them with the blessed truths of chapter 14. Listen to the infinite wisdom of God that makes them part with Him of one and the same vine, rooms of one mansion and one house, even the Father's house, not made with hands. Then after leading them of His coming resurrection and of the abiding Spirit that would lead them into all truth, He turned from addressing them to speak in prayer to His Father in heaven - His Father, your Father, and my Father. Thus, when His sermon was ended, He lifted up His eyes to heaven. John 17:1 But notice as you have never noticed before the first words He spoke: "Father, the hour has come!" The hour! What hour? Why, a specific and special hour that God the Father and God the Son had arranged in their councils before ever Adam and Eve shared the perfumed glory of Eden! Or yet before the foundations of the earth were laid or the command given to the sun to rule the day and to the moon to rule the night! The hour of which He now spoke had been set. Nothing could hinder it or delay it. Had every soldier in the Roman Empire been at Pilate's command that day, he could neither have stopped nor delayed the crucifixion of Christ, for "the hour" had come. Had every stone on earth been placed upon His tomb, His resurrection would have taken place on time, for that, too, was an appointed hour.

When the almighty God, the God of the mornings, the evenings, the days, the years, and the seasons, says, "The hour has come", then the hour has come and no power in the universe can hinder or delay it. Therefore the record says, "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world..." **John 13:1**, He arose from supper, laid aside His garment, took a towel and girded Himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet. All these things He did because He knew His hour and recognized the times and seasons which were in God's power. Like a true son of God He was not caught unaware of the moment in which He lived as many now are, who will stand naked and ashamed, saying, "I didn't know!" The consciousness of the hour in which He lived was ever present with the Saviour. As He saw His hour only a few days away with all the tribulation it would contain, He seemed to take cognizance of Himself. Was the task ahead too difficult for Him? Would Gethsemane be a load even He could not endure? Would the cross prove to be an insurmountable obstacle? What the troublesome thoughts were that crowded through His mind I am not prepared to say, but these are the solemn words that flooded from His heart as His hour drew near:

"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." **John 12:27** As though to encourage His soul in God, He referred to yet another hour, the hour of His glorification, saying, in **verse 23**, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." He who was so aware that His hour had come at the time of the feast of the Passover was just as certain that His time was not yet come at the feast of tabernacles many days earlier. At that time, when His brethren had bidden Him go to the feast to publicly show forth His miracles, He had replied, "My time is not yet come." **John 7:6** And so also did He speak to His mother at the wedding feast, saying, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." **John 2:4** But now it had come, and like a true son He was aware of it, knowing that nothing could delay it.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted: a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to reap and a time to sow; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." **Eccles. 3:1-8**

"Of the times and seasons", wrote Paul, "ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober." **1 Thess. 5:1-6**

There was a day preceding the crucifixion when our Lord came to Bethphage near the Mount of Olives. Having sent His disciples to fetch a donkey upon which no man had ever ridden, He sat upon him to make His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, as the prophet had before spoken. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, lowly and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." The common people cast their garments in the way, and the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, saying, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." **Luke 19:28-40** But the religious leaders of the day, who should have known the times and seasons, who above all others should have recognized the signs of the times, and been aware of the hour in which they lived, understood nothing of what was happening, nor could they recognize the remarkable fulfillment of prophecy being enacted before their very eyes. Coming to Jesus with evident incivility, envy, and displeasure, they said unto Him, "Master, rebuke Thy disciples." But Jesus replied, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." If the rough stones that paved the road on which He trod would have opened their dumb lips to rebuke the unbelief of all who beheld that scene in silence, shall not the living stones of His living temple in this our hour lift up their voices in rebuke of the darkness and unbelief of a world that lives as though God did not exist and a church system whose preachers know not the living God, but cry instead that God is dead, whose tables are full of vomit, and who have turned everyone to his own way?

When Jesus therefore had come to Jerusalem, He stood beholding the city, which knew not its hour, and, as He beheld, He wept over it. Innumerable memories of the past and thoughts of the future flooded His infinite mind as He stood looking and weeping over the city. Was not this the traditional place of Adam's burial? Here on Mt. Moriah, the site of the temple, Abraham, the friend of God, had obediently offered his son Isaac in type of the Saviour's sacrifice for the world. Here David, the sweet singer of Israel, reigned, to whom it was promised, "There shall not fail a man to sit upon the throne of Israel". Here the tribe of Judah from which He sprang would now crucify the Lord. Here, too, He would be raised from the dead. Here the Spirit would soon fall on the waiting souls at Pentecost.

From here He would ascend into heaven and here He would return to earth at the end of the church age to set up His kingdom. Here He would reign in splendor with His saints over all the earth for a thousand years in the kingdom of God. Is it any wonder that He wept, and that His weeping was made the more bitter as He beheld the darkness and blindness of the people who should have discerned the greatness of the hour? Lifting up His tearful voice, He said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." **Luke 19:41-44**

Awake! Awake, thou that sleepest! Arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light! He will come unto thee as the bright rays of the sun, revealing the hidden things that lie in darkness and making manifest the counsels of His heart. Past and gone forever is that scene of the Saviour weeping over Jerusalem. Gone are the shouts of the exuberant throng who cried, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Long dead and rotted in their graves are the scribes, the Pharisees, and the doctors of the law who bade the multitude hold their peace. But Jesus still lives, and even at this very moment the Lord of heaven is making the final preparations for the hour of his triumphal re-entry into Jerusalem. All heaven is astir today. The living stones are crying out, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee." He will come riding upon a white horse in the clouds of heaven. He that sits upon the horse is called Faithful and True. In righteousness doth He judge and make war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many crowns; and He has a name written which none can know but He Himself. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. His name is called the Word of God. Out of His mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword, His word of truth, that with it He should smite the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron, for He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. And the armies of heaven, the sons of God, followed Him upon white horses. Hallelujah!

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Oh, mystical church, the body of Christ! Oh, sons of God, ye saints of the Lord! Could it be that thou knowest not thine hour? While ten thousand ransomed voices at this hour cry, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," must it be that you go on in unbelief, mingling your soul with the souls of those who sit in the darkness and despair of Babylon? Must you be found committing spiritual fornication with her daughters? Must you be found sleeping, the oil all burned out of your lamp? Will you remain where your soul is ever vexed with the filthy conversation of the Sodomites who wait for the fiery indignation of God? Or will you know that this is your hour?

Deep within a voice is saying that the kingdoms of this world are soon to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Son Jesus Christ. The misrule of the carnal mind is soon to end. The time of trouble foretold by the prophet Daniel is not merely a thing of the future. Lift up your eyes and look, for that time of trouble is with us now, surrounding us on every hand. It will end only when the King of kings comes in the clouds of glory and with Him all the sons of God to set up the only righteous government this world has ever known or ever will know.

It is said that during the last ten years the world has doubled the accumulated knowledge of the previous six thousand years. This is probably true, but, while our knowledge has doubled, our trouble and sorrow has much more than doubled. Man in his blindness has been assuring us that all we need is more knowledge and we will be rid of all our trouble. So we have more medical science than ever before, but hospitals cannot be built fast enough to contain the sick and infirm. Distances have shrunk to meaninglessness. Communication is world-wide and instantaneous. But among nations there is more misunderstanding and distrust than ever before. The

education bill for our schools and universities is a staggering sum, but what have we got to show for it but rebellion, ill-will, disobedience, moral degradation, and godlessness? Trouble never before known multiplies as knowledge increases. Compare Dan. 12:1, 4

Jeremiah the prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord, A people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth... They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters... Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them." **Jer. 6:22, 28, 30** Please read the whole passage. The nation being raised from the sides of the earth appears to be these rebellious people who have arisen like an evil specter in almost every country on earth, literally from all sides of the earth. So terrible has this rebellion become that it is a far greater danger than the threat of invasion from any enemy. Such a conglomeration has never before been known - children of wealthy parents, graduates of colleges and universities, bums and mendicants off the street, whites, Negroes, Indians, men and women, boys and girls, living in filth, screaming rebellion and defiance, burning, looting, bludgeoning, raping, filling their hides with needles, with pot, LSD and liquor, and practicing every sex perversion known to mankind. No wonder the inspired prophet said, "We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side." **Jer. 6:24-25** Do you know that thirty-two million American women are afraid to venture out on the streets alone at night and that a large percentage of men share the same dread?

As I was meditating on all this fearful rebellion, my mind took up the words of the apostle Paul, who said, "For the creature was made subject to vanity (futility), not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children (sons) of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." **Rom. 8:20-23** The restlessness, the hateful rebellion, the degradation, the filth, the drugs and the immorality are the blind, dumb, ignorant cries of a groaning creation to be delivered from the bondage of the present corruption. They do not know for what they groan. They vainly imagine that, could they but cast off every value they have ever known, they would find peace and satisfaction. But stranger than fiction is the truth that their fearful groaning is in reality the desperate travail of a creation which in unbelievable ignorance cries and sighs for the manifestation of the sons of God who will deliver every created thing from its fearful bondage and corruption into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

There is an insane madness among the leaders of the world. Like king Nebuchadnezzar they have refused to fear God or give glory to Him, so God has given them a reprobate mind. "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient." The great men of the earth have been stricken with a strange mental block that causes them to do everything wrong. Practically every decision they make is a mistake. While men are dying in Viet Nam, while wives are losing their husbands and little children are losing their fathers, while the strongest boys in the land are being maimed and ruined for life, while towns and cities are being laid desolate, and evil is continuing unabated, the great statesmen of Viet Nam and the United States sit in Paris, fiercely arguing about the shape of the conference table, whether it will be square or round or oblong, and about the order in which the conferees will speak. And, while they argue, men die! Is it any wonder I declare that the leaders have reprobate minds? Can we not see there is a mental block! Is it peculiar that in such circumstances boys burn their draft cards? Who dare expect that men can be brave under such circumstances as these? Can we wonder that the whole creation groans and travails, longing for deliverance and emancipation from such bondage of corruption and decay?

A new day and a new hour is dawning upon the world. The healing rays of the kingdom age are beginning to appear in the eastern sky. Heavenly voices are heralding the message, "The kingdom of God is at hand". Angels proclaim the message that Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. The smoke of her torment is rising up. Men who have trusted in her riches shall cry, "Alas, alas, for that great city." Revelation, chapters 17 and 18, contains the vivid description of her wealth and power and of her impending fall and doom. Is it any wonder we continually cry, "Come out of her, My people!"

The all-wise God, the author of times and seasons, has left us many infallible proofs that should show us plainly that days and seasons belong to the realm of time. Every one in its order was made to pass away. The passing of each day and each season of the year is intended, not only to end the old, but to begin the new as well. The evening of one day ushers in the morning of the next day. The day slowly draws its curtains and fades away into the night; and the night, removing its mantle of darkness, matures into the fullness of day. If we turn our eyes backward to the distant peaks of the past to look upon mountains and hills over which the human family has come, we cannot miss the truth that the omniscient God has been pleased to introduce us to new days and new dispensations, each one in its turn bringing to the world a further and greater revelation of God's divine will for man and thus displaying His immutable purpose. The teachers of the confused church system have made the mistake of believing that God experimented with the different dispensations and, finding them a failure, He did away with them one by one. Nonsense, man! The truth is that each succeeding dispensation brought ever increasing light to the world and ever expanding revelation of the very nature of God. In the kingdom age and in the dispensation of the fullness of times the combined truths of the seven ages will be gathered together as one perfect light, a perfect revelation for a perfect age. The toil of six days of labor will produce the wonderful Sabbath of rest.

Men and women of all ages and dispensations have found it almost impossible to believe that the age in which they lived was passing away and the truths in which they rejoiced were about to give place to a greater revelation than they had ever before known. It may be for this very reason that, though every dispensation begins in glory, it ends in judgment. Let us not forget, then, that the dispensation in which we now live is the same dispensation that began in the upper room on that day of Pentecost when men were filled with the Holy Spirit and a heavenly relationship hitherto unknown was ushered in. Such wonderful grace was upon the young church that by the end of the first century A.D., amid blood and tears and persecution, one-twentieth of the entire Roman Empire was converted to Christ, and by the year 300 A.D. Christianity became the state religion of the previously heathen Roman Empire. The act of Emperor Constantine in making Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire proved to be the most devastating blow ever dealt the church of the living God. Enjoying the popularity and protection of the Roman eagle, she folded her arms and fell asleep, becoming part and parcel of Babylon. Thus the age, which began with the glory of Pentecost, is ending with Christ's standing outside its apostate doors. Cast out of the system called by His name, He stands before the door of the individual believer, saying, **"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me."** **Rev. 3:20**

It must have been a stunning blow to Adam to see his wonderful age of innocence ending in judgment. There is evidence, it seems to me, that Adam was neither willing nor prepared to leave the sanctuary of the age of innocence to go forth into the newness of another dispensation with all its seeming uncertainties. As the Jews were prone to return to the law, Adam was ever prone to return to his lovely garden, looking with longing eyes back to the good old days so familiar to him. It was here his life on earth had begun and here he would gladly remain forever. Have you not noticed these words, which vividly portray his unwillingness to leave the garden? **"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."** **Gen. 3:23-24** The Lord drove him out. Adam did not want to leave the age of innocence any more than people today want to leave this age with its message of grace to go forth and embrace the kingdom. If God is going to shake men loose from this present age and this system of confusion, He must drive them out; otherwise they refuse to go. I am sorry to say that, even after He has driven them out, He still must put a flaming sword behind them to guard every avenue of return. Otherwise, they would stray back to the old system as a flock of stupid sheep returns to lie down in its old fold even after the pasture is dried up. Twice during my own life the Lord has driven me out, making it impossible for me to stay where I was and impossible to return. I know by experience how Jacob felt when the sun had set on the old ways, the old home, and the old associates, and that forever. **Gen. 28:11** And I know how restless his head must have been as it lay on the pillow of stone, but I know, too, of a Lord who stands at the top of the ladder, smiling down as though He would say, "Every rung brings you nearer to Me."

Many people who have written to me lately indicate that they are being forced from the womb of the old system as a babe is forced from the womb of its mother to enter upon the glory of a new world and the wonder of a new day. Courage, my brother! It is God who is leading you forth. The heavens are opening before you as you

advance. The angels are ascending and descending upon the sons of God. Heavenly voices are proclaiming that the old age is dying and the kingdom of God is at hand.

So it was that Adam's age of innocence ended with judgment, man being driven forth from the garden. What a tragedy, someone will say! No, my brother, it is not a tragedy. It is part of the eternal purpose of an all-wise God, for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Rom. 8:20-21 Had the eyes of Adam been opened as were the eyes of Jacob, he, too, might have seen a ladder from earth to heaven. So God drove him forth from the garden that he might unfold to all the universe the seven great steps of His eternal purpose.

As Adam's day of innocence ended in judgment and the promise of a new day, so also ended the age of conscience when Noah alone of all earth's inhabitants was found righteous in His generation. So God ended that wicked age, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and Noah came forth from the ark to look from the mountain top upon an entirely new age, to gaze on a world that had been cleansed from the filth of a highly civilized but morally degraded people, the like of which had never been before and has never been since until this solemn hour in which we now live. Need we remind ourselves that it was of our day that Jesus spoke when He said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man." In that day the earth was corrupt and filled with violence, and the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts were only evil continually. It was that way then; it is that way now. Filth and evil are portrayed everywhere. Perhaps the most dreadful indictment of all is found in the fact that smoking, drinking, fornication, and homosexuality have become rampant among the hireling ministries of the decadent, earthly Babylon, that haughty harlot who with brazen effrontery parades as the bride of Christ and the church of the living God.

The days of Noah are with us on every hand. Make no mistake about that fact. This age of grace is not going to end in the triumphant glory of world-wide revival as some vainly imagine. It is going to end in world-wide judgment. It is going to end in gross darkness as all other dispensations have ended that from the darkness and the judgment may emerge the glory of the new day. I have no hesitation whatsoever in declaring that there will not be another real revival in this dispensation. There may be many false revivals. They are in progress all the time. Just as there are many false prophets and false christs, so there are many false revivals. If it were not so, the false prophets and false christs could not exist. Every sect and denomination eventually becomes a false christ which men trust for salvation. There will not be another revival in this dispensation, because judgment was pronounced upon this age by both Jesus and the apostles. "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him," saith the Lord. Other than that there will be no great turning to God. When this evil age has ended in the awesome judgment of the great tribulation, then the dispensation of the kingdom of God will begin - a dispensation unlike all other ages, because in it Jesus Christ in person, together with His brothers, the sons of God, will rule the whole world in righteousness. All other rule and authority will be put down forever, and righteousness, justice, and equity will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the seas. Men will not learn war any more; neither will covetousness or greed hold any in their sway. But all shall know God from the least of them to the greatest of them. The lame man shall leap as the hart. The tongue of the dumb shall sing. The eyes of the blind shall be opened. Upon the bells of the horses will be "Holiness unto the Lord."

We are now in the hour of preparation for the kingdom of God. Let us not be mistaken. My message is not a message to the wretched harlot system, that false christ who dares to call herself the church. My message is to the precious sons of Zion, who are being called out from the harlot system and being called out unto God. Sons of God, the hour has come to disentangle yourselves; otherwise you will share the judgment of the great whore of Babylon. Rev. 18:4. In these last days of the dispensation of grace there is no message more important than this: Every son of God, every saint of the Lord, must disentangle himself from the octopus-like arms of the harlot church system. He must come out from among them and touch no more the unclean thing that he may receive the promise, **"Ye shall be My sons and daughters."** **2 Cor. 6:17-18** My soul gets desperately weary of hearing men quote Heb. 10:25 in an effort to convince themselves and others that they should continue to assemble with the present day harlot church system. When Paul wrote, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is", it never crossed his inspired mind that we would think for a moment that we should bury

our lives and destroy our experiences by constantly assembling ourselves with a corrupt and decadent system, now grown full of false prophets and antichrists, a system given over to religious vaudeville, a system that compasses land and sea to make proselytes and whose members too often know little or nothing of a personal knowledge and relationship with Christ. It is a system abounding with smug preachers, exuding self, claiming to be God's man of the hour, end time prophets, healers, workers of miracles, and many other such things. Though many profess to be favored with special gifts and to be blessed with ministering angels, I believe I am right in saying that their audiences are more enamored with them and their high sounding talk than with the Christ they profess to represent.

Have you taken notice that men such as Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Peter, John, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and many others like them never wasted time proving that they were anybody special at all? These men did not even know that they were special vessels. They were what they were, and it mattered not to them what men thought or believed of them. Like Moses of old they wist not that their faces shone. I frankly admit that the moment any man presents himself as having some special ministry or gift, my guard goes up right away. "A man's gift maketh room for him and bringeth him before great men." He needs confirmation from no man. If he is speaking from God, it soon becomes evident. Not for naught did Jesus tell us that false prophets, false teachers, and false christs would be many in the last days. The sinister word false could be inscribed over this whole system of confusion. In this our day, in this our hour, political Babylon and religious Babylon are hand in glove. They are two harlots in one house. "When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses." "How shall I pardon thee for this?" **Jer. 5:7**

If you will read the third chapter of Isaiah, which is a message concerning Judah and Israel, you will see how aptly it applies to the church system today. Then, in chapter four, verse one, the prophet makes this strange observation: "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach." The seven women represent the seven churches described in Revelation, chapters two and three, beginning with Ephesus and concluding with Laodicea. So decadent have these women become in the period of Laodicea that the only thing Christian about them is the name they insist on using. A wife should be sustained by her husband, eating the food he provides and wearing the apparel supplied by his labor... but not so with these women. They have no interest in His garments of righteousness, nor in His bread of truth, nor His water of life. "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called Christian to take away our reproach." If they are not called the church, they have no reason for existing at all, so they call themselves by the name of Christ so that there will be no reproach, but they go their own way, eating their own bread and wearing their own apparel, and in general living apart from Him.

Why is it that people who are so fond of quoting Paul's word from Heb. 10:25 are never heard to quote the words of that same apostle from **2 Cor. 6:17-18**? Here, after saying, "What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" he goes on to command, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Why do Christians imagine they have a duty to sit in the idol's temple, pretending they are obeying the words of Heb. 10:25? Have you not seen that sonship is promised to those who come out from among them? To those who come out is the promise given, "I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters." Better far it is to come out and receive the sonship for which creation groans than to sit among the seven women who do as they please, hoping that this religion of yours will assure them of God's favor. There should be no question in the mind of any Christian today that, if the apostle Paul were living in this the end of the age, he would join his voice with that voice in the Revelation, crying, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Indeed, he did cry, "Come out", even in his own day.

The old day is dying. The darkening shadows are lengthening into the night of tribulation. The new dispensation, the dispensation of the kingdom of God, is dawning out of the darkness and confusion of the age that is now passing away. With it will come new light and new understanding. A strange day has come upon us. Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people; yet in the hearts of the true saints there is light,

In Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 we have a record of seven twenty-four hour days which we now name Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. See figure 1 on the chart. These seven twenty-four hour days of Genesis represent seven one thousand year days from Genesis to Revelation in which are included the seven Bible dispensations, innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom of God. See figure 2 on the chart.

In Leviticus 25:1-13 we are given an account of forty-nine days, each day being one year long. Forty-nine days are seven full weeks. Read the account carefully. Whereas a day represents a thousand years, we are faced with the conclusion that forty-nine thousand years are determined upon the earth, or seven days, each day being seven thousand years long. See figure 3 on the chart.

Man is made in God's image on the sixth day whether it be the sixth twenty-four hour day, the sixth one thousand year day, or the sixth seven thousand year day. We are now living in the sixth one thousand year day since Adam. See figure 2. We are also living in the sixth seven thousand year day since Genesis 1:1; "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." See figure 3.

Five vast days each seven thousand years long, had passed away into history before Adam, the first man, was made on the sixth twenty-four hour day of the sixth seven thousand year day. The entire seven thousand years (seven days) shown in figure 2 on the chart are all included in the sixth seven thousand year day shown in figure 3 on the chart. The sixth seven thousand year day of figure 3 includes all God's dealings with man from Adam to the end of the millennial kingdom.

The seventh seven thousand year day shown in figure 3 is the dispensation of the fullness of times, Eph. 1:10, in which period God will gather all things into Christ. It is the Sabbath of rest for the vast week of seven, seven thousand year days.

The fiftieth year, spoken of in Lev. 25:10, is the jubilee in which every man returns to his possession and all goes back to its original owner, who in this case is God Himself. Since these things are so, is it any wonder that Peter said, "Be not ignorant of this one thing that a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

CHAPTER FIVE SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR

"Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."

On a number of occasions we have mentioned that no prophecy is of private interpretation. 2 Pet. 1:20. Almost every scripture has a local and primary meaning which should be clear enough to even the casual reader, but after the primary meaning there comes a secondary meaning of much greater scope and importance which cannot be discerned by the natural mind that is content to dwell in the shallows of spiritual understanding. Therefore that deeper meaning is left for those who with longing hearts follow the Holy Spirit into the realm of wisdom where He dwells. There men begin to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and comprehend the incomprehensible. It has been truly written, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

1 Cor. 2:9-10 Then again it has been written, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." **Rom. 1:20**

When the Spirit has revealed a secondary meaning of a truth, He longs to draw aside the third veil that we might behold the ultimate meaning, if in God there could possibly be an ultimate. The tabernacle in the wilderness clearly showed that the worshippers were first led through the low wide gate, which was a curtain,

to bring their offerings into the outer court, and thence the priests, the sons of Aaron, went through the second veil into the holy place, a place into which ordinary worshippers were never allowed to go or even to see because of the forbidding veil. But beyond this holy place of the priests was another place called the holiest of all into which none but the high priest could enter, and that but once a year and never without blood, for here in this third place was the presence and glory of God, which would have slain even the high priest had he dared to enter unclean or without the blood of the sacrifice upon him. I have no hesitation in saying that there is no teaching contained in the New Testament that was not first contained in the types and shadows of the tabernacle constructed in the wilderness by Moses. Let no man ever think that he has the last word of truth about anything, for if any man thinketh he knoweth aught, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. Having established, then, that we may look for three or more levels of meaning in the divine plan, it should not come as any surprise to find that there are also three levels of meaning contained in this simple statement of scripture: "Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." **Exo. 20,9-10**

That there are seven days in a week we need not try to prove. From the beginning of the world this fact has been clearly seen. Six of these days were to be filled with labor, but in the seventh no servile work was to be done. The apostle Peter was ordained to bring forcefully to our minds the truth that each day represents a thousand years, when he said by the Holy Spirit, "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" **2 Pet. 3:8** Compare also Psa. 90:4 This scripture does not teach us, as some seem to believe, that time means nothing with God. Indeed, it teaches the very opposite - that time has a very definite meaning with God. It teaches in the most irrefutable way that just as there are seven days in one week, each twenty-four hours long, so there is a much greater week consisting of seven days, each one thousand years long. Since, then, there is a week of seven days, each twenty-four hours long, and also a week of seven days, each one thousand years long, should it seem incredible that we should also find a third and greater week foreshadowed in God's word consisting of seven days, each seven thousand years long?

If you carefully read the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, you will see that the Hebrews had three sorts of weeks: first, the week of days which was reckoned from one Sabbath to another (Lev. 23:1-3); second, the week of years which was reckoned from one sabbatical year to another and consisted of seven years (Lev. 25:1-7) Then following this was a third week of seven times seven years, or forty-nine years, reckoned from one jubilee year to the next. Lev. 25:8 Every fiftieth year was a year of jubilee. It should not now be difficult for the reader to see that, as one day represents one thousand years, so forty-nine days represent forty-nine thousand years, or one week in which each day is seven thousand years long. Five of these giant days passed by before Adam, for man was created on the sixth day and is brought completely into God's image during the seven thousand year day extending from Adam to the end of the millennial kingdom - that is, the sixth seven thousand year day. Please refer to the enclosed chart. Following this sixth day comes the dispensation of the fullness of times which is the seventh seven thousand year day. In that glorious day God will gather into Christ absolutely all things. Eph. 1:10. This day is followed by the jubilee, one, one thousand year day, in which all debts are cancelled and everything returns to its rightful owner, who is God Himself. If we prove ignorant here, we will certainly miss the plan and purpose of God for the ages. To understand the purpose of God for the ages transforms the Bible into a new book and places the infinite wisdom of God in the pure light in which it belongs.

With these truths fresh in our minds we can easily see that the basis of the whole economy of God as it concerns man is based upon the week of days in Genesis, chapter one - six days of labor followed by a day of rest, each day representing one thousand years. Our minds, however, do not begin to grasp the significance of the plan until we read **Lev. 25:1-6**, for here the week is translated into years. "Six years thou shall sow thy field, and six years thou shall prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land..." **Verses 3 and 4** Here we have seven days, each day one year long, and each day representing one thousand years even as Peter instructed us. It was certainly in the wisdom of God to gradually make our minds acquainted with this great plan of the ages; otherwise we would never have been able to understand the truth that follows in **Lev. 25:8-13**, part of which reads as follows: "And thou shall number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years." **Verse 8** Here then we have a week forty-nine years long, or

seven days, each seven years long. Remembering again the instruction of Peter, we are immediately brought face to face with the indisputable fact that this period of forty-nine years (or forty-nine days, each day one year long), represents forty-nine thousand years, for "One day," said Peter, "is as a thousand years," or seven days in which each day is seven thousand years long. This vast week represents the time from Genesis 1:1 - "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" - to Rev. 21:1 - "and I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." This takes us to the end of the dispensation of the fullness of times spoken of by Paul in Eph. 1:9-10 when God completes His divine purpose by gathering all things in heaven and earth into Christ.

On the sixth day God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." **Gen. 1:26**. You will see the whole plan unfolding before your eyes if you can now see that it was in the sixth twenty-four hour day that the Lord made the man in His likeness and it is also in the sixth seven thousand year day that God is accomplishing His purpose of bringing mankind into His image and into His likeness. In the dispensation of innocence man rejected the government of God, and in disobedience to God's command he chose his own way and immediately discovered himself to be completely out of harmony with God's laws and out of fellowship with God Himself. The Lord said to the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." And unto Adam he said, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." **Gen. 3:16-19**

These verses clearly show that the labor and travail now universal in the world is the result of disobedience. It is the consequence of man's being out of harmony with God. "The curse causeless shall not come." **Prov. 26:2** The six thousand years of the world's history has found man laboring beneath the curse of the Lord. Everything he touches is under the curse. The ground is cursed and refuses to yield her increase. Only by labor and travail, toil and sweat is man able to wrest his livelihood from the ground until at last he himself is consumed by it and falls back into the dust from which he came. So long has man labored that he has become accustomed to it. He spends his days beneath the curse fighting with thorns and thistles, weeds of every kind, voracious insects that devour the seed in the ground, attack the roots of crops, and cut the shooting stems, sawflies that literally cut the wheel down before the harvest, rust that attacks the stems, weeds that crowd out the wheat, swarms of grasshoppers that consume the young plants, and rodents that steal the ripened grain. Besides all these blighting curses the fields are devoured by drought, consumed by hail, devastated by frost, burned by fire, and sometimes drowned in harvest by unseasonable rain; yet he knows not that all this is the result of the curse. If such things can be told of a field of grain, how the curse is multiplied as husbandmen toil to save their fruit orchards, their fields of cotton, and many other things! There is not one crop unaffected by the curse, not one beast in the field or bird or man that is not laboring every day under the curse that fell upon the world and all things in it when man in disobedience threw off the government of God and chose his own rebellious way.

Man in his rebellion has become so accustomed to laboring under the curse of sin that he has accepted all its ravaging consumption as a matter of course. He has accepted without question the fact that innumerable diseases attack the human body until there is not one joint or muscle or organ that is immune from disease and sickness of many kinds. Name, if you can, one organ of the body from the hair on your head to the skin on the soles of your feet that cannot be afflicted with disease. But man has labored so long beneath this curse that he thinks very little of the fact that it is the result of his own rebellion. In his vain attempts to deliver himself from the curse of sickness he finds himself confronted with an ever, increasing variety of diseases. Medical skill never can deliver the world from the curse of sickness, but is progressively plunging us ever deeper into it. With what pathetic words we might tell of the curse of accidents, of war, theft, and crime of every description! We need not here elaborate on the fearful blight of it all. One has but to read the papers or listen to the news to learn that in our day there is no good news. It is all bad.

Man in the very beginning of his existence cast off the easy and blessed yoke of God's government, choosing to do his own will and govern himself. The consequence of his rebellion is in evidence everywhere and the ultimate tragedy of disobedience could not be written or spoken. For six thousand years or six millennial days man's very existence has been naught but labor and travail and all his fruitless struggle has been for his own

belly. To obtain food, clothing, and shelter has been his primary aim, an aim no higher than that of the beasts of the field. That which he laid up in store he has been unable to take away, leaving it to others to disperse in their sin and folly. For his daily bread man toils and sweats continually nor does his ingenuity and invention gain him much. The more he gains by means of these the more he lavishes upon his lusts or leaves to the vanity of others, bringing evil upon himself in sickness and accident, disease, war, crime, and theft. Five hundred wars have been fought since the turn of the twentieth century, and every war in history, whether rightly or wrongly, has been fought to gain something more to consume upon the flesh.

Besides the numberless curses of the physical body man has had to struggle to wrest his living from an earth that is also under the curse. "Cursed is the ground for your sake," God declared to Adam. "In sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return." **Gen. 3:18-19** The curses of the ground are innumerable as men in the sweat of their faces wage their never ending struggle against drought, frost, hail, floods, erosion, ravaging worms, and pests of ever increasing number and variety. No sooner has one enemy been defeated than its very defeat releases a whole variety of new enemies that thrive because of its death. When man undertakes to destroy the carnivorous beasts lest they prey upon his cattle, then the rodents increase to destroy his crops. In his ignorance he destroys the birds lest they pick at his fruit, and in their stead comes the devouring insects, and when man learns to destroy these by using expensive and damaging sprays, he finds that he is poisoning himself and the rest of mankind by polluting the rivers and streams with poisonous insecticides, destroying the fish and birds upon which he fed, and doing damage even to the ground from which his food comes.

All war, sickness, crime, violence, disease, injustice, inequity, and every other ill possible to name has been brought upon man by his own evil and disobedience and is all the result of his carnal rule. "Six days shall thou labor and do all thy work," was the edict of God. Thus for six thousand years, or six millennial days, man has labored and travailed in pain and sweat. He has tried every form of government that the carnal mind could devise and each one in its order has been a dire and terrible failure. If the people choose a monarch to rule over them, he is more often than not filled with his own evil ways, imagining that the world and all the people in it were created for his personal pleasure and satisfaction. If a dictator arises, he soon oppresses the people, forcing every injustice upon them as he rules with his armies and the strength of his arm. And, when men in desperation throw off the evil rule of such men and form a democracy, it, too, falls into decay and becomes so weak and filled with evil that rise is soon given to some man who is strong enough to bring order out of chaos. This very condition is now sweeping over the nations of North America and Europe. Nations once prosperous in temporal things because they feared the Lord have become so evil and defiant against God that their very strength has brought them weakness and their evil savor fills the earth. True indeed were the words of Solomon: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Amid the travail and deepening darkness through which man for almost six thousand years has labored there is an eternal ray of hope, for the immutable edict, "six days shall thou labor", is almost complete. The seventh day, the great millennial Sabbath of rest, is even now at the doors. It will be a Sabbath to last one thousand years. It is the dispensation of the kingdom of God, the rule of Jesus Christ over all the earth with the saints He has prepared through the ages.

We can be most explicit when we say that the kingdom of God will be a literal kingdom and that it will endure upon the earth in glory and majesty for a day a thousand years long. There will be no governments elected by the people, but the elect of God, saints chosen by Him from all ages, will reign in righteousness over the whole earth. His government will not be the tyranny of a dictatorship nor the misrule of an earthly demagogue, but a theocracy in which Christ in all the completeness of His body of sons shall rule and reign in righteousness. "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. (No more electioneering.) A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He has set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." **Isa. 42:1-4**

It is a most singular thing that Christian people for almost two thousand years have been quoting the Lord's prayer, and yet few of them, even the most devout among them, have ever noticed that practically every sentence of that beautiful utterance concerns the blessed and wonderful day when God's kingdom shall come to earth. The first request of the prayer is, "Thy kingdom come", and the second is like unto it, "Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." And the third, "Give us this day our daily bread", is the heart cry of all creation for that blessed kingdom day when man shall no longer with toil and sweat wrest his bread from the unwilling earth, but our daily bread will spring forth from the blessing of the Lord as "the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." **Amos 9:13** Even the blessed words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us", define the very nature and character of the saints who shall rule in the kingdom of God. If among the rank and file of church believers God forgave them only as they forgave others, few indeed would find forgiveness, but those who shall be accounted worthy to rule with Christ in that blessed kingdom will be saints in whom the grace of forgiveness has been wrought to such perfection that their mercy and forgiveness toward all mankind will be in the same abundant measure as God has shown mercy to them.

The prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", is little understood by those who recite the words. But God through many bitter and heartbreaking experiences is teaching us that, unless by His grace we are delivered from evil, we must be led in the paths of temptation that we may come to ourselves as did the prodigal son in the long ago, returning in repentance unto Him who will bring the best robe and put it upon us, for the son that was dead is alive again, and that which was lost is found. The closing statement of that prayer, so all encompassing and all enduring, so sublime and full of God's purposes in wisdom and understanding, is one of the richest revelations ever given to man. "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory unto the age of the ages." The age of the ages is the dispensation of the fullness of times, which follows the millennial kingdom of God and in which time God will gather into Himself all things in Christ. Eph. 1:9-10

God's purposes for the ages are not doomed to failure. They are being worked out exactly as He planned. We will never understand the ways of God until our hearts discover the wonders of the sacred truth that "all things work together for good to them that love God..." We will never know the depths of His loving kindness and tender mercy until we are able to see that the fall of man in that far off dispensation of innocence was part of a purpose that was to develop and mature through timeless ages, producing at last spotless and experienced sons in the image of God. The six days of man's labor and travail have not been in vain, because God has been teaching the universe by experience that there can be no God but the Lord; neither can there be rule or authority anywhere worthy of mention but only the rule and authority of God. Through the dispensations He has been teaching a benighted world that the carnal mind with its divisive tendencies is always an enemy of God. He is causing the world to see that sin is a reproach to any people and the wages of sin is always death. Great have been the lessons taught to even the vilest of men. But there is one purpose above all that God throughout the wearisome ages of human rule has steadfastly pursued. He has been handpicking and carefully preparing a company of saints in His own image and likeness to reign with Him over all the earth and all the nations in the kingdom of God.

If God's people would now understand the plan of God, they must valiantly unlearn many of the human and Roman traditions handed down from generation to generation. We have no words of condemnation for those who have taught that Christians must soon fly away to heaven and leave the world forever behind, for God does not remove the veils of misunderstanding until the time draws near for His purposes to unfold. There is no truth given greater emphasis in God's word than the truth that he is preparing a kingdom of righteousness that will engulf the whole earth in a glory not exceeded by the glory of Eden and that Christ Himself in all the fullness both of the head and of the body will reign over the whole earth in perfect righteousness, justice, judgment, and equity. His kingdom will spread as a mantle of blessed righteousness that will encompass the whole earth. His saints from ages past, resurrected and glorified, will shine as lights set upon a hill, even the holy hill of Zion, until the whole earth is full of the wisdom and knowledge of God even as the waters cover the sea.

Those who have died in faith, not having received the promises, will be raised from the dead in glorification together with us who are alive and in preparation at this very hour; for, though their instruction was completed and they were made perfect in all the ways of God's kingdom, God has kept them waiting for the full perfection

of immortality and glorification until the whole reigning company of the saints is fully prepared that they might all rise together. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." **1 Thess. 4:16-18**. It is here that truth differs from tradition. Tradition has taught that this wonderful catching away will be a means of escaping the tribulation that is coming upon the world. The truth is that at the time of the catching away the tribulation is almost over and the saints rise to meet the descending Christ that they might descend with Him upon the Mount of Olives. This shall be the occasion of the great wrath and anger of all nations of the earth and the wrath of antichrist, who will rise to make war against Him because He has come to put down all rule and authority and government and to rule the nations with a rod of iron until all men know that He is King of kings and Lord of lords. His coming to the Mount of Olives will not only mean the destruction and end of this world's ungodly system, but it will also mean the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth. "Thy kingdom come," prayed Jesus. "Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." Thus with the Lord's coming with all His saints to the holy hill of Zion shall begin that reign that shall endure unto timeless ages.

For the past two thousand years the kingdom of God has been in the earth only in mystery form. Jesus explained this mystery when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you." The only sign that the kingdom of God existed has been in that handful of people scattered all over the world who were walking with God and allowing Christ to set up His mystical throne within their hearts to rule and reign within them. There is no disputing the fact that both in the Old Testament era and in the New Testament era God has had a people whose lives were wholly given to Him. They walked with Him. They followed the leading of His Spirit. They discarded their own wills and followed only the will of God. They lost all love for earthly things and abandoned the things of the flesh to follow the Lamb of God whithersoever He went. They are not nor have they ever been the ordinary run of church members, for many there be who, though they have believed on Christ, follow the leading of men and whose ears have never become attuned to the voice of Christ. The throne of God has never been established within their hearts. But God has always had a separate and elect people of whom He was able to say, "The kingdom of God is within you." These elect people, within whose hearts the kingdom of God now dwells, will rule and reign with Christ in that wonderful hour when the literal kingdom shall come upon earth.

Soon the mystery form of the kingdom of God will pass away and the literal kingdom of God will be established on the earth. It was for this kingdom that Christ prayed when He said, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." We must be very emphatic here, for it is a never ending source of amazement to find that so many Christians are never able to see beyond the mystical kingdom in spite of the indisputable fact that the Psalms of David and the inspired writings of the prophets magnify the literalness of the kingdom of Christ above all else. Isaiah is continually breaking forth in mighty paeans of truth concerning it as though it were an artesian well in his heart that could not be shut off. Time after time he bursts forth with such phrases as these: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert... And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." See **Isa. 35**

Over and over again we see this blessed prophet of God in one breath condemning the wickedness of the people among whom he dwells and the evil ways of the kings and governors that rule the land and in the next shouting the praises of that coming wonderful day when the people will be all righteous, the rulers will be the servants of the Lord, and the land itself shall be blessed of God. In the midst of the woes of the day he cries aloud, "Behold My servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." **Isa. 42:1-4** "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye

that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains ... I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." **Isa. 42:10-11,14-16** Reading the book of Isaiah, one must surely conclude that the prophecy of Isaiah is in truth the gospel of the kingdom of God.

The six days of man's labor and travail are almost at an end and the seventh day, the long awaited Sabbath of God's rest, is at hand. In it man's work will be no more. The six days of man's misrule will be over and his distorted and unholy kingdoms will be ended, and in the seventh day, the thousand year millennial day, the kingdom of God will spread itself over the entire earth and all nations shall serve and obey Him. See Dan. 7:27. In the light of these things surely our understanding is quickened to see the inspired meaning of the words spoken so long ago: "**And God blessed the Sabbath (seventh) day and hallowed it**". **Ex. 20:11**

All throughout the Bible the Lord has been painting pictures of things to come. He has made fleeting shadows to fall across our pathway, reminding us that realities great and eternal are in the offing. It is always typical of man to become so engrossed with the shadows that he is unable to see the reality of the form that made the shadow. He becomes so busy trying to explain the mystic image cast upon the earth in the form of a shadow that he neglects to raise his eyes to behold the reality. A few mornings ago I arose early to stroll in quiet meditation by the shore of a beautiful little lake. The sun, just arisen to gladden the earth, was playfully casting grotesque shadows upon the ground out of all proportion to the objects they represented. As I walked along with my back to the sun, I smiled at my own shadow stretched out fully forty feet in front of me. Certainly the shadow did bear some resemblance to a man, for there was the image of the head upon the shoulders, and the arms and legs were clearly visible. No one could have doubted that this was, indeed, the shadow of a man. But if we try to judge the man by the shadow, we will get things out of all proportion. I am not forty feet high as my shadow seemed to say; and, by the time my morning walk was over, my shadow had already reduced itself to twenty feet and then to ten, and by noon it would have been less than three feet. So we can not accurately judge the man by the shadow. It told nothing of my nature or my character. It did not tell whether I was white or yellow, black or brown. Indeed, it was the shadow of a man, but only a shadow. One could, I think, have a clearer understanding in a moment of time had he looked away from the shadow to the body that made it: and, had he spoken, he would have seen beyond the outer man to commune with the spirit and nature of the man within.

It was with this truth in mind that Paul instructed the Colossians, for they, though believers in Christ, were inclined to waste their time debating about circumcision and uncircumcision, ordinances and laws, new moons and Sabbaths, meats and drinks, and many other things that are only shadows of things to come. So the wise apostle wrote them a letter to turn their eyes away from the shadows to behold the reality, saying in his epistle, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" meaning, of course, that the body that caused the shadow is the body of Christ. Col. 2:16-17 The exhortation is plain then. Do not spend your life arguing about days and months and weeks and years which at best are only shadows, but raise your eyes to see the reality which He is. A shadow is really nothing at all. It changes with every movement of light. The shadow of the Empire State Building tells us little of its worth. About all the information it gives is that, if we follow the shadow to its end, we will find the reality.

Why are people forever debating about which day of the week they should keep, and whether or not they should eat this or that? Why spend our lives debating about shadows? Look away yonder and you will see the body that made the shadow, and the reality. There are millions of people who keep the first day of the week as holy to the Lord who have never seen that to the Christian it foreshadows the dispensation of the fullness of times, and there are millions who keep the seventh day of the week who have never begun to understand the millennial kingdom, which it foreshadows. I greatly fear that many, after spending their lifetime in debate, will find in the end that they did not possess the spirit of the kingdom of God nor believe in the fullness of times.

CHAPTER SIX KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD

Many years ago a friend of mine departed this life to dwell forever in the presence of the Lord. He was a young man of about twenty-nine years, but his relationship with God far exceeded his age, for God had called forth from his heart a love and devotion much beyond the ordinary. He was suddenly stricken with a cancer that developed so rapidly that within eight months he passed away. As the time of departure drew near, he lay delirious, occasionally regaining consciousness long enough to breath out a few words of love to God, but when at last the hour came to bid farewell to earth, mustering all the strength of his weary body, he sang as he passed from death into life,

More love, O Christ, to Thee, more love to Thee!
Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee.
This is my earnest plea; more love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee; more love to Thee.

No man that ever lived has been able to define love because love does not belong to the realm of definition but to the realm of experience. We may read all the beautiful passages of scripture that concern the love of God and yet depart in ignorance with a spirit devoid of understanding and a soul as dry as a toothpick. The preacher may exhaust all his explanations as his glib tongue bursts with eloquence upon the ear, but for all his explanations both we and he go away empty, our souls devoid of truth, for it is not "Athen's blooms, but those of Calvary and Gethsemane that cause prodigals for home to pine, and turn their backs for aye on husks of swine." It is not explanations of love we need, but personal relationship with Christ. The soul that can sing from a bursting heart, "My Jesus, I love thee, I know Thou art mine," knows more of the love of God than all his teachers and has a closer relationship with Christ than all the learned professors in the world with their dry explanations of love and their useless ritual. When our time comes to depart out of this life, we will find no consolation whatever in the abundance of our learning or the tightness of the people among whom we worshipped, but if in that moment our love for Christ abounds, our minds will have no regret and our hearts will know no fear. Whenever I find a Christian who is furtive about the possibility of death, who hates the thought that he is growing old, who resorts to sham and make-believe to convince the public that youth is still present, I know that such a one is lacking in the love of God, for the hidden and secret desire of his heart is to holdfast to this present life and delay as long as possible his departure from it.

The apostle Paul found himself in a great strait. On the one hand he dearly longed to depart this life and dwell with Christ, but on the other hand he was surrounded by people who badly needed him. So he said one day, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better; Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." **Phil. 1:23-24** Had he been free to take his own choice, he would have gladly departed to dwell in the presence of Christ, for well he knew the sacred truth that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"Love passes the door of many beautiful maidens on the way to his beloved's house," and we, too, when our love for Christ abounds, are kept from all earthly loves that we may worship God in purity with neither guilt nor regret upon our conscience, free in the knowledge that our love for the Eternal dwells in innocence before Him. Where the love of God is dwelling in the heart of the believer there need be no law, for love is the fulfilling of the law. Who needs a law saying, "Thou must love," where love already abounds? Need we ever say to him who dwells in love, "Thou shall not kill," since love worketh no ill to his neighbor and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth only in truth? Need we ever say, "Thou shall not covet," to him who loves, since love refuses to seek her own, but the things that please God only?

For this reason and this alone love is the fulfilling of the law. He in whose heart dwells the love of God will do by nature all the things contained in the law of Moses. Obedience to precepts need not be demanded of him who dwells in love, for obedience will flow from his heart like living streams of water on their joyful way to the oceans of God. The soul who loves God finds no rest apart from God, but rejoices only in His presence; therefore, that our love may abound more and more, the Lord often withdraws Himself to hide in darkness that we may seek Him diligently and covet earnestly His abiding presence. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom

my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go, until I had brought Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." **S.O.S. 3:1-5**

Love never stops seeking until she finds the object of her search, for Thou, Lord, madest us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until we rest in Thee. The watchmen mentioned in this beautiful passage could not tell the seeker where to go to find the Lord, and in this respect they represent the preachers of the church system in our day who, though they go all about the city, compassing land and sea in search of proselytes, have no answer to the seeker's problem, for that answer, important above all others, they do not know. But "It was but a little that I passed from them, and I found Him whom my soul loveth." We will have to go beyond our instructors if we are going to come into communion with the Lord. Sermons and explanations are but vanity here, for God is found only by those who love Him enough to search after Him until they find Him. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear..." Neither will such seekers be content until they have brought Him to the inner chamber of the human spirit that God may dwell in them and walk in them, that He may be their God and they may be His people. Oh words and phrases, how inadequate thou art, for who with thee can paint love's portrait upon the human soul?

As we come ever closer to the end of the dispensation of grace, I am becoming more and more convinced that our greatest need is an intimate and personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. There is something about knowing Christ and loving Him that is better far than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, for the glory light of His presence fades into nothingness the endless doctrines and instructions of men. These things serve to leave us high and dry on the sand, proud in the knowledge that is nothing short of ignorance and foolishness in the light of God. But men and women who come into a personal relationship with Jesus come to know Him and all who know Him, walking in love before Him, are wiser in God and the things of God than all their instructors. There is something about loving Christ that makes us part of Him. I cannot explain it nor can I quite understand it, but those who love Him and ever seek to be near Him melt away into Him as ice melts away into water. The roughness and rudeness of the natural man is cleansed away by the glory of His presence. His blood cleanses from sin and His Spirit transforms the lover into the very image of Him who created him. As water mixes with water and air mingles with air, so in our relationship with Him our spirits mingle with His Spirit as we melt away into Him, becoming one Spirit with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. It is here, and here alone, that sonship begins. Here it sojourns and matures all the days of our life and here in God's presence it is consummated and brought to eternal fullness. "If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23**

It would not be hard to write almost endless sermons about the love of God, showing what it is, what it will do, and why we should dwell in it, but for all the head knowledge that men might attain and all the technicalities they might embrace, they might still depart with naught but theory and none of the warm glow of love in their hearts. We may convince men who live in sin that they should love God, but for all that they will continue in enmity against Him. It is impossible to love anything or anybody just because we have been told we ought to do so. A man may be fascinated by the beautiful face of a woman only to find upon acquaintance that everything about her nature repels him, and, indeed, the opposite is often true. We find many people whose appearance holds no attraction for us whatever, but lying beneath the outer appearance there is a personality that draws forth a thousand responses from our spirit.

It was as though the prophet viewed our Lord from afar when he wrote the words, "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." **Isa. 53:2-3** But as the prophet drew near and revelation from on high flooded into his soul, he saw the eternal purpose of God that lay hidden with this stricken man of sorrows from whom we hid our faces. He saw the reason for His cruel passion and bloody sweat, that His griefs and sorrows were not His own but suffered on our behalf and for the redemption of the whole world and the entire creation. The man of sorrows and

acquainted with grief was filled with grief not His own and afflicted with sorrows of another, for surely He hath borne our grief and carried our sorrows. Yet all the time He suffered for us, we stood afar off, deeming Him to be smitten of God and afflicted because of God's wrath against Him. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; He was chastised that we might find peace; by the stripes inflicted upon His body we are healed and brought to immortality, and by the thorns upon His head even the earth is cured of its curse. Therefore to stand afar off is to despise and come to false conclusions, but in drawing near to this Sun of Righteousness the ice and snow of out wintry night of unbelief melt away and flow off into the ocean of His infinite self and we are one with Him.

We can never come to love God because we are told or coaxed to do so. Neither can we develop love by hearing sermons and trying to obey rules. We love God as we draw near to Him and His Spirit changes us into His image and likeness, making us one with Him. One night, as the Passover moon hung in the sky, an act of love was performed that must be told throughout all ages. There, while men communed at supper with Christ and the resurrected Lazarus sat with them, a little woman took a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. She cared not for supper or things to eat or for any conversation, but rather to lavish upon Him all the love of her overflowing heart. And think not that she rose unrequited. In her adoring contemplation she was made like Him, and though she knew it not, she was anointing Him for His burial, for "if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." **Rom. 6:5** We cannot come into contact with Jesus and remain unchanged. Even one moment in His presence makes us a stranger to this present evil age. Neither can we ever again be satisfied to roam the wastes of a world already under judgment, but like Noah's dove we will return from the desolation again and again to Him.

How different was the heart of Judas Iscariot who, in feigned concern for the poor, rebuked this humble woman for her wastefulness, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and carried the purse and stole from all that was put therein. Had not this man walked about the country with Jesus for three years? Was he not among those who had received power to heal the sick and cast out devils? Yes, indeed, he was! And in those short three years his eyes had seen and his ears had heard things too wonderful to tell. But he was like so many ministers today who, having much theology and teaching, preach sermons everywhere. They heal the sick and pray over the demon possessed. They profess to be disciples of the Lord, but their hearts have never been broken before Him or their spirits melted within them. For all their talk and all their profession their ministry is cold and lifeless, and for all their claims of miracles and healings, baptisms and multitudes of disciples, they have never come into vital union with our blessed and wonderful Lord.

We can never really lead men to God unless we live in Him ourselves. It is for this reason that all over the world today our eyes behold the disgusting spectacle of exalted men and women leading multitudes of followers, who idolize them and almost worship them as God. I am sure one could name a dozen or even a hundred such men whose names are of national and international repute, but because they have not lost themselves in Christ, the people follow them instead of Him, and when they are called away in death, all who follow them falter like drunken men because they trusted in man instead of loving Christ.

There are multitudes of people who often long for a deep and blessed experience with God. Not infrequently they express their concern by saying, "Oh, that I had an experience like this man or like that man!" For long and disappointing years they have desired a true relationship with the Lord, but it has been denied them because they sought it outside of God Himself. They imagined they could obtain it by following the rituals of a church system that, though loud in its talk, long in its explanations, and fervent in its proselyting zeal, was in itself far away from the pattern of God and pitifully devoid of His true presence and His will. Centuries ago the disciple Jude earnestly enquired of Jesus, "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." **John 14:23** Ah, my friend, here lies the blessed secret of a rich experience with God. This is the solution to the problem of the abiding presence of God in your life. This is the fulfilling of the law of God and all the sayings of Jesus. This is the secret of abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words. If a man love Me, My Father will love Him. If a man love Me, We will come unto him. If a man love Me, We will make Our abode with Him."

You say you long for a deeper walk with God. Then divorce yourself from the harlot systems that steal your heart away and devote yourself to Christ. Pour the ointment of your love upon His head, bathe His feet with your tears of repentance and joy, fill His heart with your praises and thanksgivings for all things, for you already know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord. Believe and know of a surety that all who pour such fervent love upon Him will in a very short time find themselves walking in a relationship with God that they never deemed was possible, for "if any man love Me... We will come and make Our abode with Him."

There is a strange verse of scripture found in **Prov. 23:26-28** which I would like to take time to explain, for it is full of meaning. "My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways. For a whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increases the transgressors among men." Now, who is this whore to whom the wise man refers? It is none other than the great church whore spoken of in such lurid terms in the book of Revelation. "Come hither," said the angel to John, "and I will show you the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." This is the strange woman, the swaggering prostitute, the narrow pit who has made herself drunk with the blood of the saints and corrupted the earth with her fornication. This is the woman decked with gold, arrayed in purple and scarlet color, upon whose head is emblazoned the names of blasphemy and in whose hand is a golden cup full of the abomination and filth of her fornication. This is mystery Babylon, the great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Cf. Rev. 17:1-6, 19:2

It is this harlot churchwoman that keeps prospective sons from coming into vital union with Jesus Christ. This is the whore who is a deep ditch. Men and women who did run well in the race have been taken by her whorish eye and her deceitful kiss and have fallen into the ditch of denominationalism, undenominationalism, sectarianism, and every imaginable ist and ism that the human mind could devise. They have sunk down so far into this deep ditch that they cannot extricate themselves. This deep ditch and narrow pit is the fearful rut of churchianity into which Christians have fallen so that they are never free to follow the Spirit of Christ as sons of God must do, because, when they would follow Him, the deep ditch and narrow pit into which they have fallen will allow them only to follow its monotonous way of doctrines, laws, and ordinances. From infancy men have been taught that they must be faithful to their church, which, if they only knew it, is not the church at all, but a sect or a denomination that has become a slippery and mucky ditch, a winking whore that steals their heart away from true relationship with Christ, robs them of union with the mysterious virgin church which is His true body, and leaves them like prodigal sons far away from the Father's house, sitting in filthy garments, hungry and destitute, and companions of swine.

If we are ever going to escape the harlot systems, if we are ever going to get out of the deep ditch and out of the rut into which we have fallen, we must make the same decision that was made by the prodigal son. We must leave the deep ditch with its husks of swine and rise up in resolution and holy consecration to return to our Father from whence we came that He may clothe us with the garments of sonship, put the ring of union upon our finger, and rejoice that a son who had fallen into the deep ditch of harlots has returned to walk with Christ and know only Him.

Perhaps you will tell me that you long for fellowship with God's people. That is good, but learn first to fellowship with God. Listen to His voice first that you may know His voice and follow Him, and when you have come into fellowship with God, then you will find yourself in true fellowship with all men who love the Lord. You will find yourself a member of that true mystical church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, unbound, unhampered, and unconfined by the sickening pride of fanciful little groups who seem to imagine that they have all the ocean of God's truth in their little cup and all eternal wisdom locked up in their paltry church creeds.

People often ask me for a statement of what I believe. I never even try to tell them. Why should I attempt to confine infinite wisdom and the knowledge of the universe behind the paper fence of my human understanding? I have left the deep ditch of harlot systems forever and, please God, may I never fall into another. If you are going to walk with me, you will have to climb up out of the ditch of denominationalism and the rut of sectarianism and race across the Elysian fields of a God who is ever progressive and a revelation that is ever expanding, for the path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more till the day is full.

"My son, give me thine heart and let thine eyes observe My ways, for a whore is a deep ditch and a strange woman is a narrow pit."

Let us now speak of a secret that has been hidden from the minds of Christians down through many ages. You have often wanted to know why so often there is trouble among the people of God. It may be trouble over doctrines or trouble over creeds. It may be nothing more than personality clashes and petty dislikes. Indeed, it may be caused by any of the ten thousand imaginations of the carnal mind. I will not defile this paper by trying to name them, for they are many indeed and proceed not from the mind of Christ in men, but from the carnal mind, the avowed and age-lasting enemy of the mind of God. Weeks pass into months and months into years but still the church trouble rages on and on. Though the preacher preaches and exhorts on the sin of division, the wickedness of backbiting, pride, enmity, and all the other evils that divide men one from the other, there is never any respite from trouble and disunity among brethren, for the carnal mind in its enmity against God never ceases to project some phantom image on the screen to re-ignite the fires of bitterness that divide brother from brother.

There is no use in preaching sermons in the hope of bringing unity among brethren and restoring fellowship one with the other, for it is not here that the trouble lies. Broken fellowship is only an ugly rash and a festering sore that warns us of a plague within. The truth of the matter lies in the hidden fact that these warring brethren are in reality out of touch with Jesus Christ, for the man who is in vital union with Christ is at peace with all men, even though they be his enemies. Long ago in the wilderness Miriam and Aaron spoke evil against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. They said, "**Hath the Lord indeed spoken only to Moses! Hath He not spoken also by us!**" **Num. 12:2** The subtle and mischievous words, which they spoke were spoken because they themselves were out of touch with God. Had they been abiding in Him, they would have seen all things as He saw them, for God, though almighty and all wise, had not rebuked Moses for marrying the Ethiopian woman, but He had set His love upon Moses because Moses had set his love upon Him. When men dwell in God, they become completely unconcerned about the vicious noises and cruel accusations that come from the carnal minds of other men, for they have the inclination to recognize that men who dwell in God will often be evil spoken of by men and women with caustic tongues who gnash upon them with their teeth and seek to destroy them. It is necessary for righteous men to suffer many evils, for he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.

Consider how patiently Jesus bore the taunts that were hurled upon Him. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Amid their mocking and jeering He was able to pray fervently, "Father, forgive them." Because His relationship was right with the Father, God dwelt in Him and He dwelt in God and thus was His love made perfect. And His relationship with all mankind was right even though the world was out of harmony with Him. It is our relationship with Christ that really counts. Get that right and all else will fall into God's pattern and we will find ourselves in harmony with all things, for all things, absolutely all things, even the most evil and dreaded of them, are working together for good to them that love the Lord.

When Mary wept at Jesus' feet, her heart was one with His. The sweet oil she lavished upon Him was worth three hundred pence and this represented a whole year's work, for laborers then received a penny a day. **Matt. 20:2**. Because she dwelt in Him and her heart was one with His, she was completely unaffected by the idle words of Judas Iscariot, who rebuked her for her wastefulness. Indeed, it may be wondered whether she heard them at all so absorbed was her life in the wonders of the spiritual realm in which He dwelt. Nor did the beloved Stephen grow agitated with his tormentors, for he, too, loved Christ and, dwelling in Him, both saw and understood all things even as God Himself understands them. Therefore he was able to pray with utter and complete understanding, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." How truly did Paul say that love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things and never faileth! **Cor. 13:7-8**.

Long ago a man named Jacob, weary with the journey of life, at enmity with his enemies, and apparently out of touch with God, mournfully complained, "**Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.**" **Gen. 42:36** But many centuries later, the apostle Paul, beset by evil such as few men have ever known, picked up his pen to write the undying message, "**All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.**" **Rom. 8:28** He had learned the secret of dwelling in Christ and had said for all men to hear, "For me to live is Christ."

Our relationship to a denomination means nothing; our membership in a sect is as the chaff that the wind driveth away, but our relationship to Christ is of eternal value, for there alone is sonship complete, and there alone is harmony with all God's creation and the fullness of His purpose. Furthermore, our fellowship with mankind means much less than we imagine, for Christians are far too often out of harmony with the Father. Men out of harmony with God can never draw us closer to Him nor point the way to a deeper life in Him. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruit. "Consider what I say and the Lord give you understanding." **2 Tim. 2:6**

The first command of God is: "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." And the second command of God is: "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself." The order of this commandment stands unchangeable. Could God Himself have said, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself," and then have said afterward, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God," He would have commanded that which is impossible, for no man can possibly love his neighbor as himself until first of all he has come to love God with all his heart. After our lives become lost with Christ in God, then love for the world and love for all mankind flows from a heart that is filled with divine understanding, for I am sure that beneath all the love of God for His creation there lies that prized possession of understanding. The moment a man begins to understand the wonders of God's purpose, at that same moment his heart leaps out in love for Him by whom all things exist and in whom all things end. The words of the Saviour, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," speak with eloquence of the love of God that flows from a heart of understanding.

See now how the love of God supersedes all knowledge whether spiritual or natural. Paul has declared without equivocation, "If any man thinketh he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man love God, the same is known of Him," **1 Cor. 8:2-3**, or as Weymouth has so beautifully put it, "If any man loves God, that man is known by God." The pulpits of the world today are filled with men who seem to think they know everything. They depend upon their years in college and university, imbibing the traditions of the elders. They have burned the midnight oil as they pored over their books and crammed for their examinations, but for all this the vast majority of them do not know God, and God does not know them. In spite of all their learning, they know nothing as they ought to know it, for the wisdom of man is foolishness with God. But if any man loves God, God knows that man.

We may say then with all confidence that, if God knows a certain man because that man loves Him, then there need be no doubt that that man also knows God. How can a man love God and be known of God and himself not know God? Such a thing is indeed impossible. But let us follow the thought still further. Now we must declare that, the moment a man comes to know God, all the wisdom of his natural mind commences to become foolishness to him, for the wisdom of man is foolishness with God. Henceforth he is unlearning the things he thought he knew. The doctrines that were his pride and joy often become completely incompatible with the love that God is. He finds himself turning away from them, often repulsed and revolted by them. The love of God in his heart has revealed more eternal wisdom to him in just a moment than all his instructors for decades past. Furthermore, with the understanding that love imparts his attitude toward publicans and sinners becomes strangely changed. His mind is filled with understanding for heathen men who have never heard that God had a Son. No longer does he speak evil of any dignity, for "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." **1 John 4:16**

I do not know how many times people have written to me requesting a doctrinal statement. I never try to give them one, for we know nothing yet as we ought to know, but in all my life few, indeed, have enquired concerning my relationship to Him or have told me how I might come to know Him better than I do. Some men know the doctrine of their sect. Others are filled with the tradition of their denomination. Everyone seems to know what he believes, but have you heard the words of Paul, "I know whom I have believed," **2 Tim. 1:12**, not in whom or about whom, but I know whom I have believed?

What tremendous longing filled the heart of this apostle of Christ when he cried from the fathomless depths of his spirit, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." **Phil. 3:10** This is the man who had been brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel and who had said, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man

thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." **Phil. 3:4-9** A man may have all this and yet not know Him. He may be filled with all this kind of knowledge and yet not know whom he has believed. His life may be burned out in zeal for all these things, yet still remain devoid of that love in his heart that would cause God to say, "I know him." What better can we do, then, than love God, for he who loves God is known of God and knows God?

In what hateful vanity and pride do men indulge when they argue and strive about the law and the Godhead. Why should we plague our lives with things too high for us? What benefit will I attain by trying to prove that God bears the likeness of some physical thing since it delights the Lord to hide Himself? Better far it is to devote our time to walking with Him and loving Him, for he that loveth God dwells in God and God in him. You may not and do not know all the things that are coming upon the earth in the very near future. You may not know the order of the resurrection nor understand the catching away of the in Christ company. Indeed, you may not even know your own ministry nor your true place in the kingdom, but what does that matter if above all your lack of knowledge you know Him and love Him? Will God pass you up on that day because there were many things you did not understand and could not explain? I tell you, no, for Christ has long ago said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there may ye be also." And if you like Thomas should object, saying, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest and how can we know the way," the answer would be the same to you as it was to him: "I am the way, the truth and the life."

What further need you know about the way, since to know Him is to know the way? He is the way. What, O man, is the value of spending a lifetime searching for truth since He is the truth, and to know Him is to possess all the truth there is in the universe. How pitifully often have men enquired, "How can I know the way? Which of all these denominations is the right one? Who of these many preachers has the truth? Forget it, my friend and brother, for all that come before Him are thieves and robbers. Why burden your soul with their uncertain creeds? Seek to know Christ and Christ alone. He is the truth and He is the way.

Jesus said many things that cause us much astonishment. In John, chapter 10, He made Himself to be the good shepherd that enters by the door and the door by which the good shepherd enters, and further still He seems to make Himself to be the sheepfold into which all the sheep come. Said He, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." And again, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." And is it not true that He is all these things and life besides? He who finds Him as the truth shall find Him as the way, and he who finds Him as the way shall find Him as the life.

Friends all around me are trying to find
What the heart yearns for, by sin undermined.
I have the secret; I know where 'tis found;
Only true pleasures in Jesus abound.
All that I want is in Jesus.
He satisfies, joy He supplies.
Life would be worthless without Him;
ALL THINGS in Jesus I find.

In these momentous days many are much troubled about the time and manner of the Lord's return and, as always, there are many who, imagining themselves to be very wise, are always ready at a moment's notice to spring to the defense of their dogmas or to go to great lengths to prove the points that seem real to them. Some fervently teach a pre-millennial coming of Christ; others are in great opposition, contending for a post-millennial coming of Christ. Some believe in total rapture of the church before the tribulation; others believe

that the church will go through the tribulation. The trouble is that we see through a glass darkly and not face to face. We know in part and not as we are known, because the love of God is not perfected in our hearts. The older I grow the more I realize just how little I really know and the less dogmatic I become about almost all things. The less dependence we put in our own understanding the more we are inclined to abide in Him and look to Him as the solution to all our problems, and of this we may be sure: all those who abide in Him and keep themselves in His love will always stand complete in Him and in full preparation and readiness for all things that are to come. Therefore, should Christ come in the early morning or at noon, in the evening or at midnight, He will never find us sleeping, but abiding in Him and kept in the love of God that whether we wake or sleep we shall be found perfect in Him, without spot and blameless.

Perfect love casteth out fear, not only the momentary terrors of the way but the dread of uncertainty that often haunts the people of God who lean heavily on their own understanding. The man that loves best understands best. He who loves best is freest from the torments of fear, for he, abiding in Him, knows that Christ is not only the way but the light that shines ever more brightly upon it.

I do not know how God will fulfill the many promises of His word. The restitution and restoration of all things was clearly taught by the apostles and prophets. We may understand very little of how it will be accomplished, but here in this blessed hiding place, abiding in Him and kept in the love of God, the sure and blessed confidence eternally lives that all things will be restored just as He has promised, that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to the glory of God that He is Lord of all, and that every creature in heaven and earth and in the sea will be heard saying, "Blessing and honor and glory to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13 We need not strive about details when we know Him and abide in His eternal love, for we are complete in Him, and in Him dwelleth all the wisdom and knowledge of the universe. Whether therefore we wake or whether we sleep, we live together with Him. 2 Thess. 5:10

We freely admit that our understanding of God's eternal plan is extremely limited, but there is more abundant understanding in those Christians who concentrate on loving God than is found in those who concentrate on study and strict adherence to the teaching of their tradition. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." John 14:21 The surest way for any man to know the secrets of the Lord is to love Christ. The things contained in books may be just so much chaff, for the world is full of books and of the writing of them there is no end. The mails are loaded with nuisance literature, each proclaiming his pet theory and seeking to draw away disciples, but he who uplifts any save Christ is a thief and a robber, robbing Christ by stealing the love of His disciples from Him and robbing men of the priceless heritage of abiding in Him.

It would seem to be irrelevant to remind God's people that we are at this very moment living in the closing hours of the sixth dispensation - the dispensation of grace. The seventh dispensation - the dispensation of the kingdom of God - will follow this one just as naturally as the days of the week follow each other in their turn, as simply as day follows night. As the book of Genesis begins with man in the garden of Eden and ends with Joseph in a coffin in Egypt, so every dispensation begins with a blessing and ends with a curse, quickly followed by a new age with a new blessing. The dispensation of the law ended with the whole world's being judged in the awful passion of Jesus Christ, but the dispensation of grace began with the glory of the resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But the age that began with such glory is now about to end as John beheld it, lukewarm and with Christ standing outside the professing church knocking at the heart's door of individual men, saying, "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me." Rev. 3:20 Christ is not in the church system as we know it today. He is outside the camp and all who would know Him must go unto Him without the camp of the present system, for He is preparing a mystical church, unseen and unknown of men, but known of God and abiding in Him. These are they who sup with Him. These are they who have overcome through Him. To them it shall be granted to sit with Him in His throne even as He overcame and is set down with the Father in His throne. Cf Rev. 3:20-21

The events that are happening every day are the events predicted by our Lord and by His holy apostles and prophets - wars and rumors of wars, violence, riots, anarchy, rebellions, earthquakes, the sea and waves roaring, men's hearts failing for fear, disobedience to parents, unthankfulness, unholiness, forms of godliness without any sign of power, and the thoughts of men's hearts only evil continually. It would take almost endless

pages to even begin to cover the disasters of the past year, and so frequent have they become that our hearts grow hardened to them except we watch and abide in Him. Because of the momentous hour in which we live, it is time to remove our trust from man and all his abominable human systems. It is time to remove our foot from the great harlot system, which has long falsely paraded as the church, that we might abide in Him, for it is only those who are joined in love to Christ that are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

In this vital hour when all the systems of earth are collapsing, when democracies are falling, mighty empires are fading away, and the church system has wandered off into the sinking sands of the carnal mind, ecumenism and Babylon, there could be nothing better than that men and women should separate themselves unto Him. A week of fasting and prayer would open your eyes to a new realm of understanding in God. It would deliver you from the great ditch into which the harlot system has led you. We have been so busy tithing rue, anise, and cummin that we have passed over judgment and the love of God. Luke 11:42 While we have been busy receiving honor from men, we have awakened to hear the Lord saying, "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." **John 5:42** Because we have been busy receiving honor from one another, our faith has vanished away. "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" **John 5:44** Because we have followed the teachings of men, we have gone astray in our doctrines, becoming most unthankful and unholy, but the grace of God teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:12-13

"May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ." **2 Thess. 3:5.** "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." **John 15:7** Therefore, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. AMEN!

CHAPTER SEVEN DEPRESSION

All over the world today Christians and non-Christians, saved and unsaved, are being cast into the black dungeon of depression. One Robert Barrett describes depression as "a miserable, wretched experience that leaves you exhausted, uninvolved, and in deep, hopeless despair. There seems to be nowhere to turn and not one single thing you can do to escape these horrible feelings. You feel doomed, trapped, and at the end of your rope. It is awful!"

It may be that two thirds of those who read these lines have been afflicted and enslaved by the dread tyrannical monster of depression. It is indeed an horrible encounter with hopeless despair. The experience is common to both believers and unbelievers. Because of depression people have committed suicide. Tens of thousands are running to psychiatrists for help. These men do their best, I am sure, but their help comes only from the natural mind; therefore, they cannot get to the true source of the problem.

Almost any disease could be healed if the cause of it can be ascertained, but if the cause cannot be discovered, neither can the cure be found. To ascertain the cause of depression we must learn the truth that man is spirit, soul and body, and in that order of importance. Everything in the world today is designed for the physical - the body. Body first, the mind second, and last and least important is the spirit. What a tragedy! What a shameful perversion of truth!

Depression, whether found in the saint or in the sinner is caused by the desperate craving of the spiritual man for communion with God. The spirit of man is one essence with the Spirit of God. It thirsts for God! It hungers for God! It yearns for God! It faints for God! It craves spiritual meat and spiritual drink like a parched man lost in a burning desert whose tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth for thirst, whose soul swoons and whose body droops and faints as hopelessness and despair seize upon him and there is no shadow or refuge from his torture.

Let saint and sinner alike take heed to what I now tell you. If you will simply recognize that what you have been calling depression is not depression at all, but the plaintive, pitiful, heart-rending, tortured cry of the spirit for communion and fellowship with God, its Maker, then you will have the answer to your problem. This that you are experiencing is nothing more nor less than the "groanings, which cannot be uttered", spoken of and

experienced by the apostle Paul in Romans 8:26-27. Does not your body literally cry out for food when it is starved? Why then should we think it strange that the spirit should also cry out when it, too, is being starved for communion with Christ? Do you not feel depressed when your body is famished for water? Why then should we think it strange or unusual that the spirit should droop and faint when it is famished for the water of life and the bread of life?

You will have no more depression if you will learn the simple secret. My spirit is hungry; it must sup with Christ and Christ must sup with me. When this feeling of depression falls upon you, go immediately to the secret place - some place where you can be alone with God. Kneel there and do whatever the spirit within you seems to demand. Pray, if prayer wells up within. Groan, if in this the spirit finds release and satisfaction. Praise, if worship is flowing like a torrent from your heart. It will not be long, I assure you, before you begin to learn and sense the way of the Spirit. Take the word of God with you. Read it slowly and meditate upon its blessed truth and, as you do this, you will feel the groaning, the heaviness, the depression ebbing from your innermost spirit as water ebbs from melting snow. In this communion both the Spirit of God and the spirit of man are satisfied and united.

Men and women in all ages have experienced this same depression. Poor, despondent Elijah, sitting faint and weary under the juniper tree, said, "It is enough. Take my life. I do not want to live any longer." Neither in the earthquake, the fire nor the wind was God present, but in the still, small voice of the Spirit. 1 Kings 19:11-13 Disappointed, disconsolate Jonah, blustering because events had not gone the way he hoped, cried out in his depression, "O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; it is better for me to die than to live." Listen and you will hear the voice of Job, afflicted, perplexed, and crushed and depressed, cursing the day he was born and imprecating malevolent maledictions even on those who rejoiced at the hour of his birth. These men of God all experienced the horror of depression and each of them have had to learn, even as I have also done, that depression comes from the cry of the spirit for communion with God. It is not depression at all. It is the thirsting of the spirit after God, manifesting itself in "groaning that cannot be uttered". Go quickly then to the secret place that your spiritual travail may bring to the birth that sonship for which not only the spirit, but the whole creation, craves.

Do you not see from this how fruitless it is to try to shake off this so-called depression, which is in fact the spiritual groaning after God's Spirit, by running here and there, or entering into fun or excitement, or running off to church to get with people? It is not people you need, beloved. It is communion with Christ. The psychiatrist cannot help you because he does not understand your problem. Go to the secret place of the Most High. Christ has been knocking. Open wide the door and He will come in and sup with you and you with Him. To the unsaved the same message is true. It is Christ for which your spirit groans. You need Him and Him alone.

Go, carry your burden to Jesus!
To Him let your heart be outpoured.
Your Father, who seeth in secret,
Will bring you a gracious reward.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 23

TWO REALMS

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE

THE FIVE SENSES IN THE REALM OF DEATH

Man is a triune being - spirit, soul and body. The spirit is the realm of God consciousness, the soul is the realm of self-consciousness, and the body is the realm of sense consciousness.

Man in his fallen state speaks of himself as body, soul, and spirit, but God always refers to him as spirit, soul and body. The reason for this reversal of terms becomes evident when we understand that man looks only at the visible and temporal, beyond which he cannot see, while God looks at the spiritual and eternal, which though invisible to man is radiantly clear and vastly more important to Him and to all who inhabit that blessed realm of life and reality. Man in his fallen state has never learned that the things he sees are unreal. They are unreal because they are passing away.

Visible things are always changing and never remain the same. How then can that which is always changing and which never remains the same be real? That which is young today is old tomorrow, and that which blooms today has faded tomorrow and gone to the dust the day following. "Man which is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not." **Job 14:1-2** "What is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." **Jas. 4:14.** "For all flesh is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away." **1 Pet. 1:24** "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." **Psa. 103:15, 16** "For that which is seen is temporal, but that which is not seen is eternal." When the Spirit of God opens the eyes of our understanding, clearly revealing the temporary nature of all visible things, at that same moment they lose their glamour and value. They become as the morning dew that passes away at noon, a fleeting shadow, or a fading leaf.

Man in the beginning, before the shame and desolation of his fall, was clothed upon by the glory of God. He was not naked, as we understand the term, neither was he clothed as animals are clothed. He was radiant with the glory of a spirit in God's image as was Jesus, the last Adam, at the transfiguration, whose face shone as

the sun and His raiment was as the light. He was in truth spirit, soul, and body, for the Spirit clothed his body with glory not as now, for now the body clothes the spirit in death. Paul had hope of the restoration of this very thing when he penned the immortal words of **2 Cor. 5:1-6**, inwardly sighing for the day to speedily come when once again he would be clothed upon with his heavenly house, that, being clothed upon, he would no longer be naked. In Moffatt's vivid translation of this passage we get the true meaning of the message that was in the apostle's heart: "It makes me sigh indeed, this yearning to be under cover of my heavenly habitation, since I am sure that once so covered I shall not be naked at the hour of death. I do sigh within this tent of mine with heavy anxiety, not that I want to be stripped, no, but to be under cover of the other, to have my mortal element absorbed by life. I am prepared for this change by God, Who has given me the Spirit as a pledge and installment."

It is no wonder that Paul longed for the return of the day when he would be clothed with the Spirit of God, not that the Spirit should be in him only, but that he should be in the Spirit; not that the body of death should be visible, but that the body of death should be swallowed up in the life of that spirit house which is from heaven that death should be absorbed by life. It is no wonder that Paul was filled with this longing, for, whether known or unknown, that same longing fills the heart of every man; yea even the beasts and all inanimate things groan for the manifestation of the sons of God. The moment Adam and Eve discovered that the glory of their heavenly house had departed from them, leaving them stark naked, they manifested their plaintive longing for its return by pitifully sewing together fig leaves to cover the nakedness made manifest by the departure of their spirit house from heaven. Man alone of all God's creatures finds it necessary to wear an artificial covering. He must rob the sheep of its wool to cover himself. He must rob the plant of its cotton to hide the nakedness of which he is ashamed. Man desires to be clothed, beautifully clothed, but in his blindness, nakedness, and death he knows not at all that a glorious seamless garment not made with hands has been purchased for him by the blood of the eternal Son of God. Righteous Job saw this magnificent truth as he sat among the ashes scraping himself with a potsherd while his flesh rotted on his aching bones. "I know that my redeemer liveth," he cried, "And He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and if after my skin worms destroy this body, yet/n my flesh shall! see God, Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another." **Job 19:25** The hour is at hand at last when this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15:53, 54** We hear a great deal of talk today about entering into the realm of the spirit, but there is one thing above all else that continually stands with drawn sword to block our pathway, always hindering us from entering in to the life for which our spirits crave. The flesh is that one thing and we may safely say the only thing that bars our progress to a true life in the Spirit. The vast majority of people blame Satan for their lack of spiritual progress, but I am convinced that, were it not for the flesh in which all men live and move and have their being, Satan would have no power at all. The moment a man has completely overcome the flesh by the power of the Spirit, Satan is completely robbed of all his power over that man. This I declare to be the truth with no hesitation or equivocation.

WHAT THE FLESH IS

One would suppose that it would be completely unnecessary to ever ask the question, "What is the flesh?" But I for one must testify that, after serving God for almost forty years, daily seeking His face and studying His Word, I am one hundred percent convinced that the question of what the flesh really is, is the best kept secret both in the world and in the church today. The moment we make an assertion like that, perhaps a hundred, perhaps a thousand or ten thousand, voices will be immediately lifted in objection. But, if you were to ask that same hundred or thousand people to tell you exactly what the flesh is, they would all give you different and ambiguous answers that assist your understanding not one whit. If you will but speak the truth to your own heart, and if I will speak the truth to mine, we will both have to confess that, though we have heard the term the flesh used by preachers on countless occasions, having heard many sermons on the subject as well, yet we still went away in complete ignorance as to what the flesh really is, and with no true understanding as to how it so successfully operates that it hinders all mankind from a life in the Spirit. The moment we break through the flesh barrier, we enter into the realm of the Spirit and the spirit becomes supreme. The desperate famine in understanding the simple fact of what the flesh is has given birth to all manner of legalism and bondage.

All the world lives after the flesh whether it be man, or beast, or birds, or fishes of the sea, and yet for some strange reason the knowledge of what the flesh is has been reserved for the end of the age. But once we see

what it really is, thus discerning the weakness and unprofitableness of it, it will have no more power over us than common dung and we will be on the path at last to a true life in the spirit and the sonship for which all creation groans. We are going to have to discard the often repeated and generally accepted assertion that the flesh is the carnal mind, for it is not. We must also give up the notion that the flesh is the carnal nature. It is no such thing. As long as we desperately cling to these long-standing notions, we will forever remain in ignorance, always remain in the flesh, and never be free of a carnal (fleshly) mind. We will always be subject to the carnal (fleshly) nature, and never enter into the realm of the Spirit.

We have already stated that man is a triune being. He is spirit, soul, and body. We need have no hesitation whatever in saying that man is spirit, soul, and flesh, for who on earth can say that the body is not flesh? Centuries ago Job sat in dust and ashes, his body covered with boils and his flesh literally putrid with sores. Prophesying of the end of the age, he said, "If after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Now the most stubborn theologian on earth would surely admit that his flesh and his body referred to here were one and the same thing. Why is it, then, that when Paul uses exactly the same terms saying, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but, if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Christians insist on making the body one thing but the flesh something else altogether. The truth is that, when Paul referred to the flesh and the body in the same verse, he was plainly showing that they are one and the same thing. We will develop this truth greatly as we progress, yet for the moment we need have no hesitation whatever in making this clear statement: the flesh to which the Bible writers so often refer is nothing more and nothing less than the corruptible human body. If we close our eyes here, we will never understand the things of the Spirit, but grope vainly for light until the day when our flesh goes to the grave and the spirit, released by the death of the body of flesh, returns to God Who gave it.

When David said, "My flesh shall rest in hope," (Psa. 16:9), he was speaking of the day when his body would lie in the grave, waiting for the resurrection. When Jesus said, "The bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51), He was unquestionably speaking of his body, which He gave, saying, "Take eat, this is My body." Matt. 26:26 See also 1 Cor. 11:24 "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life... for My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed." John 16-54-55 When Nicodemus questioned Jesus about the new birth, he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" To which Jesus replied, "That which is born of flesh is flesh." John 3:6 To this I might say, would God that all men would accept that, statement for what it says, believing that the flesh of which Jesus spoke is the flesh, the corruptible human body of flesh, nothing more and nothing less.

THE FLESH IS NOT WICKED

People throughout the whole church age have been taught to believe that the flesh (whatever it is) is something terribly wicked. They have come to the conclusion that the flesh (whatever it was) was something created by the devil. Men have consistently confused the flesh with the works of the flesh, and they have consistently confused the flesh with the carnal mind, making them one and the same thing. As long as you maintain that the flesh and the works of the flesh are one and the same thing, you will never find victory, for you will always be dealing with the effects instead of the cause, and always be treating the rash instead of the fever.

In a house where we once lived a certain spider had the annoying habit of spinning a web each night right across our doorway. The moment anyone opened the door to walk out, he walked right into the spider's web. He then spent the next few minutes brushing the sticky mess from his face and clothes. This continued for some days until we learned to take the broom and sweep the web down before venturing out. But we might well have continued sweeping the web down each morning until this day, gaining nothing, had not my wife one morning spotted the spider that was spinning all these webs. With feminine thoroughness she exterminated him, and I need not tell you that the following morning there was no spider web over the door. It was at this time that the Spirit was revealing many things to me regarding the flesh and, as I waited before Him, He put the truth clearly in my heart thus: the work of the flesh is no more the flesh than a spider web is a spider. There is nothing sinful or wicked about a spider though his works can be most annoying. Neither is there anything sinful about the flesh. It is something God made, but the works of which the flesh is capable are all opposite to the

spirit and therefore bring forth all manner of evil and death. When the flesh goes to work, it spins a web manifest in all such things as adultery, fornication, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. **Gal. 5:19-21** To this Paul adds, "of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in the past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

WHAT IS THE CARNAL MIND?

The word *carni* is a Latin word meaning flesh. The word *carnal* is the adjective meaning fleshly. Therefore when the Bible speaks of the carnal mind, it simply means the fleshly mind. The carnal mind is the body mind. The carnal mind is never concerned with the things of God or the things of the Spirit. The carnal mind is always and only concerned with the things of the body or the flesh. It is always working to satisfy the physical flesh of man. It is always thinking how it can better satisfy some craving of the flesh of man. It is forever planning some unspiritual thing that it can lavish on the body. It is very fitting, therefore, that Paul begins his list of fleshly manifestations with the words adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, for, these being cravings of the physical body, the carnal or fleshly mind seeks to satisfy its every desire and fancy.

When the flesh has hunger, the carnal mind is immediately at work to give it food. When the flesh has thirst, the fleshly mind is always at work to find it drink. When the flesh demands sleep, the carnal mind caters to its whim even though the spirit may be longing to commune with God. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane told His disciples to watch and pray, yet upon returning He found them sleeping. He revealed the eternal war between the corruptible body of flesh and the spirit when He said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." The spirit has God consciousness while the flesh has only sense consciousness. The flesh has many lusts (desires), many of which are terribly evil and none of which do ought but hinder and deter the spirit. The moment lusts arise within our bodies whether it be for the delight of the eyes or ears, or for food, drink, sex or a thousand other things, the carnal mind immediately seeks to find some way of satisfying them. Did not James say, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." **Jas. 1:14** The carnal mind does not always think of evil things. There is nothing particularly evil about food or drink or taking rest in sleep, but what we want to point out is that the carnal mind is called the carnal mind because it is concerned only with the things of the body whether those things be good or bad. The carnal mind never thinks of any spiritual thing. The things of the Spirit are nothing to it. It is always contrary to the spiritual mind, for the spiritual mind is only concerned with the things that belong to the Spirit and man's relationship with God.

There is an impassable gulf between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, for the spiritual mind is concerned only with the things of God and all the things that concern the Spirit, which things lead to life and immortality. But the fleshly or carnal mind is concerned only with the things of the physical body of flesh, which things lead only to death and corruption because there is no life in them. For this very reason the scripture says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." What other result could there possibly be, for there is no life in the body except what the Spirit gives. Therefore, to live for the sake of the body with its earthly desires must end in death. But the Spirit is eternal, immortal, and incorruptible; therefore, to live after the Spirit is life. Thus Paul says, "To be carnally (bodily) minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

THE FIVE SENSES OF THE BODY

We said above that man is spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the realm of God consciousness, the soul is the realm of self-consciousness, and the body (flesh) is the realm of sense consciousness. The five precious senses of the physical body are these: Seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, and smelling. These without exception belong to the realm of the physical. They are the five senses of the body or the five senses of the flesh. It will be necessary here to consider at length the five senses of the body and, because there is much misunderstanding about this truth, we must point out here that there is positively nothing sinful or evil in any way about any of the five physical senses. They are all wonderful gifts from God and the present world could not possibly exist without them. What we must make clear, however, is this: these five senses as we know them are in the realm of the body only; therefore, there is no life in them, the consequence being that all who

live for the sake of them (the senses) end in certain death - not because they are sinful but because there is no life in them.

THE RUDIMENTS OF THE WORLD

The apostle Paul in writing to the Colossians made this strange statement: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy or vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." **Col. 2:8** Then again, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are you subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, and handle not?" **Col. 2:20** Now I think we may safely say that not one person in ten thousand has ever understood what Paul meant by the expression rudiments of the world. Therefore few, if any, have ever understood how it is possible for a person to live after them or for the sake of them.

A rudiment is a first principle. The rudiments of the world are the first principles of the world. They are the most rudimentary or the most elementary things or principles in all the world or perhaps in all the universe. I suppose we may safely say that every branch of science has its own rudiments or its own elements. There are rudiments to arithmetic, rudiments to reading, rudiments to music. These rudimentary principles are the very first principles you must learn in studying any science. I suppose the most rudimentary (elementary) principle of the science of reading and writing would be the need to learn the letters of the alphabet. The most elementary thing about mathematics would be to learn the figures from one to ten. Possibly the most elementary thing about music would be to learn the scales, and so we could go on endlessly through every art or science in the world.

Now lest we should flounder forever in our search for the particular rudiments of which Paul speaks, he names two or three of them to clear our minds of all doubt, saying, "Wherefore if ye be dead to the rudiments of the world, why are ye subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, handle not." When Paul mentions touch and taste, he is giving us the key to the particular rudiments of which he speaks, for touch and taste are two of the five senses of the body, or the physical flesh, the other three being seeing, hearing, and smelling. These five senses together are the rudiments (elements) of the world.

THE MOST ELEMENTARY OF ALL

We must point out that the five senses of the physical body are the most elementary or rudimentary principles in all the universe. You may take any branch of science you wish, but you will never find anything so elementary or so universal as the ability to see, hear, taste, touch, or smell. The most rudimentary principles of every science on earth must be studied and learned by man, but no man ever has to learn to see, or taste, or hear, or smell, or feel, for all these marvelous elementary (rudimentary) principles were with us at birth. An infant of one day has the same ability to see, hear, taste, feel, or smell as a grown man. Though the child knows nothing about the rudiments of arithmetic, reading, music, or any science, yet because these five senses are the most rudimentary principles in the universe, he has them in completeness at birth.

There is another fact, which shows beyond doubt that the five senses of the body are the most elementary principles in all the universe, and that is that these five elements are not confined to man. They are also found in all forms of physical life. Animals, birds, insects, and fish are all endowed with the same five senses and in many cases they are in greatly intensified form. A hawk can see a mouse easily at one hundred yards. An antelope on the prairie can see as well as a man with an eight power binocular. A dog can follow a scent, which is unseen as easily as a man can follow a trail that is visible. A robin appears to have the ability to hear a worm beneath the grass of your lawn, and bats fly entirely by sound. Though a boy learning arithmetic must learn that two plus two makes four or a child learning music must learn that the notes in the spaces are F, A, C, E, and the notes on the lines are E, G, B, D, F, or one learning to read must learn his ABC's, no one has to learn these basic elements of all the universe - seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling. Neither do beasts and lower creatures have to learn them, for they, being the five rudiments of the world, are given in fullness and completeness at birth to all creatures whether man, beast, fish, or insect. There is not the slightest doubt in all the world that when Paul referred to the rudiments of the world in Col. 2:8, 20 and to the weak and beggarly elements in Gal. 4:9, he was referring to these five wonderful physical senses which, though

wonderful beyond compare, are weak and beggarly because in the realm of the flesh they have no power to give life and all who live for the sake of them end in death.

THE WORLD AND THE FIVE SENSES

Let us see now the enormous place these five senses of the body have in the present world system. As fire depends on fuel and as man to live depends on air, so also does all world commerce and all the earth's industry depend completely and entirely for its very existence on the five senses of the human body. This at first may seem like a sweeping statement and before any superficial examination it may appear untrue, but with a little careful consideration we will be forced to the conclusion that the world system, whether it be commerce, art, science, transportation or anything else, depends upon the five senses of the body for its existence. I must also emphatically add that not only does all industry and commerce depend upon the five senses of the body, but all industry and commerce on earth exists entirely and operates completely for the sake and satisfaction of the five senses of the human body, and this without any exception to the rule.

THE SENSE OF TASTE

A mighty universal world industry is built upon and entirely depends upon man's physical sense of taste. This fact is so evident to any thinking person that it would seem to be a waste of time to enlarge upon it. Not only in our day, but all through the centuries there has been an enormous appeal to man's sense of taste. I do not mean in the least that this is wrong, but the purpose of this writing will be to show that all the desires (lusts) of the flesh (the body) are manifest through the five senses, and all who live after them or for the sake of them can only hope to die, because there is no life in any of them. For this reason they are weak and beggarly.

Man is forever contriving new dishes and new recipes to appeal to the sense of taste. Listen to the radio commercials as they seek to tempt man's lust for tasty food. Every imaginable adjective is used to describe how tasty, tangy, toothful, delicious, delectable, and appetizing these dainty, lip-smacking dishes are. The ads in the magazines are forever presenting some new delectable dish to tempt man's palate, and so well prepared are they that the very sight of them on paper starts the mouth to watering. Where would the food industry be were it not for the sense of taste? Were it not for this remarkable sense, sawdust would be as tasteful as roast beef and a cup of fine coffee would have no more appeal to the taste than a glass of water.

Solomon proclaimed indisputable truth when he said, "All man's labor is for his mouth, yet the appetite is not filled." **Ecc. 6:7** It is not sinful to eat. It is desirable to have a fine sense of taste, but whether we taste much or little the end will be the same, for there is no life in taste. Therefore, it is a weak and beggarly element promising nothing but death. The physical man loves to taste. He is ever inventing more and more things to taste until all his labor is for his mouth. Yet, all such labor notwithstanding, he is slowly and surely dying even while he lives. Furthermore even that fine sense of taste before whose altar he daily worships is gradually diminishing until at seventy years of age he has lost seventy per cent of the keenness of his physical senses. If mankind should suddenly lose the sense of taste, thousands of our food industries would go bankrupt within a month. There can be no denying the fact, then, that a whole world industry depends entirely on man's physical sense of taste.

THE SENSE OF SMELL

It is of great interest to notice that God has grouped all the senses close to the mouth. If this were not the case, many of us would have died long ago. All things that enter the mouth are scrutinized by the eyes, then the nose, then the palate. Indeed, even the sense of touch tells us whether or not certain things are fit to be eaten. While animals and other creatures use their sense of smell solely for their own preservation and benefit, man refuses to stop there, but goes far beyond that. He has capitalized on the human love for exotic smell until he has built an enormous commerce of world, wide proportions that depends entirely on the physical sense of smell for its very existence. Go to any pharmacy or department store and you will find counters loaded with beautifully packaged items created entirely to please and cater to the human sense of smell. There are exotic perfumes imported from Arabia and France, delightful odoriferous toilet waters and Eau de Cologne, aromatic perfumes and fragrant creams, smelling bags and scent bottles, and all manner of fragrant soaps that drop their aroma like the dews of heaven on the nostrils of man.

The perfume industry is nothing new. It was an enormous industry in very ancient times. The Bible speaks of the rich traffic in sweet spices and anointing oils with all manner of perfumes. Even the deodorizers which now crowd the counters are made solely because of man's sense of smell. The fantastic cost of these articles is well known to most who read these lines. Sufficient indeed it is to say that this multi-billion dollar industry of world wide importance depends entirely for its existence on this one rudiment which we all know as the sense of smell.

THE SENSE OF SIGHT

Man is not permitted to use his sense of sight merely for his own survival as is the case with animals or birds, but man uses his sense of sight to please and delight himself. The world, wide industry of sightseeing depends entirely on man's intense desire to see. The fourth largest industry in New York city is the sightseeing industry. The sightseeing industry has grown to such world wide proportions that millions of people are directly or indirectly employed in it every day. In the year 1958 alone sixty thousand Canadians, six hundred thousand Americans and two million Europeans visited the British Isles. The average spending was about \$600.00 per person. Most of this vast throng made the journey for the main purpose of seeing. Vast as is this aggregate, it is but a drop in the bucket compared to the world wide interest in sightseeing. Therefore, we must conclude that though the eye is not and never can be filled with seeing, yet a world wide industry of enormous proportions is built on the sense of sight. Men and women spend days, months, and years enjoying the wonderful sights of earth. They browse endlessly in museums, travel far to see ancient architecture, gaze at magnificent mountains, delight themselves with waterfalls and ten thousand things which God has given us to enjoy. There is no sin in it. There is no wrong in any sense of the word. Like bodily exercise it "profiteth little." But though we should see all the sights of earth ten thousand times over, the eye could not be satisfied with seeing, and because there is no life in any sense of the flesh, we would but die. Even while we delight our eyes with seeing, they grow frail and we are forced to resort to artificial aids to assist our physical sight. Again I say that, because all this is in the realm of the body of flesh, there is no life in it. for if we live after the flesh we shall die.

THE SENSE OF HEARING

Consider now how great an industry is built solely to satisfy the sense of hearing. What indeed would the world be without sound and without hearing? I should think it would be even more drab than a world without color. We do not have the ability to tell how much the physical world depends on sound and hearing. Millions of dollars worth of musical instruments are sold every day. They would not exist at all were it not for man's sense of hearing. Millions of songs are sung every day and millions of dollars are spent to hear them sung, but they would neither be sung nor purchased were it not for the sense of hearing. Some entertainers earn 50,000 dollars per week for their singing and music, but they could not be earning fifty cents a week if it were not for man's sense of hearing. Without the sense of hearing there would be no place at all for lecturing, preaching, or electioneering. Big Ben of world renown, standing one hundred eighty feet high with dials twenty-three feet in diameter, pendulum weighing seven hundred pounds, and a voice that can be heard all over London on a calm day, would possibly never have been built had it not been for man's sense of hearing. It would be possible to go on almost forever describing what industry is built around the physical sense of hearing, but this we will leave to the imagination and intelligence of every reader.

Again we must repeat that there is nothing sinful or wrong with hearing, but because all the hearing we know in this world belongs in the physical realm and can never reach beyond that realm, there is therefore no life in it, and though we should fill our ears with the most delightful sounds all the days of our lives, still we would die, for there is no life in either sound or hearing when it is in the realm of the physical body, which is the flesh.

THE SENSE OF FEELING

The sense of feeling is the most widely distributed of all the senses of the body, for while sight is confined to the eyes, hearing to the ears, smell to the nostrils, and taste to the mouth, yet the sense of feeling or touch is common to all the members of the body. It is a marvelous sense. Without feeling we would be very helpless

and useless creatures. By touch we can make all manner of discoveries. We can discern heat or cold, wet or dry, soft or hard, sharp or dull, pain or pleasure. Watch folks as they walk about a department store. You will notice them constantly touching things. They touch them because their sense of feeling tells them many things which sight cannot tell them. They can easily tell by touch whether an item is made of cotton or wool or nylon. It is the sense of feeling above all others that warns us of irregularities in our bodies. We suffer a pain and know immediately that something is wrong. We feel heat and at once jerk our hand away to avoid a burn. We feel cold and turn up the thermostat or put on an extra garment. We feel hungry or thirsty and act accordingly. This is a marvelous sense inhabiting every member of the physical body.

We would also point out that a whole world industry has been built upon man's desire to gratify his feeling. Why do we use easy chairs? Is it not to make the body of flesh feel comfortable? Why do we use cool drinks on a hot day or hot drinks on a cold day? Is it not for the one purpose of making ourselves feel more comfortable? Why do we in North America literally use tons of aspirin, pain killers, and tranquilizers? Is it not to relieve physical distresses whether it be headaches, stomach aches, arthritis, or a score of other ailments? Certainly it is. The reason we want to relieve our bodies of pain is that we might feel better. The drug industry must now be among the largest of the industries of earth, and certainly we need have no hesitation in saying that it stands or falls on man's feeling, whether his feelings are those of pain, nausea, sluggishness, weariness, or any other. It can be truthfully said that the liquor industry is largely built on man's feelings, for were it not for the physical kick he gets from alcohol this industry could not exist.

Recently the British parliament after long discussion passed a bill called "the street offences bill". The bill was designed to rid the streets of prostitutes. Among the vast amount of evidence brought forward was evidence proving that one prostitute alone had earned 10,000 pounds (\$27,000) in one year. This, of course, was but one case among a great number. We need not present any argument to prove that this vile universal traffic, which is capable of destroying both soul and body, is founded entirely on the physical sense of feeling. Take this away and all such vileness would cease overnight. It is a tragedy of enormous proportions that in our day every imaginable gimmick is used to magnify beyond all reason the importance of sex. It has become a monstrous god, a sickening idol before whose shrine countless millions daily worship. Fabulous sums of money are spent to promote it. Billions are spent to see its pictures or read its books. Every effort is made to complicate its function when in truth there is nothing complicated about it. After all the books are written and read on this pet subject, no more is revealed or understood than that which is already well known to ordinary beasts of the field. Nothing has been made better except the bank accounts of the publishers, while the spellbound worshippers have been left in disillusionment and disappointment. Though this physical function is magnified as of great importance, the naked truth is that saving for its God-given purpose of procreation, there is no importance in it. It belongs to the physical realm and fades away with all other sensations of the body.

We have now shown that the five senses are the senses of the body. They are the senses of the flesh. There is nothing sinful about any of them, but because they are in the realm of the flesh, they are in the realm of death. There is no life in them, because the flesh has no life in it except that mortal life which is on the way to the grave from the day of its birth.

Try to imagine what the body of flesh would be if it had no senses. If a man could not hear, see, smell, taste, or touch, such a man would be nothing superior to a vegetable. Indeed, that is the term used to describe those who are so unfortunate. A man who had no physical senses could not live after the flesh, for it is through the senses that the flesh manifests all its desires. The flesh itself then is not sinful and the senses of the flesh are not sinful. The point we must see above all other is that if we live after the flesh we will die, the reason being that there is no life in the flesh or in any of its manifestations, neither is there life in anything it can do, accomplish, or design. Therefore, when Paul says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die", the reason for this death is most evident. It is because you are living after a realm that has no life in it. You are trying to satisfy that which cannot be satisfied and trying to find life where there is only death. If a man sees God with the eyes of his spirit, he will live. If he looks upon an image of God with the eyes of his flesh, he will die. If he drinks the water of life with his spirit, he will live forever; if he drinks the water of a well with his body, he will die. If he hears the voice of God with the ear of his spirit, he will live; if he hears the voices of earth with the ear of his body, he will die. If his spirit touches God, he will live; but if his flesh touches the things of earth, both he and they will die.

To understand the things written above is of eternal importance, for until we do understand them we will continue to place great emphasis on the things that concern only the realm of the physical man, a realm which takes up all our time from the cradle to the grave, yet a realm that the scripture describes as grass, a realm that is of no more true value than dung, a realm that profits not a straw those who take their complete fill of it. Rich men and poor alike do their utmost to live to satisfy the desire of the physical man, all of which is accomplished through satisfying the five senses of the body of flesh, for the flesh is the realm of sense consciousness. But rich men and poor alike, after having done their best to satisfy the physical senses, all die and all return to the dust from whence they came, thus proving that if we live after the flesh, we will die. Centuries ago, Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit made this remarkable statement: "For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." **2 Cor. 4:18** Man is living in a world of unreality and delusion. He affirms that seeing is believing, never learning that the opposite, "he that believes shall see", is the real truth. If Paul had said the things which are seen, heard, smelted, touched, and tasted are temporal, he would have been one hundred percent right, for all these things when confined to the physical realm are temporal; and, because they are temporal, there is no life in them. Thus they serve only to bar the pathway to the realm of reality. The whole world has gone mad with a craving to see and hear and taste and feel and smell all manner of things. As a monkey swings from a tree and a pendulum swings in a clock, so the whole world system swings upon these five weak and beggarly elements that can offer no life eternal to those who bury their lives in them.

Having seen, then, that the flesh, which is the corruptible human body, expresses all its desires and passions through the five senses, and that these are not eternal but entirely temporal, let us no longer spend our lives as men of this world, vainly striving to satisfy that which is passing away, for this serves only to bar our progress to the realm of true reality which is the realm of the Spirit, but, counting bodily pleasures as nothing, let us without these hindrances, lay hold on immortality where all our spiritual senses operate in the realm of reality and life.

ALL MEN LIVE AFTER THE FLESH

We have already shown that every industry on earth exists to cater to the five senses of the body. But we will now go further by saying that every industry on earth operates either directly or indirectly/or the sake of the human body of flesh. I say this without any equivocation whatsoever. The manufacturer manufactures his product for the body. It matters not whether he is manufacturing clothing, food, automobiles, electric appliances, or any other thing. The farmer grows his crops, raises his cattle, and milks his cows for the sake of the human body. The transportation industry on the sea, on the land, or in the air is for the benefit of the human body of flesh. Every ship is loaded with merchandise for the body. So also is every train and every aircraft. Everything that is done on earth is done for physical man. Even the years of learning in schools and universities have in mind the ultimate benefit of the body.

Every war is fought directly or indirectly over the human body. Not only are the weapons designed to kill the bodies of men, but the war itself comes from the lust that wars in the members of the body, the desire to take or retake that which will make the physical man more prosperous. The body of flesh with its many greedy lusts is the cause of wars and factions, battles and blood shed, for the origin of all war is the pursuit of wealth, and we are always forced to pursue wealth because we live in slavery to the cares of the body. Because of this slavery man never finds time to consider or diligently search out the life of the Spirit. Indeed, if for a few moments we do begin to search out the things of the Spirit, then our enemy, the corruptible body of flesh, begins immediately to fall in our way at every step of the inquiry, making demands for food or sleep or the satisfaction of some other physical desire. Thus we are filled with confusion, being torn between the flesh and the spirit, so that because of the body we never clearly see or enter the truth. It fills us with many passions, desires, and fears and often times many phantoms and much foolishness so that we can never even quietly meditate because of it. As long as we are in subjection to the demands of this body and such a hindering element is lord over our spirits and our souls, we will never gain what we desire in the spirit, for the body of flesh is always taking up our time with the care it demands day and night, ever demanding to be fed, clothed, rested, washed, and pampered and, when sickness or disease attacks us, we are hindered in our pursuit of the Spirit because we must nurse and comfort the body.

The body of flesh is such an enemy of the Spirit that we are deceived into spending a lifetime in a desperate struggle to maintain the physical man, and when we have laid by in store sufficient to maintain the body in comfort for many years, it will fall ill, devouring all we have saved in a vain attempt to restore our health. Never does it willingly lend us a moment to meditate on eternal things. Then when it has successfully hindered us all our lives, it will lie down and die, leaving the spirit earthbound, flesh bound, and poverty-stricken. Truly one has said:

We spend our health to gain our wealth;
We sweat and toil and save.
We spend our wealth to gain our health,
And all we get's the grave.

The prophets and saints learned centuries ago that it is never possible to enter into a true relationship with God while the body (the flesh) is present to harass and hinder with its divers lusts (desires). It is for that very reason that men of God of all age shave found it necessary to fast for long periods of time that the desires and demands of the body might be mortified or put to death by the demands of the spirit. A man who makes the claim that it is unnecessary to fast in our day is nothing more than a mouthpiece of the flesh. He neither understands what the flesh is nor how it operates in its opposition to the spirit. Once a man clearly sees that the fulfilling of the desires of the flesh through the five senses of the body can only end in death and spiritual poverty, he will realize for the first time in his life what utter trash all the glamour and glitter of this passing world really is, and once he sees how trashy it is, he will gladly drop it and turn to the realm of reality, even the realm of the spirit where there is life and immortality.

A man or woman who cares much about the pleasures of the body such as eating and drinking and sexual passion, holding in high esteem such things as fine clothes and bodily adornments, will never in this frame on mind attain sonship - not because such things are necessarily wicked or even wicked at all, but they are enemies of the spirit in that they never give you leave to seek God without distraction. The man who has set his heart and affection on things above has come to the place where he not only holds in low esteem the things of the body, but he despises them as well, even hating them, for he has learned that these innocent looking things deter his quest for God. Jesus knew this great truth when He said that a man could not be His disciple unless he hated his brothers and sisters and even his own life also, being willing to forsake all he possessed. Luke 14:26-27, 33 He is not teaching us to be hateful, but to clearly see that everything that belongs to the realm of the flesh is worth nothing at all and can therefore be naught but a hindrance to the life of the spirit.

The man or woman who studies to show himself approved unto God studies to stand aloof from the body, bringing it into subjection to the spirit. Such a man seems to release his spirit and his soul from communion with the body, which is the flesh. He deafens his ear to its demands and hardens his heart against it even as Paul said, "I keep my body (the flesh) under and bring it into subjection lest after I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway." **1 Cor. 9:27** Paul once sought diligently that he would be delivered from a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he be exalted above measure, but the Spirit of God revealed to him that it was best for him to have the thorn, for when his body was weak his spirit was strong. **2 Cor. 12:7-10**

Carnally minded men, whether they be worldings or professing Christians, are filled with delusion that those who forsake the desires of the body, turning instead to the eternal values of the spirit, are living lives that are not worth living, imagining that he who thinks nothing of bodily pleasure is as good as dead. But such persons do not know that the opposite is the truth, for "she (or he) who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." **1 Tim. 5:6** It is not possible to make any spiritual investigation or come to any spiritual understanding through the use of any of the physical senses of the body, for all these things belong to the natural realm and come under the unalterable edict that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. If we are to learn anything at all by the senses, we must ascend beyond the mortal to the place where they operate in the spiritual realm. But as long as we are in the realm of the body, we come closest to God when we have dismissed all physical sight or hearing together with all pleasure or pain, and having ceased all intercourse with the body, our spirits commune with God where spiritual senses operate in the realm of the Spirit of life, even in the open heavens.

"AFTER THE FLESH"

Paul often gave instruction about such things as death, the flesh, the carnal mind, and the spiritual mind. In Rom. 8:5 he exposed a yawning gulf between those who live after the body (which is the flesh) and those who live after the Spirit. He taught that "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." It all depends what we are after. The man who is forever worrying about the welfare of the physical man will always have in mind ways and means of catering to him - how he can provide more in the bank for old age, how he can provide more to see and hear and taste and feel and smell, or how he can be sure he will never want for food, clothing, and shelter. He tries to make sure that the physical man will never be in need. He is always mindful of the physical flesh and the well-being of the natural man. However much we may elaborate or enlarge on this point, we will not improve much on the straight-forward statement of Paul, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh."

Conversely, there is a small minority who spend their lives minding the things of the Spirit. The welfare of the spiritual man is uppermost in their thoughts, for they seek to partake of the mind of Christ. They practice the very presence of God and seek to have the mind of Christ. They, like Paul, "die daily" to the physical realm, counting it as a passing thing that is always changing and never remains the same. They esteem the realm of the flesh as less than nothing, seeking always to be one mind with the Father. These, being after the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit.

THE CARNAL MIND AND THE SPIRITUAL MIND

The moment we grasp the meaning of the scripture, "They who are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh," at that moment we can understand what the carnal mind is. The carnal mind is nothing more or less than the body mind, or the mind that is concerned only with the things of the carnal, the body of flesh. Carnal means fleshly; therefore the carnal mind is the mind that is forever mindful of the flesh. It is always taking thought for tomorrow, what we shall eat, what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. It is the mind that says, "I will tear down my barns and build them greater and there will I bestow all my goods. Then I will say, eat, drink, and be merry, and have a real good time in the realm of the flesh." An angel cannot have a carnal mind because he has no carnal (flesh). I venture to say that even Satan does not have a carnal mind, for he has no flesh (carnal) about which he can worry. His mind is evil and desperately wicked, opposed to all the purposes of God, but to say that Satan had a carnal mind would be a ridiculous misstatement. Only creatures of flesh can have carnal minds. Wolves and bears can and do have carnal minds in that their one and only concern is the simple preservation of their bodies. The carnal mind is an enemy of God and of all things spiritual because it so pampers and exalts every whim and fancy of the physical flesh, which stands as an almost impassable barricade to a life in the spirit. Therefore, the statement "to be carnally minded is death" is one hundred percent true.

The spiritual mind is simply the mind that is always after the Spirit. It tramples underfoot the desires of the flesh. It keeps the body under and brings it into subjection to the Spirit. It will take measures to put to death the craving of the flesh whether it be hunger or thirst, weariness or some other lust. It insists on following the leading of the Spirit of God. It refuses to take thought for tomorrow where such thought would in any way jeopardize the will of God. To be carnally minded is death because there is nothing but death in the realm of the corruptible body where all its interests lie, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace because the spiritual realm is the realm of God where all is eternal life and the shadows of death never appear. The carnal mind is an enemy of God because it is not subject to God's laws, neither indeed can be, (Rom. 8:7). So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

In our day man places enormous importance upon eating and drinking, but when the disciples came to Jesus in Samaria saying, "Master, eat", He replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Jesus knew that those who nourish the soul with the bread of life from heaven are giving life to the physical body as well, but those who nourish the body only are giving physical life to that which always lusts against the Spirit. After Jesus had fed the five thousand with loaves and fishes, the people earnestly sought Him. Jesus said to them, **"Ye sought me not because you saw the miracles, but because ye ate the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat**

which perisheth, but for the meat that endures unto eternal life, which God the Father giveth you." **John 6:26, 27** See then how the carnal mind is always concerned about the body of corruptible flesh? We hear much today of gatherings for food, fun, and fellowship. Do not deceive yourself, for these three do not go together; they belong in entirely different realms. You may have food, fun, and friendship, but spiritual fellowship is something entirely apart. It does not go hand in hand with feasting and frivolity. Labor not for the meat that perisheth, for the meat and drink that delights the taste of man is already perishing and has therefore no life that it can give. It is not sinful to eat the loaves and fishes, but they, being dead, cannot give life. Therefore, labor not for any of the things that delight the eyes, the ears, the taste, the smell, or the feelings, but labor for that eternal life which giveth life to the spirit and transforms the body from corruption to incorruption.

I do not think I have ever met a man who understands the seventh chapter of Romans. The reason so few understand it is because it is dealing with our death to the flesh in preparation for a true life in the Spirit, even the sonship of chapter eight. No man will ever understand what Paul taught in Romans, chapter seven, until he is able to see that all the flesh is, is the corruptible human body that demands so much attention that there is no room at all for a walk in the Spirit. Just watch your life today and notice how often the needs of your own body throw themselves in the path of the Spirit to hinder you from communion with God. Announce to your body that you are going to seek God with fasting and prayer for ten days and see for yourself the violent reaction that comes from the carnal mind. It will immediately present a dozen excuses why you should not do so now, but later would be more convenient.

The Law of Moses was not given for righteous men, but for unholy and profane. It was given because of the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh. All mankind remains bound by that law and in bondage to it until the death of the body or until the body is reckoned dead. "A woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So that, if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but, if her husband be dead, she is free from the law so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man." **Rom. 7:2-3** Now in this allegory we have four things - the law, the wife, the husband, and another man. The law is the law of God. The wife is you. The husband is the flesh. The other man is Christ or the Spirit. A woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but the moment the husband dies, the law which bound her has no more effect. It is not the law that died; it is the husband. But, because he is dead, the law has no more effect on the wife and she is free from it. With this in mind hear what Paul says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ (you are identified with His death), that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead (Jesus Christ), that we should bring forth fruit unto God (not unto death). But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead (the flesh) wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." **Rom. 7:4, 6**

Throughout the whole **seventh chapter of Romans** Paul pictures the old husband, the flesh, our corruptible body, as a terrible tyrant, forcing us (the wife) to do everything we do not want to do. "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; what I hate that do I," (**verse 15**), until at last in **verse 24** he cries in agony for the death of this wicked husband, the flesh, saying, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death (this body of death)?" It is in chapter eight that Paul reveals the secret of being free from the body of death. By reckoning the body (your husband) dead, you become free from the law that binds you to it, for marriage laws have no power after the death of a husband or wife, so that you are now free to be joined to anew husband, the Spirit. Thus then he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh (the old husband), but after the Spirit (the new husband). The moment a man dies, all his earthly passions immediately cease and his spirit is at last free to return to God who gave it. So also with those who have reckoned themselves dead, for they have reckoned the body with all its earthly inclinations to be dead and henceforth they are free to be joined to the resurrected Christ in the Spirit. Rom. 6:11

Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: The corruptible human body is indeed the flesh which manifests all its desires through its five senses, for the body is the realm of sense consciousness. The eye is not filled with seeing, the ear is not filled with hearing, nor the nostrils satisfied with smelling, or the palate with tasting, for all these elements are passing away and there is no life in any of them. The things which man has

imagined to be of great importance and for which the whole world labors - food for the appetite, sights for the eyes, sounds for the ears, perfumes for the nostrils, and various delights and sensations for the body - are in reality not important at all, for there is no life in any of them and they with the body are perishing. The more we fill our lives with them the less we are able to attend to the things, which are eternal. Therefore, "labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man will give you, for him hath God the Father sealed." **John 6:27**

"Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on man's primitive desires, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who does God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die." 1 John 2-15 (Phillips)

CHAPTER TWO THE FIVE SENSES IN THE REALM OF LIFE

There is a divine law that manifests itself throughout all the creation of God. It is the law of progressive continuity. You will not be able to find a definition of it in the encyclopedia, yet even a child can see that it operates everywhere and in all things. Strong mature men were not always strong and mature. They were born as helpless infants who from the time of their birth continually progressed and grew both in wisdom and in stature until they reached maturity. Two little seeds almost identical in appearance may lie side by side in the ground. One may mature into a carrot or a sunflower, the other into an oak or an elm. God has ordained that this law should operate through all creation. The tiny embryo must progress until it reaches its ultimate in animal life. The little seed must sprout and grow, first the blade, then the ear, and finally the full corn in the ear. The egg that lies immobile in the nest must hatch and develop into a bird that soars in the glories of God's heaven and the egg that is spawned in the river must develop into a fish that will fathom the depths of God's ocean. The caterpillar that labouriously creeps its way upon the earth voraciously gorging itself on leaves and plants will emerge from its cocoon of death to flit and fly in heavenly places.

This law of progressive continuity, which is so clearly visible in the world of animals and plants is just as clearly seen in the spiritual world as well, for all natural things have spiritual counterparts. It was for this reason that Jesus said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." **Matt. 18:3** We must enter that kingdom as a child even as we entered this earthly kingdom as a child. Paul in his writings called some people "babes in Christ" (**1 Cor. 3:1**), and the beloved John wrote, "My little children, these things I write unto you." From the place of spiritual children we are to continually progress until we are mature sons like Him, for we see Him as He is.

Again this same principle of progression is true in the realm of revelation. All revelation is unfolding and progressive. No revelation that was ever given to man was complete in itself. It was always the partial unfolding of a great truth that was to be progressively revealed as the centuries and millenniums passed. Thus it is that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul was given the gospel of the grace of God and makes no hesitation in calling it my gospel (2 Tim. 2:8), claiming that a whole dispensation was committed unto him (Eph. 3:2). The gospel of the kingdom was given to neither Moses nor Paul, but to those for whom it is being prepared.

It is always wrong for people to imagine that they have the last word about any truth, for we know nothing yet as we ought to know, but we know in part and we prophesy in part as we progress toward the realm of maturity and full growth and love in Him. There we shall know as we are known. The spiritual things we are permitted to see we see but dimly and afar off. The things we are permitted to hear we hear at first with muffled ears as distant voices calling to us beyond the din and clamor of earth's turmoil, faintly at first but with ever increasing distinctness as the inner ear becomes accustomed to celestial voices.

There were many people who listened as Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify Thy Name" (**John 12:29**), and many heard the voice of God that spoke to Him from heaven. To some His voice was indiscernible from the sound of the thunder while others heard the clearly articulated words, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." So also it was when Jesus spoke to Saul on the Damascus road. While the soldiers heard a voice

but saw no man, Saul both saw and heard the Son of God. Daniel fell to the earth for the glory of the things he saw and heard while those who were with him were but terrified at the sense of the presence of the angel, which they neither saw nor heard. Dan. 10:7

For centuries now we have been taught to believe that the dispensation of grace was a very superior dispensation, but the real truth is that it is only a dispensation of grace. It has been an age of immature understanding and immature Christians. It has been an age of strife and division among the people of God, an age of a hireling ministry full of the doctrines of men, and an age in which wheat and tares have grown in the same field, the tares far outnumbering the wheat. It is a dispensation when sheep and goats have pastured together, an age when leaven has worked in the meal until the whole is leavened. It has been a mixture of good and evil, false and true, white and black. Side by side with the apostle is the false apostle and along with the teacher, the false teacher. Side by side with the worker of miracles the sorcerer has deceived and with the prophet of the Lord is the man who speaks evil from his own heart. What a cursed generation it has been! Now we find ourselves at the end of the age in the deepening confusion of Babylon unable to discern among the many voices that are in the world, seeing no difference between "him that knoweth God and him that knoweth Him not." The dismal darkness and blinding bondage of Babylon is cascading endless millions of professors to destruction. But there is a light shining through the gloom for all to see who will and a voice calling o'er the tumult that is distinct from all other voices. It is the voice of our beloved Shepherd and Lord, Jesus Christ the Son of God who said, "My sheep know My voice and they follow Me."

Now if all things whether physical or spiritual begin in embryo form, then he is a very wise man indeed who heeds the still small voice or beholds the light that shines, for of its increase there will be no end. The things of which we are to speak will be seen but dimly at first by most of us, but without doubt there are others whose spiritual senses have been so exercised that they will see all these things clearly and much more as well. To some these truths will be but the flickering light of a candle, but to others they will be a burning shining light. Let us not despise the day of small things and imperfect understanding, for we are approaching the age when we shall see clearly and face to face with neither mist, darkness, nor blindness to mar our perfect understanding.

There are without doubt many realms and many worlds about us on every hand and myriads of heavenly beings as well. Paul by the Spirit was caught up into the third heaven and without doubt there are heavens beyond that also. There are two worlds or two realms in which we are particularly interested just now. They are the risible and the invisible, or the temporal and the eternal. We are inclined to always think of the risible realm as the realm of reality, but when we think of the invisible realm, we think of it as the realm of the metaphysical and unreal. We judge it to be a realm of uncertainty, of mystery, and perhaps of imagination. Because we cannot see it with physical eyes nor hear it with physical ears, we are uncertain about it and we cling tenaciously to the visible realm which we think to be real.

It must now be made clear to our hearts that things are not at all as they seem. In fact, they are exactly opposite to what they seem. It is the visible realm that is unreal and it is the invisible realm that is real. The Holy Spirit who knoweth all things has taught us in the simplest and most beautiful words that this is so. **"The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4:18** All the things, which can be seen, heard, tasted, touched, or smelled by the five physical senses are temporal and passing away. Can you think of any visible thing that is not passing away? Every form of life upon the earth is passing away, and even the earth itself shall pass away. The visible heavens are also passing away and will one day be rolled up as a scroll. Rev. 21:1 There is positively no true reality in that which is passing and not permanent, for how can we say that things that are always changing and which never remain the same are realities? If indeed their change were toward permanence and maturity, there might be reality, but since their change is always toward decay and death, there can be no reality in it. The invisible things are the eternal things and these are the things that abide forever.

Let us not be misled by the term invisible things. The things, which are eternal, are not really invisible at all. They are only invisible to the kind of eyes we mortals have. Eternal things are only inaudible to the ears of the natural and beyond the reach of the other physical senses as well. Just as there are five natural senses in the realm of the physical, which belong to the physical so also there are five senses in the spiritual realm. The five

senses of the body are able only to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell natural things, but these same five senses in the realm of the Spirit are able to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell all spiritual things in a vastly increased and eternal measure. When those spiritual senses become operative, then the realm of the spiritual becomes completely open and discernible just as the realm of the natural is open to us now.

Before Adam and Eve sinned their spiritual senses were even more awake than their physical ones. They saw God, they heard God, they walked with God, and they talked with God. The effulgent perfumes of the heavenly realm were fragrance and life in their nostrils. They were able to taste spiritual things and touch spiritual things. Let there be no doubt about that. We will greatly increase this truth a little later in this writing. Spiritual entities and spiritual realities were wide open to them and they walked in the presence and the glory of the heavenly realms. The gates of that realm were not closed by day or night and that realm was even more real than the physical things, which lay all about them. They did not need to eat of any tree neither did they need to drink of the four rivers that had their source in the garden. They like Christ had "meat to eat" that we know not of and drink to drink that we have never tasted. Pardon me if I seem fanciful, but the grass and trees, flowers and fruits of that garden had a strange and wonderful spiritual element about them, for they did not fade nor die nor did they wilt with heat and wind. They were there for man's enjoyment if he wished them and were designed to give only life for there was no death in them. The heavens were open to Adam and Eve and they walked in the glory and light of God's presence.

When the man sinned, all the glory of the eternal realm faded away and the heavens became closed to him, for he immediately lost all his spiritual senses. That was part of his death. The heavens were closed to him. He could no longer see eternal things. He could see only natural things. He could no longer hear spiritual and eternal things. He could hear only the lower sounds of earth. He could no more taste spiritual things but only such things as he could eat with his physical mouth, things which were hard and tangible and which now contained an element of death. Even the plants were partakers with him of his curse, for God had cursed the ground for man's sake. No more could he smell the more glorious fragrance of the heavenly realms, but only those perfumes, which issued forth from the things of earth. Neither could he feel the glory of God's presence, but his feeling was confined to things that belong to earth, that are tangible and do not belong to the spiritual realm. In short the heavens were closed. He could not see, hear, touch, taste, or smell in that heavenly realm. The only realm left open to him was the physical realm. He was condemned to live after the flesh, for the gates of the spiritual world were closed to him.

Just as the eyes of a blind man are closed to the things of the natural realm, so Adam's spiritual eyes were closed to all the things of the spiritual realm. That was part of his death. He could no longer see the kingdom of God. As the ears of a deaf man are closed to the sounds of earth, so Adam's ears were closed to the sounds of the eternal realm of God's kingdom. Just as men of earth who have lost their senses of smell or taste or touch can neither smell nor taste nor feel natural things, so in like manner Adam and Eve found themselves no longer able to taste or smell or touch the things of the kingdom of God. All this was closed to them and they were locked out of the kingdom of God, hermetically sealed on the physical side. As far as they were concerned, from then on the spiritual realm of reality did not exist, for they could not see it, hear it, taste or touch or smell it. Though its glory was all about them, yet they were completely oblivious to it.

When our minds begin to comprehend how completely they were locked out of the kingdom of God and barred from all spiritual experience because of the death that had come upon them, then we are able to understand more clearly why it was that Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is far more to that statement than any man has ever understood, for just as death deprived Adam of the sight and presence of the things of God's kingdom so also will the new birth bring them back into view. The same heavens that were closed on that day in Eden so long ago will once again begin to open to us that we, being born again, might live in the realm of light and of the kingdom of the Lord.

We have always been sold short on the new birth. Men have believed that they were born again just because they went to an altar to pray. 'Tis true that they may have received regeneration in a measure as they became active believers, but I fully believe that the glory of the experience of the new birth is still before us. We cannot fully explain it nor pry into it, but it is there just the same and it will bring us back to the Eden of the Lord where once more heaven will be open to us.

A blind man walks amid valleys and mountains, which he cannot see. Magnificent colors adorn his pathway. Green trees and sparkling brooks surround him, yet he sees them not. Beautiful birds soar through azure skies but he is unaware of them. To walk in a world of towering mountains, massive hills, green valleys, and resplendent beauty and yet never see it is a tragedy indeed, but have we not all been condemned to a far greater tragedy in that we have walked in the very midst of the eternal glories of heaven, but our eyes have not been able to see them, our ears have been dead to their sounds of joy, our nostrils unable to smell their fragrance, and our palates oblivious to their life-giving tastes? God did not remove heaven from man when man sinned, but man's spiritual senses went dead so that he could no longer see or hear or in anywise touch its glory though it is still all about us. God does not remove the earth from blind men nor the wonder of its sounds from deaf men. The sights and sounds still remain all about them, yet, because they are blind or deaf, they cannot see nor hear them. Their senses have become completely dead to all these things. It will be a moment beyond compare when once again our eyes are opened to behold the glory of the kingdom of God which, though all about us, goes unnoticed and unrecognized because our spiritual senses are dead and heaven is closed to us.

HEAVEN OPEN

The truth of the statements we have made above will be clearly demonstrated by that which is to follow. God has not left us without a witness to all these glorious things. He testifies over and over again that the glory of His kingdom is all about us and all we need is a rebirth that will once again open those glories to us just as they once were open in lovely Eden.

How often we have sung that beautiful song:
Open mine eyes that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands that wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free.

We cannot blame men for wanting physical healing, but what a tragedy it is that we have been blind and deaf so long to an eternal kingdom all about us, totally oblivious to its existence. It is time to be born again that we might see the kingdom. It is time to be born again that we might hear the kingdom. It is time to be born again that we might smell its fragrance, feel its life-giving glory, and taste its eternal fruit.

There was a prophet in Israel in the days of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, who lived continually in the spiritual realm. His eyes were open to the presence of the kingdom of God and he knew continually the glory of heaven open. Because heaven was open to him none of the things of earth were hidden to him. Thus he was able to frustrate all the plans of Ben-hadad, for he knew even the words the king spoke in his bed chamber. 2 Kings 6:12. Well Ben-hadad knew that he could never accomplish his purposes of war as long as a man like Elisha was in Israel, so he sent horses and chariots and a great host to capture the man of God. By night they came and surrounded the little city of Dothan to capture one man of God. And so it reads: "Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots and a great host; and they came by night and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold, a host encompassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, 'Alas, master! How shall we do?' And he answered, 'Tear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.' And Elisha prayed and said, 'Lord, I pray thee open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord and said, 'Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness.' And He smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha." **2 Kings 6:13-18**

The thing that makes all the difference is the realm in which a man lives. Two men are standing side by side. One sees only the hosts of men and is oblivious to the presence of the hosts of the Lord. The heaven, though all about him, is not open to him, for he has not regained his spiritual sight. He has not been reborn into the spiritual realm. He is blind to all things except the hard cold things of a physical realm. The other man standing by his side, though walking in the dark vales of earth, yet lives beneath open heavens. Though he sees the

hosts of Ben-hadad terrible with chariots and bristling with spear and sword, yet they fade away into misty insignificance before the majesty of the heavenly hosts that surround him. Heaven is open to him. It is not a dream, but a reality. Heaven is not a billion miles away. It is all about us.

When Elisha saw the dread and fear in the heart of his servant, his own heart went out to him in pity. He pitied his blindness; he pitied his deafness; he pitied the dullness of his understanding. It was hard for him to imagine that a man could be blind to the glory he so clearly saw. "Lord, open his eyes," he prayed, and the Lord opened the young man's eyes, and there it was all before him - the heavens wide open. But those heavenly things were there all the time. The trouble was with the man. His eyes were dead to spiritual things, but now for a brief moment he was permitted to see.

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THE EXPERIENCE OF JESUS

Nothing was ever hidden from Jesus, for though He walked on earth, He dwelt continually beneath the glory of an open heaven. It was for that reason He once said, **"No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." John 3:13**

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of him, but John forbade Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee and comest Thou to me?' And Jesus answering said unto him, 'Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him; and, lo, a voice from heaven saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **Matt. 3:13-17**

When the Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth, it became Him to be made in all things "like unto His brethren." Though He came from heaven, there was a period of time when the heavens were closed to Him just as they have been closed to us all. But immediately before His kingdom ministry was to begin, just before His Sonship was to be announced, the heavens were opened to Him, and He immediately began both to see and hear spiritual things. He saw the invisible spirit descending like a dove upon Him, and He heard the inaudible voice of God speaking and proclaiming, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus it continued throughout His life and, except for that dread moment on Calvary when God hid His face from Him, the heavens remained open unto Him. Never again was He to experience the dimness of a closed heaven or to be sealed out on the physical side. Heaven open is the normal state of sonship. There is no lack of proof that the heavens remained open to Him from that time on. He was constantly in touch with God and the angels of the Lord were ever near Him. Following His great temptation in the wilderness we read these significant words: "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." The glory of the open heavens was clearly seen on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9) where the heavens were opened and they saw, heard, and felt the glory and wonder of a realm that was all about them, but that was beyond the reach of physical eyes and ears, which are dead to all except the temporal things of an earthly realm.

Jesus Christ did not walk under a closed heaven. Heaven's glory shone continually upon Him. When at the grave of Lazarus He prayed, He lifted up His eyes and said, **"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John 11:41-42** Heaven was wide open to Him and He had access to it at any moment throughout His ministry. The angels of God ascended and descended upon Him. John 1:51. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane amid His cruel passion and bloody sweat the angels of God came to strengthen Him, and when He stood before the shouting mob that came to arrest Him, He bade Peter, putting his sword into its sheath, for He said, **"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray unto My Father, and He will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matt. 26:53**

SONSHIP AND THE OPEN HEAVENS

Do you not think it is most significant that Jesus was proclaimed to be God's beloved Son when first the heavens were opened to Him at his baptism? Matt. 3:17 And is there not even greater significance added to this when He was again proclaimed to be God's well beloved Son when the heavens were opened to Him at

the Mount of Transfiguration? Matt. 17:5 We have heard a great deal about sonship in the past few years, and well we might, but I am certain that the opening of the heavens and sonship go hand in hand. As people advance into sonship, the reality of the heavenly realm will be open to them. We have been far too matter-of-fact about the words of Paul when he said, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Phil. 3:20-21 Heavenly citizenship is a reality. It is not a myth. Sonship is a reality, not a pat on the head by a benign Father. To walk in your heavenly citizenship is to walk where Jesus walked in sonship and in the light and glory of continually open heavens.

We have sold ourselves short on citizenship. Like infant children we have played a game of pretend. We have talked much but experienced little. We have played a game that was void of reality. We must sorrowfully admit, too, that we have talked of a sonship which we did not have and which at every point fell short of the glory God has laid down as a pattern for us in Jesus, that first manifested Son who walked and talked in the light of an open heaven where nothing, absolutely nothing, was impossible to Him or hidden from Him. He did the things He saw of His Father and spoke the words His Father gave Him. John 12:49-50

The closer we come to the kingdom, the more we will experience the open heaven. More and more will godly people know what it is to be lifted beyond the pale of natural things to behold the glory of the realm where God lives in the Spirit. It is beholding Him that changes us from corruption to incorruption. It is the glory of His presence that transforms the ragged garments of our mortality to raiment, which is white and glistening. These poor human eyes which have never known aught but the power to receive light from without will soon know the glory of burning as lamps of fire to give light rather than to receive. Rev. 1:14

Fantastic changes lie ahead for all who begin to partake of their heavenly citizenship. Tremendous changes will transpire in soul and spirit and mind, and because of this there will be almost unbelievable changes in body as well. Jesus Christ has brought to light both life and immortality through the gospel. 2 Tim. 1:10 Therefore immortality and eternal life shall be ours in Him. This corruptible shall put on incorrupt/on. This mortal shall put on immortality. This weakness shall put on strength. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?" Though the sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law, yet thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are living in an hour when God is moving mightily in the hearts of the people He is calling out of Babylon. While the rest of His people go on more or less happy and unconcerned, content with things as they are, satisfied to remain citizens of Babylon, sinking deeper and deeper into its morass of confusion, there is an Ezra company, a Nehemiah company, whose hearts are being mightily stirred up to return to the Zion of their heavenly citizenship. They cannot remain in Babylon. They must return to Zion where the temple of the Lord is in building, for that is their home and their eternal citizenship. God is moving in their hearts and preparing them for a great change.

There is a very important truth, which we should all learn in this connection, and we will explain it as well as possible here. The sighing of the Spirit of God within you for sonship, incorruption, and immortality is calculated and intended by God to begin the work of transformation from corruption to incorruption and mortality to immortality, for as we pray in the spirit, we are beholding the face of the Lord, and, as we behold the face of the Lord, we are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 5:4. The time has now come when all those who are burdened with intercession and groanings in the Spirit (Rom. 8:26) should realize that the prayer of the Spirit within them is intended to begin their transformation into the image of His Son. It is the overshadowing of the Spirit that forms the son within. Ten years ago, or even five years ago, intercession largely concerned the future, but we are without doubt at the end of the age and the coming of the Lord is even at the doors. The manifestation of the sons of God is at hand. The transformation is beginning. Let us then believe that physical changes are due as His Spirit moves within.

THE OPEN HEAVENS PROMISED BY JESUS

THE OPEN HEAVENS PROMISED BY JESUS I love to read the story of the call of Nathaniel. I think he must have been a very lovely brother, full of faith and trust in God with a heart wide open to revelation. When Philip found him and brought him to Jesus, Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Nathaniel saith unto Him, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathaniel answered and said unto Him, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel." Jesus answered and said unto Him, "**Because I said unto thee I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these... Verily, verily I say unto thee, hereafter thou shalt see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.**" **John 1:50-51** Thou shalt see heaven open! That was certainly a promise beyond compare. Centuries had been added to centuries and millenniums to millenniums since the heavens were closed to man in Eden. Only a few men specially chosen of God had been allowed to see beyond the veil of the natural realm, but now a definite promise is given, not to Nathaniel alone, but to the people of the kingdom age, for it was the gospel of the kingdom which Jesus proclaimed - a definite promise, I say, of open heavens, open vision, open understanding, and open communion, for the angels of God ascend and descend upon the Son of Man. All throughout the dispensation of grace the heavens have been largely closed and the beloved Paul to whom the gospel of grace was given said, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then shall I know even as I am known."

The promise of open heavens, given to Nathaniel, is for us now. We are living in the wonderful hour when these things are beginning to happen. There will be a continual increase in this strange and glorious phenomena as the kingdom of God draws nearer. Do not rejoice in your visions, your dreams, or even the open heavens, but rejoice in the Lord. Do not seek any of these things for their own sake, but seek the Lord. Seek His face. If people would only stop seeking things and begin seeking the face of God, it might amaze us what would happen. When the Jews sought Christ, they received of the wealth of His wisdom and power and He gave them loaves and fishes as well, but when they sought loaves and fishes, they got nothing. Please read **John 6:26-27** "**Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life which the Son of Man shall give you, for Him hath God the Father sealed.**" Anything received apart from Him is not worth receiving.

THE HEAVENS OPEN TO STEPHEN

Few sermons have ever been preached with such remarkable power and conviction as the sermon of Stephen on the day of his martyrdom. He was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost and had been performing mighty miracles among people. So great was his wisdom that none could resist it, and, like his wonderful Lord, he was dragged before a wicked council to be falsely accused and wrongfully judged. "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:8-15 And when at last his wonderful sermon was over, and the people, gnashing on him with their teeth, took up stones to kill him, even while the merciless stones pounded and broke his body, he "**being full of the Holy Ghost looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.'**" **Acts 7:54-56** This was not a vision or a dream. This was something beyond the realm of visions and dreams. This was reality in truth. Heaven was open to him and he saw reality that had been hidden to man since Eden.

Heaven is not far from any of us. It is all about us on every hand. Heaven is God's kingdom. It is God's throne. It is His dwelling place and God is as omnipresent as the air we breathe, for "in Him we live and move and have our being." "For heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What place will ye build Me, saith the Lord." Man is like a goldfish swimming about in a tiny bowl which has been placed in a huge room. The tiny fish lives and moves in a little world all its own shut off from the vastness all about it, separate from and completely oblivious to the inhabitants of the world about it. They live in a realm in which it cannot live. They breathe where it cannot breathe. They move where it cannot move. So it is with us. Though heaven and its inhabitants are all about us, we are shut off from them. Though we live among them, we cannot see what they see, hear what they hear, taste what they taste, touch what they touch, nor smell the life-giving fragrance of eternal things. When man sinned in Eden, all the spiritual senses went dead, and man must be reborn to see, hear, taste, touch, or smell the kingdom of God. The servant of Elisha could not see the hosts of the Lord, which surrounded him on every side because he was not living in the realm of the open heaven. He lived on a

natural plane as we do and his spiritual senses were dead. But he did not need to go to heaven to see what Elisha saw. All he needed was to have his eyes opened and his spiritual sight restored. Then he found that heaven was not "far away" but all about him. Its inhabitants were so real that the inhabitants of earth faded into insignificance, its music so sweet that earth's harmonies became a discord. Its food once eaten gave eternal satisfaction and its breath was the breath of everlasting life.

HEAVEN OPEN TO JOHN

The apostle John had been partaker of many wonderful experiences during his life. His association with Jesus had changed him from a son of thunder (Mk. 3:17) who was ready to call down fire on the opposition to the meek and lovely apostle of love. He had been with the Lord on every momentous occasion of His life. He had listened with bated breath to the sermon on the mount, watched in awe as He performed His miracles, stood with Him bathed in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, leaned on His breast at the last supper, stood with Him in Pilate's hall, seen the wonder of the empty tomb, and watched Him ascend beyond the clouds. But near the end of his pilgrimage a still greater glory awaited him, for he stood on Patmos wrapped in excellent glory to see with his eyes and hear with his ears and touch with his hands the things that were beyond the realm of natural men. He walked that day the Elysian fields of the open heaven. He saw what others could not see, heard what others could not hear, and touched what others could not touch. See Rev. 1. He entered into a new relationship with God that day. He walked from then on in the realm of his heavenly citizenship. He lived beyond the veil of the flesh and blood of earth. He had passed with boldness into the holiest of all to live and walk and move in God's presence even while his feet still left their prints on Patmos' sandy shore.

This verily is the truth, for the hour is at hand - the hour of new birth, the hour of the restoration of our spiritual senses, the hour of the open heavens. Ah, blessed and wonderful state! Ah, sweet and perfect realm where storms never darken the loveliness of heaven's horizon nor fears ever annoy! Where every breath of the nostrils is life, where the eyes not only see but give light to all they see, and the sounds that fall upon the ear are the sounds of life, life, eternal, eternal, life!

KIND AFTER HIS KIND

God has ordained in the natural world that kind shall be after his kind. The law operates in the spiritual world as well. It seems possible to fellowship only with people who are on the same plane as yourself. If their experience is much lower than your own, there is very little fellowship. If their experience is much higher than yours, there may also be very little fellowship, for you just simply do not speak their language. As a result you are inclined to look upon them through the eyes of your own misunderstanding and condemn them because you do not understand them.

Did you ever wonder why it was that John in his epistle makes this emphatic statement: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Why was it that this man whom they had known so long was now beyond their reach? They had been able to fellowship with him before; why could they not fellowship with him now? Had they backslidden? No! They were as they had always been, but John had entered a new experience in God. Though he still walked on earth, he was living and moving in the realm of the open heaven. He was seeing and hearing and touching, yes, and tasting and smelling that which was beyond the realm of natural men. Therefore, if these dear people were ever to be able to fellowship with him henceforth, they must come up to his realm, the realm of his heavenly citizenship, for he could not go back to theirs.

See, then, why it was that he opened his epistle with these enlightening words: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." **1 John 1:1-3** Who dare deny in the face of such statement that John had entered into a new experience and into a new relationship with both the Father and the Son? Certainly he had known fellowship with Christians, but now he was rejoicing in a fellowship with the Father and with His

Son. And he declared to all other Christians (for it was to Christians he wrote) that if they would fellowship with him in the future, they would find him in that new realm in fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

My dear brethren, deny it if you can, but our fellowship in the centuries past has not been with the Father and with the Son. Our fellowship has been in the realm of people and Christians. It has concerned itself with doctrines, programs, sects and denominations, choirs and orchestras, drives for this and pushes for that. Don't deny it, for it has been true in the past and it is true now. But there is a fellowship beyond all this. It is a realm where few ever come. It is the realm Jesus referred to when He said, "**Whither I go ye cannot follow Me now, but thou shall follow Me hereafter.**" **John 13:36** It is the realm of the open heaven where all spiritual senses are restored and we walk in the light of the eternal and incorruptible even as we have walked in the light of the physical and corruptible. It is simple to see that in the very first verse of his epistle John refers to three of the senses of the spiritual realm, viz; That which we have seen, which we have heard, and our hands have handled - seeing, hearing and touching, and all this in the realm of eternal life itself. The more the natural eye sees, the weaker it becomes. The more the natural ear hears, the duller it gets. The more we feel, the less sensitive we become, and our senses of taste and smell decrease as the years go by until all ends in death. But the realm of life is the exact antithesis of this. In that spiritual realm of the open heavens everything you see gives life to you and your touch gives life to it. That which you taste does not lose its existence as now, but like the loaves and fishes greatly increase, and the breath of the nostrils is the breath of life.

Oh, glorious and wonderful realm! It is the realm beyond the veil. The opening veil is the opening heaven where we may enter with boldness to tread the highways and fields of our heavenly citizenship. This is the realm of the Son of God. It is the inheritance of the sons of God. It is the realm of the kingdom, and from its inhabitants shall come the government of the world in the blessed age before us, a government of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. From the wisdom of those who enter that realm will go forth such justice and confidence that swords will be changed for plowshares, wolves will lie down with lambs, children will safely play with lions, the asp, or the cockatrice, and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

I realize that what we are saying now may be hard for some to understand and accept, for very few people have ever realized that man lost his spiritual senses at the fall and that in consequence he has been completely shut out of the celestial realm with heaven closed to him. Fewer still have ever seen that it is the restoration of our spiritual senses that once again opens the heavens to us. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Heb. 5:14. The apostle Paul frequently made mention of the various senses of the spiritual realm of which we shall speak more particularly in a moment. Dare any man imagine that we could enjoy our heavenly citizenship possessing no ability to see, hear, taste, feel, or smell the ineffable glories that belong to that realm of unspeakable reality? What are we to expect who are coming "**unto mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel?**" **Heb. 12:22-24** Are we to enter the transcending glories of that realm and yet remain as dead to its realities as we have been for the past six thousand years? A thousand time no! We are to enter that realm as men born from above and restored to the glory we had with Him before the world was.

In Hebrews 5:11 Paul rebuked the people for their dullness of spiritual hearing. He wondered how a man could fall away after he had tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. Heb. 6:5 David exhorted us, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good." Psa. 34:8 Paul and David were not speaking of a day when we would die and go to heaven; they were speaking of a spiritual experience when heaven would open to us here and now and when we would begin to enjoy the glory of our heavenly citizenship, when we would not only see and hear, but taste and see that the Lord is good, when we taste the good word of God and taste the powers of the age to come.

Few events of history can equal the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That transforming experience that was the very beginning of the church age was an event of events. Yet it is with sorrow that we must confess that we have clung to Pentecost as though it were the end instead of the beginning. Pentecost in

any man's life should be one of the initial experiences of his progress toward sonship. It should be the alpha and not the omega, the beginning rather than the end. Pentecost is really the earnest of our inheritance; it is not the inheritance itself. Long ago in Israel when one man bought a piece of land from another, the seller removed his shoe from his foot, filled it with the soil, and gave it to the buyer, signifying that the land was now his possession and inheritance. Ruth 4:7. This shoe full of soil was called the earnest of the inheritance. That is what the baptism of the Holy Spirit really is. Pentecost is the earnest or a foretaste of a great inheritance to come.

Let us not miss this fact, however. The earnest of the inheritance contained in minute form all the qualities of the inheritance, and on that glorious Pentecost almost two thousand years ago there was an open heaven. The sounds of a rushing mighty wind came from heaven. Tongues of fire came from heaven. The Holy Spirit came from heaven and filled the waiting believers. Those assembled that glorious day had their spiritual senses awakened. They saw the heavenly fire. They heard the heavenly wind as the Holy Spirit swept over them. They felt the glory and power of their heavenly citizenship as holy waves of eternal life and celestial glory swept through their mortal bodies until they staggered about as drunken men full of the wine of their heavenly Canaan. They were men transformed because they tasted of the blessings and the glory and power of another world, a heavenly world, the realm of our heavenly citizenship. As they walked in the glory of that earnest of their inheritance, nothing could stand before them. Nothing could gainsay nor resist them. The shadow of Peter healed the sick. Angels descended from the glory world to open their prisons and set them free. Acts 5:19 Dead were raised to life, demons scampered away to the nether regions, and multitudes were converted to Christ.

All this was but the beginning. It is not the end. Much as we may rejoice in the glory of it, we are wrong to expect God to ever repeat it. We do not need a return to Pentecost, which was the earnest of our inheritance. We must now possess the inheritance itself - our spiritual Canaan, our heavenly citizenship.

The excellence of the realm of which we speak may seem to cast a shadow of doubt over our minds, for tradition has not taught us to expect these glories here and now as part of our inheritance, but has taught us rather to expect them only after death in some far distant day. But for the sake of faith and hope that maketh not ashamed the Word of God is replete with many witnesses of men and women who, while here on this earth, walked in the light of an open heaven, having all their spiritual senses wide awake to see and hear, taste and feel and smell the effulgent glory and power of an open heaven. The heaven was open to Job when his eye saw the Lord and he was transformed. Job 42:5 The heaven was open to Isaiah in the year that King Uzziah died. Isa. 6. The heaven was open to Daniel when he saw the wonderful sight of the man whose "body was like the beryl, his face as the appearance of lightning, his eyes as lamps of fire, his arms and feet like the color of polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." **Dan. 10:6** Heaven was open to Jesus at His baptism and at the transfiguration. Heaven opened to Stephen at his martyrdom. Heaven opened to Peter when he saw the vision that opened the gates of mercy to the Gentiles. Acts 10:11 Paul was caught away into the open heavens to hear and see things that are unlawful to utter in this earthly realm, for heavenly things cannot be absorbed or understood by earth-bound men whose spiritual senses are still dead. Heaven opened to John on lonely Patmos when he saw, heard, felt, and tasted the excellent glory of the realm we are about to enter, for the coming age is the age of heaven open.

It is true that no man can see God and live, and it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Seeing God neither brings death nor lets you remain as you are but brings transformation. Corruption puts on incorruption, mortality puts on immortality, weakness becomes strength, and the natural becomes supernatural. We become like Him when we see Him as He is. To see His face or hear His voice and not be transformed is unthinkable, and every man who has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. It is the Sabbath of rest. It is the age when the inhabitants of earth are governed by the inhabitants of heaven, even the sons of God who are in the image of the Son of God. It is the age when heaven is the throne and earth is the footstool, the age of heaven open.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." John 1:50-51

CHAPTER THREE THE OPEN HEAVENS

Once when the king of Syria was warring with Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, "In such and such a place let us make an ambush and conceal ourselves." But the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians have concealed themselves there." So the king of Israel sent to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he (Elisha) used to warn him, so that he could guard himself there, not once or twice. Therefore the mind of the king of Syria was agitated because of this fact; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will ye not tell me who of us is for the king of Israel?" "There is no one, my lord, O king! But Elisha the prophet who is in Israel tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." "Go and see where he is," he said, "that I may send and take him." Then it was told him, saying, "Behold, he is in Dothan." Accordingly he sent there horses and chariots and a large force; and they came by night and surrounded the city. So on the morrow, when the man of God arose early in the morning and went out, there was an army of horses and chariots surrounding the city, so that his servant said to him, "Alas, master! What shall we do?" "Fear not," he said, "for they who are with us are more than they who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, open now his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the lad, and he saw and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha." **2 Kings 6:8-18** (Goodspeed)

There are many passages of scripture which undisputedly proclaim the certainty of two distinct realms, the first a natural realm inhabited by natural men with natural minds where temporal things are visible to natural eyes or audible to the dullness of the natural ear, and the second a realm unseen, unheard, untouched, untasted, and unsmelled by natural man, but seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelted by those who by God's grace dwell in heavenly realms, sit where He sits, and abide where He abides. Far below their heavenly habitation thunder the sickening strifes of this present evil world with its wars and strikes, its violence and spoil, its lust and greed, its worry and distress, its dread, its fear, and its turmoil. The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt. Continually do they lust after things, things, things, for they do not know that the things, which are seen are temporal, but the things, which are not seen are eternal. Only those who have caught a glimpse of the eternal realm where Christ sits at God's right hand can ever rise above earth's turmoil to walk with Him in newness of life.

It must have been a tremendous revelation to the servant of Elisha in the little town of Dothan long ago, for he, like the multitudes of Christians today, had never trod one step beyond the natural realm. It is very doubtful if he had ever heard that there was a realm of reality, unseen, unheard, and untouched by natural men. To be sure he was an Israelite, but this was the only difference between him and the heathen across the border. He was like the millions of Christians who, though they have believed on Christ, still toil, worry, and grovel in a realm that is only natural. "Alas," they cry, "for all the enemies that surround me, for all the suffering I must endure!" So busy have God's people become in their struggle for the temporal and the passing, things that please the physical senses, soft clothing for the body, pretty things to hear and dainty things to eat, that they cannot even find time to gather around the family altar to read together of things eternal or pray to their Father in heaven who alone can deliver them from this present evil world. Perhaps I may lose friends and readers by so saying, but I do not and I cannot believe that men who are unfaithful in these things that are least will ever be trusted in the kingdom of God to be faithful in that which is much, for it was our Lord who taught His people, saying, "**He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is much.**" **Luke 16:10**

I seem to hear the note of pity in the voice of Elisha as he prayed to God on the young man's behalf. He had seen the dread and consternation in his countenance at the sight of so dreadful an array of armed and desperate men. Fear stared from his eyes, cold perspiration started from his flesh, his knees knocked together, and the very hair stood up on his body. "Alas, master! What shall we do," was his terrified cry. But it was not so with Elisha. He did not dwell on such a low place as this young man nor was his vision confined to that natural realm where dwelt the king of Israel and all his hosts. His eyes had been opened to the certainty that there was a higher realm where God dwells and where God's men dwell in Him. So in pity and understanding he prayed, for well he knew that none but God can open the eyes of him that is born blind, and none but He can draw aside the darkling veil that we may see face to face. So, he prayed, "O, Lord, I pray Thee open his eyes that he

may see." And the Lord in mercy opened the eyes of the young man and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

If there were no other scripture but this, our conclusion must certainly be that there are two realms, one beneath, the other above; the first inhabited by natural men with natural understanding, the second the realm of God, the habitation of spiritual men who dwell with Christ in heavenly places. And we may say further that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ plainly told us of these two realms when He said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." **John 8:23** And yet again: "If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" **John 3:12** Paul, seeing this great truth by the Spirit, wrote to the Ephesians, saying, "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us... hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." **Eph. 2:4-6** Those who seek earnestly to take this way have "come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." **Heb. 12:22-24**

It is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. 1 Cor. 15:26 Through the wisdom of God and for reasons best known to Him all men have been called upon to begin their lives in a purely natural realm filled with natural aspirations, but the scriptures abound with a glowing revelation that shows that the path of the just need not lead through darkness dim where our feet are ever entangled with the subtle snares of this world, but as a great light it shineth more and more till the day is full.

I have prayed most earnestly that the spirit of divine revelation will possess those who now read these truths, and I am sure that if we will confess our darkness to Him, He will give us light. It is when men are satisfied with their childish philosophies and blinding theologies that God abandons them to spiritual sterility, pronouncing woe upon them who enter not in themselves and forbid those who are entering.

Shame on those who declare that they have not changed a whit in belief since they were first saved! We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. In our early imperfections we see through a glass darkly, but the further we walk with God, the clearer the light shines and the more beautiful becomes the way. The more we know God the more paltry become the worrisome doctrines of men and the peevish tenacity with which they argue their childish theories. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer? Where is the wisdom sought by the Greek or the miracle demanded by the Jew? Have they not all become as nothing and mere petty trivialities to those who dwell in wisdom and to those who have become a part of the Omnipotent?

Is it true that you who once began in the Spirit have now become in bondage to the natural realm and slaves to the weak and beggarly elements of the five physical senses? Those who remain in the natural realm are natural men, and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2:14 All such natural men "speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." **Jude 10** Depend no more, then, upon your education or your years of Bible College or the doctrines of your particular church group, for there is a realm to which the diligent and obedient come where you need not pore in weariness over endless pages of human theory. "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:27**

I am thoroughly convinced in my spirit that we have come to the end of the age of grace and we now stand at the very gates of the kingdom of God. As John the Baptist stood at the end of the dispensation of law to look with wonder into the coming kingdom of heaven, so we now stand at the close of the church age on the very threshold of the kingdom of God. Have you read this saying of Paul, "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away!" **Heb. 8:13** The age of law with all its ritual had to vanish away with the coming of the dispensation of grace, and it is equally true that the age of grace that has now been with us for almost two thousand years has now waxed old and is ready to vanish away. It will vanish away with all its institutions of

whatsoever sort they be, whether denomination or sect, Bible School or Sunday School, prophet and miracle worker, missionary and mission, for "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." Heb. 10:9 The dispensational sun is setting on the tired old age of the dispensation of grace. All that is in part is to be done away. No more seeing through a glass darkly. No more knowing in part or prophesying in part, for that which is perfect will come with the rising of the kingdom sun and we shall hail the glad day that shall spread itself in justice and equity to cover all the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The signs around in earth and air tell us as never before that God is drawing the curtains upon this age. Violence as great as Noah's day fills the streets, stalks the highways, pours from the air, and lurks in the hearts of men. Iniquity such as Sodom knew has invaded the whole earth. The fraudulent sex god raises its ugly head, not only in cinema, but in every home as well. Mammon, the god of riches, has set up his throne in the heart of Christian and sinner alike. The church system stinks with rotting forms of godliness that deny every vestige of power or reality, and the same system reeks with deceivers who, seeking their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ's, bewitch the ignorant with fraudulent miracles, devouring widow's houses and for a pretense making long prayers. The mark of this beast system is even now upon the foreheads and hands of many thousands of people, and the day is at hand when all who refuse to bear its mark and be joined to it will be able neither to buy nor to sell. Buy then of Him gold tried in the fire and fine raiment that ye may be clothed with His righteousness that the shame of your nakedness appear not.

Many strange things are happening all over the world that must transpire before the end of the age, and nothing can stop them. We are seeing the dissolution of the British Commonwealth and Empire whose mighty influence has touched and blessed every nation on earth. All the nations of colored skin will separate themselves from her before the end, and the United States also, individually the most powerful nation on earth whose arms are scattered in some forty countries, must be gathered. Mighty kings of the east, long sleeping, are arousing themselves in preparation for the day when God will plead with them in the valley of Megiddo. The Jews also are being fast regathered for the day of the revelation of their Messiah. Zech. 12:10 With the passing of the sixth age the rule of men and carnal minds will vanish away. For six thousand years and for six dispensations the creation has groaned beneath the injustices of human rule. Selfishness and greed have reared their ugly heads in every form of government that has been tried whether in the religious or secular realm, proving beyond the slightest doubt that all rule and authority coming from the natural mind is coming from beneath and is corrupt according to every deceitful lust.

Have you noticed the way in which opposites are generated from one another? Day is opposite to night, yet out of the night comes forth the day and out of the day comes forth the night. Sleeping is opposite to waking, yet the state of being awake is generated from the state of being asleep, and the state of sleeping is generated from the state of waking. Death is the opposite of life, yet the state of death comes forth from the state of being alive, and unless nature should fail in this one respect, then with the greatest certainty the state of life shall come forth from the state of death. No wonder Jesus said, "The hour cometh when all that are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth." John 5:27 It cannot be otherwise.

If these things are so, and who can deny them, then we may further say that the natural mind is opposite to the spiritual mind. The mind from beneath is opposite to the mind that is from above. From the rule of the spiritual mind in the garden of Eden came forth the rule of the natural mind which has continued to this hour, but from the rule of the natural mind shall be generated the rule of the spiritual mind which is the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ as it dwells in His sons. Thus the glorious ages to come are to be ruled by sons in whom dwells the mind of Christ, and in that day all shall be order, interdependence, and unity.

We do not wish to speak against what the world calls learning, but the wisdom that is from above is something entirely different. Saul of Tarsus was a man of great learning in the natural realm, so much so that the governor Festus said, "Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad." He had been raised a Pharisee and had learned all the tradition of that strict sect, being brought up at the feet of the learned Gamaliel. I suppose he could argue scripture and law as few men in his day and even justify himself for his wicked persecution of the saints and for holding the garments of the murderers of Stephen. In his blindness and ignorance he did not know that these saints were living in a higher realm than himself - a realm which he neither saw, felt, tasted, touched, nor heard. "But," he said, "when it pleased God, who separated me from my

mother's womb, and called my by His grace, to reveal His Son in me... immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia..."

Gal. 1:15-17 It was evidently in the lonely deserts of Arabia that the great revelation of the grace of God was given to him, for he was not taught it nor did he learn it of man, but he was given the truth by revelation. Eph. 3:2-8

From the things, which we have said we must conclude that there is a natural realm and a spiritual realm far above it. As there is a people who live and move in this, a purely natural realm, so God is also preparing a heavenly people who live and move and have their being in heavenly realms. My heart is often heavy with longing to make all men see that here and now they can enjoy a heavenly citizenship that is something more than mere wishful thinking or the niceties of words, but that which is in truth the realm of reality. For thousands of years God's people have talked of dying and going to heaven, but pitifully few have ever learned by the Spirit that even while we inhabit the earth, we can inhabit heaven also. This statement may at first seem ridiculous imagination, but not so in the light of truth spoken by men who actually walked in the light of an open heaven. For years I wondered at these words of Jesus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Is it any wonder that earth-bound men with natural minds thought Him mad, for He was saying that, while He dwelt on earth, He lived in heaven as well. His bearers knew nothing of any realm but the natural, which they saw all about them. Their minds as well as their eyes were holden to the heavenly hosts that surround us - The angels of God and the chariots of fire. We are indeed come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first born which are written in heaven, to God the judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect. Heb. 12:22-24 Not only did Paul declare, "our citizenship is in heaven", (**Phil. 3:20**), but he also said, "We sit together in heavenly places." **Eph. 2:6**

How tragically have God's people walked as natural men in a natural world as they filled their lives with natural aspirations, neither knowing nor caring to know that they could walk as sons of God in heavenly realms while they dwell amid a crooked and perverse generation. Though the first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly, and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor. 15:47-50

Every dispensation has had its men who knew the wonder of living in the heavenly realm even while they walked on earth, and I am sure that the coming age of the kingdom of God will be first entered by men and women who while strangers and pilgrims in this world were possessors of a heavenly citizenship. What was the experience of John on the Isle of Patmos but a foretaste of things to come? Banished by men and exiled to die in loneliness, he found himself walking with God, and listening to harmonies that would make earth's sweetest symphonies a raucous discord. There his wondering eyes beheld the completeness of Christ, - not the lonely Galilean of yesteryear, but Christ complete with all His glorious sons, whose head was white as wool, whose eyes were as flaming fire, whose countenance was as the sun, whose sword issued forth from His mouth in words of life, whose girdle was of gold, and whose beautiful feet seemed to burn as in a furnace of fire. Even the sounding of His voice caused the man of God to fall as one dead, for no man can see God and live.

It is impossible for man, the inhabitant of this earthy realm, to see God and live and it is impossible for man to see God and die. That is the meaning of the two edged sword of the Word. With one stroke it kills the old and with one stroke it makes alive the new. Deut. 32:39 No man can see God and live as he formerly lived, for the old self has been slain and from the dead carcass of the lion has come forth the honey sweetness of the eternal world. Judges 14:5-9

In the age of innocence Adam lived and enjoyed the glory of the heavenly realm. He was clothed with light and dwelt in light, for light was his covering. Mighty angels were his companions and God Himself walked and talked with him in the cool of the day. He knew as few men have ever known the reality of the spiritual world, crystal clear to spiritual senses, transcending far everything that was earthy. He knew no hunger, thirst, or nakedness, for the bread of life was his food and the water of life was his drink and his garment was the glory

and light of God. The "I AM" that nurtured him in the beginning will be the "I AM" that nurtures His people in the end, for the Lord shall be our God and we shall be His people.

And Enoch, too, who lived in the dispensation of conscience, walked with God and he was not, for God took him. Though the fall of man had cast a pall over the world, causing men to walk in dread and fear as they fought and warred, toiled and sweat, to drag a living from the unwilling ground, there was one man at least who lived in a realm far above the strife of natural men, for he walked with God. Little, indeed, is spoken of this good man, but rest assured that he was indeed a stranger to the multitudes about him as he walked in a realm that other men could not understand. While others were filled with religion, he knew nothing about religion; he knew God and walked with Him.

I may be wrong, but I sincerely doubt that it is possible to be spiritual and religious at the same time. The religious susceptibilities of the scribes and Pharisees were continually outraged and shocked because of the irreligious life of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. They hated Him because He healed on their Sabbath day, because He ate with unwashed hands, and permitted His disciples to rub out corn to eat. They hated Him because He displayed the hypocrisy of their religious acts and likened them to whitewashed sepulchers, which appeared beautiful without but within were full of rotting flesh and dead men's bones. They hated Him because He said the Father loved Him and He loved the Father. They despised Him because He loved the sincerity of sinners more than the hypocrisy of their religion. No, there was nothing religious about Him, and I would to God that the people who read this message would awaken to the fruitless-ness of religious activities and come apart to begin to love God and walk with Him. Honestly, I am astonished at the number of people who, having been diligent church members for years, scarcely know whether or not they are saved, and many, alas, have no assurance of salvation whatever. They would not miss a church meeting, yet they do not know God. The whole community knows them as religious, but they are devoid of spiritual life.

Noah during the dispensation of human government found favor with God, and, being in touch with God and knowing Him, he prepared an ark to the saving of his household when all the world was destroyed with a flood. Abraham, too, who lived during the dispensation of promise, knew God face to face, walking in His presence and enduring as seeing the invisible, Moses likewise, under the dispensation of the law, remained in God's presence twice for forty days and forty nights, and all during his life he lived in a realm that other men knew not, even as it is said: "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel."

As for the dispensation of grace in which we have lived out our lives, time would fail us to tell of Jesus, of John, Phillip, Peter, Stephen, Paul, and a host of others who, while their feet trod the earth, had their heads and hearts in the heavenly realm. Not only have we the example of these blessed sons of God, but we have their teachings as well. Our Lord said, "If ye were of this world, the world would love her own; but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Did not Paul teach us that we have a heavenly citizenship, and tell of the wonderful possibility of sitting together in heavenly places? And did he not teach that if we live in the Spirit we should also walk in the Spirit? Divine revelation is full of the hopes that "as He is, so also are we in this present world."

Of the things which we have spoken this is the conclusion: First, that there is a natural realm all about us where people with natural minds and natural understanding wait continually upon natural things. Even their religion is on a purely natural plane. Second, there is a spiritual realm where men and women of God live, their lives in this world being ordered from above as their newborn spirits rejoice in the mountains of the Lord.

There is always so much to write and so little space to write it and certainly the world itself could not contain all the things that should be written but all who are living in vital union with Him will know that the truths I write already lived in their hearts before they heard them so that in spirit they always knew them. He who begins to live in the Spirit begins to know the meaning of that sacred text, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Whenever one speaks of the attainable marvels of God, there are always many who come seeking some magic formula by which they may easily attain yet still remain as they always were. There are always people who wish to be saved, not because they love God but because they fear punishment, but like Lot's wife their

hearts are still in Sodom. There were many who, seeing men filled with God's Spirit, desired also to be filled, yet had no desire to live as Spirit-filled men. When Simon the sorcerer saw the miracles of Peter and John, he desired their power, yet he was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. How often men and women have sought spiritual gifts merely because they wanted to possess them, or in hope that their possession of them would bring great prominence. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and the sooner we learn that lesson the better it will be. I have no confidence in flesh or fleshly minds. I have no confidence in men nor anything that is in man. I have no confidence in myself. If we are to have confidence at all, it must be in the living God who, having overcome the world and the flesh and the devil, ever liveth to make intercession for us. Before writing the burden that is upon my heart, let me say that repentance and remission of sins must precede every new experience in God, for every new experience with God demands new consecrations, and every new consecration brings repentance of something hitherto unknown to you. You will find yourself like the blessed Job of whom God said, "There is none like him in the earth, a man that feareth God and escheweth evil", yet in the light of his heavenly revelation he bitterly cried. "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." When Isaiah saw the Lord, he cried, "Woe is me for I am undone ;for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." **Isa. 6:5** And Peter, after the miraculous draught of fishes begged with tears, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." **Luke 5:8**

I have no time for frothy preachers who never want to speak of repentance, but who for their own ends would lavish spiritual gifts upon the most carnal of men. There is no magic formula for a spiritual life. You cannot partake of the bounties of this present evil world and be sons of God at the same time. It simply cannot be done. You cannot make a treasure of mammon (riches) and have a spiritual mind, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You cannot sit for hours before a T.V., viewing the filth and rot of the world's most demoralized characters, and still view the celestial realms and hear the beautiful voice of Christ, for purity and vileness do not dwell together. Go ahead and do it if you want to, but refrain from making spiritual claims for you only deceive yourself. You cannot spend hours in idle chit-chat and gossip and have a spiritual mind, for all these things are but products of the carnal realm. They keep men carnal and they are designed for that very thing. Let us lay aside these modern evils that drown men in perdition and hear instead the words of Peter, "Giving all diligence add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ... for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:5-8,11**

The church system with all its confusion is literally filled with men and women who profess to be saved and are not saved. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient and unto every good work reprobate. There are thousands who profess to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but their lives are empty and dry and their profession is vanity. They are in truth filled with emptiness and have become deceivers of themselves. Instead of being after the Spirit they are after the flesh, filling their lives and their time, not with prayer and communion with God and His Word, but with the tinny emptiness that continually dances before their eyes. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above and not on things of the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." **Col. 3:1-3.** "Mortify therefore your members who are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." **Col. 3:5-6** A thorough realization that we are in truth the citizens of another world will do wonders in overcoming this present evil one. There is without a doubt a heavenly realm unto which we can look and in which we can abide, a realm where communion with Christ is continual both day and night, for He has raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

The church at Corinth was very interested in spiritual gifts, and there was a time when they came behind in no spiritual gift. But you have only to read the book of 1 Corinthians to see that, though these people were zealous to possess spiritual gifts, their lives were in many cases indescribably bad. Many of them were guilty of fornication and incest, and some were committing sins not even common among the Gentiles. They were sectarian in spirit, being followers of men. Their communion table was so disorderly that some made gluttons of themselves while others became drunk from the wine. 1 Cor. 11:17-21. Instead of coming together for better they came together for worse and their disorders must have been a putrid odor even to the world.

It was to these people that the apostle Paul taught the great requirement for a truly spiritual life, and we should pay fervent heed, for this is what he said: "If I can speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am a blaring trumpet or a clanging cymbal. Or if I can prophesy and am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge, and have such absolute/fi/v/! that I can remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I use all I have to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love is fore bearing and kind. Love knows no jealousy. Love does not brag; is not conceited. She is not unmannerly, nor selfish, not irritable, nor mindful of wrongs. She does not rejoice in injustice, but joyfully sides with the truth. She can overlook faults. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of endurance. Love never fails. But if there are prophecies, they will come to an end; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will come to an end. For our knowledge is partial, and so is our prophesying; but when that which is perfect (love) is come, all that is partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I talked like a child, thought like a child, reasoned like a child: Now that I have become a man, I have put an end to childish ways." **1 Cor. 3:1-12** (Weymouth)

It is time to consider with prayer and meditation the things we have just read, for, -if men can possess all manner of powerful gifts yet still be nothing but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, if they can give all their possessions to the poor and lay down their lives as martyrs and still be profited nothing, then it is time for us to know just where we do stand. We have made such heroes of men who advertise their gifts, whether real or imagined, not considering that all they may be is a big noise and a very empty one at that. We must surely admit that for one to have all these spectacular things and still be nothing is indeed a very serious matter.

There is a more excellent way and this way is the only way that men will ever come to dwell in God or sit with Christ in the heavenly realms of the Spirit. If you are ever to dwell with Christ in God, there is one way and one way only. It is the way of love, for God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as He is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, because perfect love casteth out fear. Love is first and foremost of all fruits and in its mighty depths are contained all spiritual wisdom, all spiritual graces, and all spiritual gifts. Love is the more excellent way because it is the excellence of wisdom, the excellence of understanding, and the excellence of power.

The man who dwells in love dwells in God and this is the celestial realm. It is no wonder that Paul said. "Love suffereth long and is kind. It envieth not and is not puffed up", for when men dwell in that new and wonderful realm of love, they have perfect understanding of all things. All things appear entirely different in the light of perfect understanding. The times of ignorance God winked at because His love understood the ignorance of natural men. It was this very understanding love that extended mercy to the murderous Saul of Tarsus because love saw that he did it ignorantly in unbelief. Perhaps you have marveled and wept as you have contemplated the words of Jesus who with His dying breath prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The pure love of God in which He literally dwelt filled Him with the excellence of understanding and His heart overflowed with kindness and forgiveness toward them, because He who dwelt on higher planes knew that these poor creatures of the dust were ignorant of every reality that belonged to His realm. Love is full of understanding, Paul knew this when he said to us, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgment." **Phil. 1:9** The love that was in the heart of Stephen lifted him to the realm of God and caused him to know that even Saul of Tarsus, his chief tormentor, was ignorant of the realm where Christ stands at God's right hand, and so with the understanding and pity of the love of God he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The love of God in Stephen's heart taught him that which even Saul knew not, - that he did it ignorantly in unbelief. 1 Tim. 1:13

Love is the realm of God, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. The Holy Spirit has made real to me that in the realm of love many things are missing that clutter our lives now, and many things are present there that are conspicuous by their absence now. In the realm of love there are no ceremonies. Man's religion has been filled with forms and ceremonies from time immemorable, and all these were only shadows of things that were to come. In them there was no real deliverance from sin, but rather a continual remembrance of sin. Just as true grief is not ashamed of its tears but weeps and sobs in perfect simplicity, so also he that dwelleth in God's love is sincere, all his worship is in simplicity, he needs no ceremony to guide him, and all such are bondage to him. The woman who washed the feet of Christ with her tears, wiping them with her beautiful tresses, kissing them and pouring expensive ointment upon them in prodigal abundance, was not worshipping according to ceremony, but according to the simplicity of divine love. She loved much and was therefore forgiven much, for who can love and go unforgiven? Those who sat about her rebuked her simplicity and rebuked Christ for not knowing that she was a sinner, but love is stronger than sin. Love is stronger than death itself, breaking down the bars of Hades to let the captives free. Nothing is so powerful that it can stand before love, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Herein is displayed the vast difference between the love of man and the love of God. The love of God is unselfish and outgoing, extending itself in lengths and breadths and depths and heights, cleansing sinners and lifting them to highest heaven, calling to the gates of Hades, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye age-lasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in." **Psa. 24:7** Love is touched with the feeling of human infirmities, bearing our sickness and carrying away our pains, rejoicing with those who do rejoice, and weeping with those who weep.

What place has form and ceremony in such a realm as this where there is perfect love, perfect understanding, perfect peace? Is it any wonder that, when the new age dawned, Paul declared, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." **Heb. 10:9** That first realm with its laws written on tables of stone, its ceremonial washings, its daily sacrifices and yearly feasts, could never make the worshippers perfect. "Then said I, 'Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will O God.'" **Heb. 10:7** Love needs no law to govern it because love itself is the fulfilling of the law. One never says to a man in whom dwells the love of God. "Thou shall not kill", for he who truly loves God loves his neighbor also. Neither need one say to him, "Thou shall not steal", for love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Nor yet, "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", for who is he who would blaspheme or speak evil of the name he loves? Neither need one say to him, "Thou shalt not bear false witness", for he who loves God is born of the truth and no falsehood is in him, and no lie is of the truth. Neither would one say to him, "Thou shalt not covet", for love envieth not and covets nothing that belongs to this world. Neither shall one say to him who loves, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God", for why should he be told to do that which his heart never ceases to do? It is thus and thus alone that the law is done away. How treacherous is that carnal doctrine that teaches people to live as they please because the law, having failed, was done away! The law is done away only for those who in love fulfill it, because to those who love God every precept of the law is written upon their hearts and has become part and parcel of their very nature.

The things we say in parting from our friends are the things we deem of utmost importance. It was even thus with our Lord who, before leaving this world to go to the Father, said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." **John 13:34-35** This last message impressed itself deeply upon John, who continued the theme in his epistle, saying, "He that abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye had from the beginning." **1 John 2:6-7** That old commandment was the commandment of love. "Hear, O Israel; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." John, writing to the elect lady, said, "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." **2 John 1:5** Love is both the old commandment and the new commandment. It was with us before ever a law was written and will be with us when ages are no more forever.

IN LOVE THERE ARE NO TRADITIONS

Tradition had become such a bondage to the Jews that our Lord frankly told them, "Ye make the word of God of none effect by your tradition." **Matt. 15:6** You will surely say amen to that, but will you consent when I also say that God's people today, together with the whole existing church system, are literally bound hand and foot with the grave clothes of tradition so that they are not free to serve God in spirit and in truth? Neither are they free to accept the light that falls in ever increasing rays of revelation upon their pathway. It would not be difficult, I suppose, to name a score or more of traditions that hold men in bondage to such an extent that they cannot move in God at all. Sunday School has become such a tradition that one would think that it was inaugurated by Jesus Himself, or at least by one of the apostles. But such are never mentioned in scripture and were completely unknown until they were begun by Robert Raikes at Gloucester, England, in 1780. Sunday School did not become established in America until the 19th century. I am not saying whether they are right or wrong, - only that they are traditions that bind men so much to form and ceremony that they can never walk simply before God in freedom and love, liberty and spiritual worship.

We may also well say the same thing of the bondage of continual church meetings, campaigns, and conventions. They have become such a tradition that God's people actually imagine that such are a necessary part of a spiritual life. The truth is they are only tradition and a cruel bondage to the spirit, for, while millions are consumed with the activities of their church, they have forfeited their personal contact with God. I am thoroughly convinced that the church system with all its abominable tradition and bondage, its doctrines, its meetings, its conventions, its money grabbing schemes, its hireling pastors and evangelists, has become a ball and chain to all spiritual progress and a strait jacket to spiritual growth, for "of whatsoever a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage."

Our Lord once sat upon a wayside well telling a sinful woman the way of life. Her understanding was pitifully slow and it was not until His divine wisdom revealed the sins of her life that she said, "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." See how badly even this poor soul was in bondage to the blinding tradition that had clouded her life from childhood! "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," she said, "but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men should worship." Can you not see here in these words the bondage of tradition? Can you not see that the same bondage exists in almost every Christian heart today? Where you worship, how you worship, when you worship, and with whom you worship, what the order of worship is to be, and so forth: this is the church system from beginning to end, and it is a chain of darkness about the feet of God's people and a blindfold upon their eyes. How true were the words of Jesus when He said to her, "Ye worship ye know not what!" Could we not say this to all the church systems of our day? Men have left off worshipping God to worship the works of their own hands, worshipping and serving the creature of their own making instead of the Creator Himself. Then He spoke that truth of truths to her heart. "The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship God in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him," **John 4:23** Spirit worship is the worship of love. Times and places mean nothing to such worship, for whether one be in the heart of a crowd or in the loneliness of a desert the spirit is dwelling in God. Deep is answering to deep and love is responding to love. In the realm of love there are no divisions, no denominations, and no sects. Denominations are the work of the carnal-mind, not the work of love. Did not Paul say this very thing when he declared, "...While one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" Cf. **1 Cor. 1:10-13, 1 Cor. 3:1-4** What then would this great man say could he see today the vast array of sects and denominations that can scarcely be numbered, each blaring forth its own troublesome tradition and shouting aloud its carnality. To all who long to worship God in spirit and in truth and dwell on that celestial plane with Him the first step of obedience will be, "Come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17** What a promise that is for all who long for sonship! Yet how few ever heed it, for church tradition has blinded their minds and snared their feet in chains of darkness. Be not like them, for that is the realm in which they dwell, but God is calling you up higher.

LOVE AND REVELATION

Love is the principle element in revelation. If you would know God, there is but one way. You must love Him with divine love. Have you not found that people who are lovers reveal their secrets to each other? There was much truth in the subtle words of Delilah when she said to Samson. "How canst thou say, 'I love thee,' when thine heart is not with me?" **Judg. 16:14**. When a man loves God, the love of God responds to that man,

revealing the secrets of God's purpose, His grace, and His power. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me is loved of My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him." **John 14:21** He that has entered into this rest has ceased from his own works, his ceremonies, his traditions, his sectarianism and divisions, and his misunderstandings. Even those bitter enemies who through lies and hypocrisy uprooted him from all he had are seen in the light of love's understanding, for had it not been for their evil, he might well have remained with them on their carnal plane, sinking lower and lower into the slough of tradition and heresy.

The love of which we speak has nothing in common with that human farce which men call love. It knows nothing of sentimentalism. It has no personal requests, for it seeks only God's will. Love "seeketh not her own." It embraces the universal purpose of the Most High. It was Dryden who said, "Let grace and goodness be the principle lodestone of thy affections, for love which hath ends will have an end." That is why it is said, "Love seeketh not her own."

BORN FROM ABOVE

You may no sooner have read these lines than you will say in your heart, "I must show more love." But that, my friend, is not the way, for you cannot show what you do not possess. Love is of God and it is born in our hearts from above. Love comes from the indwelling presence of Christ as He abides in your re-born spirit. I tell you of a truth that if you will constantly love Him and communicate with Him, feasting upon His Word, seeking His mind and His will, doing nothing of importance without His direction, you need never trouble about showing love. The love of God in your own heart will continually constrain you, for "if a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." **John 14:23** If God's children would cease from their works and their hoary old traditions and begin to love Jesus Christ in spirit, they would be surprised at their own growth and the revelation that would fill their minds.

God has hermetically sealed all realms on their own side. The rock cannot lift itself into the plant kingdom. The plant cannot lift itself into the animal kingdom. The animal cannot lift itself into the human kingdom, and the human cannot lift himself into the kingdom of God. But have you not noticed how the plant reaches its roots down to the earth and raises it up into itself so that the earth is born into the plant kingdom above it? And have you not seen the animal eat the herbs of the earth so that the herb becomes part of the flesh of the animal, and man likewise eating the flesh of beasts causes it to become part of himself? Thus each kingdom is born or lifted by the kingdom immediately above it. So it is also with the kingdom of God. We must be born from above that we might enter it. God reaches down and puts His Spirit within our own and we are born from above. And what can we more say of love, for we do not attain the love of God by desperate struggle, but by opening our hearts that the love wherein He hath loved us may be born in us. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.

My Soul, rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope nor wish to be esteemed or great:
To take the impression of a will divine
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess Him righteous in His just decrees;
Love what He loves, and let His pleasure please;
Die daily; from the touch of sin recede:
Then thou hast crowned Him, and He reigns indeed!

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 26

THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-10

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CHAPTER ONE THE HOLY SPIRIT INTRODUCTION

Many years ago during a long season of prayer I was brought into deep meditation concerning the Holy Spirit. As I waited before the Lord, my mind was flooded in quick succession with a whole series of themes concerning that blessed divine person whom our Lord Jesus called the Holy Spirit. As heading after heading and theme after theme swept into my mind, I wrote them down lest they should be forgotten, and, when at last the Spirit ceased to speak, I knew I possessed in skeleton form material enough for a large and informative book concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. As time went by, the book was written, though only parts of it were ever published; but it may be that He who in wisdom reserved the best wine for the end of the feast has also reserved these things for that true ecclesia, which is now rising to form a fixed abode for God through the Spirit. Should it be pleasing to the Lord of all wisdom and understanding, it will be our joy to write of this heavenly person whose divine commission it is to bring to fullness every blessing of Christ in the life of the believer.

It will be my purpose in writing these truths to set forth in awe and simplicity the things of the Spirit, but I shall not attempt to settle any of those vain arguments of men, which pretend to explain even the very appearance of the Godhead. All such carnal debate is an abomination to me and a wretched debasing of things that are higher than the heavens. Never have these carnal debaters succeeded in explaining their views, nor have their views drawn any man closer to God. If it pleased the wisdom of our Lord to reveal Himself to Moses as a fire, to Elijah as a still small voice, to Abraham as three men, to Gideon as an angel, and to Thomas as "my Lord and my God", then learn from this with grace and wisdom all that the Spirit teaches that our enquiring minds may open to greater understanding as a flower opens to the sun. Seek not to conform to childish notions and doctrines of men as though we could understand with our infant minds the greatness of the mystery of God. No pride of understanding fills my soul, but rather a desire to seal my lips in silence when I read the words of holy inspiration, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." **1 Tim. 3:16**

The longer we walk with God, the greater the mystery becomes, yet they who have walked with God will agree that the mysteries of Him are not of the kind that render the spirit distraught and set the head to spinning, but their mystery, their majesty, and their glory serve rather to awaken in the saint an abounding faith, a sacred reverence, and a trusting humility such as nothing else could do. The man who presumes to stand up to explain the doctrines of God, but afterwards lightly uses God's name in vain, has neither seen God nor heard His voice, And I am sure it is the mind of Christ to say that he who in anger, debate, or malice seeks to propound the mysteries of God is himself far from the Father and knows nothing of the things of which he speaks.

A lifetime of experience will teach us this truth: "If any man thinketh he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him." **1 Cor. 8:2** "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." **Luke 10:21** These words spoke Jesus as He rejoiced in spirit because of the wisdom of God. Let the wise and prudent doctors of divinity and men of letters and learning take heed, for the Father has hidden His mysteries from you and has revealed them to men of humble and contrite spirits that they may with rejoicing enter into them. Cease then from the luxury of vain arguments and definitions of trinities and unities. Faith does not depend on human understanding but, believing the promise, carries off the blessing with rejoicing.

While the Pharisees and Sadducees debated the evil of eating with unwashed hands, there came "a woman of Canaan out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs, which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." **Matt. 15:22-28** Even so, O Lord, let it ever be that all things sacred and holy may be hidden from the prying eyes of the wise and prudent men of this world that faith in the heart of the contrite may with great joy receive the blessing.

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Consternation, mourning, and heaviness settled down upon the disciples of Jesus when the truth of His departure from their midst began to grip their troubled minds. These men, who in their walk with Christ had seen the power of God manifested in every department of life, could not believe that He would be killed and taken from them, and the promise He gave that He would rise from the dead only served to fill their hearts with greater trepidation and amazement. How could He who had healed every sickness known among men, who with a word had stilled the wild and stormy seas, who had put new limbs on men that were maimed, had cast out the most violent of demons, had eluded those who came to take Him and turned to foolishness the wisdom of the wise, now fall victim to the machinations of men and end His life on a cross? And how much more were their fears aroused by the disquieting news that one of their own number would in wickedness betray Him, and yet another, even the strongest of them all, would deny that he had even known Him.

It was in the midst of their fears and heart-broken consternation at the thought of His departure that the wonderful promise that He would send another Comforter, even the blessed Holy Spirit who would abide with them forever, was given by our Saviour. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." **John 14:16-18**

The mystery of God and of godliness is exceeding great and never do I feel so impotent and inadequate as when by necessity I attempt with finite words to explain that which is infinite. Here, far more than other places, we must abandon human wisdom and cut ourselves clean from the many so-called schools of thought and

from the wordy dissertations of an apostate church system that the path of the just be no longer clouded by the outer darkness of human theology. "I admit Thou canst do anything, that nothing is too hard for Thee. I thoughtlessly confused the issues; I spoke without intelligence of wonders far beyond my ken. I heard of Thee by hearsay, but now mine eyes have seen Thee; so I despise myself; in dust and ashes I repent." **Job. 4:1-6** (Moffatt) It is when we come to this state of heartfelt humility before God that the Holy Spirit is able to reveal the priceless things He would have us know. God does not indulge in the senseless pastime of putting new wine into old wine skins. We may as well conclude, then, that we will never receive new light, true revelation or understanding until we quit the old church system with all its multiplied establishments, its doctrines, and its do-gooding and join ourselves to Christ alone that we may become one in spirit with that mystical church which is His body. It is the erroneous teaching of the system that hinders our progress, dulls our spiritual appetite, and stagnates our faith. The faith of God leaps out to embrace every true revelation from God without the necessity of our stretching or straining to make ourselves believe.

I cannot explain to the satisfaction of all why it was that in one breath our Saviour declared, "I will pray the Father and He will give you another Comforter," and in the next He said, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." My spirit grasps it; my inner man understands it; my heart believes it, and my faith carries away the blessing. Let those who wish to fight about it do so if they will, but God will leave them in the darkness of their own hearts while others in adoring faith in what He said receive the rich fullness of the inheritance. While scribes and Pharisees in their carnality argued about the non-essentials, the Canaanitish woman walked off with the blessing. While the disciples of Jesus marveled that he talked to a Samaritan, the woman ran off to the city with the revelation burning in her heart, "Is not this the Christ?" - a truth that even the disciples as yet had not seen. And what shall we say of the blind man, who from birth had seen neither the light of the sun nor the faces of his friends? Rejoicing in his new found treasure, he confounded the challenge of his inquisitors with the unanswerable statement, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." **John 9:25** Be exhorted, child of God, to turn from human understanding. Lean not upon it. It is completely unreliable. Lean rather upon the Spirit of truth, whom Christ has sent forth from the Father and of whom it is said, "He will take the things of God and show them unto you."

There are some conclusions, which the Holy Spirit would mark indelibly upon our minds. It will make a universe of difference to our understanding, our spiritual growth and progress, when our minds grasp the fact that the Holy Spirit possesses each and every element of personality. This truth I will humbly endeavor to show. If in your mind the Holy Spirit is merely an influence for good or a strange irresistible something as impersonal as the wind, then it is small wonder that you find your progress very slow and your spiritual understanding immature. Would you not say that there would be a great difference between one's being filled with a divine influence and being filled a divine person? A person can speak; an A person can be spoken to; an influence cannot. A person can comfort and help; an influence cannot. A person can intercede; an influence cannot. A person can lead, correct, chasten and illumine; an influence can do none of these things.

A person is that which, when speaking, says "I", when spoken to, is called thee or thou, and when spoken of, is called he or him. This is a very simple and concise definition of what a person is, and I think the Bible bears abundant evidence that in all these things and many more the Holy Spirit is proven to be a person. In the Greek language the word spirit is a neuter noun and is therefore designated by the pronoun it, but it is a most unusual mark of inspiration that, when speaking of the Holy Spirit, this grammatical law is set aside and overruled in the light of the true and definite personality of the Holy Spirit. Thus you will notice in the following statement of truth concerning the Holy Spirit that came from the lips of Christ Himself the pronoun he is repeated eight times and the word himself once. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." **John 16:13-14** This verse of holy truth establishes beyond question that in this age the work of God is done, not by an impersonal influence sent forth from heaven, but by the personal Holy Spirit of Christ, sent forth into the hearts of believers to work in them all the wonders of God. No wonder Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you!"

Perhaps, as we were counting the number of times the pronoun he was used in the text above, we missed or passed over the vital truth the scripture itself contained. I am sure we could fill volumes with the marvelous

revelation of that text! First we must notice that He is the Spirit of truth. The Holy Spirit does not merely tell the truth; He is the very Spirit of all truth. No lie or false doctrine ever emanates from Him. He is Himself the very essence of truth because He is the Spirit of truth. From Him all truth comes. The man or woman in contact with the Holy Spirit need never fear a lie, for He is truth and the very Spirit of it. Of this we will speak in greater particular as this heavenly theme develops.

Notice further that the ministry of the Spirit of truth is this: "He will guide you into all truth." Let saints of God give eternal praise that we have not been left to the helplessness and hopelessness of human understanding, nor is it necessary for any man to seek God's wisdom from another. The promise of God to you and me as believers is this: He will guide you into all truth. All things necessary for our spiritual growth and adoption will be revealed to the heart of the believer by the Spirit of truth as necessity and occasion demand. It is of this same guiding Spirit that Paul spoke when he wrote the words, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10**

The work of the Holy Spirit in bearing witness to the truth is greatly magnified by the words of John. This apostle of God was well aware of the many errors stealthily creeping into the midst of the people of God. There were seducers in his day just as there are seducers and deceivers now. And do not imagine, my friend, that seducers are the rare and unusual breed, for there are many more seducers and deceivers at large among the Christians of our day than there are genuine ministries. So much the more, then, should we take heed and depend upon that Spirit of truth that He, and not men, should guide us into all truth. John, knowing the ever-increasing deception, exhorted the Christians in these words: "Let that (the truth) therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father... These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing (the Holy Spirit) which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:24, 26-27**

It becomes very clear from the above scripture that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is truth and that this same Spirit both guides us into all truth and defends us against all error. The Spirit bears witness to the truth and causes the soul to rejoice in it. The Holy Spirit shrinks from error and causes the soul in whom He dwells to remove himself from the spirit of error. How many times in your walk with God have you felt the warm witness of the Spirit that certain teachings were right? And am I not right in saying that often times the Spirit bore witness to the truth long before your own mind was able to grasp or understand it? On the other hand have you not known times when the Spirit shrank away from a man or from the things he had to say even though his words sounded right and even scriptural? When once the Spirit of truth shrinks away and fails to bear witness, we should not allow ourselves to become persuaded or convinced by the cleverness of men. It is entirely true that the scripture says, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you", but it is nothing short of tragic that the vast majority of Christians think of power only in terms of Christian service. They dream of a baptism that will give them the power to perform miracles, to heal the sick, or raise the dead, and they hope to see signs and wonders follow their ministry. Scarce indeed are those Christians who consider or even notice the many more important offices of the Holy Spirit. In our lifelong search for truth, for instance, why do we not quickly learn that this divine person is the very Spirit of truth? Why do men and women by endless thousands run off to Bible Schools in the hope of learning truth when the Spirit of truth dwells within? Have we never read, "Ye need not that any man teach you?" Do we not believe that the anointing teaches us all things? And that this same Spirit of truth shows us things to come? "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." **Job. 32:8**

It is never difficult to get people to mentally accede to the fact that the Holy Spirit must be our teacher, but we must also learn that even the indwelling Spirit does not teach a sluggish and dilatory soul. As a door turneth upon its hinges, so the sluggard turns upon his bed. How can a man expect to be taught of God if he fails to give himself time to be alone with God, away from the crowd, away from the preacher, away from Sunday Schools, the organization and the program? How can he expect to hear the Spirit's voice if he does not wait on God in the silence of his own soul? How can he expect to hear from God when his stomach is always full and

his flesh is put before his spirit to be satisfied in every detail? No man can meet with God as he should without fasting and prayer. It is impossible! He will always be an anaemic Christian if there is a lack of fasting, prayer, the Word of God, and a dependence on the Spirit. If men would fast and continually walk in the presence of God's indwelling Spirit, they would stand amazed at the work the Holy Spirit would accomplish in their lives. How can any man expect to be filled with God and at the same time be filled with everything that belongs to this present evil world? We hear men pray, "Lord, fill me," when they should be praying, "Lord, empty me of the world." How can any man hope to hear the voice of the Spirit when by means of the television he brings into his parlor all the filth and corruption, the violence and murder that dissolute minds can devise? People excuse themselves by saying it is educational. It is, indeed! It is the kind of education that vexed the soul of righteous Lot day after day as he saw their filthy deeds and heard their corrupt conversation. We are drawing very near the end of the age. It is time to watch and be sober lest, when Jesus comes, He finds our minds involved with corrupt and deceitful things and we find ourselves ashamed in His presence.

I cannot help but rebuke the gross hypocrisy of modern Christians, for the Spirit makes the message urgent within me. This is the hour of Laodicea and it is time for lukewarm Laodiceans to repent. It is time for them to throw all corruption out of their parlor and invite the Holy Spirit into the throne room of their hearts that their walk may be wholly with God. If my warning becomes offensive to some, I care not a straw for that, but, if many fall down in repentance, making the Spirit their guide and paraclete, then all heaven shall rejoice, and I shall rejoice and be glad with them. We may indulge in much talk about sonship, but we will never get beyond the realm of spiritual infancy until we cut ourselves clean from systems, organizations, corporations, and love of the world and the things that are in the world whether they be pleasure, luxury, or worldly pastime. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith. Everywhere we turn our eyes we see the truth of this witness, but that same Holy Spirit speaks expressly in these latter days that we should turn from all these vanities that He may be our teacher, our guide, and our paraclete.

GUIDANCE

If personal names and personal pronouns indicate the personality of the Holy Spirit, it is certain that personal offices also denote His personality. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." This promise is almost too wonderful for comment. "He will guide you into all truth!" Think, if you will, of the years we have wasted in searching for truth, devouring books, listening to lectures, burning the candle at both ends, but neglecting entirely the source of all truth and ignoring that indwelling teacher sent forth from the Father with the explicit ministry of guiding the believer into all truth! It is not my place to deride schools of learning, though we may say with certainty that "they know nothing yet as they ought to know." But it is my place to tell you that, "the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." He is, first of all, the Spirit of truth, and He has been sent forth from the Father both to be with us and to dwell in us, and to guide us into all truth. "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you," we are told in John 16:14. No one can show us the things of God. That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I may tell you about the things of God, but only the Spirit can show you. Teachers may teach, but forty years of teaching have taught me that only the Spirit can reveal and show the truth. I cannot count the hours I have spent in teaching and writing and explaining the things of God, only to find in disappointment that the listener had heard nothing except with the outer ear. But, when the Holy Spirit came to open the eyes of their understanding, taking the things of God and showing them unto them, then they knew in a moment of time what years of instruction had failed to show them.

It is probable that Martin Luther had read the text, "The just shall live by faith", times without number before that notable day when, ascending the steps of St. Peter's on his knees, the Holy Spirit spoke the words into his heart, "The just shall live by faith!" In that instant of revelation all his struggles were over. Faith shone like a heavenly lamp on his pathway. He rejoiced in the God of his salvation and turned his back forever on the blinding rituals of men and the legalistic forms and ceremonies of an apostate system that dared to masquerade as the church of the living God. "He shall receive of Mine," said Jesus, "and shall show it unto you."

These words are far too potent and full of meaning to be read over carelessly or lightly laid aside to be forgotten. Herein lies the source of the river of all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This is the gate through

which we mortals walk on our way to the treasure house of the knowledge of God. Within its jasper walls are hung vessels of gold in pictures of silver. Here are the things, which eye hath not seen or ear heard neither have entered the heart of man. Here abide the things that only God can reveal by His Spirit; and I think we may say with godly assurance, though we still sojourn in this lowly temple, that our city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." **Rev. 21:23-24.** Ah, blessed light of God! He will guide you into all truth, for He will take the things of God and show them unto you.

It was only this morning, very early, long before the sun arose, that I rather anxiously enquired of my Lord, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" And when my words were ended and I was quiet in His presence, He assured me that it was the office work of the Holy Spirit to guide me in the way that He would have me go. Having done this, He kindly reminded me of the long, long journey over which we have come since that distant day when we started our walk together. He reminded me of the obstacles He had removed from my path that I might go forward in Him and He reminded me of the obstructions He had placed in my way to turn my steps to the right or to the left. How precious to the believing heart are the words of Solomon: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." **Prov. 21:1**

There is a power whose care
Teaches Thy way along the pathless coast,
The desert and the illimitable air
Lone wandering, but not lost.
He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless coast
Thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must walk alone
Will guide my steps aright.

HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF

When the Holy Spirit, even the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide those who receive Him into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself. John 16:13 When Jesus was here on earth, He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." **John 5:30** He also said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do (margin, doing): for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show greater works than these, that ye may marvel." **John 5:19, 20** Jesus plainly stated that all the works He did were shown to Him by the Father and given to Him to do. Our Lord Jesus Christ did absolutely nothing that the Father had not shown Him to do. It is my frank opinion that neither sick nor maimed nor demon possessed was ever healed or delivered by Jesus without the Father's instruction. There is no evidence that will support the notion that Jesus went about the country laying hands indiscriminately on every sick man as though the purpose of His life was to heal everyone before He died. He passed by sick people every day without doing anything for them. I do not know how many times our Lord visited the temple at Jerusalem during his life, but I do know that there was a certain man above forty years of age who was laid daily at the temple gate who was not healed until Peter and John passed by and commanded him to rise up and walk. Acts 3:1-11 If there ever was a great and valuable lesson for men of God to learn, it is this: We should not attempt to do anything which the Father has not bidden us do, and I am sure also that we would be wise to say nothing that the Father has not bidden us say.

It gives my heart much joy to know that all our Saviour's words and all our Saviour's works were first ordained by God the Father. They were given to Him of the Father that nothing would be done outside His purpose, but that all things should work together for good to them that love God, being called according to His purpose. Have you never wondered why it is that of the countless hundreds of sick people who are prayed for only a small percentage are ever healed, while the vast majority go away empty? It is because there was no instruction from the Lord concerning their healing, and so they went away empty. How good it would be if men could only know that for the vast majority of Christians in this decadent Laodicean period it is better far for

them to remain sick than to be healed. All over the land today preachers are proclaiming that God wants everybody healed and He would have everybody prosperous. It is a lie! They speak falsely! There is no truth in it. Suffering and tribulation of every kind are a positive necessity to our entering the kingdom of God. Both suffering and tribulation are an absolute must. It is in great adversity that Christians avail themselves of grace, but, when all is well in the flesh and in the natural, then they forget God today as Israel did of old.

As Jesus did only the things that pleased the Father, so the Holy Spirit, who was sent forth at Pentecost told the believer, to walk in him, to transform him and be his guide in all things, does not speak of nor from Himself; "but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak, and He shall show you things to come." Naught but the inspiration of the Almighty could crowd so much information into one verse. Here we are assured that the Holy Spirit speaks from the Father. He is the very Spirit of the Father and the very Spirit of His Son. As time permits, I will clearly show that a most important part of His ministry is the wonderful work of transforming the believer into the image of Christ that the believer may be one spirit with the Father and with the Son. God hath sent forth the Spirit into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." Thus we can clearly see that the spirit of sonship is, indeed, the Holy Spirit in our hearts. He that liveth in us to guide us into all truth is making us one with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. He is bringing us to the fullness of sonship, which is adoption and manifestation. The Holy Spirit will work in the heart of the believer until he is one with Christ and until that hour of adoption when the Father shall pronounce with a voice like thunder, "This in My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

He shall not speak from Himself, but all things that the Spirit has received of the Father that shall He speak to you that your life may be lightened by His presence as the earth was lightened by the presence of the angel who came to announce that Babylon had fallen. Rev. 18:1-2 How tragic it is that Christians should walk in the outer darkness of their natural minds while the promise of such a divine helper is given them by the living Christ! Why, oh why, my brother, my sister, are you content to feed year after year on the husks of men's wisdom when the Spirit of God is within you? Why do you listen to preachers telling and re-telling the old, old story when the Spirit stands ready, not only to guide you into all truth, but to show you things to come as well? Even the servants in your Father's house have bread enough and to spare, while you perish with hunger on husks of men. What a crying pity it is that men and women, who once received the Spirit with many evidences from on high, have failed to grow a spiritual inch, still depending on some one else to feed them and tell them the things of God! There is one within you now, even the Holy Spirit, who from the Father's exhaustless store has received all the things of God. He will guide you personally into all truth. He will show you the things that were shown to Him of the Father. He will willingly take the things of God and show them unto you and with unerring accuracy will show you things to come.

All this day the thought has been returning to tell me that we are the people who belong to the period of Laodicea. Why then do we not listen? Why do we not hear? Why do we not know that the Spirit is urging the Christians who belong to this lukewarm period to buy gold tried in the fire, and white raiment that we may be clothed? Gold signifies God; white raiment is His righteousness. But, instead of our letting the Spirit work His wonders in our hearts, we pride ourselves by saying, "I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing." Alas! The real truth is that Christians today have nothing while they vainly imagine they have need of nothing. While priding themselves about gifts and ministries and power and possessions and all such things, they in fact have nothing and know not that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Rev. 3:14-19 What a blistering message that is right from the lips of Christ! Yet no one seems to give heed or believe that the message could be to him.

It is time to fast and pray. It is time to cast aside all outward appearance of religion and let the Holy Spirit work the work of God in your heart. You will grow in grace and in the knowledge of God and your life will begin to yield the nine fruits that grow on the tree of the Spirit when you are willing to quit the harlot system with all her abominable and enormous fanfare and give yourself to fasting and prayer and devotion to God. Walk with Him as Abraham did. Is not the promise of this Laodicean hour given to any man who hears God's voice? **Rev. 3:20** Is it not said to us, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith... ?**" **Verse 22.** Since, then, such promises as these are made to individuals and not to multitudes, your solemn duty is to come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing that God may be a Father to you, and you may be sons

and daughters of Him. Be exhorted, O child of God, for to you the Spirit is given that He may lead you into all truth and bring you to the very image of Christ.

"The Holy Spirit shall glorify Me." said Jesus Christ, "for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." This is the fountain of God. Here are flowing the rivers of living water. If any man thirsts, let him come here to drink even as Jesus declared when He stood and cried at the Feast of Tabernacles, "If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:37-39** I believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I have received the Spirit and give glory to God with the multitudes of men and women who have also received this heavenly person, this comforter, this paraclete from God. But many there be who once received the Spirit, rejoicing for a time in heavenly fullness, yet they were willing to let the glory fade away as it faded from the face of Moses. They made the initial infilling of the Spirit the goal instead of the gate. They made it the end instead of the beginning. They thought it was the summit instead of the foot, the final instead of the first. The life of a Christian must be a walk in the Spirit if it is to fulfill God's plan. It is the Holy Spirit walking in him and he in the Spirit, "For," says God, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." **2 Cor. 6:16**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK

Surely there is not a Christian drawing breath who fails to perceive at least in part how incalculable was the value of the presence of the Son of God on earth. His manifestation in the flesh two thousand years ago was without doubt the most important event in the history of mankind, and His coming again in the near future will mean the regeneration and restitution of all things. Acts 3:21 The presence of this Son of man, this Son of God, the Saviour of the world and Redeemer of Israel, of whom it is written, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end," is so important that the human mind cannot grasp it. All the sermons that ever flowed from inspired minds and anointed lips have failed to scratch the surface of the fullness of God's purpose in Him. We would not be wise now to turn aside from our theme to speak again of that transcendent glory in Him. Search it out for the rest of the dispensation and the investigation will only have begun.

The physical presence of Christ was so important to the twelve disciples that they were filled with consternation and were troubled at the thought that He would go away and leave them. "These things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." **John 16:4-6** But Jesus, after saying these things to them, turned His words to the promise of the Holy Spirit, and the words He spoke demonstrate with more conviction and force than any other statement could possibly do how exceedingly important to themselves and to all mankind the coming of the Spirit would be. With God-like assurance He spoke these words: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I depart, I will send Him unto you." **Verse 17** The word expedient means "serving to promote a desired end, advisable, and contributing to personal advantage."

These words are worthy of deep meditation and prayer. Never can we comprehend their forceful meaning without prayerful, careful consideration. Here is one sure place where we need that blessed teacher, the Holy Spirit, to "take the things of God and show them unto us." Jesus was telling these distraught men that His going away would mean the coming of the Spirit. He told them plainly that it was better for them that the Spirit should come to them than that He should remain with them. Blessed and wonderful was His own presence and ministry among them; yet far more blessed would be the presence and ministry of the Spirit within them. "I will pray the Father," He assured them, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." **John 14:16-17**

Wonderful as was the presence of Christ in the world, that physical presence cannot be compared to the magnificent glory of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the believing heart. No outward manifestation of power or glory can take the place of His indwelling presence. It is within and not from without that the work of

transformation is to be carried forward from glory to glory until we shine in that same image of Christ. Though Christ had walked and talked with His disciples, eating with them, praying with them, instructing them and continually demonstrating the works of God among them, even giving them power to heal and work mighty wonders, yet at the time of His departure there was but little sign of any work of grace within them. All was on the outside. Peter was still capable of cursing and swearing and lying. Judas was still capable of stealing and acting the traitor. When the pressure was on, they were all capable of forsaking him and running away. They were still natural men, as almost all the Old Testament saints had been. Christ had indeed been among them, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, but He was not in them. Transformation does not take place from without. It must come from within. All the evil in the world today, even as Jesus said, comes from within out of the evil heart of man. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." **Matt. 15:19-20** Therefore, since all evil begins within and not without, then conversion and regeneration must begin within and not without. A man who quits his drunkenness because he signed the pledge has only an outward change while his heart may remain unchanged, but the man who ceases his sinning because his heart is changed is changed from within and is a new creation. Herein then lies the first and greatest blessing of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had been with them, but the Spirit would henceforth be in them. He would be regenerating, transforming, changing, and renewing. He would be leading, guiding, and directing their lives from His throne room in the heart. He would be taking the mysteries of God and revealing them unto the believer. He would be showing them things to come. How wonderful it must have been to walk the hills of Judea and sail the Sea of Galilee with Jesus by their side! How much more wonderful it is that Christ by the Holy Spirit now dwells within, changing, transforming and transfiguring until we shine in that same image of Christ!

Those who read the scripture with thought and purpose will surely have noticed the transformation that took place in the disciples after that wonderful day when Jesus walked through the locked doors, and standing in their midst, said, "Peace be unto you... And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." **John 20:21-22** The Holy Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified. John 7:39. But now the cross was past and gone forever. The travail of His thirty years of death was past and gone forever. The price had been paid; the redemption was complete. The blood was shed and had been presented in the holy of holies in heaven where it remains forever in incorruption. Jesus Himself was glorified, and the time had come for the Spirit to be sent forth to regenerate the believer. Thus He breathed upon them, and the Spirit came to them, working the work of regeneration in their hearts. These were the first men of the age to be born again. "The wind (the Spirit) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." **John 3:8** The regeneration that took place here must not be confused with the mighty baptism of Pentecost. This was regeneration, the first work of the Spirit in the believing heart. You must have noticed how Jesus related forgiveness of sins with the initial work of the Spirit. When He had said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit", He immediately followed with these words: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The new birth is regeneration and regeneration cannot be separated from forgiveness of sins.

The story of the new birth is a story written in the hearts of millions of believers in this age. Those who have been changed by the regenerating power of the Spirit cannot explain the transformation by wisdom, but in their hearts they know the truth of these words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou nearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." In our readers at school there was a verse that said:

Who hath seen the wind?
Neither you nor I,
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

We cannot see the wind; neither can we see the Spirit. We know the wind is there because we see its many works in creation and we know that were it not for its life-giving power we would all be dead men. So also is everyone that is born of the Spirit. We cannot see nor understand His life-giving power, but we see the work

that is being done in all who believe and we know with much assurance that without His blessed power we would be unregenerate souls dead in trespasses and sins. That soul who is born of the Spirit pulsates with a life that comes from above. He becomes a citizen of a new world. His hope is anchored within the heavenly veil. He is not a conformer to a new principle or religion. He is the recipient of a new life. He is not the imitator of a person, but the possessor of the life of Jesus Christ.

Let it be thoroughly known that all conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit. Conviction of sin is not the result of eloquent preaching. It does not come through excellent music or fine singing, nor does it come through the art of persuasion. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will use preaching. He will use singing and He will use persuasion, but let it be known that without Him you can do nothing. If the Spirit is not present to reveal Christ to the unbeliever, if He is not there to show the sinner his sins and his need of a Saviour, there is no power in man or in anything else that can convince him of his need of a Saviour or make him call on God with the repentance that results in salvation. You may convince his mind; you may instruct his intellect, but only God can convert him. It is godly sorrow that works repentance unto salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Cor. 7:10 I do not think there was any special oratorical skill in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Many men could have put together a better discourse than that. The thing that brought three thousand souls to their knees in repentance was the fact that they were "pricked in the heart", and that was the work of the Holy Spirit. Peter's sermon the day following, as recorded in Acts 3:12-26, was a simple statement of truth and fact, and through it five thousand believers were converted to Christ - not because of a fine sermon or a dynamic personality, but because of the mighty convicting power of the Holy Spirit as He came convincing the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

Peter and John were foremost in disclaiming either power or holiness of their own. Seeing the multitude staring in wonder at the healing of the lame man, they said, "Why look ye on us so earnestly as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" **Acts 3:12** He knew what power had made the man whole and did not hesitate to let them know also from whence that power came. These men ran no advertisements proclaiming themselves to be God's men of the hour. They would have been horrified at such blasphemous thought. Instead of indulging in the worthless pastime of self-commendation, they spoke the truth, saying, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go." **Acts 3:13** It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. I am convinced that all the vain talk about men of the hour, first ladies, men of faith, men of miracles and all the rest is nothing but the world's pompous humbug. Not only is it humbug; it is also a lie, and deception is its artful intention, and that intention is to turn the love and affection that belongs to Christ toward ostentatiousness and pretentious men. All such pomposity and promotion of self is vain glory, and these vain-glorious men are "the scorn of the wise, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own vaunts." (Bacon) "The vain glory of this world is a deceitful sweetness, a fruitless labor, a perpetual fear, a dangerous honor; her beginning is without providence and her end not without repentance". (Quarles)

"He will convince the world of sin," Jesus said; and He, the Holy Spirit, is the only power that can so fasten the guilt of sin upon a man that he will turn to God and with a broken spirit cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." And when at last the weeping sinner cries in the agony of his guilt, "What must I do to be saved," that same Holy Spirit responds with the only way of salvation, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." As far as I am aware the only work the Spirit does in the world of unbelievers is to convince them of sin. "No man comes to Me except the Father draw Him," Jesus said; and again, "All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." When the Holy Spirit convicts a man of sin, that man knows he is a sinner, and when the Spirit draws him, he comes.

It will be useful to us all to notice the ways in which the Spirit brings ungodly men to a realization of their sin. Three things are especially mentioned here and it is upon these three things the Spirit concentrates. "He will reprove (the Revised Version says convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." **John 16:8** (Please do not add the words judgment to come. That is not what Jesus said.) And this is the way He will convict or convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. **First, He will convict of sin because "they believe not on Me (Christ)." John 16:9** **Second, He will convince the world of righteousness "because I**

(Christ) go to the Father and ye see Me no more." Third, He will convict of judgment "because the prince of this world is judged."

The greatest sin in the world is, not murder or theft or drunkenness or even the breaking of God's commandments. The greatest sin and the only damning sin in all the world is unbelief. Unbelief was the original sin, the very first sin, of mankind, and all the evil in the world today springs from unbelief and from that one particular unbelief stated in this text, "They believe not on Me." Let men first believe. Let them come to Christ, not with resolutions and human effort, but with/ort/i in His blood. God the Father has perfect faith in the blood of His Son, and all who come to Him must come believing that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. I John 1:7 "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." **Heb. 9:14** Throughout the pages of divine inspiration from Genesis to Revelation there hangs a scarlet cord, of which even the ransomed in heaven sing, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." **Rev. 5:9-10**

There is no use convicting a man of sin and unrighteousness if you fail to point him to the source of cleansing and righteousness. Christ is our righteousness and it is the work of the Spirit to prove it so. I know of nothing that bespeaks the perfection of Christ's righteousness with such certainty and assurance as is shown by the fact that, after men had rejected and killed Him, God raised Him from the dead; and, being raised from the dead, He ascended up on high to the Father, and, being the High Priest, He offered His blood on the altar in heaven to cleanse not only man but the universe as well from all sin. The blood of God's righteous Christ cleanses from all sin wherever it may be found, for once in the end of the age He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Heb. 9:26. Had we much time and space to speak of the righteousness of Christ, we could add but very little to that one giant evidence which Jesus gave in this one short sentence, "Of righteousness because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more."

Having convinced the world of sin and of righteousness, the Spirit of God will further convince the world of judgment, not judgment to come, as so many say. That is not true. He will convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world is already judged. There is therefore now no condemnation (judgment) to them who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life (the Holy Spirit) in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. All sin must be judged. It cannot be otherwise. But I will tell you this: All sin has already been judged in God's Son, Jesus Christ, and today the Spirit of God proclaims the message, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." **John 3:18** And he that is condemned is only condemned because he has not believed. The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son, (John 5:22), and the Son declares to all mankind, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation (margin, judgment), but is passed from death unto life." **John 5:24**

Because of the vastness of the subject, my effort thus far seems paltry, indeed, but from these few words and many scriptures I hope I have made it plain that the Spirit that proceedeth from the Father is not an influence, but a person; that He is not an ordinary person, but divine, even the Spirit of God and of Christ. Thus far, Amen.

CHAPTER TWO THE NAMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Even the simplest equations are difficult to those who do not understand them, but the most intricate problem becomes simple when the mind holds the solution to it. The door that is locked with a skeleton key will baffle the man who has no key, but the massive doors of the bank vault swing open with ease to the man who possesses the combination of the intricate lock. Thus it is in the realm of the Spirit. "The things of God knoweth no man," but the moment the Holy Spirit comes to take control, His divine wisdom unlocks for the seeker door after door to the storehouse of the riches of God in Christ Jesus until with wondering eyes the seeker beholds wealthy mines of glittering and precious jewels.

We have often heard the question, "What is in a name?" Though it is often asked in jest, the fact remains that there is much in a name. Automobile manufacturers give all manner of names to their products because they know that names create an image in the mind of the buyer, so that while the sophisticated may be thinking in such terms as Imperials, Continentals, Rivas, and Ambassadors, the sportsman type thinks in terms of Comets, Thunderbirds, Corvettes, and Javelins. The names we give our children in the twentieth century usually have little or no significance, but in Bible times names were often given by prophetic utterance, which disclosed both the nature of a man and his life's work as well. "Thou shall call His name Jesus," said the angel, "for He shall save His people from their sins." **Matt. 1:21.** Jesus means Saviour, and the name rightly belongs to Him and to no other. Abram, whose name means father, at the age of ninety-nine while still childless, had his name changed to Abraham, meaning father of many nations. Gen. 17:4, 5. Though he was to die seeing only a few sons and grandsons, the promise stands confirmed today, for many nations have descended from Abraham, among them the most powerful and influential in the world. Jesus changed the names of James and John to Boanerges, meaning sons of thunder, because the name befitted these men who thought to call down fire from heaven to destroy the unbelievers. When Andrew, the great personal worker, brought his brother to Jesus, our Lord greeted Peter with these words: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." **John 1:40-42** The ministry of an apostle is the ministry of the foundation. Thus the name Cephas calls attention to Peter's ministry as an apostle and to the rock-like character of this simple man. Barnabas means son of consolation (Acts 4:36), and how well the name befits the nature of this kindly man who took Paul and brought him to the apostles when all others feared and rejected him. Acts 9:26-29. It was Barnabas who showed sympathy to the erring John Mark (Acts 15:36-39), and though Paul rejected Mark, he afterward wrote, "Bring Mark, for he is profitable to me in the ministry." 2 Tim. 4:11

Among the heathen in Africa all the boys at a certain age are required to attend the "devil school." They are taken into the bush for several weeks to be trained by their witch doctors. At the end of this period every boy is given a new name according to his ability. If he proves to be a good hunter, his name is Hunter. If he is a good leader, his name is Leader. If he is able to cook, his name is called Cook. It is not difficult to see that even among ourselves many of our names sprang from our occupation or calling. The names Smith, Haymaker, Hunter, Bridge-man, Carpenter, Farmer, and a thousand others signify the occupation, nationality, or dwelling place of the people who first possessed them.

The homely examples we have related above are intended only to show how the many names given to the Holy Spirit were intended to display His personality and to teach our searching hearts what manner of person this divine Comforter really is. I shall say positively and with utmost sincerity that it is of the greatest possible importance that we should know that He who fills our hearts is a divine person, even God Himself, and not merely some strange impersonal influence. He is a divine person with divine names, each separate name a heavenly designation loudly proclaiming His nature, His character, His work in the believing heart, and His ministry toward the many who have not yet believed. It will take many pages to demonstrate the truths we have in mind, but I hope to show that every Christian grace developing in the believer is the operation of the Holy Spirit, doing the work of God in his heart and transforming the diligent believer into the image of Christ.

The promise of our Lord Jesus Christ was twofold: first, that the Holy Spirit would be with them as Jesus Himself had been, and, secondly, that He would dwell in them. John 14:17 This marvelous state of blessedness our dear Saviour could not accomplish in the days of His flesh and the blessing of His indwelling presence could never have been accomplished had Jesus remained with them in physical presence only. Therefore in the midst of the distress and turmoil of their troubled minds He gave them these words of sublime assurance: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come: But if I depart, I will send Him unto you." The coming of the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, is the fulfillment of the promise, "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you." **John 14:18**

THE SPIRIT

The Hebrew word for spirit in the Old Testament is ruach, and means breath or wind. The Greek word for spirit in the New Testament is pneuma, which also means breath or wind. The English word ghost used in the King

James version, though now somewhat obsolete and not in general use, is derived from the Greek pneuma. Its original meaning is exactly the same as the word spirit. Though the word ghost does not carry the same meaning today as in the 17th century and as used in the King James version of the Bible, I am inclined to believe it has a greater significance than the word spirit, and it is to be greatly pitied that we have allowed the word to lose its meaning to such an extent that we now associate it with apparitions and haunted houses. It is like the word love - once so pure and holy that it was associated only with God and those who were like Him, but today so degraded that it is made the jest of the filthy and the obscene to be associated with adulterers and adulteresses, lesbians and homosexuals, who are doomed to find their aionian place in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Wind is a symbol of the Spirit as is also fire and water. We will all agree that these are powerful and expressive symbols. If it were not for these three elements, fire and water and wind, our planet would be as dead and devoid of every form of life as the moon or any of the numberless planets and stars of the universe. These three elements make the difference, for without them neither life nor power can exist. In view of this fact it is significant almost beyond human understanding that it is said, "In the beginning the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Then these three elements immediately come into view. The Spirit of God (the wind) moved upon the face of the water, and God said, "Let there be light (fire), and there was light." Here we have wind (the Spirit), water (the Word), and fire (the light). Each and every one of these are dynamic symbols of the Holy Spirit. And if we may now extend the likeness, we can see these same elements, wind, fire, and water, elevated to the spiritual realm in the wonder-filled outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the one hundred and twenty waited on God as we are told in Acts, chapter two. "Suddenly there was a sound from heaven as of a mighty, rushing wind (the Holy Spirit). And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire (this is also the Spirit), and they all began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." This speaking in many tongues (languages) is the gushing forth of the fountains of living water, even as Jesus promised it would be when on the last day of the feast of tabernacles He stood and cried, "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:38-39**

The Spirit, the wind of God, even the very breath of the Lord, is sovereign in His almighty power. Thus did Jesus teach the inquiring Nicodemus when He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." **John 3:5** Then, seizing upon the mysterious, life-giving power and sovereignty of the wind, He drew from its mystery a beautiful fantasm in these words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit (the wind)." **John 3:8** The wind bloweth where it listeth. It moves irresistibly toward the south and turneth in its sovereignty to blow to the north, - the wind that lifts the dust of the earth on high, that rustles the trees and shakes the forests, that fills the sails of the vessels at sea and stirs the oceans to rage in fury; the wind that warms the earth with his breath in the springtime, causing the waters to flow and bless the land, and in the autumn blows with its cold to congeal the streams of water into fields of ice. The wind, the wind, phantom symbol of the breath of God, the life-giving Holy Spirit, blows where it listeth, awakening the souls of men long dead in trespasses and sins, and moving on the face of the deep darkness and death of our spirits, causes the light that shone out of darkness to shine into our hearts, giving us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The same Spirit that moved on the face of the waters in the beginning when the earth was without form and void moved on my soul when I, like the earth, was without form in my sin, when outer darkness covered the deep of my soul and I was without hope and without God in all the world. When God said, "Let there be light," there was light. The same Spirit that moved on the waters moved on me, convincing me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. At my behest He came in to make the living waters flow and open the fountains of the deep that I might be re-born.

Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see, and certainly he cannot enter, the kingdom of God. The wind is the Spirit; the water is the water of life. We who are born of water and of the Spirit at our regeneration are born of the fire when our Pentecost comes. If there could be one reason above all others that would loudly proclaim the necessity of a new birth, it would be this: When the Spirit of God first moves upon us, we are literally dead in trespasses and sins. There is no more spiritual life in the unregenerate man than there is natural life on the moon. Unregenerate man. is just as devoid of the life of God as the earth was before that

blessed day in which the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. Surely, O man, whether dead in trespasses and sins or born anew through faith in Jesus Christ, your soul should now grasp the significant truth of the words of our Saviour, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." How futile in the face of such truth as this is any form of self-reformation! However thorough that reformation may be, it leaves us without life and hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins. Well did faithful Paul bear witness to the work of the Spirit in the lives of the Ephesians when he said, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ...But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:1-5

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convicting men of sin;
Nor how, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

But the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the very life breath of the almighty God.

THE FREE SPIRIT

A second name for the Holy Spirit is given in Psa. 51:12. Here David speaks of the Spirit as the free Spirit. My understanding is much too small to grasp all that this name implies. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," said the apostle Paul. 2 Cor. 3:17 Some translations have it, "Where the Spirit is Lord, there is freedom," - not freedom as some have supposed, to indulge in all manner of senseless manifestation like a drunkard in his intoxication, but freedom from sin, from bondage, from ignorance, from darkness, and freedom from the flesh and the lusts thereof. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." **John 8:36**. David explained the meaning of true freedom in this passage in which he speaks of the Spirit as the free Spirit. After confessing the awfulness of his sin to God and owning the solemn fact that he was both born in sin and shapen in iniquity, he cried, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones that Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." **Psa. 51:1-13** What a world of freedom comes to the heart of the believer when God's free Spirit comes to abide. He opens the gates of the prison to let the captive go free. He loosens the chains that His saints may walk unscathed in the burning, fiery furnace of affliction. He bids His ministering angels go to shut the mouths of lions. He opens the gates to the prisoners bound in death that men may walk in glory, immortality, and eternal life.

There came a day in the long ago in which our blessed Christ, feeling the bondage and restriction of His body of flesh, cried out in the anguish of His Spirit, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" **Luke 12:50** Naught but a baptism of crucifixion and death to self can liberate the spirit. Death breaks the golden bowl of self and loosens the silver chord that binds the spirit to the corruptible realm in which we live that dust may be dust and the spirit be free to rejoice in God who gave it. Jesus knew full well that the day was near at hand when He would die and be raised again in glory. Full well did the Son of God know that, when His baptism of death was fully accomplished, the Holy Spirit would be free to go forth, as Noah's dove, into all the earth, convincing men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, entering every believing heart to create them anew and bring them into the image of God from whence they had fallen. How often we have heard the expression, "free as the wind"! What is freer than the wind? What could find more freedom to accomplish the work and will of God than God's free Spirit sent out by Jesus Christ into all the world?

I have often thought of the Spirit as the arm of the almighty God. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ once referred to the Holy Spirit as the finger of God, saying, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Compare **Luke 11:20** with Matt. 12:27-28. He is the finger of God. He is the mighty arm of the Lord. Wherever you search in all God's word, you will discover that every work of the Lord of whatsoever sort it be is accomplished by His almighty free Spirit. By His Spirit they are created. He reneweth the face of the earth. It is the Spirit that renews the soul. It is the Spirit that quickens our mortal flesh. It is the Spirit that changes men from glory to glory until they reach that same image of Jesus Christ.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The name Holy Spirit is the name most familiar to us and more often applied to this divine personage than any other. No other word in the English language could more acceptably define the nature of this divine person than the word holy. In scripture we learn of all manner of spirits - foul spirits, unclean spirits, lying spirits, spirits of infirmity, and many others - but He alone is the Holy Spirit. All true holiness emanates from Him. Not only is He Himself holy, but He sanctifies and makes holy every living vessel in whom He dwells.

From Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary of the English Language comes the following explanation of the word holy. I will quote it partially, but at some length that we may see the richness of purity that is implied in this one descriptive word. Holy - pertaining to holiness; morally excellent; of highest spiritual purity. Set apart for the service of God or for sacred uses; consecrated; hallowed. The synonyms of the word are: blessed, consecrated, devoted, divine, hallowed, sacred, saintly, and set apart. Sacred is applied to that which is to be regarded as inviolable on any account, and so is not restricted to divine things. Therefore in its lower applications it is less than holy. That which is sacred may be made so by institution, decree, or association; that which is holy is so by its own nature and moral perfection. God is holy; His commands are sacred. Holy may also be applied to that which is hallowed, as "the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." In such use holy is more than sacred, as if the very qualities of a spiritual or divine presence were imparted to the place or object. The antonyms are:- abominable, common, accursed, impure, polluted, secular, unconsecrated, unhallowed, unholy, unsanctified, wicked, worldly."

We are living in an hour when the understanding of true holiness seems to have fled from the face of the earth. Everywhere we look we see the appalling tendency toward the unholy and the profane. If the decadent degenerate spirit of this evil age were confined to the world only, it would not seem so significantly wicked, but this retrograde spirit is rampant everywhere, its adulteration abounding among the people who call themselves by the name of the Lord. The adulterous mixture of good and evil, right and wrong, light and darkness, holy and profane has become the abomination of our day. The ecumenical spirit is not the spirit of the Lord, but the spirit of that wicked one whose desire of desires is to adulterate all that is sacred and holy and true with all that is corrupt, profane, and false. I have no hesitation either in believing or saying that the ecumenical movement, however desirable it may appear in the eyes of natural men, is in itself the rising of that antichrist system which will head up all religions in one system with one head so that no man can buy or sell except he bears its abominable mark and pays homage to its beastly head. Furthermore, I warn all mankind, both wise and unwise, that before this century is over, an antichrist head will ascend the throne of this universal system of godless worship by which even now many ten thousands of Christians and possibly some of the elect are being deceived. He will exalt himself above God and above all that is worshipped, showing himself that he is God. It is certainly true that these people talk freely of signs and wonders and miracles, and speak loudly of salvation and of the baptism of the Spirit, but are not these the very things of which the faithful apostle Paul warned God's people when he said, "The mystery of iniquity (rebellion) doth already work: only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned (judged) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:7-12**

The Holy Spirit is separate from all that is unholy and profane, and we who are indwelt by Him must grasp the solemn fact that we are different from all men on the face of the whole earth. We are a new race and a new

generation, walking temples of the Lord, a peculiar people unto God, - not peculiar in the sense of being odd or queer, but peculiar because we are a chosen people. We are the temples of the Holy Ghost who dwells in us, and our steps are ordered, not by the demands and lusts of this body of flesh or the desires of this present evil world, but of the Lord, and our conversation is in heavenly realms. The kingdom of God has begun in our hearts and the King of kings has already taken His throne. Show me a man who loves the world or craves for its worthless glory and I will show you a man who has pushed the Holy Spirit off the throne of his life and has profaned that holy kingdom which he himself once was.

Because the Holy Spirit is holy, as His name so abundantly implies, God has ordained that His presence in the life of any believer will both sanctify and make holy his innermost being. In the temple at Jerusalem there was an innermost sanctuary called the holy of holies. This holy of holies represents the spirit of man in that living temple which we are. The Holy Spirit is the innermost sanctuary of God Himself. With God all true life springs from within and not from without. It is from within that the Spirit begins His work of sanctification until all is holy and all is sanctified. In the holy of holies neither the light of the sun nor even the light of a candle ever shone. There and there alone was the shekinah, the glory light of God Himself. There in the light and presence of His glory nothing unholy or profane could live or enter, not even the priests of the outer court or of the holy place. The High Priest alone could enter there, and that but once a year and never without the blood of the sin-offering which he offered for himself and the sins of the people.

The earthly temple at Jerusalem is done away. No stone remains upon another. Never again will it be called the temple of God, for "ye are the temple of God", and "the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are". The living temple of God, made of countless living stones, is holy because we are the creation of God, as it is written: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:22-24 You are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit of God dwelleth in you. It is His indwelling presence that fashions you into God's temple, and it is because he dwells in you that you are the temple of God and the abiding place of the Lord.

For years I wondered why it was that the Levites were permitted to go into the holy of holies to carry the vessels of the Lord and set them up in a new location in the wilderness and then replace all the holy things, since no man could enter the holy of holies lest he die. But then one day I realized that the moment the cloud and pillar of fire, in which God dwelt, removed from above the tabernacle, without His presence it was no longer the temple of God and the holy of holies was not sacred. But, when the tabernacle was re-erected and the fiery pillar stood over the holy place, then it was the temple of God and nothing unsanctified could approach it. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes you holy. Nothing that you can do personally has any meaning as far as holiness is concerned. It is the working of the indwelling Spirit that cleanses our way and purifies our lives, producing fruit unto holiness and the end, everlasting life.

It is infinitely necessary that every Christian understand that He who comes to abide in his heart is the Holy Spirit of God. We cannot over-emphasize or over-estimate the value of knowing that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness, and that He is not an impersonal influence, but a divine person, even God Himself, possessing all the elements of personality, having personal names, and having the ability to speak, to love, to chasten, to be grieved, to minister, to impart graces and gifts, and to change and transform the believer into Christ's image. All these truths will be enlarged upon as God permits and leads. Our purpose now is to continue to speak to those divine names which not only reveal His personality but clearly manifest His innermost nature and being.

THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

In Rom. 1:3-4 Paul taught that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. The apostle could as easily have said that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God according to the Holy Spirit, but the expression, the Spirit of holiness, adds a force of meaning that is not easy to explain. Nevertheless, this name, the Spirit of holiness, adds greatly to our understanding of His inherent nature. Angels are spirits (Heb. 1:7) and angels are holy (Rev. 14:10), and in this sense angels are holy spirits even as human beings might be holy men and women. But the Holy Spirit alone is the Spirit of holiness. He is the very essence of holiness, the quintessence,

containing in concentrated form its most essential part. From Him comes all holiness wheresoever it may be found - in angels, in cherubim, in seraphim, or in men. All are holy because He is holy and we are indwelt by Him.

All holiness outside of Him is a pretence and a make-believe. It is substitute, deficient, and inferior, belonging in that company where self-righteousness sits clothed in her filthy rags. It falls short of the glory of God and is completely unacceptable before Him. It is found wanting, imperfect, and less than nothing. Holy men of God in ages past spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. They moved and they spoke because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and they themselves were holy men because the Spirit of holiness, dwelling in them, made them partakers of His holiness. Surely this is what Paul was teaching in Ephesians when he drew a sharp distinction between the deceitful lusts of the flesh and the renewed mind: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man (Christ), which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:22-24. The chastening rod of God has this one end in view: "That we might be partakers of His holiness." **Heb. 12:10** You may polish a flint rock until it is an object of great beauty, but it still remains flint and it still remains rock. You may reform the "old man" until he appears to be very commendable, but he still remains the "old man". He is still possessed with the old nature. Inwardly he wishes God would go away. The "old man" must be put off and the "new man" put on. Col. 2:9-10. This is the work of the Spirit. This is righteousness and true holiness.

All healing begins deep down in the wound. However severe your wound may be, healing never begins on the surface. A scar will form momentarily to cover the wound, but the healing begins deep down at the very bottom, and, as the healing proceeds from within, all poison and unwanted substance are cast off in the process. Holiness, like healing, does not start on the surface but by the transforming work of the Spirit of holiness in the heart. The holy seed placed in the virgin womb blossomed forth as the Christ of God, and the holy seed, placed by the Spirit of holiness in the womb of the heart, brings forth the new man, even the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Gal. 2:20** Our fathers after the flesh "corrected us and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." **Heb. 12:9-10**

God, even our Father in heaven, is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders" (**Exod. 15:11**), and by His holiness He has sworn that He will not lie unto David, but his seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Him. It shall be established forever as the moon and as a faithful witness in heaven. He is the Spirit of holiness. That is His name. We are made partakers of His holiness, for He has created us in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:24

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

We do not wish to weary the reader with unnecessary repetitions, but it is our earnest hope that all may clearly see that every name given to the Holy Spirit is intended to convey some outstanding truth concerning His personality and innate nature. It should be plain, therefore, that when the name the Spirit of truth is given, we are to gather from this that just as the name the Spirit of holiness teaches that He is the spirit and essence of all holiness, so this name the Spirit of truth assures us that He is also the very spirit and essence of truth. In the revised version we have this remarkable statement: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. 1 John 5:7 R.V. The Holy Spirit does not merely tell the truth. He is the very quintessence of truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who was full of the Holy Spirit, assured His disciples that He also was the truth, saying, "I am the truth." John 14:6 When the Spirit of truth abides in a man, He bears witness to the truth, and I am very sure that this same Spirit of truth can detect a lie regardless of the source whence it comes. The Word of God is truth whether it be the written word, the created word, or the living word. The Bible is the written word. The creation is the created word. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth." That is the word of God

as told by God and by creation. The living Word is Jesus Christ firstly, then afterward all the sons of God reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.

The Bible is truth. It is all truth. For many centuries men have attempted to prove that the holy scripture is false and pock-marked with error, while other men have striven to prove the Bible is true and the Word of God, but the greatest witness to the truth of scripture is not what men say, but the fact that the Spirit of truth is the author of the scripture. The method by which scripture was given is clearly stated in these words: "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." **2 Pet. 1:20** "David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." **2 Sam. 23:1-2** Few passages of scripture give greater affirmation to the truth of God's word than those quoted above, in which we are told how the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth, put the exact words of truth in the tongues of the holy men who wrote them. Holy men, who were made holy by the indwelling Spirit of holiness, spake the truth in its fullness because of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of truth.

It is a wonderful day for a believer when he becomes so conscious of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of truth that he need not enquire of any man concerning truth or error, because the Spirit of truth within bears witness to the truth that he may walk in confidence. When the "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and John bare witness to that living truth, which is Christ, saying, "This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me." **John 1:14,15.** John, being full of the Spirit of truth even from his mother's womb, knew and recognized the truth the moment he came into its presence, because the Spirit of truth bears witness to the truth. You have no need that any man teach you of truth or error if you walk in the Spirit of truth. The indwelling Spirit will bear witness to truth or be repelled by the error, because no lie is of the truth.

"Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." **Psa. 119:11.** The Word is truth. Christ is truth. The Spirit is truth. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord, is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." **Psa. 19:7-11.** All these are the Word of God. Like all truth they are full of edification and eternal profit. They flow from the Spirit of truth. There is no lie in them, and by walking in them there is eternal reward.

The spirit of antichrist, wherever it is found, is known by lying wonders, deceivableness and unrighteousness. By him multitudes are being deceived because they received not the love of the truth, that is, they did not love the truth. For this reason God shall send them strong delusion that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Compare 2 Thess. 2:8-12.

THE SPIRIT OF PROMISE

I think it is a wonder sublime that our Lord Jesus Christ, just before leaving this world, promised us the Holy Spirit, saying, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." Final messages are usually the most important. Jesus knew it would be a dreadful shock to His disciples to suddenly learn that He was to be taken away from their midst. No words of comfort the Saviour could speak were able to dry their tears or soothe their broken hearts in spite of their efforts to be brave. "Why weepest thou?" He asked the weeping women; and the disciples, too, though men, mourned and wept in their deep distress. Mark 16: 10. Little did they know the excellent glory that would be theirs when the promised Holy Spirit came upon them. The Spirit, promised by Jesus, became the Spirit of promise when Paul said, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." **Eph. 1:13**

The Spirit of promise, for that is His name, is the unalterable oath of God that we will never be left without an abiding and indwelling paraclete, a heavenly comforter, to strengthen and empower our lives, transforming us into the image of Christ by His indwelling presence. The work of the Spirit of promise in our lives is unending

and unceasing. First He comes convicting. Then He comes converting. Then He comes empowering. Then He comes transforming. It is this same Spirit of promise who produces the gifts, the graces, the fruits, and the ministries in the people of God. It is the Spirit of promise who changes us from glory to glory until we come into that same image of Christ.

I said above that the Spirit of promise comes converting the soul, raising it from the realm of Adam's death by a new birth. It is at conversion that the Spirit Jesus promised regenerates and makes alive that which was dead in trespasses and sins and we become God's children by the wonder of the new birth. The disciples, who for three years had walked with Jesus, had not yet experienced this regenerating power because the Holy Ghost was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:39. But after the resurrection, His ascension into heaven and glorification, then the Spirit of promise was given them, not at first to baptize and fill them, but to regenerate and make them children of God by a new birth. So it came to pass that, before He was taken up to heaven, He breathed on them, and said, **"Receive ye the Holy Spirit." John 20:22** The blood of Christ was applied to their hearts by faith and the Spirit came to regenerate them and give them eternal life, and they were born of God.

Many people call a halt to all spiritual experience at the moment of their conversion. Jesus did not halt here but, being assembled with them just before His ascension into heaven, He gave them anew the promise that the Spirit would come upon them to endue them with power from on high. **"Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49** To this command of Jesus they were faithful, for, after He was taken up into heaven, they **"returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Acts 1:12-14**

"Then when the actual day of Pentecost came, they were all assembled together. Suddenly there was a sound from heaven like the rushing of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were seated. Before their eyes appeared tongues like flames, which separated off and settled above the head of each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit gave them power to proclaim His message.

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem Jews of deep faith from every nation of the world. When they heard this sound, a crowd quickly collected and were completely bewildered because each one of them heard these men speaking in his own language. They were absolutely amazed, and said in their astonishment, 'Listen, surely all these speakers are Galileans? Then how does it happen that every single one of us can hear the particular language he has known from a child? There are Parthians, Medes and Elamites; there are men whose homes are in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Africa near Cyrene, as well as visitors from Rome! There are Jews and proselytes, men from Crete and men from Arabia, yet we can all hear these men speaking of the magnificence of God in our native language.'

"Everyone was utterly amazed and did not know what to make of it. Indeed they kept saying to each other, 'What on earth can this mean?' But there were others who laughed mockingly and said, 'These fellows have drunk too much new wine!'

"Then Peter, with the eleven standing by him, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Fellow Jews, and all who are living now in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I say while I explain to you what has happened! These men are not drunk as you suppose - it is after all only nine o'clock in the morning of this great feast day. No, this is something, which was predicted by the prophet Joel. 'And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth My Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Yea, and on My servants and on My handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!'

"Men of Israel, I beg you to listen to my words. Jesus of Nazareth was a man proved to you by God Himself through the works of power, the miracles and the signs, which God showed through Him here amongst you - as you very well know. This man, who was put into your power by the predetermined plan and fore-knowledge of God, you nailed up and murdered, and you used for your purpose men without the Law! But God would not allow the bitter pains of death to touch Him. He raised Him to life again - and indeed there was nothing by which death could hold such a man. When David speaks about Him, he says, 'I beheld the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh also shall dwell in hope. Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou give Thy holy one to see corruption. Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; Thou shall make me full of gladness with Thy countenance.'

"Men and brother-Jews, I can surely speak freely to you about the patriarch David. There is no doubt that he died and was buried, and his grave is here among us to this day. But while he was alive he was a prophet. He knew that God had given him a most solemn promise that he would place one of his descendants upon his throne. He foresaw the resurrection of Christ, and it is this of which he is speaking. Christ was not deserted in death and his body was never destroyed. Christ is the man Jesus, whom God raised up - a fact of which all of us are eye-witnesses! He has been raised to the right hand of God; He has received from the Father and poured out upon us the promised Holy Spirit - that is what you now see and hear! David never ascended to heaven, but he certainly said, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of My feet.'

"Now therefore the whole nation of Israel must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that this Jesus, whom you crucified, God has declared to be both Lord and Christ.

"When they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they cried to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men and fellow-Jews, what shall we do now?' Peter told them, 'You must repent and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that you may have your sins forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this great promise is for you and your children - yes, and for all who are far away, for as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself!' Peter said much more than this as he gave his testimony, and implored them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this perverted generation!'

"Then those who welcomed his message were baptized, and on that day alone about three thousand souls were added to the number of the disciples. They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in their fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. Everyone felt a deep sense of awe, while many miracles and signs took place through the apostles. All the believers shared everything in common; they sold their possessions and goods and divided the proceeds among the fellowship according to individual need. Day after day they met by common consent in the Temple; they broke bread together in their homes, sharing meals with simple joy. They praised God continually and **all the people respected them. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were finding salvation.**" **Acts chapter 2** (Phillips Translation)

Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit of promise may be considered the greatest event of this present age. The crucifixion of God's Son and our Christ ended the dispensation of the law. His resurrection and ascension into heaven open the floodgates of life into an entirely new era with a completely new experience in God. The pouring out of the promised Spirit at Pentecost ushered in the blessed age when Christ would be much more than with His people, for according to His promise the Spirit of Christ would dwell in them, transforming and changing their lives from glory to glory. Power for service has in many ways been stressed to the neglect of all else, but let us remember that the promised Holy Spirit came to bring us to the fullness of sonship and our final adoption in Him.

With the coming of the Spirit of promise at Pentecost another promise was given in words so divinely inspired that they embrace all mankind without exception in one universal blessedness. It is my well-considered opinion that, should some artful philosopher write a book with a golden pen, he could not devise a promise more complete and all inclusive than that which was stated by Peter when with the unction of the promised Spirit upon his humble lips he uttered that all-inclusive promise in these words: "**The promise is unto you and to your**

children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." **Acts 2:39** If this is not the "whosoever will" of the Spirit of promise for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then words fail and speech falls impotent to give forth in words or phrases any promise that would include all mankind.

And has not God continued to fulfill His promise throughout this entire age of grace? Was the initial outpouring at Pentecost a wonder never to be repeated in the annals of the church? No! The promise is unto every believer - to you and your children, to all who are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," was the promise of the Lord before He ascended into heaven. Acts 1:5 Three days He had lain in the grave. Forty days He had been seen of men after His resurrection; and there were but seven days remaining until the day of Pentecost. And, when upon that day the Spirit of promise fell upon them, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were indeed baptized with the Holy Ghost. The wonder of being baptized with the Holy Spirit continued to occur throughout the apostolic days. It occurred among the people of Samaria (Acts 8:5-17), and many days later the assembled few at the household of Cornelius, the Italian centurion, were filled with the Spirit as they were at Pentecost. X — Acts chapter 10. Nineteen years later Paul taught the Ephesian Christians of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and after they were baptised in water, he laid his hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; and with the laying on of his hands the Spirit fell upon them, manifesting His presence by inspiring the people to speak in many languages and by giving many the spirit of prophecy. Acts 19:1-6. He is the Spirit of promise. That is one of His names. And the unfailing promise is unto you and to your children and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

He is the Spirit of adoption for sonship; the Spirit of holiness for purity. Rom 1:4. He is the Spirit of judgment for conviction of sin; the Spirit of burning to purge and refine. Isa. 4:4. He is the Spirit of truth that truth may dwell in your inward parts. John 14:17; 15:26 He is the Spirit of life to deliver you from the realm of death. Isa. 11:2. He is the Spirit of grace that the grace of God may dwell in your heart and adorn your life with the graces His Spirit brings. Heb. 10:29. He is the Spirit of glory to transform you into God's image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 1 Pet. 4:14. He is the Comforter, the Paraclete and the Advocate, for such is the meaning of the words of Jesus in John 14:26. These divine titles of the Spirit and many more abound throughout the Word of God that every saint of the Lord may be instructed by the expressive names which are His and may know that in truth it has been written, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

It is impossible to bring the vastness of God into the realm of our human understanding. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, said Solomon, how much less the building! And we may well add, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him; how much less can words describe Him! I think we will every one find a new source of glory and joy, a new hope for purity and cleansing, yea, of sonship and adoption, when we have learned by the wisdom of God that the Spirit who has come to dwell in our hearts is indeed the Spirit of God, - yes, the Spirit of Christ. Man can never change himself nor can he add a cubit to his stature, but we are changed into His image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. He who now dwells in your heart, He who walks in you to comfort you and direct your pathway, is indeed a person, and that person is God, the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER THREE **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONVICTION OF SIN**

The vast wealth of blessing freely bestowed upon mankind by the coming of the Holy Spirit is, I freely admit, beyond the scope of my ability to portray, nor need we attempt to encompass with our limited understanding the full extent of that which our omniscient heavenly Father knows. We have written briefly of some of the mighty workings of His divine power in the lives of those who yield themselves to Him, but until we rid ourselves of the reasonings of the human mind to let the mind of Christ dwell in us, we will be unable to grasp more than the rudiments of all He is and does. **"But, when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." John 15: 26-27**

I know no words, be they many or few, that could more adequately describe the blessedness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the believer's heart than these inspired words of Jesus by which He

promised that after His departure He would send the Holy Spirit to abide with us forever. **"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."** **John 16:7**

The physical presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, walking among men for thirty-three years manifesting the truth, the light, the life, and the glory of God, must have been the greatest and most blessed visitation the world had ever known. We dare not deviate from our subject now to roam at will through the delightful meadows of meditation, feasting our wondering eyes on the events of power and glory that daily filled the mighty ministry manifested to the world by that first Son of God. Should we now allow our minds to explore a ministry of such greatness that even the world itself could not contain the books needed to describe it, we could not now write of that Comforter whom Jesus promised to send that we might share His sonship. Behold what infinite importance Jesus, the Son of God, placed upon the coming of the Holy Spirit when He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." His departure out of this world meant the coming of the Spirit, and this in His wisdom was expedient. (The word means serving to promote a desired end.) He had been with them and had worked the work of God among them, but henceforth by His Spirit He would be in them, transforming them into God's image and likeness and through them extending God's work and will in all the world as well.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth, (John 6:63), and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Rom. 8:9 Only by the entrance of the Holy Spirit are men born of God, and from that new birth all who henceforth walk in the Spirit, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, are changed into the image of Christ from one glory to another by each successive step until we arrive at that same image. 2 Cor. 3:18. God hath both finished and manifested His first Son. That Son, Jesus Christ, is the firstborn of a vast family of sons, who are members of His body. God is now in the wonderful process of finishing and perfecting these younger sons who are members of the Christ body. The Spirit has baptized them into the body of Christ and they have all drunk of that one Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13.

As diamonds are dug from the grime and filth of a mine thence to be cut and fashioned into objects of extreme value and beauty, so now does the Holy Spirit search out from among the filth and corruption of the world those who by God's grace are predestined to share His image and likeness. Man in sin is lost. He is without God and without hope. He is a stranger and an enemy. He is blind and cannot see his way; and, worst of all, he is dead in trespasses and sins. Could a cold stone by its efforts transform its lifeless self into a man, then might a man dead in trespasses and sins transform himself into a living son of God. If the dead by some effort could arise from his tomb, then might he who is dead in sins deliver himself from death's chain to walk in newness of life; but these things cannot be. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The Holy Spirit quickens those dead in trespasses and sins by planting the life of Christ within them. Man, to enter the kingdom of God, must be born from above. The Spirit of life - the Holy Spirit - reaching down from above, touches the dead soul with the life of God. Then and then only does the creature live. All nature teaches us this vital lesson. Five distinct kingdoms are clearly visible: the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, the human kingdom, and the kingdom of God. Each of these kingdoms is fast sealed and shut up in its own realm. By no effort of its own can the mineral enter the vegetable kingdom. By no effort of its own can the plant enter the animal kingdom. By no effort of its own can the animal enter the human kingdom; and by no effort of his own can man enter the kingdom of God.

The clay that lies inert and lifeless in the garden possesses no power by which it can transform itself into a plant and enter the kingdom above it, yet how often our eyes have seen the miracle of a living seed planted in the ground, springing forth, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. We have seen that seed of life from the vegetable kingdom above touching the deadness of the clay, lifting it up through its tender stem, transforming it into a living plant, a flower, a vegetable, a fruit, or an oak, depending entirely upon the kind of seed that was planted in the dead earth. We shall further affirm that it is impossible for a plant by some effort of its own to enter the animal kingdom immediately above it; yet we have seen with our eyes how both animals and men, eating that plant, do by a miracle which we call digestion lift it up into the animal kingdom and transform it into the flesh of a beast or a man. Though perhaps my thought may seem crude, am I speaking aught but truth and soberness when I say that even the flesh of beasts, eaten by man, does by the same miracle of digestion become the flesh of man? Thus does each kingdom, when touched by the life above it, leave its own realm to enter into the realm above its own. We should now plainly see how impossible it is for

man by some effort of his own to enter the kingdom of God above him. How could he by any process transform himself into the likeness of God? It is impossible! Yet when the Spirit of life from God's kingdom above enters his soul, planting there that incorruptible seed of the word of God, who liveth and abideth forever, then that man is born of God. Yea, he is born into the kingdom immediately above him, which kingdom is the kingdom of God. He becomes God's child, God's son, and a full partaker of God's Spirit of life. He is born again. He is born from above.

If we have considered the matter as we ought, we will surely have noticed how all things in God's creation come from a seed whether it be of the vegetable creation, the animal creation, or whether it be the kingdom of God. An oak tree comes from an acorn, planted in the earth. Man comes from a seed, planted in the womb; and sons of God come from the incorruptible seed, planted in the heart by the Spirit of God. That is why Peter said we are born of incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. 1 Pet. 1:23.

We speak the truth in saying that God seeks His sons from the corruption in which they are lost, without God and without hope in the world. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to arrest these men in their night of sin. He awakens them, brings them to repentance, gives them faith to believe God's great redemption, and then He quickens them by planting within their hearts that incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. Therefore Jesus told them, "When the Comforter is come, (the Holy Spirit), He will reprove (that is, convict and convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Have we not by experience found that man, convicted of his sin and thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of Christ and His power to save and deliver from death and bondage, will soon turn his heart to God in repentance and faith to receive the life that comes pouring into his soul from above?

Let us then consider the work of the Spirit in convicting men of sin. I greatly fear that in our day men are not being convinced and convicted of sin as they ought to be; and, because they are not being convicted of sin as they ought to be, they are not being delivered from the bondage of their corruption. The sad consequence inevitably follows that before long they sink back into sin again, seeing no evil in it. But the man who has seen his deplorable state in sin even as God sees him and has repented with the repentance the Spirit gives him will never again turn back, nor will he desire to do so. My lifelong observation has convinced me that men who turn back, or backslide, are men who never thoroughly repented in the first place. We make a great mistake when in our anxiety to bring men to a decision we force a sort of premature birth, an unwholesome conversion, that is followed by a life-time of sickly, immature Christianity. The world does not need religion. The world needs conviction, repentance, conversion, and life. Men need to know that they are dead in trespasses and sins and that the wrath of God abides upon them. "But," you may ask, "what is the wrath of God!" I must reply that the wrath of God is death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is the edict of the Lord. God's wrath against sin is manifested in the death of the sinner, a Christless death in which he abides throughout all the decades of his existence until Christ comes into his heart. It was this very truth that Jesus was making clear to us when He said, "He that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son hath not life; but the wrath of God (death) abideth on him," because he hath not life. Though such a one should live in the extreme fullness of earth's pleasures, yet he is dead while he lives (1 Tim. 5: 6), a stranger to Christ, and an enemy of God.

The condition of a man outside of Christ is a condition of complete and utter helplessness, and, insofar as his ability to help himself is concerned, his condition is also one of utter hopelessness. That which is dead is both helpless and hopeless. "The dead know not anything" and are powerless to avoid the corruption that sets in as the skin worms destroy the body. Our condition as sinners outside Christ is the condition of death. To the Christians at Ephesus Paul wrote, saying, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1** And Jesus also, when speaking to the Jews who contended with Him, in like manner revealed man's condition of death when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." **John 5: 25-26** The tenor of thought forcefully expressed throughout the whole scripture is that man in his natural state is dead. It is because of this fact and this alone that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself entered the realm of death, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." **2 Cor. 5:14** What statement could be more plain or what fact more clear than that which is stated here: - because all are dead, Christ died for all! And, if Christ died for all because all were dead, then without Him and the divine life He freely bestows mankind is not only dead but helpless and hopeless as well.

As a man with his voice arouses another from sleep, so those who sleep in death shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. Our Saviour demonstrated time and time again throughout His earthly ministry that the power to raise dead men by His word was inherent in Himself. He was, yea, rather is, both the resurrection and the life, and all who hear His voice must come forth. "Young man, arise," he said as His fingers touched the bier (Luke 7:14), and the young man arose to be returned in life to his widowed mother. "Talitha cumi; maiden, arise," was the word of power He spoke to the maiden silent in death (Mark 5: 41), and at His word her heart resumed its beating, the blood its life giving flow, and all the people rejoiced at the marvelous thing they had seen. "Lazarus, come forth," He called as they rolled the stone away; and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. "Loose him and let him go," the Master spoke; and Lazarus walked in the newness and freedom of life.

"I am the resurrection!" Thus He spoke
In lovely Bethany one cloudy day
To weeping sisters; yet those living words
Healed not their wound, nor dried their tears away.
Naught did they see but death; the chasm wide
Was deep and dark and cold. They did not know
Eternal life was standing by their side.

"I am the resurrection!" Yet they wept
Though Life Eternal looked into their eyes;
For resurrection came to visit earth
When Jesus left His home beyond the skies.
So Life walked down that day with human feet
To where death trembled in the grave's dark gloom.
Life challenged death; he dropped his keys and fled,
And with Christ-life a man came from the tomb.

"I am the resurrection!" Angels smiled
That day in spring they rolled the stone away
While humans wept. They could not yet believe
That conquered death could never hold his prey.
But in that grave Life stepped from out a shroud.
Life fears no shrouds nor death's vales dark and wild.
The everlasting arms are lifting him
As tenderly as mother lifts her child.

"I am the resurrection!" Jesus walked
Beneath the trees that He himself had made,
And watched a broken-hearted woman weep
Outside a tomb where all her hopes were laid.
If He could bring a dead man back to life,
If by His word death vanished from the tomb,
Could He not bring back hopes that now are dead
And resurrect lost joys from night's dark gloom?

"I am the resurrection!" Jesus spoke;
One word fell from the lips of endless Life,
One word, a name; but that was word enough
To banish all the darkness, fear, and strife.
Raised from the dead were Mary's hopes and joys.
Gone were her sorrows, gone her doubts and fears.
She understood then what we now should know —
Eternal Life is walking through the years.

He is the resurrection! And today
We walk the road with Him in life anew.
The resurrection life He gave to them
Is life that now He wants to give to you.
He is that life! He gives it freely when
We bid Him enter, nevermore to part.
You find it not beyond the starry skies;
You have it when you have Him in your heart.

Charles S. Price

Man has no life in himself. He is dead in trespasses and sins. But, as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. John 5:26. When, therefore the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins hears the voice of the Son of God, he awakens to an entirely new life as Jesus said. "I give unto them eternal life." We are mistaken in our thinking when we conclude that eternal life is called eternal merely to signify duration. Eternal life does not speak of duration but of the kind and quality of life that Jesus gives. We already have physical life, and those who possess nothing more are dead while they live. Eternal life is not the life of this world, but the life of the ages, for that is what the Greek word aionian means. Christ gives the believer His life, and His life is the life of the ages. It is the life that will fill all things forever. It is the life of God, and, because it is His life, it is as timeless and endless as Himself. Endurance, however, is only one of the qualities of the life that Jesus gives. **"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3.** Since the Saviour said, "I am the life," then we should be able to see that life in all its fullness is what He is in all His fullness. The life He gives is a different quality of life. That which man calls life God calls death. He sees us with this mist, this vapor we think is life, as dead men burying our dead, but the life He gives to those who believe is His own life, and that life is Christ Himself. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," was the promise He made. It is certain they cannot perish. His life is imperishable because He is imperishable and He is life. "I give unto them aionian life," Jesus said, and aionian life is the life of the ages. Eternal life is not an extension of this present life. Christ is eternal life. The life, which He is, is the life He now gives to those who believe. That life is imperishable because He is imperishable. We are in error when we say, "Jesus died that I might live." The real truth is that Jesus died that He might give His life to us. He is the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died, and, as a result of that death, His life now reappears in the millions of those who believe.

We are inclined to lightly pass over many profound statements of Holy Scripture. There is "a time to be born," the wise man said. Eccles. 3:2 Jesus in His unfolding of the mysteries of God made this remarkable declaration: **"All that the Father hath given to Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37** He also said with equal force, **"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44** These two definite assertions are contrary, if not completely opposite, to the negative preaching of modern evangelists, but let God be true though every man be a liar. No man comes to Christ until the Father draws him. Organize all the revival meetings you wish. Preach your heart out; persuade, exhort, cajole, warn, rebuke, and threaten, but they still will not come except and until the Father draws them. You may by persuasion gain a proselyte or a mere professor, but only the Spirit of God can make a believer. It is the Lord who adds daily to the church such as should be saved; it is not man. Acts 2:47 There is a time to be born in the Spirit just as there is a time to be born in the natural. Men come to spiritual birth when they hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to the innermost depths of their spirit; then they that hear and believe live. No man comes except the Father draw him, but all that the Father hath given to Jesus Christ will come to Him. John 6:37 Our believing on Jesus Christ is the beginning of the resurrection. Our faith in Him is actually the first step in the order of a resurrection which, when completed, will include our spirit, our soul, and even our bodies in perfection, incorruption, and immortality. First the spirit is quickened and made alive by the life of Christ. Then the mind is renewed as we become possessors of the mind of Christ. God does not put His thoughts into our minds; He gives us the mind of Christ. Finally, the body is renewed as it is written, **"This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (The victory here mentioned is the life of Christ.) O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory." 1 Cor. 15: 53-55**

As the resurrection of the dead from the grave proceeds, "every man in his own order" (band or group), 1 Cor. 15:23, so likewise the quickening of the spirits of men walking the earth, dead in trespasses and sins, comes "every man in his own order." Every man comes to Christ in his proper time - when the Holy Spirit calls him. This Jesus plainly taught when He said, "All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me" (John 6:37), and "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44.

If we can lay aside the tradition of the evangelists, theologians, and sects and listen instead to the word of God, we will clearly see that it is only when Christ calls men by His Spirit that they come in repentance to God. Did Jesus Christ consult Saul of Tarsus as to whether or not he wanted to become a Christian? Did He plead with that rebellious, persecuting tyrant to change his ways and to follow Him? No! He did not! He told him in the plainest and simplest manner possible that he was a vessel chosen of God and that he was to bear the name of Christ before Jews, Gentiles, and Israelites, that he must stand before kings to testify in Christ's name, and that in doing so he would suffer great persecutions and hardships. Paul had nothing to do but obey. No wonder this murderous Christ-hater was able to say with power and assurance, "Every man in his own order." If you will search a bit, you will not look far before you find many men who were similarly called against their will and told by the Spirit of God what they must do, though at first they had no intention of doing any such thing. Moses was certainly among those unwilling ones, as was also Jeremiah and many others, both in scripture record and in history as well. When the Spirit of God speaks, dead men, though bound hand and foot with grave clothes, come forth from the darkness and hopelessness of death's deep sleep to be loosed and let go, to live and to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONVICTION OF SIN

When the hour comes for men to be called to Christ, the first work of the Spirit is to convict them of sin. "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." With eloquent words the poet sang:

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin;
Nor how, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.
But I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.

Our hearts respond with reverence and a fervent amen to such truth as this. I frankly confess that after half a century of walking with God, I still cannot explain the miracle of conviction of sin, nor do I fully understand that heavenly wonder, the miracle of the new birth. My ignorance is yet more manifest as I behold with bewildered admiration the miracle of those things we speak of as being natural, which occur momentarily all about us. "Knowest thou how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child?" the Spirit questions. Eccles. 11:5 To this, with bowed head and wondering heart, I confess, "My Lord, I know not!" If we understand not the miracle of a leaf falling from a tree in autumn, how shall our little minds explain the miracle of the bones that grow in the womb of her that is with child? How much less are we able to explain the wonder of the Spirit moving in grace and power over the lifelessness of the soul of one dead in trespasses and sins, awakening the spirit with conviction of sin and granting repentance unto life eternal through Jesus Christ, our wonderful Lord! Jesus spoke of something more than a far off resurrection day when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." John 5: 25 No one was more certain of a great and final resurrection than was the Christ, who said, "I am the resurrection," and no one understood as well as He that there is a resurrection, which now is, taking place in the spirits of those who, believing, receive life through His name. As the breeze, moving gently in the tree-tops, bears in its breath the mystery of God, so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the heart of sin, rousing and awakening him to repentance and salvation. The method by which the Spirit convicts men of sin is shown here to be threefold. He will reprove or convince the world of sin, of righteousness-and of judgment: "of sin because they believe not on Me; of righteousness because I go to the Father; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." **John 16: 8-11** The great damning sin upon which the Spirit fastens His work of conviction is the sin of unbelief. "Of sin because they believe not" is the word of the Lord! Unbelief is the one great damning sin. Sin and unrighteousness of any and every kind remain to darken the soul and hold it in the vice-like grip of death wherever unbelief is found, but sins of years are washed away and blackest stains become as snow when men believe on Christ, for the Holy Ghost has said, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." **1 John 1:7** If there is no belief in the blood of Christ, no spirit of repentance toward God, no faith toward Jesus Christ, then nothing is cleansed and the soul dead in trespasses and sins remains in his death and the wrath of God abides upon him - because he has not believed. We have already shown that the wrath of God is death, and, since the unbeliever is already dead in sins, thus the wrath abides upon him while he remains in his unbelief. John 3:36

When Jesus with three of His disciples descended from the mount of transfiguration, a scene of pitiful confusion met His eyes. A lunatic boy, violently possessed of a demon, had been brought to His disciples, but they could not deliver him. So they brought him to Jesus. "And when He saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." **Mark 9: 20-24** The question we ask must not be, "If Thou canst help us", for with God all things are possible. The question of eternal importance is this: "If thou canst believe."

"Lord, now, indeed, I find Thy power and Thine alone
Can change the leopard's spots, and melt the heart of stone."

The question is not, "Can Christ save me?" The question is, "Do you believe that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" The question is not, "Can God forgive and save a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, or any other?" The question is, "Do I believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin?" He who believes that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him will in one moment make a wonderful discovery - that, though his sins were as scarlet, they are now as white as snow, and, though they were red like crimson, now they are as wool. Isa. 1:18

Conviction of sin, seizing upon the sinful heart, will cause the penitent spirit to cry from its unsearchable depths, "Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole. I want Thee forever to dwell in my soul. Break down every idol; cast out every foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat.
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet.
By faith for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." **Rom. 10:17** Simply stated the meaning is this: Faith cometh by hearing the word of God. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." It is when the Spirit whispers the promise of God into the sinner's heart that faith, born of the Holy Ghost, reaches up to grasp and lay hold on the truth and bring salvation and the life of Christ to the believing heart. How often during my life I have knelt by the side of repentant sinners only to find that, though they had confessed their sins to God, they still did not have the witness of the Spirit that the blood of Christ had cleansed their sins away. On such occasions I always opened the Bible at that bright promise in 1 John 1: 9 to let them read for themselves God's wonderful assurance that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And I think I can say to the glory of God that I know of neither man nor woman who, seeing the simplicity of that straightforward promise, was unable to believe to the salvation of his soul.

He will reprove - i.e. convict and convince - the world of sin. Conviction of sin must be recognized as the first and initial work of the Holy Spirit in the unbeliever. If there is no true conviction of sin in the heart and conscience of the sinner, then there is no true conversion. Men must be convicted of the fact of sin, the fault of their sin, the folly of their sin, and the filth of sin. The fact of sin is that we have transgressed the commandment of the Lord. The fault of sin is that we have despised God's word, God's law, and God's Christ and have done ill worthy of death by our transgression. The folly of sin is that, while we continue in it, we are acting against our own reason and against the word of the Lord as revealed by His holy law, against the conviction of our own conscience and the reproof of the Holy Spirit, and in so doing are treading beneath our feet the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for the remission of our sins. The apostle spoke a fiery and dreadful truth when he exclaimed, "He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" **Heb. 10:28-29** The words of the evangelist could not have been far wrong when he cried with eloquence, "Oh dying but immortal men, ye blood-bought hearers of the word, better for thee that Calvary had not borne its burden and that the lips of Christ had not been opened in invitation if, rejecting all, thou goest into eternal desolation, thy hands and thy feet bedabbled with the blood of the Son of God!"

The folly of remaining in sin could be attested to by ten thousand reasons, for "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The filth of our sin can only be fully seen as we behold the inherent purity and glory of God. I dare not deviate from my subject now to endeavor to portray the holiness and the glory of God, but let us at least call to remembrance how, on those occasions recorded in which the Lord revealed His holiness to men, those men, though themselves among the holiest on earth, shrank always to hide themselves in dust and ashes from the blinding light of that holiness which He is. No greater man ever lifted his prophetic voice to unfold eternal mysteries than the prophet Isaiah, yet the inglorious vileness he felt as he saw himself in the revealing light which God is, is recorded for us in these inspired words: "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." **Isa. 6:1-7**

The reason sinners today are not aware of the filth of their sin is because preachers have lost sight of the glory and holiness of God. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so..." "For among My people are found wicked men; they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich." These words, quoted from the fifth chapter of Jeremiah, I say with extreme regret picture with vivid inspiration the dreadful condition of preachers and priests in our day. They prophesy falsely and the people love to have it so. But what will they do in the end thereof? Because the preachers have lost sight of the glory of God and have given themselves to numbering their congregations, while compassing land and sea to make new proselytes, therefore the people, Christian and unconverted alike, have lost their sense and realization of the dreadful filth of their sin. It is true that some occasionally speak of the holiness of God, but they seldom seem to have any true conviction of it and seldom do they live the thing they preach. Therefore their sermons are clouds without water and empty words preached from empty hearts.

No man will ever convince men of the filth of sin while he consents to believe that Christ was a hippy, bumming idly about the country as a rebellious, long-haired mendicant, intent on stirring up trouble. I am amazed beyond belief that an almost countless number of professed spiritual leaders have gone aimlessly along with such imbecilic absurdity, and, not content with this, have even allowed themselves to be instructed by this unclean

rabble, who are intent on fulfilling every lust of the flesh, repenting of nothing, but gratifying every unclean and hurtful inclination. Christ, so far from being a hippy, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Heb. 7:26 Let us both see and partake of the holiness of God; then shall our presence be a rebuke to those who live in ungodliness. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and where will that cleansing be more manifest than in the purity of heart and life and conduct of those who believe? If the cleansing within fails to be manifested in the cleansing of the outward life, who can believe that Christ is in them at all?

The folly of sin is the more accentuated in the light of the indisputable fact that there is a fearful penalty for sin. Among the very first instructions given to man was God's faithful and immutable warning of the dire and inevitable result that would follow if he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "Thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And, when man in disobedience stretched out his inquisitive hand to partake of that which God had forbidden, the life of God departed from him and he stood naked, ashamed, and dead in trespasses and sins. This, O reader, is the first death, and this first death passed upon all men for that all have sinned. This whole existence, which we now erroneously call life, is, in fact, death from the cradle to the grave, and all men and women outside of Jesus Christ are dead. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," said Paul, speaking to men whose spirits had been made alive through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:1), and, speaking to believers who had received the life of God in their souls, he spoke of the yet unregenerate body, saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10.** Thus we should clearly see that, even after we are born of the Spirit, our bodies are still dead and will remain so until the resurrection morning. But it was not of this first death only that Paul spoke of when he said, "The wages of sin is death." **Rom. 6:23.** The Spirit has faithfully told us of a second death into which unbelieving men shall surely go. That second death will be a period of time similar to this first death we are now experiencing, but much more terrible and severe than anything we now know - so much so that it is described in Rev. 21:8 as a lake of fire. Its only inhabitants will be the sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, the fearful and unbelieving, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. The penalty of sin is very great. Not only in this present age does it curse us, but in that second death which is to come. It can only be described as the "lake of fire."

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, yea, the Spirit of holiness, to reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, but woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the believers are lukewarm! They are neither cold nor hot. They manifest not either the holiness or the love of God. Their lives, lukewarm and nauseating, have become mingled with the world and all its ways. As Belshazzar in the dissipation of his licentious orgy mingled the vessels of the Lord with the debauchery that delighted his ungodly heart, so these men, saved and unsaved alike, mingle together, speaking in tongues, worshipping Mary, celebrating mass, converting the world, preaching that God is holy and Christ is a hippy, dancing on the altars, using pop for communion, while delighting in feasts, breakfasts, and dinners. Well did Jude describe this generation in these fearful words: "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." **Jude 12:13** O corrupt and filthy Sodom of the twentieth century, your degenerate heart does not know that the things in which you delight will bring the wrath of God upon you! Neither do you remember the words of our Lord, who said, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." **Matt. 24:37**

He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. There is no surer way to reprove the world of sin than by a faithful demonstration of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God the Father, the highest authority in all the universe, has now declared to angels, principalities, and men that the righteousness of His Son is sufficient to make all the world righteous, and that we, too, shall be made the righteousness of God in Him. Give audience and hear with reverence the truth He would have us believe: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (reconciliation and satisfaction) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus." **Rom. 23-26**

So complete was the righteousness of Christ that, when men by wicked hands killed Him, God raised Him from the dead, and, being raised from the dead, He ascended to the right hand of God's throne. There Stephen in spirit beheld Him when he cried, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God!" **Acts 7:55** Nothing so completely manifests the righteousness of Christ and the acceptance by the Father of His sacrifice and death as does His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven. Therefore, Jesus said that when He, the Spirit of truth, was come, He would reprove the world of righteousness "because I go to the Father."

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

CHAPTER FOUR THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REGENERATION

The book of Genesis, which begins with a man in the blessedness of the Garden of Eden, ends with a man "in a coffin in Egypt." **Gen. 50:26** That book which is the Bible begins with man in the Garden of Eden, but ends with man, the temple and habitation of God, in that blest paradise, the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Before our eyes can see the glory of God, they must become dead to all things that only seem to be. Before our ears can hear the voice of God, they must become insensitive to every earthly voice that clamors for our attention. Before our minds can embrace the depth of that eternal wisdom which knew the end from the beginning, nay rather, planned the end from the beginning, we shall have to divest ourselves of the shallowness of human wisdom and all the limited understanding of the darkness of the carnal mind. When the wisdom of the Holy Spirit touches our understanding, we will confess before our Father in heaven that we know nothing yet as we ought to know and we will see that our natural mind has proved itself again and again to be an enemy of God. Then the Spirit will begin to unfold to our searching hearts the purposes of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

When the Holy Spirit reveals that God works all things after the counsel of His own will, He will also reveal that this working out of His counsel is that "we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." **Eph. 1:11-12** Never for one short hour during all the centuries that have come and gone since Eden has our immutable Father deviated from the eternal decree which He proclaimed when He said, "Let us make man in our image and let us give him dominion..." **Gen. 1:26** Each and every step He has taken with unerring wisdom. He lowered man, His choicest creature, into the fearful vanity of the fall, that awful pit of death, darkness, blindness, and helplessness, and then revealed through His servant Paul that the dreadful vanity of man's fall was part of the divine intention, "for," said he, "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature (every creature) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18-19**

Was it not God Himself who said, "The creature was made subject to vanity by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope?" Yes! Most certainly it was our Lord, the almighty and wise Father who said it! And what, O Lord our Father, was the hope that lay hidden for ages and dispensations in Thy divine mind? It was the hope that the creature itself (all and every creature) should be delivered from the bondage of universal corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **Rom. 8:20-21** God was - yes, is - in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. He has committed to us that same word of reconciliation principally for that kingdom age to come, but at the end of the millennial kingdom the mouth of the bride of Christ will also be filled with that same word of reconciliation for the ages to come. Then will the Spirit and the bride say, "Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." **Rev. 22:17**

You will never know the Lord or His merciful purpose so full of wisdom and understanding until He reveals Himself and His purposes to you by His Holy Spirit, and I am sure that you will receive but little revelation from Him until you repent of the blinding traditions of the elders, the denominations, and the sects, and turn to God with an open searching heart. Then will He unfold to your understanding how all things are after the counsel of

His will. You will discover that no one can resist His mind or His intention. "He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away." **Luke 1:51-53** He raiseth up the basest of men (Dan. 4:17) and putteth them down that all things may work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

It is the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. O child of God, longing for the understanding of the Almighty, if you will but pause to consider these three statements, a great battle will be won within you and a question of eternal importance settled in your mind. These I place before you that you may consider: (1) **The carnal mind is an enemy of God.** It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom. 8:7 (2) **The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,** for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2:14 (3) **It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.** "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life." **John 6:63**

Everywhere today carnal men with carnal, fleshly minds are setting themselves up as authorities concerning the things of God. Their carnal minds know nothing of the Spirit, but only of the flesh. They are interested only in those things that concern the corruptible body. They do not know that the carnal mind is God's enemy whichever way it turns. As for me, I see little choice between the fleshly mind and the natural mind, for the natural man in his natural and unregenerate state not only cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God but considers all truly spiritual things foolishness. The natural man, which with regret I say includes almost all the ministers of the church system, discourses loud and long about the church, but he does not know what the true church really is. He speaks eloquently of unity, seeing only a unity of creeds, statements, and doctrines, but he knows nothing of that Spirit who binds all believing saints into one body, joining them in His Spirit as ligaments and muscles join the bones, making them at once one body and one Christ, the greatest and most sacred mystery of all the ages. Jesus Christ Himself is the wisdom of God; yet to the religious Jew, filled with natural understanding, Christ is naught but a stumblingblock. 1 Cor. 1:23 To the heady Greek philosopher a crucified and resurrected Christ is utter foolishness. To men perishing in sin, the preaching of the cross is unreasonable folly, but to those who have believed it is both the wisdom of God and the power of God.

The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. Because the world is carnal and lives in the realm of the flesh, it can accept only those things that can be analyzed by the five physical senses. The world receives not the Holy Spirit because it sees Him not; but he who believes God sees and knows in a realm unfamiliar to the natural man. Once you believe even the genesis of truth, then the Holy Spirit begins to open to your heart the storehouses of God's unsearchable riches. While the natural man is affirming that seeing is believing, the Son of God is saying, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" **John 11:40** The truth is that believing is seeing.

"Whence knowest thou me?" the astonished Nathaniel inquired of the Lord. "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," was the gracious reply. "Master, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel," Nathaniel declared in triumph and awe. Jesus, answering, said, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these... hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." **John 1:48-51**

"Thou shalt see greater things than these," the Spirit is whispering to the believer. "Thou shalt see the hidden mysteries, which in other ages were not made known to men, but are being revealed in these last days to those whom God hath chosen." **Eph. 3:5.** Not only will such glories be seen with the eye of the spirit, but they will in fact and in reality become part of our experience with the Lord. It is written, "Eye (the natural eye) hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Whatsoever work the Lord does He does by His Spirit. He sendeth forth His Spirit, and they are created. He reneweth the face of the earth, and whether His work is in the natural realm or in the spiritual realm, the Holy Spirit is the mighty arm and power of God that carries out the will of the Lord. From all our observation of God and from the declarations of His holy word it is easily seen that all and every work of the Spirit is done with the

intention of aeonian progression. God does not finish a thing, then leave it to decay as man is inclined to do. All that He does He does with the intention of changing it from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and, when He created it, He created it "not in vain", that is, not void and not without form. Isa. 45:18. There is a vast time lapse between Gen. 1:1, when the earth was created "not in vain", and Gen. 1:2 when the earth had become without form and void or vain. What caused this great catastrophe we are not directly told, but, if you will ponder a little, you will know that the earth today, though not without form or void, is suffering dreadful convulsions through man's abuse and transgression. Even now the earth and the oceans are dying and waxing old as a garment, but there is a promise of resurrection. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." **2 Pet. 3:13** As David by the Spirit said, "Thou renewest the face of the earth." **Psa. 104:30**

When the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the time came for our heavenly Father to launch the second phase of His immutable purpose. He sent forth His Holy Spirit to move upon the face of the waters. "Let there be light," was the word of the Lord, and there was light - not the light of the sun, for the sun was not given his command until the fourth day, but the light that shone was that good light, even the light of God's presence. Gen. 1:4 If I may add this thought, we must conclude that all light is God's light, even the light that shines from the sun, the moon, or the stars. We call it natural light, but can we be wrong in concluding that even natural things are also from the hand of God? One of the works of the Spirit on that wonderful day of re-creation was this: "God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night." **Gen. 1:4-5** Our little minds can but dimly grasp the wonderful transformation that took place when the Spirit of God began to move on the face of the deep. The water, of course, was ice because there was neither light nor heat. That was the true ice age, of which men of science often speak. But now the Spirit of God was moving upon the deep, dividing darkness from light, dispelling the bitter cold, melting the endless snows and the timeless ice, to make the dry land appear that both vegetable and animal life could spring forth at God's command to live and thrive. Thus it is written, "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit; they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth." **Psa. 104:30** What a marvelous transformation was taking place in that natural creation as old things began to pass away and all things became new! Gone was the darkness, the death, the snow, the ice, and the dreadful cold, and in its stead bustling life and bubbling song filled the whole earth. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell," and joy and gladness are everywhere.

The earth, that was without form and void, and the gross and terrible darkness that covered it like a shroud is the Lord's symbolic picture of the condition of unregenerate man. The description given in Genesis 1:2 - the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep - is an apt and accurate description of the spiritual condition of a man outside of Christ, unconverted, unregenerate, and not born again. The word void conveys the meaning of emptiness, destitution, unoccupied, of no effect. What more accurate picture could be given of an unregenerate man as he lives without God or hope in the world? What value can we place on any of the things that now are if we view them without God? What value could there possibly be in a man's living at all, whether in riches or poverty, freedom or slavery, health or sickness, if the grave is to terminate all existence? There is infinite value in all things that have purpose, but, if there be no purpose either in joy or pain, better far for man if he had not been born at all. The earth was "without form" before the Spirit of God moved upon it, and darkness - gross, outer darkness - was upon the face of the deep. O man of the world, is not this a picture of your life without God? What form or shape can be given to such an emptiness as a life lived without the Lord? Darkness hangs like a pall over the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins, and, should one gain the whole world and lose his soul, it would profit him nothing at all. Moffatt in his translation of Prov. 4:18-19 has so significantly stated, "The course of bad men lies through darkness dim. They cannot see what makes them stumble; the course of good men, like a ray of dawn, shines on and on to the full light of day."

The scripture, speaking of the condition of an unregenerate man, describes him as being without God, without Christ, a stranger to God's covenants and promises, and having no hope. Eph. 2:11-12 He is said to be walking according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the power of the air (the devil), who

works in all children of disobedience. He fulfills the desires of his own flesh and is by nature a child of wrath. Above all else he is dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. 2:1-3. Thus, as the earth once stood in the beginning, without form and void and with darkness upon the face of the deep, so now stands unregenerate man, whom God formed of the dust of the earth, but who through transgression fell, becoming a stranger to God, unregenerate, unconverted, and without hope in the world. But, as in the beginning the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters and light came at the commandment of God with warmth to melt the homeless snows that ten thousand forms of life might appear upon the earth, so also it is written of men, once dead in trespasses and sins, without hope and without God in the world, that, even when we were dead in sins, God quickened us (made us alive) together with Christ and raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:5-6

Our Lord Jesus paid the full price of our redemption and our regeneration. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." **2 Cor. 8:9** So great is the redemption wrought by Christ that Paul, describing the vastness of its all-embracing, all-inclusive scope and power, wrote this marvelous proclamation to the Christians at Colosse: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." **Col: 1:16** Then, proceeding from this magnificent statement concerning creation, he describes the vastness of Christ's redemption of that same creation in these powerful, all-inclusive words: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." **Col. 1:20** Centuries before Paul wrote these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah had lifted up his prophetic voice to proclaim the completeness of Christ's redemption in almost identical words: "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear... In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." **Isa. 45:23, 25.** "Even to Him shall all men come." **Isa. 45:24.** Paul, once more taking up the same theme in Phil. 2:9-10, thus spoke of the unlimited dimension of Christ's redemption: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at (in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The beloved John, the last of all Bible writers, describing the redemptive scenes of coming ages, thus portrayed the marvels that unfolded before his wondering eyes: "And I beheld, and I heard the voices of many angels round about the throne and the beasts (living creatures) and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth forever and ever." **Rev. 5:11-14**

O that I possessed the words and wisdom of angels! Then would I show the magnitude of the almighty power and the wisdom contained in those two words, but God, found in Eph. 2:4 and in many other texts. But God! But God! But God! We were dead in sins, without hope, without God, without Christ, children of wrath, without form and void, living in the outer darkness and blindness of our unregenerate souls. As for hope, we were hopeless! As for life, were lifeless! As for light, there was nothing but darkness! But God! But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ! By grace we are saved!

If all the books were written that should be written, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. John 21:25. Yet, if all those books were written, their endless pages could not contain the limitless wonders God wrought in His Son, Jesus Christ, when He sent Him to raise His creation from the thralldom of death, to fashion them in His own image and likeness, to commit to them the word of reconciliation, and through them to bring the whole universe into harmony with Himself. Could we even tell the unconfined, uncircumscribed extent of such a universal reconciliation, our words would seem but idle tales to the dark and unbelieving mind of man until that blessed Holy Spirit, who proceedeth forth from the Father and the Son, moves like the breath of God on the covering darkness and the dreadful void of the soul that is dead in

trespasses and sins. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh with all its slavish religion profiteth nothing. Fill your mind with as many doctrines as you wish. It profits you nothing. Celebrate mass every day of the week, if you so desire. It profits you nothing. Give all your goods to the poor, or give your body to be burned. It profits you nothing, for you are still dead and chained by the power of inbred sin. O that men of every race and every creed might know that it is the Holy Spirit alone who makes men alive! He it is who renews the face of the earth. He it is whose everlasting light shines into the outer darkness in which we have dwelt so long, even as it is written, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." **2 Cor. 4:6**

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." **John 3:1-2** That was an excellent speech, and I think Nicodemus was most sincere in every word he said, but the Lord lost no time in pointing out to this man of learning and letters, this doctor of the law, ruler and teacher of the Jews, that one basic issue that he and all men must of necessity know. This man, all his learning, his culture, and his religion notwithstanding, was just as dark, just as void, and just as dead as was the desolate earth, from which he came, before that memorable day in which it was said, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light." O what a resurrection, what a regeneration took place on that heaven-blessed day - a resurrection far greater than that which we see in spring when the strengthening rays of the heightening sun with his warming winds breathe upon our land, loosing all creation from the vice-like grip of ice and snow as dancing waters, glad of their freedom, chatter and flow to the ocean, flowers appear on the earth, and the gladsome notes of the song-bird is heard in all the land. The earth, which before Adam was held in the grip of death, covered with ice and snow and embraced in the arms of a darkness that could be felt, could only know life as the life-giving winds of the Spirit breathed upon it and God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Well did Jesus know that without that life which He Himself is souls dead in trespasses and sins can never see God nor comprehend the glories of His kingdom. Not until the blessed Holy Spirit moves as the breath of God upon our lifeless spirits does life spring forth. It is when God says, "Let there be light," that the Spirit illumines our lives with the light and glory of Himself. You may wonder why it is that suddenly you seem to be awakening from your long sleep of death in sin; it is because the Holy Spirit is moving upon you, filling your heart with a desire to be saved and find rest in knowing God, your Maker. "If our gospel be hid," said Paul, "it is hid from them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them... For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." **2 Cor. 4:3-4,6**

Should you ask me, as Nicodemus asked Jesus, how a man can be born again, I would only answer that, as the Spirit of God moved upon that dead creation in the beginning, even so He now moves upon the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins, giving life where there was death. As a mother wakens her sleeping child, so the Spirit of God wakens those who sleep the sleep of sin and death. He plants in the heart the faith to believe the wonderful grace God manifested to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, as Paul has written: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (faith) not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." **Eph. 2:8-9** No man can even desire to know God or to receive of His life until the Holy Spirit begins to move upon him. When the Spirit moves, however gently, within us, conviction of sin awakens, repentance stirs within, and faith in the all-powerful blood of Christ to give complete salvation is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, by whom we believe the promise of God. Then and there the life that raised Jesus from the dead, the Holy Spirit, raises us from our night of sin and we are born from above, regenerated, renewed in God, re-born. The old life passes away and all things become new. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth (makes alive): the flesh profiteth nothing."

To those who love God and revere His word there are few records in holy writ held in more sacred esteem than the account given by the evangelists of the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary concerning the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The mind of this pure young woman must have been staggered beyond measure by the angelic annunciation that He who was to be called the Son of the Highest should come forth from her virgin womb. The mightily angel, Gabriel, who always comes with the message of the Lord, had appeared to her, "a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house and lineage of David;

and the angel came in unto her, and said. Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name, Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." **Luke 1:27-35** The birth of the Son of God was the work of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of God moved upon the waters in the beginning to bring forth that life which was to be, so now the Spirit of God moved upon Mary, overshadowing her with His almighty presence to form within her virgin womb Him who was to be called the Son of God.

The Christ-child, conceived in the literal womb of a literal woman and then separated from her by a perfectly normal birth, was God's immutable hope of the reconciliation of the world, even as it is written that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Can you not see, O believer, the rising crescendo of God's almighty purpose? For it is now written that Christ in you is the hope of glory, and, if I understand God's glory aright, I am convinced that God's glory is God's image and our perfect oneness with Him. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them," Jesus said, "that they may be one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect on one." What greater glory could ever come to the redeemed than that they should be one with Him? Hear the words of poor disconsolate Job as he spoke out of the misery and corruption of his enormous affliction. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." **Job 19:25** "And we," said Paul, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18**

All spiritual things are opposite to natural things. Thus it was that, when the literal Jesus was formed in the literal womb of a literal woman, He must of necessity be separated from her; but, when Christ by the Spirit is born within the spirit of man, the two are never to be separated. By His Spirit within we are changed from glory to glory until we reach the exact image and perfection of Him who is the first born among a vast family of sons of God. When a man is born of the Spirit of God, he should be brought to realize immediately that his spiritual birth is only the beginning of a lifetime of spiritual growth and experience. What a tragedy it is that the church system has left new-born souls to grovel along in the kindergarten of spiritual experience, feeding on husks, starved and anemic, while they sing of some far-off day when they will die and go to heaven to roam forever through its elysian fields, shouting hallelujah and playing harps! The man who through faith in Christ has believed to the salvation of his soul is not only reborn, but re-generated and re-newed, henceforth to proceed into the image he knew before sin and the fall were ever known. Nothing can be re-generated that was not first generated. Nothing can be re-newed that was not first new; and nothing can be re-born that was not first born. Neither can that be re-plenished which was not first plenished. When a man confesses his sin to God and receives Jesus Christ into his heart, then and there he receives the life of God in himself. Christ is the life of God, as it is written: "He that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son hath not life but the wrath of God (death) abideth on him." Would God that I could help men see that death and the grave are not synonymous terms. It is possible to be in the grave and yet be alive; conversely, men all around us are walking about on the earth and enjoying pleasure, yet are as dead as a stone. All existence outside of Christ is death. She (or he) that liveth in pleasure, partaking to the full of every enjoyment of earth, is completely dead while she lives, simply because life is inseparable from Christ - in Him is life - and all existence outside of Him, no matter how pleasurable, is death. Man calls it life; He, who Himself is life, says it is death. Not only shall we justly say that those who live in pleasure are dead while they live, but we may also say with equal justice that he who liveth in religion is dead while he lives, if Christ has never become his life. For thus saith the Lord, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts! Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they

are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you..." **Isa. 1:11-15** It is not religion that men need. It is life; it is regeneration; it is a new birth. It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." **Titus 3: 5-7**

Now when a man believes on Christ, then and there the Spirit of life in Christ comes into him, and that man makes the wonderful discovery that what religion could not do Christ has done. The law of the Spirit, which is life in Christ Jesus, makes him free from that death which came as a result of sin. The whole world is full of laws. We cannot possibly avoid them. There is a law, unwritten but positive, that says that, if you jump into a fire, you will be burned; if you leap from a precipice, you will be killed; if you expose your body to the frost, you will be frozen; if your breath is cut off, you will perish. All such laws are irreversible. There is also a law that says, "If you sin, you die," and this law is called the law of sin and death. No religion on earth can alter, change, or abrogate that law. The Law of Moses only accentuates and exposes it. But there is another law that says, "He that hath the Son hath life." Therefore Paul said, "What the law (of Moses) could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (your flesh and mine), God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law (the law of Moses) might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." **Rom. 8:3-4** He that believeth on the Son of God hath life. It is only when we receive His life that we understand how the law of the Spirit, life in Christ Jesus, has thoroughly freed us from the law of sin and death.

All this marvelous work of God in the believer's life is triumphantly carried out by the Holy Spirit, of whom Christ spoke, saying, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." But we must add with the utmost conviction that the work of the Spirit thus far realized within us by regeneration and cleansing from sin is only the infinitesimal beginning of a work that is designed to change us from glory to glory until we shine in His image. Our rebirth and regeneration are the childhood, the infancy, of all Christian experience. Great and marvelous is the work of the Spirit in awakening the soul that was dead in trespasses and sins. Conviction of sin is by no means a pleasant experience. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." **Acts 9:5** The sorrow of the world worketh death, but it is the goodness of God that gives us godly sorrow for our sin, leading us to repentance, unto life that needeth not to be repented of. Repentance, which is godly sorrow for sin, is followed by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. The power of the cleansing blood of Christ is applied to the believing heart by the Holy Spirit. He it is who washes the soul and renews the Spirit of God within us.

At the moment this renewal, this rebirth, this regeneration of the Spirit, takes place within us, we become members of the true church, which is the body of Christ. "For by (in) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13 This is where we become members of the true church. There is no church membership in heaven or in earth apart from this. Any other form of church membership is a bare-faced sham, an ungodly mockery of that which is true. The moment you believe, you are a member of the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. Heb. 12:23 Every effort on the part of man to have you join yourself with one of man's organizations is an effort to lead you astray from your fidelity to Christ and that divine work which the Holy Spirit accomplished when He placed you by His power in His body, which is the true church. The misguided and false shepherds desire to have you commit fornication with that bawdy mother of harlots and her prostitute daughters of many denominational names. How slyly and well do these preachers perform the work of Satan by telling their converts to join the church of their choice! There is no church in the universe except that one mystical ecclesia into which the Spirit baptized you on that wonderful day in which you believed. It is the Lord who addeth to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:47 This His divine power does in that hour you believe. It should be clear, then, that whensoever some man asks you to join the church, he is both denying that you are already in the church and asking you to doubt and deny the sacred work of the Holy Spirit, accomplished when in answer to your faith He baptized you into the mystical body of Christ, the true church and the true ecclesia. 1 Cor. 12:13. Col. 1:18.

We stated above that regeneration is only the beginning, the infancy, of a life that is entirely new. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Yea, he is a new creation, an entirely new generation, a new race, a new kind of people. 2 Cor. 5:17 Peter was certainly speaking to more than natural Israel when he said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9 Peter, who himself was a Jew (Gal. 2:14), knew well what a vast difference Christ had made to his life. Paul also, who was a Jew of the strictest sort (Acts 21:39), knew that his meeting with Christ had made him a new man and a new creation, for he said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3:7-9

As Adam was the beginning of the old creation and all men were fashioned in his likeness (Gen. 5:3), so now is Christ the beginning of a new creation. He is the beginning of the creation of God. Rev. 3:14 Adam was the beginning of the creation of man. Jesus Christ is the beginning of the creation of God, and those who believe on Him immediately become members of a new creation, a new race of people, even the children of God, having one blood, the blood of Christ; one Spirit, the Holy Spirit; one Lord, the God and Father of all; one faith, the faith of Christ; and one baptism, the baptism into His mystical body, which is the true church. Col. 1:18 He is the beginning of God's new creation, the firstborn from the dead. He is the firstborn of every creature and all creation. When the Holy Spirit says that Christ is the firstborn of all creation, He is emphasizing that new creation of which the believer is a member. Christ Himself was the first to rise from the dead, possessing immortality. He is the head of His body, the church, because He is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.

It is the will of God that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened, and that we might know what hope God had when He called us. He desires that we may know the rich inheritance He has in His saints, and that we may grasp the greatness of the power He manifested toward us when He raised up Jesus Christ from the dead to set Him at His own right hand, putting all things under His feet. It is God's will that we should know that He has quickened us and made us alive in Him that we might share His glory and sit with Him in heavenly places, far above every principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, both in this age and in the ages to come. It is God's will that we should know that this magnificent display of grace has been manifested toward us so that we who have now been made partakers of it may in the ages to come show forth the exceeding riches of His grace to all those who as yet have not partaken of it. For this, I declare, is the meaning of the words of the apostle in Eph. 2:6-7 God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." And, lest such grace as this should seem to be more than human understanding can comprehend, He reminds us of this one eternal and indisputable fact: it was by grace and grace alone that we ourselves were also saved. Eph. 2:8. Why, then, should we confine His power, or for one moment think that it cannot bless the inhabitants of ages yet to come?

CHAPTER FIVE THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW CREATION

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," (2 Cor. 5:17); that is to say, he is a new creation. The Holy Spirit has been sent into the world by the resurrected and glorified Christ as He promised: "If I depart, I will send Him unto you," John 16:7 Thus the Holy Spirit has come to complete in each believing heart the wonderful fullness of the redemption Jesus Christ purchased for all mankind. In our unregenerate and unconverted state we were men and women after the flesh. The only pleasure we knew was the momentary satisfaction obtained from the five physical senses of our bodies - our sight, our hearing, our smelling, our tasting, or our feeling. These, being senses of the body, appear for a moment, then vanish away like a whiff of sweet perfume or the savor of a meal, and, because they are physical senses and not spiritual, they grow dull with the passing years and finally are no more. Because the world lives to satisfy the five senses of the physical body, therefore it is written, "The world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (I have explained this more fully in my book Two Realms. This extremely important message is free upon request.)

They who are in the flesh cannot please God. Rom. 8:8. The man who lives only to indulge his five senses (and that is what the world does) is sensual and from beneath, or earthly. But the kingdom of God is spiritual, from above, and heavenly; therefore, they that live their lives indulging the body can by no means please God. Says Paul, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life (alive) because of righteousness." Therefore, those who are in Christ have become new creations, new creatures, and citizens of an entirely new and higher realm.

Because we have become new creatures through the grace of Christ and the power of His spirit, then we should think of ourselves as a new creature, a new creation, and not as the old man we used to be. I do not believe Christians will ever advance very far in God while they continue to think after the weak and beggarly tradition that the church system has taught us. The whole thought of their philosophy revolves around the erroneous notion that through the fall the all-wise and omnipotent God has got Himself and all His creation into some sort of dire predicament from which He must now in desperation snatch as many as possible. Their crude notions make the all-wise God, who said, "Let us make man in our image," resemble a desperate man, rushing into the flames of a burning house in a frantic attempt to rescue his family trapped in the flames. Being unable to rescue them all, he is forced to be satisfied with saving a few, while abandoning the rest to the flames. Those God has rescued He is jealously guarding through their years on earth until they can be taken to a heaven of many mansions where they will walk on golden streets forevermore. As long as we allow our renewed minds to be filled with that kind of poppy-cock, our eyes will be forever closed to the eternal purposes of the all-wise God, and, because the eternal purposes of Him, who created us in Christ before the world began, are shut out from our vision, darkness will cover our path here and now, and we will fail to reach the high mountains of blessedness unto which the Holy Spirit is lifting all those who have faith in Him.

No greater tragedy can ever overtake a man than that, after he has been saved by God's grace, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and made a partaker of God's Holy Spirit, he should set his affection on things on the earth and not on things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the Father. What a tragedy that he should forget that his old self, yea, his old life, is dead, and his true life is hidden with Christ in God to appear and become manifest as Christ becomes manifest in his believing heart! Listen, my brother, and hear, my sister! You are being taught on every hand that God's only objective in this age is to get as many souls saved as possible. This sounds reasonable to the natural mind; consequently Christians rush about in every direction like ants on an ant hill, doing this and doing that, going here and going there, praying, preaching, exhorting, sending out missionaries, giving their money, working themselves into nervous wrecks, even neglecting their families and their homes, cultivating the vineyards of others and letting their own experience remain entirely on the surface. Let me tell you with all conviction and assurance that God's plan in this age is not to convert the world. God's plan in this age is to call out a people for His name, a people who will be transformed into His image, a people who can be used in the kingdom age and in the ages to follow to restore all things to their original owner - God Himself.

Hear now what the scripture says on this most vital subject, for I think the scripture must be the final authority for all truth. In the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles the record tells of some Gentiles who were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and the subsequent amazement of the apostles in that the Spirit of the Lord was moving among these Gentile people. So great was the surprise of the apostles over the fact that the Gentiles were being converted under the ministry of Paul and Barnabas that a conference was arranged at Jerusalem to consider the matter. After much talk Peter related the story of how the Holy Spirit fell on the Italians at the house of Cornelius, giving them the Holy Spirit with the witness of speaking with tongues (languages) as they had done also at Pentecost. Paul and Barnabas also declared the mighty works that God had done among the Gentiles through them. Then James arose. James was a teacher of great wisdom and authority and seems to have been a man whose words of wisdom were always final and conclusive. The following statement is his conclusion of the matter under consideration and the irrevocable pattern and purpose of God throughout this entire dispensation of grace. His summation is given in Acts 15:13-18. "After they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this (that is, after He has taken out a people for His name) I will return and will build again the

tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

This is without doubt one of the most important statements in the whole New Testament, for it shows that the plan of God for all this age from Pentecost unto the return of the Lord is simply to take out a people for His name. After this He will return that the residue of men might seek the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom His name is called. All this work, this purpose, and this plan was and is known of God from the beginning of the ages. It cannot be changed. Its purpose is sure, and the Lord will perform it exactly as He has said. Even that scripture which men call the great commission (Mark 16: 15) bears out this very same principle. Whosoever believeth shall be saved.

I think it is time for God's people to wake up to the true and real purpose of God for this age, and to lay off this frantic attempt to convert the world. Whether our traditions receive it or whether they refuse it, the truth is that God has a plan for this age and He will never be persuaded to turn from it. He also has a definite plan for the ages to come, a time which Peter with great wisdom speaks of as the times (ages) of the restitution of all things. Acts 3: 21. These times or ages of the restitution of all things are spoken of by the various gifted translators of the Bible in these emphatic words:

"The times of the restitution of all things." King James Version.

"The restoration of all things." American Standard. "Times of universal restoration." 20th Century New Testament.

"Of the reconstitution of all things." Weymouth. "Of the great restoration." Moffatt. "For the universal reformation." Goodspeed.

"When all things are put right." New Testament in Basic English.

"When all is restored." John Knox.

"Until the times of establishing all things." Revised Standard.

"Until the final recovery of all things from sin." Taylor.

These are statements of ponderous power, and to these the translation by J. B. Phillips adds weighty assurance, revealing the plan of God for this present age and for the ages which follow the return of Jesus Christ. This is his translation of Acts 3: 31: "Now you must repent and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, that time after time your souls may know the refreshment that comes from the presence of God. Then will He send you Jesus, your long-heralded Christ, although for the time He must remain in heaven until that universal restoration of which God spoke in ancient times through all His holy prophets." Surely a restoration of such great importance that it was heralded by all the holy prophets since the world began is worthy of our faith and our complete confidence and trust, for "ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenants which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." **Acts 3:25**

God now in this age of grace is in the process of calling out a people for His name. I am persuaded that this statement - a people for His name - is an affidavit so profound that scarcely any man has ever grasped its fathomless significance. Biblical names of persons and places almost always bear special significance and meaning. They identify persons for what they are, often revealing their character and calling. Thus, for example, Jesus means Saviour; Christ means the anointed one; Abraham means the father of many nations; and Israel means a prince with God. Such things are too great for me. They are high; I cannot attain unto them, yet I am filled with assurance that, when Jesus gives His name to the people He is calling - a people for His name - then they, like Himself, become saviours because they bear His name. Centuries ago the prophet Obadiah, dipping his pen in the ink of inspiration, wrote this thrilling prophecy: "And saviours shall come up on

mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." **Obad. 21.** Ah, my brother! The kingdom of God will see a whole body of saviours, That body of innumerable members will be the body of Jesus Christ, each member bearing His name, each one bearing His likeness, Jesus Himself the oldest and first born of that vast family of sons (Rom. 8:29) that Christ might truly say, "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:13**

How good is our heavenly Father that He in grace and wisdom should choose men in Christ from the foundation of the world, calling them by His Holy Spirit, each in his appointed time, cleansing them by the blood of the everlasting covenant, baptizing them with His Spirit, transforming them into His image, uniting them in one body of God's sons, putting the name of Christ on their foreheads and His Spirit in their hearts, that they in the kingdom age should stand with Him on beautiful Zion as saviours to judge all flesh (Esau) in that supernal kingdom which is the Lord's! God is calling out a people, not to whisk them away and hide them in safety behind the jasper walls of a far off heaven, but to bear His image and extol His name both now and in that dispensation of the fullness of times in which He will gather all things into this wonderful Christ, the body of whom He is now preparing.

These things I write and these blessed hopes I set before you that your spiritual eyes might be lifted far above the dimness of tradition and the outer darkness and wearisome senility of the Babylonish church system. Rejoice, O ye ransomed that bear the name of the Lord, that first begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, the oldest brother and the eternal head of that vast family of sons who are now coming into His likeness! "For to which of the angels did God ever say, My Son art Thou: I have this day become Thy Father; and again, I will be a Father to him, and He shall be My Son? And again, when He brings His Firstborn into the world, He says, And let all God's angels worship Him. Moreover of the angels He says, He changes His angels into winds, and His ministering servants into a flame of fire, but of His Son He says, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of Thy kingdom is a scepter of absolute justice. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Thy God, hast anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. It is also of His Son that God says, Thou, O Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. The heavens will perish, but Thou remainest; and they will grow old like a garment, and as a mantle Thou wilt roll them up; yes, like a garment, and they will undergo change. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will never come to an end. To which of the angels has He ever said, Sit at My right hand till I make Thy foes a footstool for Thy feet? Are not all angels spirits that serve Him - whom He sends out to render service for the benefit of those who are to inherit salvation"! For this reason we ought to pay the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, for fear we should drift away from them." **Heb. 1: 5-2:1** (Weymouth). Since such awe-inspiring truths are spoken of God's Son, and He is calling out a people for His name - that is, to have and to share His name - ought we not to give earnest heed to these things lest we let them slip away from us? How can we escape if we neglect a salvation and a purpose so great as this? I greatly fear that Christians have completely failed to understand what the Holy Spirit is saying when He speaks of the body of Christ. Dare we continue to imagine that the body of Christ can be contained behind the confining walls of some little sect, or the forbidding fences of some great denomination, or the narrow-mindedness of some self-centered little group that calls itself "the church?" I tell you, nay! The body of Christ is no such thing! The body of Christ is that people which He, through all this age of grace, has been calling out to bear His name. These are no ordinary Christians! They are continually beholding His face, and thus from glory to glory they are changed into His image. They take heed to their high calling to sonship, for they know that Christ has baptized them with the Holy Spirit. Assurance fills their hearts that the Holy Spirit has immersed them into the great mystical body of Christ as Paul has plainly said: "In one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." That body is the body of Christ. It is the body of Christ. It is the Christ body. It is the Lord, the en-Christed. It is the people called for His name. These are they who followed the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and they, being led by the Holy Spirit, have become the sons of God. For these our blessed Lord and Christ prayed, saying, "**7 in Thee and Thou in Me, that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe.**" **John 17:21** And the world and all who are therein will believe when our Father in heaven has fully accomplished this ineffable act of calling out a people for His name. How can I neglect so great salvation as this? And how shall I escape if I do?

In ages past God spoke in divers ways at sundry times and through all manner of people, but henceforth He will speak through a Son of God, who is heir of all things. He brightly reflects God's glory. He is the Lord of the universe and upholds all things by the word of His power. God's first perfect Son is now seated at the right

hand of the Father on high. His name is Jesus. We do not yet see all the universe ruled by the sons of God, but we do see Jesus, the first Son and the Head of that vast family called the sons of God. The first Son is raised from the dead. The first Son has ascended on high. Their Son is proclaiming to the universe that, when all His brothers are ready and complete in His image, the reign of Christ will begin.

"How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him, and hast set him over the work of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels - even Jesus - because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace He might taste death for every man. For it was fitting that He for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory (that is, to the image of Christ), should perfect by suffering the Prince Leader of their salvation. For both He who sanctifies and those whom He is sanctifying have all one Father; and for this reason He is not ashamed to speak of them as His brothers; as when He says: I will proclaim Thy name to my brothers: In the midst of the congregation I will hymn Thy praises. And again, I will be one of those whose trust reposes in God; and again, here I am, and here are the children (i.e. sons) God has given Me." **Heb. 2:6-13.** (Weymouth). Therefore, holy brethren, sharers with others in a heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whose followers you profess to be. Undeniable is the truth that God through the Spirit is taking out a people for His name.

Let us consider now just how completely the Lord has made us new creatures in Christ, His Son, for it is not sufficient to merely express the sentiment that we are new creatures, nor to imagine that we are new creatures only in the sense that there has been some change in our manner of living since our conversion. God has done much more than to simply change our deportment. That has certainly taken place, but the change reaches far further than the mere dropping off of a few evidences of carnality noticeable to our neighbors. The person who repents of his sin and believes on Christ his Saviour is made a new creature. The moment he believes, the creature power of the Holy Spirit begins to operate in his life in a work which never ceases until he stands in that same image of Christ. Let those who have believed on Christ give ever increasing thought and concern to the marvelous fact of their being new creatures in Jesus Christ. The scriptural teaching that believers are new creatures or new creations is not merely a pleasant figure of speech; it is a divine, God-given, and living reality. It is a work of resurrection, accomplished by the Holy Spirit. In the distant ages of the past, when the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the record is clear that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and from that moving of the Spirit there came light and warmth and every imaginable form of life. The earth, that beforetime was void and dark, cold and useless, now began to move in order, in light, in warmth and purpose. All these wonders wrought by the Holy Spirit in the beginning were living types of that which the self-same Holy Spirit now performs in the earth, which we are. He has moved in mighty conviction upon the void of our sinful lives. He has called for light, and the light, which Jesus Christ is has flooded our pathway and penetrated to the inner recesses of our darkened being. He has divided the waters and brought forth abundant fruit in our lives; yea, He has turned the darkness and death of our Adamic citizenship into a flourishing, fruitful garden with the tree of life in its midst and the river of life flowing from Him who sitteth upon the throne of the kingdom of God within.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth. It is the Spirit who overshadows our being, forming the Christ-life within. In one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and that body is the mystical body of God's sons, Jesus Himself being the oldest and firstborn of us all. To him the birthright pertaineth, for He is the firstborn of the new creation. This is the body of Christ. We are Christ's body, for, as the body (physical) is one and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 1 Cor. 12:12. The fullness of Christ is Jesus, the Head, together with His many brothers - sons - all immersed into one Christ by the wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit. See how gloriously He has placed His name upon us, for saith He, "As we, being many, are one body in Christ and every one members one of another, so also is Christ." Jesus, the Head, with the sons of God, the body, is the body of Christ in fullness for the kingdom age to come. Nevertheless, there will be an addition, a greater fullness by far, when at the end of the millennial kingdom the body of Christ, God's glorious sons, will be joined to the New Jerusalem bride, who will by then have made herself ready for the bridegroom. Read of her surpassing glory in Rev. 21:9-21. Wonderful beyond our understanding will be the

reign of the sons of God, the body of Christ, in that one thousand year kingdom of God, but it seems to me almost unlawful to speak of the surpassing glory of that still greater age which Paul names the dispensation of the fullness of times. Eph. 1:10. Then the bridegroom and the bride will be united in one Spirit. They will become one body. Then will God's Christ, both male and female, be in one together as was Adam in the day of his creation before the woman bride was separated from him. This union of the bride and the bridegroom, the male and female, together in one is beyond comparison with that of Adam, for it is written: "The first man Adam was a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (life-giving) spirit... The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven... And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." **1 Cor. 15: 45, 47, 49.** Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom nor can corruption inherit incorruption, but God has provided a regeneration for us - a transformation, a new creation, a new citizenship. The Holy Spirit, who raised up Jesus from the dead, is raising us up also. First, of our spirit it is written, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1** Of our bodies it is written, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15:53, 54.** Therefore rejoice in this living truth: "But if the Spirit of Him (the Holy Spirit) who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies (flesh) by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11.** O Hallelujah! How great is the mystery of godliness - that God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the world, and received up into glory!

As we sit in the glory light of our anticipation of these things, knowing full well that even now, while we read, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is at work within us, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which was spoken at first by the Lord, and is now confirmed by those who hear His voice? It was in anticipation of the wonders of God's plan, outlined by Paul in Romans, chapters 10 and 11, that he challenged God's people to the deepest possible consecration, saying in **Rom. 12:1**, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

In these evil days, when all the world and most of the Christians are eagerly making the lusts of the flesh their plaything, it is my heart's desire and earnest prayer to God that those elect who read these truths will lay hold of them by faith. What does it mean to you, my brother, to present your body a living sacrifice to God? How easy it is for any of us to revel in the glory of these hopes that shine before our eyes, only to walk away and go about our business, our toil, and our earthly pleasures, thus neglecting them and failing to enter into the promise! If we are hearers of the word only and do not grasp the promise and make it a part of our faith and our very existence, we are deceiving ourselves; for "if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." **Jas. 1:23-24.** Such a man is a forgetful hearer, and I see no hope that such a sluggard will ever attain to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The Holy Spirit, who steadfastly works the work of transformation in your life, will change you from glory to glory until you reach that same image of Christ if you earnestly give yourself to Him by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing yet possessing all things. **2 Cor. 6:6-10.** "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." **Phil. 4:5-8.**

If you consider with reverent honesty the vast difference that lies between the above exhortation, which produces the mind of Christ in you, and the filthy corruption viewed hour after hour in the parlors of so-called Christian homes and feasted upon by the earth-bound minds of professed believers, you will understand why

some are being renewed in the image of Him who created them while others are sinking ever more deeply into the abominable morass of the carnal mind. What a tragedy it is to find professing Christians able to sing all the latest hits or name all the latest Hollywood stars, but are unable to recite the 23rd Psalm or name the books of the Bible. A man who professes a hope of sonship in Christ, while yet indulging his mind in the Sodom-like corruption displayed on television, is becoming a laughing stock before men and a fool in the eyes of God. The mind of Christ and the filth of Sodom do not walk together, for what fellowship has light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? What fellowship hath he that believeth with an infidel? 2 Cor. 6:15.

This new creature, which God has created in Christ Jesus, is a new creature because the Lord has given him a new heart. God does not change his laws to suit man's wicked heart. He changes man's wicked heart to make it in harmony with His law. One of the weakest and most insipid acts of modern government is the cowardly process of changing and relaxing good laws to suit the criminal. Good is made evil and evil is made good that the criminal may go free. Instead of putting away evil from the midst of society, evil is legalized so that where there is no law there is no crime, even though the nation is brought to ruin. God does not indulge in such insipid acts. He has a method far greater than that. He changes the heart so that the heart of the converted man loves the law of God. Yea, he so loves the law of God that he need no longer receive the command, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," for his regenerated heart already overflows with love for his Lord, and such a command would be both superfluous and dishonoring to him. Therefore it is said to be done away. No longer need he be commanded to love his neighbor, because the love of Christ in his renewed heart causes him to love all mankind. Such a man need not be told, "Thou shalt not steal," because the very thought of robbing those he now loves is repulsive to his pure heart. He would freely give and give again that his neighbor might be blest, but he could take nothing from him by stealth or guile.

The prophet Ezekiel, foreseeing the days of this remarkable regeneration, prophesied, saying, "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people and I shall be their God. But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, / will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God." **Ezek. 11:19-21.**

The scriptures give almost endless detail concerning the heart. The Bible makes the heart to be the secret of life and strength. Its meaning includes soul, mind, and spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding. It signifies the center or inner part of a thing. Therefore the Holy Spirit says, "My son, attend to My words; incline thine ear unto My sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." **Prov. 4:20-23.** Give ear to the voice of our Saviour as He teaches that, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, **blasphemies: these are the things that defile a man.**" **Matt. 15:19-20.** Over every unregenerate heart there hangs an impenetrable veil of outer darkness that keeps men blinded to the glory of all spiritual things. Even in the reading of the scripture the veil is over their eyes, and they sit in blindness and outer darkness until the heart, being moved upon by the Holy Spirit, turns to God in repentance. Then and only then does the light shine upon them. This is what Paul was saying to the Corinthians when he wrote of unregenerate Israel that "their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is (or, where the Spirit is Lord) there is liberty (freedom). But we all, with open face (unveiled face) beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:14-18.** The Lord does not change His law to suit the carnal heart. He changes the stony heart and puts a right spirit within to make the heart a fit habitation for the purity and holiness of the law of God. Remember, when speaking of the law, that the law of God is the very nature of God, the quintessence of His holy mind, a manifestation of His innermost character and the purity of His own heart. "O how I love Thy law!" David cried; but that was because in repentance he had prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." **Psa. 51:10.**

This new creature of which the Spirit speaks, this new creation in Christ, is blest not only with a new heart but with a new mind as well. The mind which God gives to His new creation is the mind of Christ, for says Paul, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." **1 Cor. 2:16** "Therefore put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man (Jesus Christ) which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." **Eph. 4:22-24** It is evident from these inspired words that not only is the mind new, but the man himself is new. In every respect the believer who is born of the Holy Spirit is a new creature, a new man with a new heart, a new spirit, and a new mind. The creation of this new man in the image of God is one great part of the mystery, which is hid in Him from the beginning of the world. Eph. 3:9.

We will never in this age be able to understand the boundless power of the mind. It appears to be true that practically everything of good and evil in all the world comes forth from the mind. Even the natural mind, though it understands not the things of the Spirit of God, is capable of astonishing wonders. All the marvelous inventions of the world have proceeded from the mind of man, yet the natural mind receives not any of the things of God. As heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's and God's thoughts higher than man's. The man who comes to Christ is renewed in the spirit of his mind so that he thinks and acts as an entirely new creature, a new man, a new creation; and, if he follows on to know the Lord, he will find that his former darkened mind has given place to the mind of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that was in Jesus was the Father's mind. Because He was fully possessed of His Father's mind, He was able to say, "I and My Father are one." The mind that was in Christ Jesus is freely offered to every man who believes on His name that he might be one with Christ and one with the Father, sons of God in every true and perfect sense of the word. Let us never forget that in those heaven blest ages to come it will be the mind of our heavenly Father that will rule the universe. The Father has decreed that He will rule the universe by him whom He has chosen, and those sons, every one, will be possessed with the Father's mind. It is idle for us to speak of the counsels of God. God does not hold counsel with Himself or with others to decide issues as men are wont to do. God the Father has given His mind to His son, Jesus Christ, and He in turn has given that same mind to us. As the hands and the feet of a healthy body act in harmony with the head, so every member among the sons of God acts in harmony with the Head, even Jesus, because one mind dwells in them all.

Behold now how great and complete a work the Spirit has accomplished in this new creation of men. He has given them a new heart, a new spirit, a renewed mind, and a new image, the image of Him who created us. Furthermore, He has given this new creature a new citizenship. Henceforth our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself. Phil 3: 20, 21. (R.V.) Paul is telling us here that we who have received all these blessings will have yet one more glory added to us - a new body, glorified and immortal. Surely this man with a new heart, a new spirit, a new mind, a new body, and a new citizenship is indeed a new creation in the image of the creator Himself! "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." **Eph. 2:19**. All this does the Holy Spirit work as He works out in the believing heart the wonderful redemption of the Lord.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." **Rom. 6:12-13** As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness, that, being made free from sin and having become the servants of God, you have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. See Rom. 6:16-22

I have written but briefly concerning the wonderful new creation, which the Father is bringing into being by the power of His Holy Spirit. The ocean cannot be contained in a cup. How much less can the purpose of Him who inhabits the universe be explained by the puny words of man. Mighty oaks from acorns grow; so all things great and small come from tiny seeds, which hold within their diminutive breasts every aspect of that life which is to be. We trust the kernel of truth contained in these concluding lines will be as fertile seed, filling the soul with hope as the earth is filled with the goodness of the Lord.

Those who read these lines must certainly believe that the Almighty was completely sovereign in all His work of creation. When the omniscient Father by His omnipotent power created the universe out of nothing, He required neither help nor advice from anyone. When He said, "Let there be light", He was sovereign. When He divided the waters to make the dry land appear, He was sovereign. When the edict came forth, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion", He was completely sovereign in His declaration and in the wonderful work He purposed to do. If you consider with utmost care the truth I shall here relate, your entire attitude toward God and His immutable purposes will be completely transformed. You will love Him as never before as you grasp the wise and infinite purpose of this long dark night of travail and sorrow through which the world has struggled for the past six thousand years.

In the beginning God proclaimed, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." The general misconception among men concerning this statement has been that God made Adam out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. That was the end of the story! Error would have us believe that Satan, in spite of the power, the omniscience, and the omnipresence of God, somehow sneaked in and laid waste the lovely plan that God had made to the extent that the eternal Father was hard pressed to salvage some minute portion of His work from the unexpected disaster that had seized upon His creation. Whether we wish to admit it or not, the above statement is in substance the kind of stupidity proclaimed by the church system, the utter absurdity of which is largely responsible for filling the world with faithless and unbelieving people.

The simple truth of the matter is this: When the omniscient, immutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, and eternal God said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion", He intended to take at least six thousand years to prepare even the first fruit of mankind in His image. Unfallen Adam was one part of the plan of this creation in His image. The next step in bringing man into God's image was that man should be lowered into the realm of sin and death. This statement will be shocking to many who read, and, if I alone had proclaimed it, they might well declare it an error. Do you believe the scripture to be the word of God? Then hear by the Spirit what Paul wrote by the Spirit, for to him God revealed things hidden from ages past. Eph. 3:4-5 These inspired and thrilling words reveal the true purpose of the fall. "For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity (futility, death, and sin), not willingly but by reason of Him (God Himself) who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** What then was the hope of God when He made the creature subject to this appalling vanity all about us? His purpose was that the whole creation should be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of the sons of God!

"Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," said the Lord, whose purposes stand forever. Thus the creation of Adam was the first step in making man in God's image. The fall of Adam was the second step in God's plan to make man in His image. The redemption of the fallen man is also part of God's plan to create a perfect man in His image. Therefore it is written that Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rev. 13:8. It must never be imagined that innocent Adam in Eden's lovely garden was the finished perfection God designed. There were to be millenniums of temptations and trial before this perfection was complete. The fall and the knowledge of good and evil were a demanded necessity. Redemption, glorification, and eternal freedom from sin were all an absolute must for this new creation God is preparing to rule the universe in His name. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation..." **2 Cor. 5:18**

Space forbids us to expand this truth at present, but hear in conclusion the hope God has in store when He has completed the creation of man in His image. Paul wrote to the Romans, "In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited — yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!" **Rom. 8:18-21** (Phillips)

Jesus Christ is the beginning of the creation of God. His perfection was completed two thousand years ago. He is in the image of the Father. Next in order come the younger sons of God, the completeness of the second Adam bridegroom. Our redemption draweth nigh and perfection in His image is near at hand. Following this the

bride, too, is ready and perfect and is seen descending from heaven (Rev. 21:9-11) that she may open wide her many splendored gates and join her voice with the Spirit and all the sons of God, saying, "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17

CHAPTER SIX THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SANCTIFICATION AND TRANSFORMATION

In our meditations concerning the Holy Spirit of God, we will find it impossible to separate the Spirit and His work from that of the Son and the Father. Man, insignificant in his pride and vanity and unable to divide or discern between his soul and spirit, would yet pretend his ability to comprehend the unspeakable wonders of the Godhead. These things are too wonderful for me. They are high; I cannot attain unto them. Therefore, with reverence and godly fear we will read of them, depending the while for all our understanding upon Him in whom dwelleth every treasure of wisdom and knowledge. Neither the wisdom of the present age nor the abounding illumination of ages to come will be sufficient to tell the full story of that which God our Father has accomplished for us in Christ Jesus, His Son. Nor will we fully understand, while yet in this realm, the wonder working power of that blessed Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father to bring into being and fulfillment in our lives all the work which Christ completed for us by His death, His resurrection, and the life with which He is alive forevermore.

For many years my prayer has been that God would put His thoughts, His understanding, and His wisdom into my mind. Good as such a prayer as this may be, it is no longer the prayer that fills my heart. Paul told us of something higher far when he said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Good as it is that God would stoop to put His thoughts in the human mind, let it be known to all who partake of His grace that He purposed something greater far when He told us that, as His children, we could know the unspeakable wonder of His mind dwelling in us. Those in whom the mind of Christ is permitted to dwell will, as they yield themselves to God, discover that they are thinking in the Spirit, yea, thinking with the mind of Christ. Because a new mind is born within them, it need not be amazing that understanding like unto that of the Most High should be continually with them. The mind of the most, high God dwelleth in them. The old man is dead. The old nature is dead. Ye are dead. You are a new man with a new nature and a new mind, even the mind of Christ. Such is the holy transformation wrought in you by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The mind that dwelt in Christ Jesus during His thirty-three years in this realm of death was the Father's mind. For this reason He was able to say, "I do always those things that please the Father." How could He do otherwise when the Father's mind possessed Him? "I do only those things which I have seen of My Father," He said; and again, "I and My Father are one." Unity of mind and spirit is the greatest unity anywhere, and this unity is ours when God's own mind is dwelling in us.

In these desperately trying and tedious days in which we now walk through the deepening shadows of an age that is swiftly passing away, it will please the Father in heaven to open the eyes of His elect and chosen people to much truth hitherto but dimly seen by the children of God. As the shadows lengthen and deepen for all the inhabitants of the world, yea, and for Christians who persistently grovel in the confusion of the carnal mind, a light brighter than the sun, even the light of life, will shine into the hearts of those who separate themselves unto Him. giving them the knowledge of the glory of God from the face of Jesus Christ.

During the recent months that have been slipping away as shadows, the Holy Spirit has been filling my heart with an understanding of the bountiful completeness of the work Jesus Christ accomplished for us by His so great redemption. It is my earnest prayer that those who read these lines may be given the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of understanding in the knowledge of Him that their hearts may fully embrace the length and breadth and depth and height of the completeness of God's work, firstly for us, and secondly in us. If you will ask God for His understanding, you will now be able to discern the infinite difference between a man's having the thought of God in his mind and, on the other hand, having no mind of his own, but possessing the mind of Christ. Of a truth it may easily be that he who has God's thoughts in his mind today may find himself tomorrow filled with his own thoughts and in his own mind denying those things that were so real to him only hours before; but he who lets the mind of Christ dwell in him so that he has no other mind but the mind of Christ will

find himself continually transformed by that renewed mind until even his physical body becomes a partaker of that renewal which Christ has provided. For this cause Paul wrote this staggering statement of truth: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." **Rom. 12:1-2** The indwelling mind of Christ renews not only our minds, but our spirits and our souls and, lastly, our bodies as well. Our bodies are sick because our minds are sick, corrupt, and carnal, filled with the world and almost completely identified with its corruption. It is not divine healing that we need; it is a renewed mind - a mind renewed after the image of our Creator. The mind of Christ will bring everything in us into complete subjection to God, and will overflow in life immortal, even the life that raised up Jesus from the dead. The mind of Christ, dwelling in the believer, will cast down every imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. 10:5

Bear with me for a moment while I point out the one thing above all else that fills the human heart with unbelief and foils all our efforts to attain the blessing God has so freely bestowed on all who believe in Him. We are always falling short of God's blessing because we insist on asking Him to do what He has already done. When Jesus Christ shed His life-giving blood, He purchased salvation and life for all the world. He saved the world and all the people in the world. We do not receive salvation by asking the Lord to save us, for that is something He has already done. We receive salvation when believe that He did save us when He gave Himself for us. Any man who will believe the truth contained in **John 3:16** will have the witness born to him that He is both saved and the possessor of eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The unbelieving heart may ask God ten thousand times to save him, yet go away both unregenerate and unassured, but he who believes in His heart that Christ purchased salvation for all men without exception when He died on the cross will through his faith carry off the blessing, and the very word of truth which God has spoken will be his everlasting assurance. In faith he sings,

"I'm believing and receiving as I to the river go;
And its waves my heart is cleansing whiter than the driven snow."

While unbelief stands off in the shadows, begging God to do that which He has already done, simple God-given faith in the great redemption wrought by Christ for all the world fills the believing soul with the blessed assurance of sins forgiven. He who has been forgiven has discovered first hand and by personal experience that his victory came not by works of righteousness which he had done, but by the mercy and love of God and by the victory that was gained for him by that Christ of God, who assured us that, though our sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow, and though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool. Isa. 1:18

The same trust and the same faith that brings salvation to the believing heart is that which also brings every other blessing of redemption into the believer's life. O how often men have said to me, "I am praying that God will give me the mind of Christ." Frankly, my brother, I do not think you should pray that way. As Christ offers justification from all sin, free of charge, without money and without price, saying to all who seek, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved," even so now He says by the Holy Ghost, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Consider the significance of this word let, for the Spirit says, "Let this mind be in you." While the Christian in his traditional unbelief is begging God to give him the mind of Christ, the Lord is asking him to accept it. He is saying, "Let this mind be in you." The only way I can receive a gift is to reach out my hand and take it. The only way to receive the mind of Christ is to believe that, when Christ gave me Himself, He also gave me His mind, and now, by my faith in such utter completeness, I let that mind become operative in me. Believing that the mind of Christ dwells in me, I can now attain much through prayer, as I seek to have no mind of my own, casting down every human imagination to bring every thought into obedience to the mind of Christ.

I am well aware that, since I have said these things, many carnal men with carnal minds will boldly proclaim that they have the mind of Christ; but give neither attention nor heed to them, for I say through the grace given unto me that men who walk in the glory and light of the mind that was in Christ Jesus will never be found sounding a trumpet before them. They will rather walk in humility and in the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. It is my heart's desire and earnest prayer to God, as these truths are written, that our blessed paraclete, the Holy Spirit, will "take the things of God and show them unto you." If He will but touch our understanding, we cannot fail to comprehend the heights and depths of His promise; but, if He touches us not, we must remain in the outer darkness of the natural mind, understanding not the profound statements of truth He has left us to receive.

Let us further consider the import of the message the Spirit is teaching when He says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new." **2 Cor. 5:17** Adam was the first man of the old creation. Jesus Christ is the first man of the new creation. Adam was the first born of the dead; Jesus Christ is the first born from the dead. Adam was the first of the dying; Christ is the first of the living. In Adam, the old creation, all die. In Christ, the new creation, all are made alive. The old creation was of the earth earthy; the new creation is from heaven. As heaven is higher than the earth, and as God's mind is higher than man's, so the new creation in Jesus Christ is higher than the old creation in Adam, and all the ways of the new are above the old. In truth the apostle wrote, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation); old things have passed away, and, behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." **2 Cor. 5:17-18** The man who in Christ has become a new creation discovers to his joy that all things are of God, and it is to such new creatures that the Holy Spirit commits the word of reconciliation to display how God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself and not counting their trespasses against them. To those who belong to the old creation all things are of the earth earthy. The scripture is very plain that in Adam, that is, in the old creation, all die; but in Christ, the new creation, all are made alive. The entire realm of the old creation is the realm of death. There is no life in it. In this realm of death, which is the old creation, the dead bury their dead, and those who carry the bier are just as dead as the corpse that lies within. Matt. 8:22 Unto those who by faith have entered into the new creation in Christ the Holy Spirit says, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." **Eph. 2:1** Believers have been made alive in Christ because through faith they have received the life of God and have been transferred from the old creation of death to the new creation of life. God has made us to be "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." **Col. 1:12-13** Just as surely as Enoch through faith was translated from earth to heaven (Heb. 11:5), so we who have believed in Jesus Christ have been translated from the earthy realm of the old creation to the heavenly realm of the new creation. We have departed by faith from the realm of Adam in which all die, yea, all were dead, and we have been transferred, translated, and transported into the realm of Christ, where all are made alive and all live by the life of God. Because we have been translated and transferred (Weymouth) from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life, from the kingdom of Adam to the kingdom of Christ, from the kingdom where all things are of man to the kingdom where all things are of God, and from the kingdom where all is flesh to the kingdom where all is Spirit, therefore we are citizens of a new kingdom. We who were made dead in Adam are now created alive in Christ. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10). Being renewed in the spirit of our mind, we have put on the new man (Christ Jesus), which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:23-24

I pray that the truth and force of these things may grip the believing heart! There is a great gulf fixed between those who are in Christ and those who remain in Adam. Those who remain in Adam are still of the earth earthy. They continually mind the things of the earth. Their pleasure consists solely of the fleeting enjoyment derived from indulging the five physical senses of the body. Those who by faith are in Christ are of the Lord from heaven. Because they have been translated into a new realm, they have become citizens of a new realm, an heavenly country, and because they are created in Christ, they are new creatures, yea, new creations. Because with Christ these heavenly citizens have risen from the dead, they no longer seek things that are of or on the earth, but they seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father. They set their affections on things above and not on things on the earth, for they are dead to the earth and all the dead things therein, and their life is in Christ. And, when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they appear with Him in glory. The glory of God is the image of God; "but we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18** Now the Lord here means the Spirit, and where the Spirit is Lord, there is freedom. **2 Cor. 3:17**. There is freedom, I say, from all things that pertain to the death and bondage of the old creation.

The old creation is one of labor, sweat, sickness, war, division, flesh, and every imaginable lust; but the new creation is one of love and peace and life, even as Jesus in His invitation to share His glory spoke, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." **Matt. 11:28**

O child of God, have you not considered that the life of this present age is death? Why, then, do you plunge into it as though it had aught but death to offer you? I cannot see how any man who has a true understanding of his heavenly citizenship in Christ can act as though he still belonged to this present age. If the people who have been made partakers of the life of Christ would pause in holy meditation and consideration, they would soon see that they do not belong to the world system at all, neither are they citizens of it. Certainly God requires that we submit to the present authority and that we obey them that have the rule over us. He requires that a man work if he wishes to eat, but He does not require that we spend our time here in this world as though we belonged to it. The things of this present world are for our instruction only, and God's people should never forget that "here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God." We are not citizens of this world. We are pilgrims passing through it, and our citizenship is in heaven. We have no citizenship in this world. Our citizenship has been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. We reject the life of this age, for the life of this age is death. Through Christ we have become partakers of the life of the ages, for that is the life that Jesus gives. "I give unto them aionian life," Jesus said. **John 10:28.** Aionian life is the life of the ages. As a thousand years is filled with minutes, so eternity is filled with ages, and Jesus Christ has clearly said, "I give unto them aionian life (the life of the ages), and they shall never perish." The life, which Jesus gives, is Himself, and the life, which He is, is imperishable. Those who partake of it cannot perish, for they have passed from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life, Jesus did not die that you might live! Jesus died that He might give His life to you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He is the kernel that fell into the ground and died, and, in dying, the life, which He is, has reappeared in the millions of those who have believed. Because His life is imperishable, they who receive Him shall never perish.

As every man is made alive in his own order, so also there is an order by which a man himself is made alive. Man is spirit, soul, and body, and in that order he is made alive. When Paul said to the Ephesian Christians, "You hath He quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins," (**Eph. 2:1**), he was speaking of the spirit of man. When he said to the Philippians, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ," (**Phil. 2:5**), He was speaking of the renewal, the making alive, or the resurrection of the mind, which seems to me to be closely related to the soul. And, when he said to the Romans, "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies," (**Rom. 8:11**), he was speaking of the day when the body as well as the spirit and the mind would be a partaker of that eternal, imperishable life which Jesus is and which He gives to all who receive Him. In this connection the apostle wrote, saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is alive because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10** That is clear, indeed, but if we turn the sentence around, it is even clearer: If Christ be in you, the Spirit is alive because of righteousness (Christ's), but the body is (still) dead because of sin." The sentence, however, does not end there. He continues, "But, if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The making alive of the mortal body will have to wait until God's moment has come for that grand experience. It is plainly spoken that this corruptible (body) must put on incorruption, and this mortal (body) must put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Then shall heaven and earth ring with the triumphant chorus, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory." Did not the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus Christ, our Lord, herald the glad morning when "all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth?" **John 5:28** "Behold, I shew you a mystery," said Paul; "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." **1 Cor. 15:51-52** And when he instructed the Christians at Thessalonica, he added an entirely new thought to the resurrection, showing beyond question that, when God's moment comes to make the body immortal, there will be no difference between those mortal bodies that lie dead in the grave and those mortal

bodies that stand dead on the earth, "For," said he, "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." **1 Thess. 4:16-17**

The life of a believer should be one of constant and continual change from the moment of his conversion to the moment he stands transfigured in the image of Christ in the presence of the Father. That continual change is accomplished only as we, "with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18** It is an enormous tragedy that through the ages God's dear people have been taught to attribute every pleasant and pleasing thing to God and every hard and difficult thing to the working of Satan. The real and oft times hidden truth is that the opposite view is correct. If we would heed the voice of the Spirit as He speaks, we would see the mysterious working of the great Author and Finisher of our faith, both molding our lives and fashioning our faith by means of those severe trials and cruel afflictions that times unnumbered seize relentlessly upon us until their floods would seem to overwhelm us and their unremitting power cast us into the dust of desolation to destroy us forever. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." **James 1:2-4** Surely, if no other instruction was given in the Bible but this one verse, we would have a sound foundation upon which to fasten our firm understanding that it is through fiery trials and the floods of tribulation that the Holy Spirit builds faith and patience into the believer's heart.

We are always inclined to imagine that, could we see miracles and mighty acts of God's power on every hand, our faith would by this be greatly increased. Nonsense, my brother! It is never so. Faith comes by hearing and patiently understanding the work of grace our Lord is performing. Did the mighty workings of God by the hand of Moses in Egypt fill the Israelites with abounding faith and courage to believe God in every impossible circumstance? I tell you, nay! Instead we find them whining and whimpering, complaining, and threatening to turn back into Egypt every time they were faced with difficulty. No, my brother and my sister! We do not come to know God's ways by seeing, by feasting our carnal eyes on signs and wonders and continual miracles. We reach the heights and depths, the length and breadth of Christian perfection and experience by the trial of our faith.

Does history ever record greater signs and wonders than those that followed the ministry of the apostle Peter, who saw the sick healed, the dead raised to life, the wicked fall dead at his feet, and the afflicted rise to walk in newness of life as his shadow fell upon them in the street? Acts 5:15 No doubt he gave continual glory to God for all those remarkable displays of God's power, yet he advocates none of them as any help whatever to spiritual growth in Christ. Harken now to the words of wisdom flowing like a river from his inspired mind as he gives praise for the things that have glorified God and for those sufferings that are bringing man to the image of Christ. Thus for our learning he wrote: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability, which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." **1 Pet. 4:11-13** I have pointed out above that the glory of God is the image of God. We reach the glory of God when we reach the image of God. We are changed by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, from glory to glory, or from one glory to another, until we reach that same image. With this truth in mind, then, notice especially what Peter is saying in his fervent exhortation, "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad..." The Holy Spirit is telling us that our suffering with Christ is producing the very image of God in us. And is He not also telling us that, when His glory is revealed, we will be glad and rejoice as we see that the fiery trial that was to try us was not a conflagration designed by the devil to destroy us, but a furnace of seven-fold heat in which the dross was separated from the gold and the tin separated from the silver? It was a heat that burned off the bands and bondages of the old creation, leaving us to walk in freedom in the midst of the fire with one like the Son of God and bringing us forth at last as sons of God with no smell of fire upon our purified beings. What a day of rejoicing it was for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as they walked forth from the fiery trial more in the image of Christ than they had ever been, rejoicing not that they had overcome the fire, but that the fire had overcome everything earthly that remained

in them, leaving in its stead that form which caused the startled Nebuchadnezzar to cry out in astonished wonder, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?... Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." **Dan. 3:24-25**

Behold the truth that lies hidden here! Nebuchadnezzar, so full of rage and fury (verse 10) that his very visage was changed (verse 19), designed to utterly destroy these three men from the face of the earth. "Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and these three men fell down bound into the midst of the fiery furnace." Three men bound fell into the fire, but three men in the image of Christ came forth in liberty. Where the Spirit is Lord there is freedom, and he whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Therefore, "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." **1 Pet. 4:14** "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? ... Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." **1 Pet. 4:16-19** I know of no secret more precious to the heart of a child of God or more fraught with such priceless value as an understanding that suffering is designed, not of Satan, but of God, to bring us into the image of Christ. In the October, 1970, edition of The Page (available upon request under the title From Death to Life), I endeavored to show from the scripture that this existence, which we call life, is, in fact, death. I am now most firmly convinced that it is impossible for us to understand the great redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ until we are able to see that all men in Adam are dead both spiritually and physically. All men in Adam are made dead. All men in Christ are made alive. The only life in earth, in heaven, or in the universe is the life of God. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." All existence outside of Him is death. It is not correct to affirm, as many do, that the moment we are born, we begin to die. The real truth is that we are born dead and continue to exist in death until Christ, who is the life, shines into our hearts, giving us that eternal life which He Himself is. This is the true God and eternal life.

Does the scripture say in vain, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth?" Was Paul speaking inadvisedly when he said, "You hath he quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins?" Was he uninformed when he said, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is alive because of righteousness?" What was it that made Paul cry out in anguish, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" **Rom. 7:24** More clearly, "Who shall deliver me from this dead body?" Was Jesus speaking only in metaphor when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead?" Did Paul say in jest, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light?" **Eph. 5:14** Death stalks in every corner we look, and the grave with its gaping mouth is naught but the final phase of the death that has gripped us all our years.

It is of great importance that we see how Jesus Christ Himself entered this valley of the shadow of death on our behalf. He became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8), and walked its dismal valley for thirty-three years, finally ending it on the cross and passing again into life. As He knelt in the garden of Gethsemane and prayed with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death (Heb. 5:7), His prayer was not that He might be saved from the death of the cross, but that He might be saved from the whole realm of death into which He entered for us. His dread was not that He would die on the cross, for He endured the cross with joy; but the terror that beset Him was the awful possibility that in some way He might miss the cross and so remain in this dreadful realm of death and outer darkness. Thank God, His prayer was heard in that He feared, and by the cross His death was completed and by it He was delivered out of the realm into which He had willingly entered.

Surely now we can plainly see why it was so necessary for Jesus to come into this realm of death, for all nature teaches us that, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. When a kernel of wheat dies, its life is released into the body of the plant. Therefore Jesus died and, in dying, His life was released that all who believe might freely partake of it and all might live by Him. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." **Rom. 5:10** How good was God our Father to give His son to die, and

how full of grace our Lord and Saviour that He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross! But He, being righteous before God, could not be forever holden of death, neither was His soul left in hell (the grave), nor did He see corruption; but, after He had released His eternal life for all, the Spirit of God raised Him up from the dead and highly exalted Him, giving Him a name which is above every name that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God. Phil. 2:9-11

He died that He might give His life to all who believe. And now it came to pass even as He proclaimed it on that last day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:37-39.** But now the Son of God is glorified. He only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach (1 Tim. 6:16), but because He lives, we also live by Him, and the moment is wonderfully near at hand when this corruptible shall also put on incorruption and this mortal, immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written - death is swallowed up in victory? O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, our Lord! "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him (the Son), that God may be all in all." **1 Cor. 15:25-28**

The life of Jesus Christ is flowing as a river from out the throne of God. "If any man thirst," saith Christ, "let him come unto Me and drink." Because by His death eternal life was released to all, therefore the tree of life shall stand in the midst of the street of the new Jerusalem on both sides of the river of life, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations in that blest dispensation of the fullness of times. And there shall be no more curse, no more death, no more pain, no more sorrow, and no more crying, because the former things, which belonged to the realm of death, are all passed away.

While we yet tread this dismal valley of the shadow of death, both good and bad are being used by the Holy Spirit to sanctify us unto God and set us apart unto Him. These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18-19**

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose, but lest we should wonder what purpose is being served, mark with care the unerring course of events that leads us step by step until we reach that glory of God which is, indeed, the very image of Christ. For "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29-30** What a blessed chain of events the Spirit numbers here! Surely the truth contained in this eighth chapter of Romans must be the hub from which the purposes of the ages find their source! Therefore, if God be for us, who can be against us? He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?

All this work of sanctification and transformation is being continually wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He it is who fastens these truths in our hearts as burning and shining lights to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God from the face of Jesus Christ. "And we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18** As we bring these thoughts of sanctification and transformation to a conclusion, we earnestly beseech the Holy Spirit to forcefully fill our minds with the eternal hope that lies hidden in the heart of God — a hope which He reveals only to those who are being called according to His purpose. If we fail to grasp the divine purpose that inspires the Spirit's transforming work within us, then we shall certainly fail to lay hold of the promise He now sets before us. If we understand the goal our heavenly Father has in mind as He calls men to his heavenly citizenship, we will fervently lay hold of the hope that is set before us; but, if we

understand it not nor see any end purpose of our travail, then shall our hands hang heavy by our sides. Where there is no vision, the people perish; but, where there is a goal in view, every flagging spirit is revived, the feeble knees are strengthened, and the hands that hang down are lifted up. Even of our blessed Lord it is written, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." **Heb. 12:2-3**

Once our vision truly beholds the joy that is set before us, we will be neither hindered nor bothered by the pains and hardships of the way. We will become like Moses, who, having respect to the reward, "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26

And what is the recompense, which is our reward? What is God's inheritance in His saints? Why is He preparing a body of sons through such rigorous discipline, such fiery trial, and with such divers kinds of temptations? Why does the Holy Spirit change the believer from glory to glory, giving him a new life, a new name, a new nature, and a new citizenship to make him a fellow citizen with saints and the household of God? Eph. 2:19 No forceful sentence that I could construct could possibly answer these questions with the grandeur of that first mighty fiat that came forth from the mouth of the Lord: "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion." In this immutable proclamation the purpose of God is heralded forth for the countless ages that will fill the bosom of eternity.

For six laborious days mankind has struggled beneath the ponderous weight of his own cross. His work is never ended; his wars never cease. The nightmare of his ills, his sickness, and his disease crushes him as a worm beneath the wheel, and in the end of his days death mocks his travail and the grave opens wide her insatiable maw to receive his rotting frame. The conclusion of the matter is not unlike the story of the two beggarly medics who stood on the street of New York City, watching the elaborate funeral procession of a multi-millionaire. "How much did he leave?" asked the one. "Everything," replied the other. What profit is there of all man's labor under the sun?

We are nearing the end of the six days of man's labor. Every day the travail and sorrow grows deeper and more oppressive. Because men and rulers do not want to retain God in their knowledge, He has given them a reprobate mind to do the things that are not convenient. The solution to the problems facing the world today is actually very simple, but because the nations have turned their backs on God, He has given them confused and reprobate minds that muddle along in the darkness, patching up this and that, putting iodine on the pimple, but failing to heed the malady that causes the dreadful rash. The path of bad men leads through darkness dim. They do not know what makes them stumble. The path of good men is as a ray of dawn that shines on and on till the full light of day.

In the midst of all the confusion and turmoil of the hour the Spirit of God is preparing the mighty army of God's chosen sons to take the kingdom in the seventh day. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work." Man's six days of labor are almost over; the seventh day is at hand. In it Christ shall reign in righteousness and there will be no more curse, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away.

"In the days of these kings (earthly rulers) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." **Dan. 2:44** "And I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire." **Dan. 7:9** "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever." **Dan. 7:18** This is God's hope for the ages to come. This is the joy that is set before us, and it is for this glory that the Holy Spirit is sanctifying and changing us into the image of Jesus Christ. Thus all the world and eventually the universe will know the delectation and aionian joy that will be theirs when He reigns of whom it is written, "Of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run.
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Geo. R. Hawtin

CHAPTER SEVEN THE ABIDING PRESENCE

"The course of bad men leads through darkness dim; they cannot see what makes them stumble. The course of good men, like a ray of dawn, shines on and on to the full light of day." **Prov. 4:18, 19** (Moffatt) The burning truth that lies hidden in these words of inspiration is borne home to our hearts with ever increasing power as we see the lengthening shadows falling about us as sentinels, heralding the end of the age. It is not without purpose that the Holy Spirit has been directing our thoughts and bending our inmost nature toward a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord - a kinship in Him none but the elect in any age can know. All about us we see the paths of bad men leading them into ever increasing darkness while on the other hand the path of the just, shining more and more with the revealing light of truth, inspires our hearts to sing that gladsome song, "His lightnings enlighten the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." **Psa. 97:4, 5**

God's purpose in leading men out is that He might lead them in. The God and Father of Abraham led him out of Ur of the Chaldees that he might be led into a land that He would show him. Israel was led out of Egypt that the nation might be led into a land flowing with milk and honey. So now in our day! The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, who in ages past led them from Babylon and Egypt, is calling to a people enslaved by traditions and bound by sectarian chains of darkness to leave their prison house of confusion to walk in the presence of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the only true church in the universe, the church of the firstborn, the born again, whose names are emblazoned on the pages of the Book of Life - not with the fading ink from the pens of men, but with the eternal Spirit of the living God.

During the short span of our sojourn here on earth thoughtful people, knowing that they must soon depart from this valley of the shadow of death, prepare their last will and testament for the benefit of loved ones who will be obliged to carry on after they are gone. Our last will and testament is not of force, however, until our eyes close in the dreamless sleep of death. Paul made reference to this fact when he said, "For where a testament (will) is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament (will) is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." **Heb. 9:16-17** During those memorable days in which our Lord Jesus Christ walked among men, He left for us a will so forceful, so strong and completely unalterable, that no power in the universe can change, alter, or destroy it. Hear now, ye partakers of His benefit, as He sets forth His eternal will for us in these immutable words of truth: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, BE WITH Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." **John 17:24** And again: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do ... If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." **John 14:13-14** "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." **John 14: 18.** "If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." **John 14:23** But the special promise which most concerns the message of the moment is this: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." **John 14:16-17** In these words our Lord gave us the explicit assurance that He would be present with us and in us all through the troublesome days of our earthly pilgrimage. It was of this abiding presence that David spoke, saying in **Psa. 23**, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

You have noticed that, when Jesus gave the promise that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever, with great significance He added, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not." The world as a

whole and carnal Christians are usually ready to proclaim that seeing is believing. What they cannot see with their physical eyes they readily disbelieve, but the power that firmly holds our vessel through the raging storms of life is faith, the steadfast anchor of the soul. Heb. 6:19. So, while the world is confidently proclaiming, "Seeing is believing", the word of faith is filling the universe with the victorious decree, "Believing is seeing!"

There is a power whose care
Teaches thy way along the pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone wandering but not lost.
He, who from zone to zone
Guides thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must walk alone
Will guide my steps aright.

The moment a Christian begins to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and comprehend the incomprehensible, then his friends and neighbors call him mystical. "Much learning has made thee mad," they say, or sympathetically they think he has gone soft in the head. But, while they amuse themselves with derogation, hoping to belittle and disparage, the truth must ever be confessed that those who share the mysteries of God must of necessity be mystics. "Great is the mystery of godliness," saith the Lord, and to this my searching heart replies, "I shall be satisfied only when I awake in Thy likeness." If this be mysticism, then with all my heart I am a mystic. The Holy Spirit whispers this truth to every believing heart: "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God: Thou art the King of Israel," cried the fervent Nathaniel as the eyes of his understanding were opened. And Jesus Himself, seeming to be amazed at such divine illumination, responded with this assurance, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shall see greater things than these... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." **John 1: 49-51**

The burning desire within my heart in this the end of the age is that God's chosen people might with me become aware of the abiding presence of God. Several years ago one of my dearest friends wrote me a letter in which he spoke of the reality of the presence of God. I read his letter with interest, but the force of the truth did not then fully grip me. The letter was laid aside and the truth contained therein was almost forgotten until one early morning I dreamed a dream in which the presence of God descended upon me from heaven, increasing in wonder and power as it drew near. I awoke in ecstasy of spirit, breathing aloud the words, "How wonderful is the presence of God!" From that moment until now the blessed fact of His presence has often filled my meditation, and the truth which I now set before you comes with the earnest hope that all who read may henceforth walk with an ever increasing consciousness of the presence of Him who told us in words that cannot fail, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

For centuries men have spoken - some reverently, some carelessly - of walking in the presence of God; but it is indisputably true that such great statements of truth lose their sacred meaning by man's constant and often flippant reiteration. Students of theology, poor souls, are usually first and foremost in this transgression. Poring over their musty volumes, they learn the arguments and proofs, which teach that God is almighty, but the almighty God Himself they do not know. They write their learned essays on the love of God, but the God of love is a stranger to their hearts. They themselves become ineffective and often vacillating and hypocritical because they have separated truth from the Person, knowing the law, but not the law giver, reciting the truth, but having no relationship with Him who is the truth. A lifetime of experience has taught me that it is possible for one to know all the arguments and possess all the answers, but still be a stranger to God. I testify to all, however, that, the moment any man begins to know Him, vast changes take place in his understanding, for to know Him is to be like Him. "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18**

The Holy Spirit, who proceedeth forth from the Father, is not an influence, but a divine person, possessing personal names, personal attributes, personal qualities, personal offices, performing personal ministries and personal acts, and referred to by personal pronouns. I shall never be persuaded to descend to that valley of

carnality where men delight to reason and debate about trinities and unities, for why should the fellowship of the saints, together with the joy of their friendship, be cruelly destroyed by debating these sacred things before whose mystery wise and holy angels bow their heads in silent awe? The man who seeks to argue about the Godhead has lost his sense of respect for the awful greatness of God. Yet be it known to one and all that He whose presence abides with us throughout all this age of grace is that same Holy Spirit of whom Jesus spoke, saying, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

John 14:16-18

With my small and limited ability I cannot make the truth of Christ's abiding presence to be a living, transforming reality to your heart. None but the Spirit of God is capable of this divine and mighty act of illumination. He alone can take the things of God and show them unto you. Nevertheless, I confidently assure you that, the moment the solemnizing fact of Christ's presence grips your heart and fills your mind by the Holy Spirit, the reality of His presence will immediately begin to transform your life. Yea, and I shall further add that the knowledge of His abiding presence will also begin to change and renew your body as well; but of this we shall speak at a later time. The sublime truth of His ever, abiding presence through an indisputable promise of God's grace cannot and will not become real to you until you devote yourself to it by prayer, by meditation, by fasting, and by faith above all else. "Lo, I am with you," Jesus said; and, if His word cannot be trusted, our mighty foundations are but quicksand beneath our faltering feet. But He who abides with us forever is He whom "having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." **1 Pet. 1:8**

Again 'tis eventide and we,
Oppressed with various ills, draw near;
And, though Thy form we cannot see,
We feel and know that Thou art near.

"This is He who was with the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him (Moses) in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively (living) oracles to give unto us." **Acts 7:38**

Some glad morning, when the ever, unfolding plan of God is complete, our eyes will behold with endless joy that heaven blest Eden, the garden in which walked Adam, the son of God. Our eyes, long dimmed by the things of earth, have not beheld such glories as were there; our ears have not heard its deep songs of joy, nor have our dreams pictured that land so fair whose inhabitants knew no sorrow nor crying, no tears nor death nor pain. Wonderful as were its heavenly charms, the glory above all else that made each moment an endless joy was the glory of God's abiding presence. He who knew all things from the beginning to the end was abiding there with them. He in whom all power dwells, whether in heaven or in earth, was holding them by the hand. The omnipresent Lord, who knows neither slumber nor sleep, was abiding there. It could not have been otherwise else God could not be God. "In Thy presence," wrote David, "is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." In this secret place they dwelt beneath the shadow of the Almighty, for the Lord God is a sun and a shield to all who walk uprightly. Then in God's wisdom the dark hour came when the creature was made subject to vanity. Rom. 8: 20. Stretching forth his hand in disobedience, he took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and did eat, "and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." **Gen. 3:7** But they were ashamed to meet God in their fig leaf aprons, and, when in the evening of the day "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden... Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden." **Gen. 3:8** Surely none could have been more conscious of God's presence than were Adam and Eve as daily they walked and talked with Him, but now their disobedience had thrust them into a dreadful outer darkness that made them feel naked, ashamed, and frightened at the very thought of God's presence so that they desired only to hide themselves from Him forever.

Here, then, when man in fear and shame hid himself from the presence of God, was the beginning of our labor, sorrow, and night. Thus from the glory and light of God's presence all men in Adam were cast; for there is no difference, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God through man's transgression. Upon our

eyes a veil was cast that could not be taken away until that day of triumph in which Jesus Christ, the "second man" (1 Cor. 15: 47), rent the veil in two and flung the gates wide open that repentant, forgiven and newborn men might come with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus - by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Heb. 10:19-20 For this purpose the Spirit of truth was given, that we who have fixed our hopes in Jesus may abide in His presence forever.

Let us consider with care the detriment that fell like a cloud upon the human family when through disobedience and transgression Adam hid himself from the presence of God. We should not be obliged to present lengthy arguments to prove that man without God is hopelessly blind to eternal things, pitifully helpless, and desperately carnal. Once our eyes become closed to the invisible things, then we are blind to the eternal things, for the things, which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, seen are eternal. When our eyes are closed to the invisible, then our vision changes from things above to things beneath. Because we are no longer conscious of the invisible and the eternal, we begin to feast our eyes on the visible and the temporal. Without God men are hopelessly in the flesh. They pass their time in the worthless pursuits of the flesh. Their days are spent in vanity, seeking to gratify the five senses of the physical body, but seldom do they learn that this cannot be done. The eye is never filled with seeing. The lust of the eye for seeing is insatiable. The ear is never filled with hearing, nor is the taste ever satisfied with the rarest of dainties. All our physical appetites, like the grave and the barren womb, never say, "It is enough".

How often, as I have read the books of First and Second Kings, have I been almost sickened by the dreadful display of carnality and wickedness, manifested in the lives of the kings of Judah and Israel! These were men who from their childhood knew the law of God. They knew better than to do as they did, yet their lives were a continual manifestation of the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the corrupt and carnal mind. The further they went in their unholy desire to gratify the lusts of the flesh the more they rejected God, and the further they departed from His presence the lower they sank in their degrading rebellion. Even Solomon himself, because he loved many women, is found in the end to be a tax-raising oppressor, building altars and places of worship to the abominable gods of his heathen wives, and even stooping to worship them himself. 1 Kings 11: 6-8, 33 Man, without God to change his evil nature, can never hope to bring peace or justice in the earth. The tree of the carnal mind bears the evil fruit of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, and heresy as naturally as an apple tree bears apples; but the Spirit of the living God, seated in glory upon the throne of the regenerated heart, filling it with the mind of Christ, bears the good fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, faithfulness, and temperance. Against such there is no law, neither in earth beneath nor in heaven above.

How wonderful are the words of our Saviour, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." **Matt. 18:3** What better word could we find than the word converted? He who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is converted in every sense of that word. All that he ever was is passed away and all that he never was is vital, unfading, and new. "He whom the Son sets free is free indeed," for he has passed from death across to life, from a child of the flesh to a child of the Lord, from the bondage of corruption to the freedom of the Spirit, from dreaded condemnation to acceptance and pardon in His sight. Changes so great as to seem almost incredible transform the life of every believer when Jesus Christ comes into his heart. He who once, because of the filth of his sin, hid himself in shame and fear from the presence of God now returns to bask in the shekinah of God's presence because he has repented of his sin and been cleansed by the blood of the everlasting covenant. "For," said Paul, "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" **Heb. 9:13-14.** "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (**1 John 1:7**), and the man who is thus cleansed by faith in Christ is brought back by Him into that glorious presence from which he hid himself in the long ago. Among the sacred scenes of earth none is more wonderful to the regenerated heart than the sight of a sinner coming home to God in repentance. Many times in my life I have watched them come - from tender little boys and girls, sobbing at the feet of Jesus as though they were the greatest of sinners, to men and women hardened and calloused by decades of groveling in the swine pens of iniquity. To the lover of our souls it makes no difference who we are. The same Christ is as real to one as to the other and the same all-powerful blood cleanses from all sin. As the lines of hardness fade away from the sinner's face and the joy of the Lord fills his heart with peace, myriad angels on high fill the

universe with their music and lift their rapturous voices in songs of praise to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, for we "who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13

The death we endure outside the presence of God is a dreadful experience. Forth from its unholy shadow every evil and ill of all the ages have proceeded to curse humanity. Every war that has darkened the pages of history has come as a result of man's separation from God's presence - every persecution of righteousness, every hateful demeanor, every torture chamber, every sickness and disease, every hospital and cemetery. The vast overpowering corruption of the present hour, which sees humanity more sinful and separated from God than at any time since the days of Noah, is the result of man's continual desire to hide himself from God's presence. Because men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God has given them up to a reprobate mind to do the things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. See Rom. 1: 28-32. The murderous rash of convenience abortions now filling the earth with the blackness of iniquity is no less heinous a crime than the slaughter of the innocents in the days of Herod. The callous insensibility of this inhuman act is a crying evidence that mankind has entered the incredible place of stupefaction described by Paul as "without natural affection." 2 Tim. 3:3 Any reasonable person will concede that an extenuating circumstance may arise which could justify the termination of the pregnancy, but God will hold mankind responsible for the mass murder of the innocents that now every year exceeds by far the number of babies thrown into the river by the wicked Pharaoh or slaughtered by that bloody murderer, King Herod. I am often reminded of the words of one devout Christian woman who, being gravely ill during the months of her confinement, was warned by her doctor that it would not be possible for both her and the unborn baby to survive. To save her own life she was advised to immediately terminate her pregnancy. To this suggestion the brave woman gave this beautiful answer of resignation and consecration: "The Lord knows which life to spare and which to take." The result was that both were spared. How good our heavenly Father is to those who put their trust in Him!

The last stage in the corruption and final destruction of a nation is reached by the acceptance and popularization of the sin of sodomy, that vile affection which Paul describes as changing the natural use to that which is against nature, men with men working that which is unseemly. Rom. 1:26-27 This is the sin, which brought fire and brimstone to consume Sodom and purify the ground on which it stood. This is the abomination that hastened the flood in the days of Noah. Man cannot possibly survive nor can a nation endure once he stoops to this dreadful evil. Because of it God curses the people with a reprobate mind to do all manner of things that are inconvenient. Perhaps I will shock you when I say that the problems facing the world are neither complex nor difficult; neither are they complicated nor hard to solve. The solutions are exceedingly simple; the difficulty is in man's mind. It has become reprobate and confused by his iniquity so that every decision he makes is wrong and everything he does is inconvenient. It is useless to try to correct it now. The abominable confusion must await the termination of man's six days of labor, confusion, and turmoil. Then will follow the reign of Christ and His sons. Then the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Selfishness will be gone forever and iniquity shall be no more. Repentance shall have filled the heart of men with believing faith, and we shall have returned to dwell in the blessedness of God's life-giving presence.

The message of life that even in this evil hour still permeates the believing heart of every saint separated unto God by His Holy Spirit is this: It is possible for saints here and now to live with the constant and continual assurance that the same Lord who walked with Adam in heaven blessed Eden is now walking with them. As the days have passed, especially in recent months, there has come to me an ever, increasing assurance that I am dwelling and walking in His presence. God is no longer far away; He is here. No longer need saints say, "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep to bring up Christ again from the dead?" The word (Christ) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. See Rom. 10:6-7

This is not a moment for fine words or eloquent speech. This is an hour for very plain speaking. There is a truth that runs like a golden thread throughout all the pages of Holy Writ from Genesis to Revelation, teaching us

that the elect whom God has chosen may even now walk in the light of God's presence. The teaching of this wonderful fact is verified by reality of experience, by many types, and by infallible prophecy. Let all God's people be informed of the truth I now present. Lay hold upon it as you would a precious jewel because its truth uncovers the secret key that will unlock the door to great spiritual experience and understanding. Men and women in ages past attained through faith in their own day blessings promised to men who were to live in ages yet to come. Let us notice a few examples. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Through faith Enoch was translated that he might not see death. Enoch was a man who lived in the dispensation of conscience - five dispensations in the past - yet by faith he was translated and experienced that which is yet future. Abraham lived under the dispensation of promise - three dispensations before Paul preached the message of justification by faith. Yet Abraham, in the far-off day when justification by faith was only a promise, believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Rom. 4:3 Three dispensations before justification by faith was preached, his eye beheld the blessedness and his faith reached forward two thousand years or more to partake of its glory, and Abraham was justified by faith without the works of the law, and that before the law was given. And what shall we say of king David, who lived in the heart of the dispensation of the law when by God's own command sacrifices and offerings for sin were made daily, and the blood of bulls and of goats flowed in an endless crimson stream, heralding a better day when the better blood of Christ, the great anti-type of all sacrifice and offering, would be shed for the remission of the sins of the whole world. David with the eye of the Spirit looked far beyond those animal sacrifices, which could never take away sin, but left with the offerer a heart unchanged. The eye of David, the son of Jesse, looked forward through the corridors of time to the day when the blood of Christ would be shed for the remission of all sin and Jesus Christ, as God's faithful High Priest, would enter Heaven itself to present His own blood as a sin-offering once, forever, and for all, that mankind should through Him be brought back into God's presence. Thus did David under the law turn his face away from the religious ceremonies of his day, and with a heart broken for his sin he prayed, "For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt offering." **Psa. 51:16** "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." **Psa. 51:6-10** Of David it is written that he was a man after God's own heart. Who then dare doubt that he, who lived so long ago, reached beyond the experience of his age to receive the blessing of justification by faith as we do now when we kneel at God's feet to confess our sins and receive Christ our Saviour into our lives?

There is a promised day in a dispensation still future of which it is written, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." **Rev. 21:3** Angelic voices, echoing in heavenly charm and eloquence, could not describe the triumphant day of blessedness and rejoicing in His presence! I suppose then it is not to be wondered at if but few in this hour of gross darkness are able to see that God is calling a people in our day who shall know the divine secret of walking in His presence. Here and now the elect will know the wisdom of His Spirit within. They will be sensitive to the reality of His presence, conscious of His Spirit speaking, His hand guiding, and His power transforming the spirit, the mind, and the body into the image of Him who created them. Men and women, elect and chosen of God, are not walking in the nakedness that Adam knew and that sinners know. The Spirit of God, who had departed from them, has returned to abide, and all who believe shall know that through God's Christ we have been led back into the presence of God. The misunderstanding of God's people concerning God's eternal purpose, and the abominable traditions of the false church system rob us continually of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that shines forever from the face of Jesus Christ. "Lo, I am with you always" was the word Jesus spoke, and in fulfillment of that promise He said, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who will abide with you forever," or for the age, meaning this age in which we live. Though all the world and most of the Christians dwell in outer darkness of unbelief, we who believe and lay hold of the promise shall know the wonder of His presence.

There came a day when the patriarch Isaac called his son Jacob to himself. He had blessed him with the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine, saying, "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee." **Gen. 27:28-29** Then he sent him to Padan-aram to the house of Bethuel to take a wife of the daughters of Laban, his uncle. Gen. 28 With the command of his father in his heart and a haunting dread of the wrath of his brother, Esau, in his mind Jacob started the long journey from Beer-sheba to Padan-aram. "And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the

stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shall spread toward the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." **Gen. 28:11-17**

"Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not!" These were the words of the patriarch Jacob. They are words of heaven-sent revelation. This sudden, divine understanding that God was present wrought an instant transformation that changed him from one glory to another throughout his long and difficult life. This revealing experience was his first true contact with the God of Abraham. The sobering knowledge that he was standing in the presence of the almighty God filled his heart with dread, for no man can see God and live. It is impossible! Impossible, I say, because the very knowledge that God is present causes the carnal things of our former life to pass away as ice before the glowing sun, and in their place new things are born that cannot pass away, but, reflecting the glory of God, they abide in His presence forevermore. "God is in this place and I knew it not" will be your inspired words, O Christian, as the transforming truth of His presence, like the life-giving rays of the sun, come stealing o'er the meadows of your soul. It is an immeasurable spiritual tragedy just to see how many Christians, bound by the traditions of Babylon, stumble along over the byways of life, forgetting that He is very present who said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." And this God's people continue to do until by some miracle of God's good grace their eyes are opened and from their trembling lips the words break forth, "Surely the Lord is here, and I knew it not."

Moses was a man of eighty years when he tended the flock of Jethro in the backside of the desert. Gone from his heart was the zeal and fire of yesteryear that had once inspired him to rashly attempt the liberation of his people. Exod. 2: 11-15. He was an outcast now, a name long forgotten both in Israel and in Egypt. He wanted nothing better than to be left in peace to tend his inoffensive sheep, for they, unlike his people Israel, were gentle and docile, peacefully trusting him to lead them by day and protect them by night. No man of account knew where he dwelt. Of that he was glad; and perhaps he wondered in his heart if even God knew where he was. This old man had probably convinced himself that the God of Abraham had no special need of him or any plan for his life. How good it was going to be to live the rest of his life as a simple shepherd of these woolly sheep, and then at last to be gathered to his people and take his place in the bosom of Abraham!

But then there came a day when, looking up, he saw a bush burning with fire. There was nothing very unusual about that except that he presently became aware that, though the flames continued to burn fiercely, the bush was neither harmed nor consumed. Thinking this to be a most unusual phenomenon, he said to himself, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." **Exod. 3:3-6**

It is not our purpose here to speak of the call and ministry of this man to whom God spoke face to face, but rather to show that God is present at all times, even when we know it not. We have stated before that names in scripture have a special meaning, usually describing the character or the ministry of those who have them. Thus, when Moses said to the Lord, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." **Exod. 3:13-14** There is no other name in scripture that more perfectly represents the ever present, the omnipresent God. As to time God is eternal; as to place He is omnipresent. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the

uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." **Psa. 139:7-12** Know this, O child of God: These words are spoken unto you, and He who speaks them is present with you to guide your thoughts into all the will of God. In the knowledge of the secret of His presence you will possess an understanding hitherto unknown in your Christian experience. He who is present with you is a very present help in trouble, transforming the night of all trouble and sorrow into a fortress of Christian light and experience.

Time fails us to tell of Daniel, who stood all night in a den of lions purposely famished that they might destroy him, and of the angel of the Lord who, being present with him, closed their mouths and made them as docile as house cats. Nor can we speak in particular of the Hebrew three, who, walking in a furnace of sevenfold heat, found a fourth man present with them, the form of whom was "like unto the Son of God." Nor can we tarry long to speak of Paul, who in the midst of the raging storm at sea stood forth with boldness to proclaim safety and deliverance for all who were on board, saying, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying. Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." **Acts 27:22-24**

In the thirty-third chapter of Exodus the Holy Spirit has related for our learning a very important and dramatic incident. Leading up to this chapter is the record of the giving of the law of God and of the subsequent abomination committed by Israel in the worshipping of the golden calf. These chapters should be reread that we might better understand the truth that follows. Israel had been spared destruction through the intercession of Moses, and now the Lord says to him, "Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt... And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanites ... for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff, necked people: lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments." **Exod. 33:1-4** "And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me." **Verse 12** "And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he (Moses) said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken..." **Verses 14-17**

When believers become conscious of God's abiding presence, they become distinct from all other people on the face of the earth. They also become distinct from all other Christians. Men who live their lives continually conscious of the presence of Christ both abiding with them and dwelling in them are men who always walk softly with God. A fool who holdeth his peace is considered wise; so they who in silence listen to His still small voice come to know Him as the great I AM. The rich man in pride answereth roughly, but the poor useth entreaties. So he who is poor in spirit depends upon Him who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

The fourth chapter of Acts tells of the great excitement and wonder caused by the healing of the lame man, and of how in hate and pride the priests and lawgivers, together with rulers and authorities, took counsel against the Lord and against His anointed; but "when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." **Acts 4:13** And may we add the confident assurance that Jesus had been with them! Yea, His presence was continually with them.

In the Authorized Version of the Bible Titus 2:13 is rendered in these words: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our saviour Jesus Christ." But the Emphatic Diaglott, Moffatt, Young and several others render it thus: Waiting for the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Christ in you is the hope of glory, and while Christians century after century have eagerly scanned the heavens for signs of the appearing of the Lord, they have forgotten to live in the glory of the presence of Christ here and now. I am fully aware that a crowning day is coming when Christ shall ride forth from the heavens, followed by those celestial hosts of which John spoke. Rev. 19:11-16. I have

no power or ability to describe events so supernal; I may only bask in their surpassing glory. I am led to believe that those who will share the blessedness of that triumphant advent will be they and they alone who, while walking in the wilderness of this world, lived in ever increasing consciousness of God's presence. These are they who dwell continually in the presence of Him who said, "Lo, I am with you always." **"For what is our hope or joy, or the crown of which we boast? Is it not you yourselves in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?" Thess. 1:19** (Weymouth). Think of the power and majesty of those words that literally say, "Our hope, our crown, and our rejoicing is you in the presence of the Lord Jesus at His coming!"

The presence of the Lord is a secret place. David describes it as the shadow of the Almighty. The cloud overshadowing the camp of Israel throughout their journey in the wilderness, a shade by day and a pillar of fire by night, was none other than the presence of the Almighty. They ate of spiritual meat; they drank of spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. 1 Cor. 10:3-4.

"In Thy presence is fullness of joy," wrote the enraptured psalmist; and how could it be otherwise since the God of Israel is our fortress, our power, and our habitation? As a garment plucked from a perfumed closet bears in its fibers the sweet aroma, so they who dwell in the presence of Christ radiate the glory, the beauty, and the power of His attributes. "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad," wrote David. The ointment Mary poured with prodigality upon the head of the Saviour filled all the house where He sat with its fragrance, and we would be right in believing that all who came forth from that room carried in their garments the sweetness of that aromatic balm.

To dwell in His presence is to be like Him. To abide in His presence is to be changed into His image. Man can never hope to attain the likeness of the Lord by any outward regulation or command to his carnal mind, such as, touch not, taste not, handle not. It is when saints become conscious of His presence that men say they have been with Jesus. It is not what God commands that changes the heart; it is He Himself. It is not the recitation of God's divine laws that transforms our lives, but our relationship to Him who made them. Our abiding in the presence of Jesus Christ will cure our every ill and transform our spirit, soul, and body into the image of Jesus Christ.

As I was in meditation concerning the truth I have presented here, the following words by Martha Wing Robinson, so full of the breath of the Spirit, reached me through the mail. I think they will make a fitting conclusion to what we have been considering of the presence of God.

"You do not realize that you would have broken down under the weight of your cares but for the renewing time with Me. It is not what I say; it is Myself. It is not the hearing Me so much as being in My presence. The strengthening and curative powers of this you cannot know. Such knowledge is beyond human reckoning.

"This would cure the poor world if every day each soul or group of souls waited before Me. Remember that you must never fail to keep this time apart with Me. Gradually you will be transformed, physically, mentally, spiritually, into My likeness. All who see you or contact with you will be by this intercourse with you brought near to Me, and gradually the influence will spread.

"You are making one spot on earth an holy place, and, though you must work and spend yourself ceaselessly because for the present that is your appointed task, yet the greatest work you can do is done in this time apart with Me. Are you understanding that? Do you know that every thought, every activity, every prayer, every longing of the day, is gathered up and offered to Me now? Oh, joy that I am with you! For this I came to earth, to lead man back to spirit converse with his God." Amen.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF SONSHIP

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." S. of S. 2:10-13

The winter is past; the rain is over and gone. Winter is the season of the year when all things lie dormant in a state of typical death. It is a time when trees are stripped of their leaves and fruit is forgotten, when the flowers die, song birds fly away, and even great beasts hibernate in dens of the earth. Winter is a time when men's lives are sustained only by that which has been stored away, and should it continue long, all things would perish from the earth.

The six dispensations from innocence to grace have for mankind been a long, dreary winter of death. They have been a time of great and dreadful death when all but a few of the human race have been in a state of spiritual sleep. The heavens, once wide open to Adam, have remained closed since the fall while men have groveled in gross darkness and appalling ignorance, knowing not that all about them a radiant, eternal world of light and glory and liberty shines with a brightness of a million suns.

Now when anyone falls asleep, a strange thing happens to him. Except for his breathing he is in a state of death. Realities are shut out from him. He knows neither where he is nor who he is. Whether he is alone or in company he knows not. Friends and acquaintances, sickness, pain and joy are all forgotten to the sleeper, for he like the dead knows not anything.

It may be hard for you to understand what I now tell you, for sleep may hide it from your eyes, yet some will surely understand that a glorious awakening is even now at the door. Long ago in lovely Eden, we are told in Holy Scripture, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Gen. 2 In that sleep all things were shut out from him. The glory of the angels, the magnificence of the eternal world, wisdom and understanding with counsel and might were obliterated by the deepening stupor that fell upon him. Knowledge was gone, and even the wonderful glory of God's presence was shut out from him so that he knew not anything of the eternal realm and little, indeed, of the natural realm.

The omissions of God's Word are often as important as forthright statements, and here I think we have an omission of tremendous importance. Though it is said that a deep sleep fell upon Adam, yet it is not said that Adam ever awoke from the deep sleep that came upon him. All his remaining nine hundred years he remained dead asleep to eternal things. Certainly I could be wrong, but I myself am convinced that never again were the heavens open to Adam as heretofore, and never again did any of his posterity completely walk in all the light and presence and glory of God until that wonderful day when Jesus Christ, the second Adam, was baptized in Jordan and the heavens opened to Him, and, being opened to Him, they never more closed except for that one awful hour as He suffered vicariously on the cross of Calvary.

There is much more to the fall of man than at first appears to the casual reader. Adam, being both male and female in one, was a son of God and perfect. He was like unto that blessed company who at last shall be in Christ, for in Christ there is neither male nor female but sons of God, for sons of God are male and female in one as it was in the beginning. What need had Adam for a mate like unto the beasts of the field? He, being a son of God, possessed that perfect chaste virgin within himself and could have replenished the whole earth with his kind in God's image by a word of power as God by a word had willed him into existence in the beginning. But, as the beasts were brought before Adam to be named every male with his female, he must have imagined after the outward and fleshly to be as the beasts instead of after the inward to be as God. Therefore it is said, "[But for Adam there was not found a help-meet for him.](#)" **Gen. 2:20** Thus the deep sleep fell upon him and in his sleep the virgin, the female, was taken from him to be presented to him from without in another form to be possessed even as the beasts possessed their mates, and the children that were brought forth in travail and in pain were not brought forth in the image of God as Adam had been, but in the image of Adam himself who had imagined after the outward to be even as the beasts.

If you separate heat from cold, you have two dangerous things, - fire and frost, - either of which will kill you, yet, joined together, they are beautiful and harmless. If you separate judgment from mercy, you have sadism on the one hand and confusion on the other, but joined together you have peace. Positive together with negative is powerful and useful, but either one alone is helplessness. So also, while male and female were one in one Adam, there was a pure virgin sonship and harmony with God; but, separated the one from the other as the beasts, the door was opened wide for all disobedience with its attendant train of sin and death. Thus, when

Eve was tempted by the serpent, she was no match for his satanic wisdom, for, when male was separated from female, wisdom was separated from understanding. Hence she, being separated from the knowledge of God that dwelt in Adam, became a prey to the knowledge of good and evil, and Adam, likewise no longer possessing that pure virgin within himself, was moved in passion as the beasts toward that which was without to bring forth sons, not in the image of God, but after the image of himself, in manner as the beasts of the field who, having no knowledge of God, desire only to sustain their physical life and reproduce themselves.

Thus they had partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their eyes were opened to see their outward forms and to know the grief of sustaining their bodies by sweaty toil and the sorrow of reproducing themselves in desperate pain and travail. The good spirit and glory that had been their covering was departed from them and they knew the shame of their nakedness before the Lord.

But we are near the end of our long night of deep sleep. The day of waking, of sonship, and of the open heavens is at hand. With every tick of the clock our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Each violent deed, each act of lawlessness, each war and earthquake that rocks the peace of the world brings us one day nearer to the hour when that first company of 144,000 virgin sons of God shall stand on Mount Zion with Christ and in Christ, clothed upon by the seven spirits of God as a rainbow round about the throne to govern the world in righteousness for-evermore.

One day during the life of our Lord on earth His friend Lazarus fell sick and Jesus, hearing of his illness, remained two days where He was until Lazarus had died. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep." But when He saw that the disciples did not understand, He said to them, "**Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.**" Please read **John 11:1-46** How well these words, our friend Lazarus sleepeth, fit the entire picture of the human race from Adam even until now, but the hour of awakening is almost here. Jesus, the first born from the dead, is about to call "come forth" to all who are in Christ, - not just to Lazarus or some other lonely man, but to all that great company whom he (Lazarus) represents, that all who died in Adam will live forever in Him.

Come now, and let us reason together in the Spirit, for there is an ever increasing longing in my heart to make at least the elect of God to see something of the length, the breadth, the depth, and the height of the goodness, the wisdom, and the love of God. God cannot be sufficed with the weak and sickly twaddle advanced by a harlot church as truth. What good is it for men to spend their lives studying doctrine only to find in the end that they know not God? All striving about doctrines is vanity and vexation of spirit, but to enter into the secret place of the Most High, to abide under His shadow and find delight in His presence is the all important thing. What a disastrous tragedy it is for men to begin in the Spirit and then imagine they can come to perfection by adhering to codes and ethics, rules and traditions. I tell you of a truth that a man who knows in his heart the truth that God loves the world, himself included, knows infinitely more than all his instructors who do not know in fact, but only in theory.

The time has come for you and me to so believe into Christ Jesus that here and now we will experience an awakening from the long winter of our sleep of death. The time has come for us all to stop looking through the polished doors of buildings that men erroneously call churches and start instead looking into the heart of God Himself. The time has come to exchange our sitting in comfortable pews for sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ. High time it is to cease from giving ear to the frothy eloquence of trained puppeteers who hold men captive to their wills, teaching them only what they want them to hear, and to sit instead, as Mary sat, at Jesus' feet to hear from His lips the unfolding of His purposes for the ages.

There are not many people who are sufficiently awake to believe it, but at this very moment tens of thousands of church goers of every sect and creed are walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful. Their delight is not in the law of the Lord neither do they meditate in it either day or night. They are filled with doctrine and programs, tradition and church activity, and though they profess to be believers, they would not know Christ if they met Him on the street. Oh, let us awake and turn away from such vanity and come to know Him! Of a truth that lowly woman who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, kissing them without ceasing and wiping them with the hair of her head, knew more than all her learned critics, for she, dwelling in the love of God, believed all things while her learned critics, dwelling in the dismal hut of their human traditions, succeeded only in making the word of God of none effect.

It was in the evening of the sixth day that the Lord made the first man in His image. Now in the evening of the sixth dispensational day, even the dispensation of the grace of God, the Lord is again bringing an elect people whom He has chosen into the very image and likeness of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how happy are those people whose God is the Lord! How blessed the people who like the blind man of old have cast aside their hindering garments to run after Christ who giveth sight that all may follow Him! How wise the people who have cast off their affiliation with the world and all its outward show of vanity, refusing the mind of satanic wisdom together with useless forms and ceremonies of an harlot church system that they may be partakers of the mind of Christ and the sevenfold spirit of sonship! Upon them as upon their Lord shall rest the seven Spirits of God even as the prophet Isaiah foretold, saying,

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding;
The Spirit of counsel and might;
The Spirit of knowledge and ear of the Lord.

These are the seven Spirits continually before the throne of God by which the world will be governed in righteousness. These are the Spirits that will rest upon all the sons of God in that great kingdom when the whole world shall be governed in righteousness by that man whom God hath chosen. It was of these seven Spirits that John spoke when he wrote, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace be unto you and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne." **Rev. 1:4**

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightning and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." **Rev. 4:4-5** The seven lamps of fire are the seven Spirits of God. This is the fulfillment of the ancient type, the candlestick, which stood in the Holy Place in the tabernacle in the wilderness, which was made of pure gold (divine) and had seven golden lampstands and seven lamps burning pure olive oil, a symbol of the Spirit of God.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." **Rev. 5:6** The seven horns of God's perfect power and the seven eyes of God's full perfection are the seven spirits of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge, reverence, and deity that are ever before God's throne.

I am powerless to describe the magnificence that is here, - seven Spirits of God blazing as seven lamps of fire, radiating forth the perfect light! As the seven lamps of the candlestick are but one candlestick, so also the seven Spirits are but one Spirit, even the Holy Spirit of God. The seven horns of power on the head of one lamb, even the Lamb of God, are but one Spirit of power, and the seven eyes likewise are one Spirit of God. Wonderful beyond words are the glories portrayed here, but our hearts well nigh stand still as we behold with John the dazzling glory that appeared before him. John saw one sitting upon a throne, and He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. A rainbow is one but it has seven colors, and the seven colors of that glorious rainbow represent the sevenfold Spirit of God, even as the seven lamps of fire, the seven horns, and the seven eyes.

The first rainbow that ever appeared to men was a promise and a covenant from God to assure the world of His goodness and mercy. Here again it appears in the glorious age that even now casts its rays of dawn upon us, promising the world that all its inhabitants will be governed in righteousness by the elect whom God has chosen and upon whom shall rest forever the seven Spirits of God. And there was a rainbow round about the throne! What a magnificent promise for a benighted world that for time immemorial has known nothing but unrighteous government! Even the throne of Solomon was plagued with unrighteousness, greed and taxation so fearfully oppressive that the whole kingdom was divided at his death. The reign of David, good as it was, was filled with bloodshed until he who was a man after God's own heart was denied the right to build the

temple because he was such a bloody man. What kingdom or empire has not fallen prey to wickedness and corruption until it finally sank beneath the waves of its own sin and perished beneath the weight of its own iniquity? The historian Edward Gibbon, has listed five primary causes for the decline and fall of the mighty Roman Empire as follows:

1. The rapid increase of divorce and the undermining of the sanctity of the home.
2. The spiraling rise of taxes and extravagant spending.
3. The mounting craze for pleasure and the brutality of sports.
4. The building of gigantic armaments and the failure to realize that the real enemy lay within the gates of the Empire hi moral decay.
5. The decay of religion and the fading of faith into a mere form, leaving the people without a guide.

Even the most casual look at the above deductions should convince any man that the same five pallbearers who carried out the corpse of the Roman Empire are at the door of our own nations to carry them out also, for I doubt that any of the mighty empires of the past, the days of Noah, or even Sodom itself could hold a candle to the rampaging iniquity that is sweeping every nation on the face of the earth in our day. Were it not for the mercy of God in sending great tribulation on the earth hi the very near future, the whole earth would doom itself in complete destruction.

The ordinary man is kept in the dark and knows practically nothing of the abounding corruption in governmental circles, the fraud, the cheating, the outright lying and endless graft, the hobnobbing with crooks and criminals, the receiving of campaign funds from gangsters and dope peddlers, and the thousand things of which the word of God declares, "It is a shame even to speak of the things that are done by them in secret."

But a better day is coming and it is coming very soon, - the day of the rainbow round the throne hi sight like unto an emerald, the day of the seven lamps burning with fire, which are the seven Spirits of God resting heavily upon those glorious pure virgin sons of Zion, God's masterpiece and the hope of all creation. The day is at hand when the seven eyes of perfect insight and understanding shall search the hearts and minds of men and nations, and the seven wonderful horns of power shall bring into one all nations of the earth in righteousness before Him.

"Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments. O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, "Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money." **Isa. 52:1-3** It is time to awake out of sleep, for the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Even now our salvation is much nearer than when we believed. These are not idle words, but words of truth and soberness. It is high time to awake out of sleep. It is high time to realize that the solemn words of Jesus are being fulfilled in all the world about us. It is time to diligently take heed that the searching prophecies of Paul are being fulfilled in that idolatrous system that dares to call itself the church, whose members have on every hand become lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, despisers of those that are truly good, traitors, heady, high, minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

One of the most disgusting trends of our age is seen in the fact that evil men with seducing spirits have seized upon the wonderful truths of God and, though they have neither part nor lot in them, they proclaim them far and wide as great revelations. Oh, how I loathe this evil thing! They are as unscrupulous as Simon the sorcerer who, seeing that the Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands, offered money that he also might be given the same power that upon whomsoever he laid his hands they would receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter, discerning the wickedness of his evil heart, said, "Thy money perish with thee, for thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this inheritance, for I

perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Cf. **Acts 8:18-25** All over the world today men for filthy lucre's sake are proclaiming the message of sonship, but the Spirit of God's Son is not in them. Vainly they point to miracles and crowds, converts and disciples as evidence of their sonship, but all these things are empty and vain. We may with confidence affirm that every man and every woman who in any way is seeking to build up his own little kingdom does not possess the Spirit of sonship. A man who seeks to be or willingly becomes the central figure is wrong and does not possess the Spirit of sonship, for the true Spirit of sonship points men away from self and toward Jesus Christ. If I seek in any way to hold you as my disciple, I am wrong and void of the Spirit of sonship, but if, after you have read this article, your spirit cries within, "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," then I think you are becoming His disciple and the true Spirit of sonship is working in you. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." **Gal. 4:6-7**

Those blessed sons of God who are to reign with Him in His kingdom will not be men who have made great names for themselves, but men and women who through contact with Christ Jesus our Lord have partaken fully of the sevenfold Spirit of sonship. Their wisdom and knowledge comes not from schools or universities, but from the blessed fact that they have been with Jesus.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord. When a man is filled with the Holy Spirit, he is not filled with an influence, a power, or a thing. He is filled with a divine person. Therefore it is said the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. If all people who seek to be baptized with the Holy Spirit had the beautiful understanding that they were seeking to be filled with that divine person who bears within His mighty self, not only all the attributes of personality, but all the attributes of divine personality, then their approach to God would be very different than it is. Almost always people who are seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are mistakenly seeking a blessing, the receiving of which, they hope, will impart to them some sort of miraculous power that will enable them to live more powerfully or perhaps endue them with a supernatural gift. To speak with tongues is often their highest aim, for if they can attain to that phenomenon, then they are happy and satisfied in their belief that they have received all that God has for them in this age.

How pitiful is such an understanding! How desperately short we sell ourselves when we seek the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as an experience that we are to attain instead of presenting ourselves as empty vessels to be filled with that divine person, the Holy Spirit! The one hundred and twenty souls who were filled with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost were not receiving an overwhelming blessing; they were receiving a divine person who had come forth from heaven at the bidding of Christ that He might dwell in them and abide with them throughout all the age. For this purpose our blessed Lord Jesus Christ left this promise: "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more: but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." **John 14:16-20** This divine person, who is God and is sent forth by God, full of all wisdom and truth, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and reverence brings in His mighty fullness untold blessing both to the world that knows not God and to those blessed ones who through His power and the cleansing of the blood of Christ have been brought from darkness into light, being translated into the kingdom of God's dear and precious Son.

It is through the wisdom and power of that divine person, the Holy Spirit, that the world is convicted of sin, given the spirit of repentance, and made ready for the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Of sin, because they believe not on Me;
Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see Me no more:

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

John 16:7-11.

See then the eternal weight of blessing the Holy Spirit has brought to a world that knows not God in first convicting the sinner of his sin, - not only in telling him of it, but fastening it upon him, declaring the fact of sin, the fault of sin, and the fruit of sin. But God be praised, He does not leave us in the wilderness of despair in our conviction, but reproves the world of righteousness, pointing sinners to the Son of God who by His righteousness was so acceptable to God that He could not be holden by death, but is risen from the dead and gone to the Father (compare verse 10) that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, and that all who believe in Him may be free from sin that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. See Rom. 3:26. Likewise also the Holy Spirit convicts the world of judgment: First, that all who persist in sin will come into judgment; second, that Satan, the prince of this world, is judged; and third, that Jesus Christ has fully borne the judgment of God that we may be justified from all things as Paul by the Spirit has declared. "Being justified freely by His grace, through redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the fore-bearance of God." **Rom. 3:24-25**

THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF SONSHIP

Great in goodness is the blessing of the Holy Spirit toward a world of unbelieving men, but behold how great is the Spirit of the Lord toward those who have yielded their lives to the control of Him who is the Spirit of truth, for "when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." **John 16:13-14**

In the Greek language from which our New Testament was translated the word spirit is a neuter noun. Thus in Greek a spirit should always be referred to as it. But so definite is the fact of the personality of the Holy Spirit that even in Greek personal pronouns are used when referring to Him. A prime example of this fact is found in John 16:13-14 where eight times the personal pronoun "he" is used with reference to the Holy Spirit.

Know then, O man, that it is the Spirit of the Lord that rests upon and abides within the sons of God. He who is baptised with the Holy Spirit has not received a mere exuberant blessing in his soul, but a divine person capable of speaking, loving, reproving, teaching, convicting, and transforming, One who will guide you into all truth, for He is the Spirit of truth, and One who will show you things to come. Where in ten thousand worlds can greater truth be found than this: "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:27**

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM

The second Spirit to rest upon the sons of God is the Spirit of wisdom. As the rainbow round about the throne has seven colors yet one bow, so in like manner the seven Spirits of sonship are one Spirit. As each color of the rainbow has its own glory and manifestation, so do the seven Spirits before His throne as they rest upon the sons of God, transforming them into the image of Christ.

To understand what I say you will have to come out of all former tradition. Just as Peter left the safety of the boat to place his feet on the forbidding waves of a turbulent sea, so to follow Christ you must now leave the seeming safety of the ship of church tradition to walk with Him in realms forbidden to natural men. It becomes necessary to see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and touch the untouchable. Thus the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world become clearly seen, even His eternal power and Godhead. Rom. 1:20 Divine wisdom is not something that can be learned from books and teachers. Wisdom must be imparted by God. So great is wisdom and all that pertains to it that the Spirit of God moved upon the wise and understanding Solomon to write a whole book to display that it was a living personality. Numerous writers have often in the holy scripture diligently set forth the marvels of it until the innermost soul of the reader tingles with anticipation

in the hope of being partaker of that wisdom which laid the foundation of the earth and hung the stars upon nothing. Such wisdom is too great for man. The natural mind can never attain it.

If you will step from the little boat of human understanding to tread the waves of revelation with Him, you will come to believe that wisdom, like the Holy Spirit, is not a thing to be studied but a living personality. She is one of the seven lamps burning with fire before the throne, one of the seven colors of the rainbow round about the throne. Oh, how different do spiritual things become when we trace them from death to life, from inanimate things to living personalities. In the triumphant words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life", resurrection passes from the dead and lifeless realm of theology to the realm of personality and living being which Christ Himself is.

Hear now the declaration of wisdom as she seeks to lead us from the realm of the known to the realm of the unknown, from the grave of dead philosophy to the celestial realm of living things.

"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. The Lord possessed me (wisdom) in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways." **Prov. 8:12-32**

Leave not wisdom in the grave clothes of human theology, but let her be raised even as Christ from the dead to abide and grow a living reality in your life, a lamp of fire, a color of the rainbow, the Spirit by which the world will be ruled in the age which is at our doors.

THE SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING

The third Spirit of sonship is the Spirit of understanding. Since the Prophet Isaiah has called understanding a Spirit, we must free ourselves once again of the notion of dealing with understanding as a dead and inanimate thing. We cannot learn understanding as we would learn arithmetic, for it, being a lifeless fact, can as well be performed by a machine as by man, but understanding is a living thing that enters as a Spirit into the soul, a lamp burning with fire, a Spirit before God's throne. How easy it is to miss the vital significance of one word in Scripture! When the Scripture speaks of the quick and the dead, it is speaking of the living and the dead, for "quick" here means "living". 1. Pet. 4:5. And again, when Paul says, "**The Word of God is quick and powerful**" (**Heb. 4:12**), the meaning is living and powerful. So also when Isaiah says, "He shall make Him of quick understanding" (Isa. 11:1), He means He will make Him of living understanding. If understanding then is a living thing, how apt it is that it should be called a Spirit that shall rest upon the sons of God who are indeed the branch from the rod of the stem of Jesse. Isa. 11:1 Jesse was the father of David, the king. Matt. 1:6. Christ is the rod or vine from the stem of Jesse, and we are the branch out of His roots even as He said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." And upon this branch shall rest the Spirit of living understanding.

"Wisdom is the principal thing," said Solomon; "therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding." **Prov. 4:7** It is sport to a fool to do mischief, but a man of understanding hath wisdom. It is better to get wisdom than gold, and understanding is rather to be chosen than choice silver, for "**understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it.**" **Prov. 16:22**

Understanding does not judge either by the sight of the eye or the hearing of the ear, but with righteousness it judges the poor and reproves with equity the meek of the earth. Isa. 11:3-4 In the face of the condemning multitudes it cries, "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness; and then shall every man have praise of God." It was neither love nor forgiveness alone that led Jesus to say to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee", but the Spirit of understanding, for He knoweth our frame and, remembering that we are dust, He said, "Go and sin no more."

The next time you stand ready to condemn men for their slowness to see the glories you behold, give place to the Spirit of understanding that it may possess you; then you will see that God alone can open the eyes of him that was born blind. We have great pity for the man who is blind or who bears in his body some physical deformity, for understanding has taught us that these afflictions came through no fault of his own. Why then do we cast away the Spirit of understanding from us by demanding that he whose spiritual eyes have never been opened should be able to see the mountains filled with the hosts of the Lord? If the men who stoned Stephen to death had seen the heavens open as he did, they would not have stoned him; therefore the Spirit of understanding in his soul whispered, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

"Be not children in understanding, howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." **1 Cor. 14:20** I greatly fear that for many hundreds of years God's people have been men in malice and children in understanding. From time immemorial the church has been a vast feuding ground of malice, envy, bitterness and strife, full of pettiness, peevishness, whisperings, debate, deceit, backbiting, and evil speaking: Men in malice and children in understanding!

Have you ever prayed that God would open the eyes of your understanding that you may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? Ah, how much better this would be than to seek gold and silver to the detriment of your devotion to God, for the heart of God is truly pained when He from heaven beholds His sons neglecting their fervent devotion to Him while they diligently rush about to attain temporal things. Walk no longer in the vanity of your mind, having the understanding darkened, while alienating yourself from the life of God through ignorance. Never spend your days seeking riches, for they make themselves wings and fly away, and if by the will of God riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Just as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, so the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Prov. 9:10 We can never over-emphasize the importance of our coming to know God since so much is involved in it. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. But neither wisdom nor understanding will ever be yours by following the traditions of the dead church systems, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding," saith the Lord. **Prov. 3:5** Yet God's people are always leaning on their own understanding and so often our own understanding is nothing more than the faulty understanding of other men whose traditions, interpretations, and deductions we have accepted. Human understanding is terribly limited. It is limited by lack of knowledge, lack of facts, the presence of prejudice and carnal thinking. "Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the heart." Therefore lean no longer upon thine own understanding in anything. Judge neither after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears, but seek that living Spirit of understanding that comes from God alone, for "when wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things." **Prov. 2:10-12**

THE SPIRIT OF COUNSEL

We shall call it the Spirit of counsel, for that is what it is. Too long the world has known human counsel, which is in fact nothing more than the advice of the carnal mind. As an animal looks at all things through the eyes of an animal with the limited understanding of a beast, so fallen men with carnal minds see all things through carnal eyes and give their counsel as carnal men. They even dare to give spiritual counsel from their carnal minds, but this can only result in death. There are counseling services in every city where counsel is given for

a fee. Some of it is good; some is deplorable and bad, and often the counselor is in as great darkness as the counseled. It is nothing short of amazing to behold what the world will accept as a counselor as infants counsel the aged, unmarried instruct the married in the arts of home-making, and the childless counsel the fathers and mothers in the arts of guiding the family.

The carnal mind has nothing to offer in counsel but darkness and death, for the carnal mind is death, but the spiritual mind is life and peace. The darkness of the carnal mind becomes ever more dark and corrupt as the centuries of our fallen state increase. The counsel given by the wise men of earth brings naught but greater frustration until the hearts of men are failing them for fear and looking after the things that are coming upon the earth. The whole system that calls itself the church has rejected the counsel of God. Is it any wonder, then, that the world of sinners has done the same thing so that when we pipe there is no dancing, and when we lament, none do mourn?

But the age is very near at hand when the sons of God will reign with Him, not in rejection and sorrow, but in transcending glory. The mind of Christ shall dwell richly in all the sons of God and from that divine mind shall flow forth the counsel of the Lord. Now counsel is advice; it is the advice of the Lord. Counsel is good judgment. It is judgment taken by consultation with the Lord. It is a godly and deliberate purpose. The exact counsel that Jesus Christ Himself would give will be the counsel of the sons of God, the branch of the Lord, for upon them shall rest the Spirit of counsel.

Long centuries ago the apostle John looked through the telescope of divine inspiration and beheld at the end of the age a church neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, ready to be spewed from the mouth of the Lord. He saw how rich they were in gold and silver and the increase of goods and property, and he heard them boast, "We have need of nothing." But they knew not that they were wretched and poor and miserable and blind and naked. Rev. 3:16-18. They knew only the counsel and wisdom of the natural mind, neither seeing nor comprehending their wretched estate. Hear now the counsel and wisdom of God to them, for the counsel given to them may well be the first counsel that shall be given to all the world when the sons of God begin their righteous reign. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried with fire that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. As many as I love / rebuke and chasten." Rev. 3:18-19 My heart is filled with prayer and desire that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened to see that that which John beheld in this great vision is in reality the condition in which all Christians live who still adhere to the miserable bondage, the wretched nakedness, and spiritual blindness of the existing church systems, for they have rejected the counsel of the Lord against themselves that they may go on in their coldness, love of money, and spiritual death.

The hour is nigh when all the world shall come under the Spirit of counsel manifested in God's sons, for God has said, "I will call the man that executeth My counsel from a far country," for there is no counsel like the counsel of God which declares the end from the beginning, and from the ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." See Isa. 46:9-11

THE SPIRIT OF MIGHT

The nations of the earth are vainly mustering their mighty men of war. The measured tread of their armies reverberates throughout the earth. Their arsenals are filled to overflowing with weapons of unimaginable destruction, but for all this their hands hang weak and their hearts faint, for they find themselves powerless to cope with the forces of lawlessness and wickedness that rise on every side like specters from the tomb. Men have forgotten God. They do not know that nations are but dust in the palm of God's almighty hand. They fill their mouths with statements of blasphemy as they declare their feeble war against Him. But He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

Do not forget that God is never late. Neither is He ever found sleeping or unprepared. There are no emergencies with God, for He knows the end from the beginning. Think not in thine heart that Satan hath almost obtained the victory, for Satan has no power at all but such as is given him of God. There is no power but God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13:1 Satan and the nations that serve him are doing only what they are permitted to do, for it is God that ruleth in the heaven and in earth setteth up and putteth

down whom He will. While the nations loudly rattle their swords, vainly boasting of their secret weapons, God is secretly preparing His sons of might, for the Spirit of might shall rest upon them. The stone is being cut from the mountain without noise and without hands to smite the earthen feet of the image man has builded (Dan. 2:34) that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His mighty Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. The wonderful age that next shall dawn will know the glory of the Spirit of might as it rests upon God's holy sons. The world will know the wonder of true authority and might with wisdom, counsel, and understanding. The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench. He will reprove with equity the meek of the earth, and with the breath of His nostrils will He slay the wicked. Every yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing, for all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him.

THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge of God cannot be learned in schools and universities. The knowledge derived from schools and instructors in this world is for this age only and is as lifeless and dead as the things with which it deals. But the knowledge of God is not an accumulation of dead facts, but a living reality that springs like a resurrection from the Spirit of knowledge, which is in truth a manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God. Oh, how lively things become when God gives us the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of understanding that we might know that counsel, might, knowledge and reverence are living things with personality proceeding forth from the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit.

If you find such a positive statement hard to believe, perhaps you can first believe a more negative one. When we speak of evil things, we speak of lying, adultery, whoredoms, infirmities, errors, and so forth; but the Lord does not hesitate to say that some people have lying spirits, spirits of bondage, spirits of adultery, spirits of whoredoms, spirits of error, spirits of infirmity, unclean spirits, and many others. While modern learning scoffs at all such teaching, they themselves who scoff are filled with the spirit of delusion that they should not know the truth.

I do not believe in the nonsense of demonology as practiced by some Christians, who seem to delight themselves by continually talking about demons of this and demons of that, and who continually talk of casting out demons. They are usually betrayed by their own imagination. The truth is that every truly repentant soul is delivered from every evil by the omnipotent power of the blood of Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit the moment he believes. The best way to "give place to the devil" is to start talking about him. The point is, however, that since the Lord recognizes the evils above mentioned as spirits rather than mere circumstances, then we should be able to understand what is meant when God speaks of the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of knowledge, the Spirit of truth, or any other. We should be able to see that these are not mere human attributes, but personable beings and living realities as alive as God Himself, living things proceeding from that divine person, the Holy Spirit.

God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, for the workers of iniquity have no knowledge, who eat God's people as they eat bread. Psa. 53:4 But the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. Prov. 2:6 The knowledge of God makes one wiser than all his enemies so that he has more understanding than all his teachers. His knowledge is high; we cannot attain unto it, but He giveth knowledge, sound wisdom, and discretion. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that our hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God.

We are living in the hour when God hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, but lying and swearing, killing and stealing, and committing adultery. Hosea 4:1-2 The world is filled with a knowledge that is leading it to destruction, and the people of God are chained with the shackles and death of tradition, but God is separating a people from the knowledge of the world that He might impart to them the Spirit of knowledge, for the kingdom age is at hand when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

THE SPIRIT OF FEAR

The fear of the Lord has nothing to do with being afraid. The fear of the Lord is reverence for the Lord. It is profound respect mingled with awe, affection, and veneration. It is reverential trust with hatred of evil. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. Psa. 19:9 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Prov. 8:13. The fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and His children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. Prov. 14:26-27 By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil (Prov. 16:6), for the fear of the Lord tendeth to life. Prov. 19:23

God has spoken of a people of whom it is said, "**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" **Rom. 13:18** With their tongues they have used deceit, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness, and the way of peace they have not known. The blessed Spirit of reverence for the Lord has fled from the presence of God's people, for they seem to think nothing of light and silly talk in the presence of that which should be deemed holy. They approach God loudly and carelessly in prayer, willingly barter spiritual things for temporal gain, and quote scriptures in jest, making a mock of reverence.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the beginning of knowledge, too. God will never grant wisdom and understanding to the man whose soul is void of true reverence for God, for true reverence is true humility, and true humility places God's will above all else in the universe. "We ought to obey God rather than man" is its plea.

These are the seven Spirits of sonship that shall rest like a cloud of glory upon the sons of God. By these shall the glory and order of God's kingdom be established. Wisdom hath builded her seven pillars: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, reverence, and deity. These are the seven lamps of fire before the throne. These are the seven Spirits of God. Rev. 4:4-5. These are the seven eyes of the Lamb. Rev. 5:6 This is the rainbow round about God's throne.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 27
THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-6

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CHAPTER ONE
THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

In God's dear book many wonderful things have been written which are seldom taught or even mentioned among the Christian congregations of our day. Truths, which are pointed, plain, and tremendously vital to spiritual understanding, are passed by unnoticed and unmentioned as things irrelevant and inconsequential. Promises, prophecies, covenants and facts which are vital to the age in which we live fill the pages of Holy Writ, yet they go totally ignored by professing multitudes, counted as inapplicable old wives fables and rejected out of hand without a pretext of sincere investigation. It is with regret that I myself confess that in bygone days, while still in bondage to the sectarian systems, I rejected without thorough investigation truth, which I now know to be pertinent to all spiritual growth and understanding. Like so many others, I was quick to respond with accredited answers to the questions raised, vainly imagining that such eternal verities could be disposed of by the threadbare answers of tradition.

All of God's word is intended to be understood, and though truth is usually presented in such a way that it is foolishness to the natural man and he cannot understand it, that same truth blazes as the noonday sun upon the path of him who with an open and contrite heart cries continually, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Only then do we know that the invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen. Truth so vital to us all has been ignored and prejudiced against by the abstruse and slanted minds of those who believe not. So plain, in fact, has God made these blessed truths that, had not scholars and churchmen turned them completely upside down and inside out, they would have been seen and recognized by the multitudes of mankind centuries ago.

In these days, when multitudes are turning away from the truth and their minds are being turned to fables, we would do well to remember that the Bible is forever the word of God. It does not simply contain the word of God; it is the word of God, and if it be believed, we will find within its sacred records all the truth necessary for us to lay firm hold on God's promises and the hopes that are clearly set before us.

The Christian church as we know it has been living in a fools' paradise, propounding pet doctrines, arguing the pros and cons of theories, but almost completely overlooking the eternal purpose of Him who from the foundations of the ages "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Oh, for the hour when all creation will grasp the eternal message, "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends!" It will be a blissful day for you, my brother, my sister, when first your soul becomes thrilled with the revelation that God, before ever the world began or ever the ages were formed, looked forth from His temple of wisdom and understanding to chart with infinite care the course and purpose of every age. With omnipotent power He guides and sustains them according to the purpose of His own will. No purpose ordained by God from the beginning can possibly go astray or be hindered by the efforts of devil or man. All comes from Him, all exists by Him, and all ends in Him.

If you in spirit will stand as "in the beginning" with your all-wise heavenly Father, you will behold the unfolding of an infinite purpose. You will see the unveiling of God's divine intention in Eden's lovely garden. Your heart will throb as you hear Him say, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him, who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** From the lips of God you will be assured that through the anguish and night of the fall His hope was to bring to manifestation a vast family of sons of God, every one in the image of Christ. Rom. 8: 18-29 The creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. Verse 21. You will see, as you stand with Him, that the tragedy of Eden was not a tragedy in the sight of God, but an aionian purpose. You will see with unspeakable joy that the subjecting of the creation (verse 20) to the bondage of corruption was neither a mistake nor an accident, but the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. You will look upon the agonies of Calvary and see, not a stark calamity, but a purpose clearly defined and ordained before the ages began - a purpose by which sin will be forever eliminated from all the universe when God's plan is complete and all creation everywhere is lifted from the thralldom of bondage, corruption, and decay into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

If you will stand with God in the midst of the ages, you will see the immutable and unerring progress of each and every covenant He made with man and behold with wonder and admiration His faithfulness in keeping them unto a thousand generations. With the revelation of the Almighty flooding your soul you will see Him raise up evil men to oppose and resist His will even as He raised up Pharaoh that His name might be known in all the earth. Exod. 9:16. You will see Him raise up both men and nations who are destined to be His bitter opponents that the righteous might come to maturity, having fully come to the knowledge of good and evil.

It is high time that the people of God began to investigate the Bible for themselves. The word of God was written for you to read and believe. It was never intended to be interpreted for you by men who have a denominational axe to grind or a sectarian viewpoint to defend. Let God's people come out from among them and begin to search the scriptures for themselves, and God will be their Father and they will sup with Him and He with them. Let us ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and before we realize it we will find ourselves digging deep in a blessed gold mine of truth. Truth was intended to transform men, to make them love God and lay hold upon His eternal purposes. Truth was never intended to force mankind into the narrow confines of some sectarian prison cell. Christ Himself is the truth, the light and the way, and He came declaring that the truth would make us free. Bright is the shining of the sun, yet it is useless to seek its face if we cover our eyes with a dark veil or throw a blanket over our head. In all the ages of time no heavier veil ever existed than the veil of human tradition, by which religious men make the commandment of God of none effect. Matt. 15:6 It is only when this darkling veil is cast away from us that the divine purpose of the ages unfolds before our wondering eyes.

Upon your desk today there is or should be that book we call the Bible. This book alone reveals God's secret plan of the ages. It unfolds with unerring accuracy the mysteries of eons yet to come. It reveals the purpose of the present fearful turmoil which now on every hand encompasses the world. It points with unerring finger the way the saints must walk and tells us what the end will be of the world wide distress and tribulation that is consuming us like a fire. These enlightening discoveries will all be made by those who believe the word of God and not by those who disbelieve it. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He will not disclose His mysteries to the unbelieving minds of those who hate Him. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that that he hath." **Matt. 13:12**

The reader of this message does not need to be told that we are living in the closing days of this dispensation of grace. The rapidly multiplying signs, which everywhere give forth their lurid light, are shouting from the house tops that the kingdom of God is at hand. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. The evil shadows of the great tribulation hang like a gloom all over the world. Soon, very soon, will the armies of the antichrist challenge the armies of the Son of God, whose eyes are a flame of fire and from whose mouth goes forth a sharp, two-edged sword with which He will smite the nations. With this great battle, described in Rev. 19: 11-21, the six days of man's labor and misrule will end and the kingdom of God will follow to fill the earth with righteousness for a thousand years. Rev. 20 "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." **Isa. 9:7**

For many years I have felt that the day would come when it would be my God given task to unfold, at least in part, some of the hidden mysteries concerning God's chosen people, who are he seed of Abraham. Not many people now reading this message are fully aware that the entire Old Testament from Genesis, chapter twelve and verse one, to Malachi, chapter four and verse six, together with much of the New Testament concerns itself with that chosen people - all twelve tribes of them, who are the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This fact in itself should be enough to demonstrate the vast importance connected with the subject. In God's holy word this chosen race is described in such endearing terms as these:

My people Israel.	Ezek. 39:7.
Mine inheritance.	Isa. 19: 25.
My heritage.	Joel 2:3.
My glory.	Isa. 46: 13.
My servant.	Isa. 41: 8.
My witnesses.	Isa. 43: 10.
My called.	Isa. 48: 12.
My nation.	Isa. 51: 4.
Mine elect.	Isa. 45: 4.
My redeemed.	Isa. 43: 4.
My firstborn.	Jer. 31: 9.

In all the above instances the speaker and declarer is God Himself and the nation concerned is the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.

To every thinking person or any Christian with a spiritual mind and an understanding heart it must be extremely obvious that a nation spoken of in such terms as these, whose history and promise of future glory is the topic of the entire Old Testament and much of the New Testament, cannot be carelessly set aside or lightly discarded to suit the whims and fancies of blind leaders of the blind who love to spiritualize or consign to the past any truth that may upset their established tradition, and so they commit to the garbage any truth that appears to demand a greater understanding on their part. It is very clear in God's word that the Israel nations were declared and ordained by God to be the head and not the tail among the nations of the earth. Deut. 28: 13. According to the prophecies and covenants of the Old Testament, the Israel nations were to be the leading and greatest nations of the earth in the latter days, enjoying the blessings of heaven above, the earth beneath, and the wealth under the earth. They were to be a blessing to all other nations, lending to all but borrowing from none. Deut. 28:12

As God may help me, I shall endeavor to explain the purpose of God for these people, both for the present age and the ages that are yet to come. As God's inspired word opens before us, we will behold with rejoicing the unfolding of the words, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." I am fully aware that many will disagree with and even oppose the message I bring, but my sincere prayer and hope before God is that all who read these lines will become seekers after truth, unafraid to have their understanding stirred by the unfolding of the truth kept hidden through much of this present age, but ready to be revealed in the last time. May the Spirit of the Lord open the eyes of all who read to give light and understanding in the knowledge of His will.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

In the twelfth chapter of Genesis an entirely new era in God's dealings with mankind is revealed with the calling of Abram and his descendants to be a special people, a chosen nation for God's service, that through Abram and his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. These descendants of Abram were to be a distinct and separate people unto God, peculiarly His forever. From them Christ the Saviour and Redeemer would eventually come. From the seed of Abraham - as I will show you later - the sons of God, the body of Christ, would come, and from his seed also in that glad millennial day, when "all Israel shall be saved," (Rom. 11:26), the bride of Christ will come. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Gal. 3:16. Thus we must conclude that even Gentiles, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, become the children of Abraham by faith, as it is written, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 12:1-3** It would be difficult to conceive of any more sweeping and all-inclusive statement than this. Though we will not stop now to analyze its depths, in these simple but remarkable sentences we have an incredibly sweeping, far-reaching statement that will take the thousand generations of 1 Chron. 16:15-17 and Psa. 105:8 to fulfill.

- (1) Get thee out of thy country.
- (2) Unto a land that I will shew thee.
- (3) I will make of thee a great nation.
- (4) I will bless thee.
- (5) I will make thy name great.
- (6) Thou shalt be a blessing.
- (7) I will bless him that blesseth thee and curse him that curseth thee.
- (8) In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

It is extremely important that we grasp the fact here and now that God's promise and covenant with Abraham is wholly, entirely, and completely unconditional. It is an indisputable fact that no choice was given to Abraham either here or in any other place, or were there any conditions attached or demanded of him. God omnipotent, immutable, eternal commanded this man Abram to get out of his country unto a land that he would later be shown, and the same immutable, eternal Father tells him what He intends to do with him and his seed after him. There were absolutely no conditions whatsoever attached. No words were ever spoken to Abram in which it was inferred that God would bring these blessings upon him in reward for faithfulness, or for works, or for anything else. Everywhere in connection with this covenant we hear the immutable words of the immutable Lord, saying, "I will shew thee. I will bless thee. I will make thee a great nation. I will bless them that bless thee. I will curse them that curse thee. In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." If ever a covenant was made in which God was supreme and man had nothing whatever to say, it is the covenant the Lord God Almighty made with his servant Abraham.

The all-wise and eternal God, looking with unerring accuracy through the vista of the ages, was not in the least ignorant of all the rebellion, the stiff-necked obstinacy, the idolatry and failure of the seed of Abraham, yet He and He alone made His definite choice. Though now we see through a glass darkly, in that wonderful day, when the loose ends of all the ages are tied together, we will see all things as plain and clear as God saw them in the long ago and we will rejoice in the wisdom of Him who made such an immutable covenant with Abraham and his seed forever.

How good it would be if all God's people would take time to consider who God really is. In all probability throughout your life you have honored Him as the Lord God, the Maker of all, omnipotent, immutable, omniscient, eternal, holy, righteous and good, full of compassion and longsuffering, and abounding in tender mercies, yet for all that God's people have by their tradition made this Almighty One appear to be a weak, insipid being so changeable in His ways and unwise in His purposes that one would surely think the Lord of glory to be little more than an idol of wood or stone. My friend, when you are contemplating God, you are pondering Him who is the omnipotent creator of heaven and earth, the eternal, who is the beginning and the end of all things. You are considering Him who speaks and it is done, who commands and immediately all the powers of the universe, whether good or evil, begin working together for good that His eternal will might be fulfilled. Thus then we must conclude that, when He, the all-wise, almighty, begins a good work, He will

complete it, and in the end we will make the great discovery that even the most violent oppositions of Satan were part of the infinite plan whereby the Lord worked out His perfect will. For no other reason does the scripture declare that all things work together for good to them that love God. All things simply means all things, and nothing can possibly hinder or prevent omnipotence.

When men make agreements and covenants with each other, we often encounter what is commonly known as small print. Statements are made in ambiguous terms purposely intended to be deceptive. But in God's great covenant with Abram there was no fine print nor ambiguous term, neither were there any conditions demanded of him, because the man had no voice whatever in making the covenant. Abram knew nothing of the future devised for him. He was not so much as told unto what land he should go. That was to be shown to him later. But the Lord knew every detail the future would hold. He did not see the children of Abraham as an obedient people, continually loving and serving God with a pure heart, but looking down the corridor of the years, he saw a rebellious and stiff-necked people, always prone to wander away from Him, continually digressing to the worship of some other god, forever breaking the commandments of the Lord. From the beginning, before ever He made His covenant with them, He saw this people as a people who would be so rebellious against Him that they would eventually have to be torn from their beautiful land of promise to be carried to captivity and bondage among godless Gentile nations; yet for all this they were to be forever His people, His heritage, and His nation.

In the final chapters of the book of Deuteronomy Moses, the servant of the Lord, solemnly warned the nation Israel as to their calling and responsibility before God. After pronouncing upon them almost indescribable blessings that would follow their devotion to Him, he warned them of the awful desolation that awaited them for their disobedience. This is what he said: "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." **Deut. 31:29** Yet this same Moses, even while telling them of their abominations for which they would be scattered among the nations, saw them still as the children of His immutable covenant and continued thus: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." Deut. 30:1-3. One would certainly be inclined to suspect that God would cast off this rebellious nation that they might be forgotten before Him. But this is never so. Israel is a chosen race forever, sealed with an everlasting covenant, always bearing the judgment of their iniquities but always through God's judgment being returned to Him. With the certain knowledge that these chosen people, inheritors of the covenant made with Abraham, are forever peculiarly the Lord's, give ear to the triumphant words of the apostle Paul, sounding like a mighty fiat for ages past and ages yet unborn. "Has God cast away His people? God forbid! ...God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." **Rom. 11:1-2** Then with triumphant understanding of God's plan, Paul writes again, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" **Rom. 11:15**

So everlasting was the covenant made with Abraham that no subsequent failure on his part or on the part of his seed at any future time could possibly annul the agreement. The only responsibility Abram had was to obey, and everything else unto the ages of the ages, as we shall see, was in the hands of the Lord. Because the covenant was made by God and not by Abram, no sin or disobedience on his part could ever possibly absolve God of His unconditional promises. Because it was God's promise and not Abram's, therefore the carrying out and fulfilling of that promise was the responsibility of God and not of Abram. This fact, I think, was proved over and over again in the later years of Abram's life. God made the plans and Abram obeyed them. When he made mistakes, the Lord corrected him, but the covenant itself was unaltered and unchanged, as immutable as before.

Henry D. Houghton has most ably pointed out that in most, if not all, human covenants there are five distinct and essential points, as follows:

- (1) The date of the agreement.
- (2) The parties between whom the covenant is made.
- (3) The subject and scope of the covenant.
- (4) The time and operation of the agreement, limited or otherwise.
- (5) The signature.

It will be noticed now that all these five articles of agreement are distinctly visible in this covenant between God and Abram. Let us note them well and neither detract from them nor add to them, but let us rather accept them as they are, for that is faith.

It may be well to mention that not all the promises of the covenant are recorded in Genesis, chapter twelve. In Genesis twelve we have God's irrevocable promise to Abram, but in Genesis seventeen the terms of the covenant are laid out in greater detail. This is what it says: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." **Gen. 17:1-8**

Let us now apply to this statement the five essential points we have outlined above and we will see how genuine and binding the covenant really is.

First. The date of the covenant is clearly stated as being in the ninety-ninth year of Abraham, or 1898 B.C. (Usser).

Second. In verse two and verse seven the parties to the covenant are clearly stated and set out: "Between Me and thee and thy seed after thee."

Third: The subject and scope of the covenant is clearly stated in verses two, four, five, six, seven and eight. "I will multiply thee exceedingly. Thou shalt be a father of many nations. I will make thee exceedingly fruitful. . .and will make nations of thee... and kings shall come out of thee. I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee... to be a God unto thee. And / will give unto thee the land wherein thou art a stranger."

Fourth. The time and length of the agreement is given in verse seven. "...to thee and to thy seed in their generations for an everlasting covenant." The agreement is perpetual and endures as long as the ages endure. I will greatly enlarge on this fourth point later on.

Fifth, and perhaps most important of all, is the signature to the agreement. This is found in verse one. "I am the Almighty God." This covenant was made by God. All its promises are of and from God. The covenant is signed by God. Abram made no promises at all, nor did he sign the agreement. Therefore it is wholly unconditional in all its aspects and leans hard on the eternal faithfulness of Almighty God.

My soul sings a thousand hallelujahs at the glory of the thing, for I know that He who promised is able to perform. Salvation is not of man. The promises are not of man. The plan is not of man. The eternal purposes are not of man. It is God who is the author and the finisher, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last in every sense of the word. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends. Glory to Him forever and ever, unto the ages of the ages, and for eternity as well!

In the words of this wonderful covenant the Almighty God makes the irrevocable decision that from Abraham He will create and produce an entirely new race. That race will be His people and His special heritage forever that through this nation and its seed every family of the earth shall eventually be blessed. I declare without hesitation that our Lord Jesus Christ came from this race. First He was the seed of Abraham according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness and the resurrection from the dead. Furthermore, the church had its beginning with this race on the day of Pentecost, and it is of tremendous importance that we see that the one hundred and forty-four thousand sons of God, sealed and chosen as we read in the book of Revelation, chapter 7:4-8, are from the twelve tribes of this same race. When all Israel shall be saved, as is clearly stated by Paul and Isaiah in Romans 11:26 and Isaiah 66:8, this race, the seed of Abraham, will be the principal nation of the millennial kingdom, judged by Christ and those who have followed Him. Matt. 19:28. This race, saved and washed and forever freed from sin, will be the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven at the end of the millennial kingdom as a bride adorned for her husband.

"Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." **Rom. 11:1-2** But their eyes at present are darkened that they may not see and their backs are bowed down for an age. **Verse 10** "Have they stumbled that they might fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness! For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" **Rom. 11:11-12, 15.** "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part (not total, please note; only in part) is happened to Israel, until the fullness (full number) of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungoldiness from Jacob. For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. Concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." **Rom. 11:25-28.** (The fathers here are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.) Please notice with care that Paul here definitely shows that their restoration is in fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham.

From the day God made His covenant with Abraham, throughout the book of God, all through the intervening centuries to this very day and the ages yet to come, God's choice is certain and irrevocable. Certainly there has been anger, wrath, rebuke, judgment and punishment sore and terrible upon all the seed of Abraham - so much so that one might think God's mercy had departed from them for ever, but that can never be, for above all the turmoil that has resulted from their abounding iniquities God's attitude has never changed toward them and His mercy is ever extended unto them because of the certainty of a covenant made unto a thousand generations.

Wonderful as was the promise made by God to Abram at the first, I think it correct to say that here and there along the way the dear Lord added more extensive promises, which may rightfully be included in the covenant. For instance, Genesis seventeen records deeper promises than Genesis twelve, and then again, when Abraham was called upon to offer His son Isaac as a sacrifice to God and refused not to obey, the Lord adds the promise of another seed - a seed that hitherto had not been mentioned, saying, "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou has done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore: and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice." **Gen. 22:16-18.** The Lord did not say to Abraham in this passage, "If you do this I will do this," but, "Because thou hast done this thing, I will do." Abraham had no more to do than that which he had already done. Thus I declare that no circumstances anywhere or at any time can possibly release God from His immutable promise. And who is that man anywhere in the world who is so vain as to imagine that the Almighty God has any wish to be absolved from His promise?

A most significant statement is made by the apostle Paul in the book of Hebrews, chapter six, verses thirteen to eighteen. "When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation

is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew onto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things (God's promise and God's oath), in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." God's promise is immutable and His oath is immutable. Thus His promise to Abraham and his seed is immutable and is confirmed by God's immutable oath. Hence the promise is made doubly sure, for He who promised and He who swore is God, who cannot lie. What I am saying here is so revolutionary in its scope that it demands a complete new understanding of the unchanging purposes of Him who swore and never repents, who declares and His word stands forever. When the great apostle Paul declared, "The gifts and callings of God are without repentance," he was speaking of God's covenant with Israel. Surely no one would be hardy enough to deny that, for he says, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." **Rom. 11:28, 29.**

This wonderful covenant with Abraham and his seed forever was not only a covenant with an individual, but it was most certainly a covenant made with the nation that sprang from that one individual. That nation is Israel. That nation has twelve heads and, though Israel is but one nation, each of the twelve sons of Jacob was to become a nation in his own right, or a tribe of one nation. These Israelitish nations may be clearly defined in our day as "the head and not the tail." They are without doubt the leading nations of the earth, just as it was promised to our father Abraham that great nations would come from him and that his name would be great.

It is of utmost importance that we point out that it was not Abraham who sought out God to make a covenant with Him. It was God who sought out Abram to make a covenant with him. The covenant was sought by God, and proposed by God, and instituted by Him. The whole intention of the covenant was the inauguration of a special relationship between God and Abraham and his seed forever. Ages and ages were to pass by, but the covenant could never be annulled. Dispensations and millenniums were to wax and wane, but the covenant was to remain absolutely unaltered. Oh, what a wonderful thing that really is! How inexhaustible God's resources, wisdom and knowledge are! How unfathomable His decisions are! How untraceable His ways! Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts or advised Him? Who has advanced Him anything for which he will have to be repaid? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Blessed be His name for ever more.

The whole wonderful book called the Bible is the history of Abraham's race. It does not merely mention the nation Israel, but the actual history of Abraham and his seed, both natural and spiritual, fills its inspired pages from Genesis, chapter twelve, to the last chapter of the book of Revelation. And, if I may make so bold as to say so, I am certain that beyond the millennial kingdom the seed of Abraham, by then all redeemed by the blood of Christ never to wander or sin any more, will be the blessing and light of those ages in which it is God's purpose to gather together in one all things in Christ. Eph. 1:10

In Old Testament times the making of a covenant was always considered a very serious and sacred matter. None of the parties to the covenant entered lightly into the agreement. So sacred was the covenant in the eyes of those who made it that it was often sealed by an act of death. As long as a man lives there always exists the possibility of his breaking a covenant, but after he is dead, there is no longer such possibility. It was therefore the custom in the Old Testament times, when a covenant was made between two parties, that death should be implied in the following manner. An animal was killed and the carcass divided in two. The two halves were then separated a short distance apart. The party making the covenant would then walk between the two halves of the dead animal. Thus in figure he was walking in the midst of death, and so in the presence of witnesses the covenant was made irrevocable by the symbol of death.

Now Paul, writing to the Hebrew Christians and speaking of the covenant made by Jesus Christ - that by the shedding of His blood we should be forgiven of our sins and justified in His sight - made this remarkable statement: "Where a testament (covenant) is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator (covenanter). For a testament (covenant) is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament (covenant) was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This

is the blood of the testament (covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission." **Heb. 9:16-22** From this passage we not only gain a better understanding of the meaning of the all-essential shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, but we also understand more fully why death, either in actuality or in symbol, was necessary to guarantee that a covenant should be unalterable.

When the Lord made His great covenant with Abram, He made it unchangeable by doing two immutable things. First, God, who cannot lie, gave His promise to Abram. Second, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself that blessing He would bless him. But, though additional witness was not needed, the Lord God Almighty, who cannot lie nor die, added the further assurance of the death symbol as follows: In Genesis, chapter fifteen and verses one to eight, we have the account of the Lord's renewing His covenant promises to Abraham and actually showing him the vast scope of the land he was to possess. In verse six we are told that Abraham believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness, but in verse eight Abraham asked the Lord this one very important question, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" It is very apparent that the Lord considered Abraham's question to be a very logical one, and without a moment's hesitation or a word of rebuke the Lord gave him the one and only absolute answer that could be given. Behold the wonder of the following words: "And He (God) said unto him, Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove and a young pigeon. And he took unto Him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not." **Verses 9-10** Here we see the Lord carrying out in every detail the vital act of confirming a covenant by death. Now notice what happened. The animals were killed and the halves divided, the heifer, the goat, and the ram. The birds were not divided, but laid apart on either side. As Abraham carefully watched to see what God would do, a deep sleep fell upon him and an horror of great darkness, and he heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him. Then as he watched, "it came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between the pieces." **Verse 17** Then we are told, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates," **Verse 18**. What was the burning lamp that passed between the sections of those slain beasts? Or should I enquire who was it? It was none other than the Lord Himself, walking amid death as the custom was, sealing His own covenant with death that it might be unalterable and it might be everlastingly sure to Abram and his seed forever.

There is no possible way by which such a covenant can be suspended. It was made to Abram and his seed forever and sealed with the blood of death, the Lord Himself walking between the divided carcasses of the beasts that were slain. We will further notice that it was the Lord and not Abram who said, "Take Me an heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon." And it was the Lord, not Abram, who sealed the covenant by walking in the midst of death that not even the Almighty could ever make the covenant of none effect. The worth of this covenant lies in the fact that it cannot be broken. No power on earth can break it, for He has promised, He has sworn by Himself, and He has walked through the symbol of death. Man cannot change it. Unbelief cannot change it. Parents cannot change it, for each generation inherits its promise from God because the promise was made to Abram and his seed forever. Even the mighty thunderings of the law at Sinai, which was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant, could not disannul or make the promise of none effect, for God gave it to Abraham and his seed forever by His immutable promise.

CHAPTER TWO THE WITNESSES TO THE COVENANT

Two little clouds one summer's day
Went flying through the sky;
They went so fast they bumped their heads,
And both began to cry.

Old Father Sun looked out and said,
"Oh, never mind, my dears;
I'll send my little fairy folk

To dry your falling tears."

One fairy came in violet,
And one in indigo;
In blue, green, yellow, orange, red
They made a pretty row.

They wiped the cloud tears all away,
And then from out the sky
Upon a line the sunbeams made
They hung their gowns to dry.

It was almost sixty years ago that our teacher, Miss Robinson, taught our grade two class to recite those pretty words. Many times as little children we had seen the beautiful rainbow, thrown like a mantle around the shoulders of a passing storm, but little did we realize that every appearance of its magnificent beauty was confirmation of the everlasting covenant which God, who cannot lie, made with His beloved servant Noah.

The history of the flood of Noah's day is not a fable to be believed by some and ridiculed by others. Evidence of its devastation is found almost everywhere on earth and people who have traveled much throughout the world testify continually that the tradition of a great flood which once inundated and ravished the earth that then was is to be found with every tribe and nation of the world. As to the pure all things are pure and to the unholy and defiled nothing is pure, so to the faithful believer all that God has spoken is true, but to the unbeliever the gloom of doubt casts its sickening shadow over all God has spoken, even making uncertain the Lord God Himself.

There is no greater certainty than that there will never be another flood. It was God who opened the windows of heaven and loosed the fountains of the mighty deep, sending upon the earth a flood to destroy the world and all its wickedness in the days of Noah, but it was the selfsame Lord who, after the fearful flood of waters was assuaged, made this covenant with Noah and his seed: "And I, behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

Gen. 9:9-17

It is not the covenant God made with Noah with which we wish to deal, but the covenant He made with Abraham. We refer here to the Noahic covenant only that our faith may be greatly inspired to trust the word of the living and immutable God and that we may be certain that all He has promised He will perform, even to every jot and tittle, and nothing can let or hinder His faithfulness and power. As God's covenant with Noah was unconditional, so also was His covenant with Abraham. Noah had nothing to do and nothing to say about the terms of the covenant. It was as certain and sovereign as any will that could possibly be made. Though that covenant was made with all mankind forever and with the beasts and the birds and the earth itself and though none of these had one word to say about the covenant or its terms, they can enjoy its promise and live in the knowledge that, however great a storm may threaten the world, never again will the earth or the people in it, regardless of their sin or wickedness, be destroyed by the waters of a flood. That covenant is just as certain as God is certain, and it is in His great love and mercy that year after year, storm after storm, He hangs His bow of sevenfold witness in the cloud that we may know He has not forgotten His promise or in any way altered the terms of it. Would God that all men and women, boys and girls, would look up to God when the rainbow

appears in the sky and give thanks to Him whose promises never fail, for all He has promised will surely be fulfilled.

There is something entrancingly wonderful about a rainbow. It is beyond my understanding. Though its appearance in the cloud may have a simple scientific explanation that readily satisfies the unbelieving and unconcerned, when by the eye of faith and trust we look beyond its excellent beauty, we find God and see a glory that causes believers to worship at His feet. Thus did Ezekiel worship when, clothed by the glory of the Holy Spirit, he beheld a vision of God so sublime that no man has ever yet been able to fathom its depths or explain its meaning. "Above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." **Ezek.**

1:26-28

John the beloved was on the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of the Lord when he was caught away in the Spirit. In spirit he saw the glory of the Lord and the fullness of Christ in both the Head and the body together. Then, in chapter four, he heard a voice like a trumpet calling to him, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." **Rev. 4:1-3** I cannot explain the meaning of it. No doubt there are some who can, but in view of the desolation, which John was to behold from this heavenly vantage point, it is a thing of exceeding wonder that the rainbow of promise was over God's throne. The earth and its inhabitants would not be destroyed by the tribulation of water and neither will they be totally destroyed by the dreadful fires of tribulation that even now are devouring far and near among the hosts of mankind.

Again in Revelation, chapter ten, the rainbow appears. Six of the seven trumpets of the Lord had sounded and, following the first of those dreadful blasts, the third part of the trees and the grass were burned up. Following the second, a mountain burning with fire had fallen into the sea and the third part of the sea had turned to blood, and a third part of the creatures which were in the sea died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed. When the third trumpet sounded, a star fell upon the rivers and fountains of water and they became bitter, and men died of the water. The fourth angel sounded and a third part of the moon and the sun and the stars were darkened, and an angel flew through heaven proclaiming woe to the inhibitors of the earth. The fifth angel sounded and a noisome smoke appeared from the bottomless pit, and dire calamities fell upon all who had not the seal of God in their foreheads. And when the sixth angel sounded, the great river Euphrates was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared for the battle in which two hundred million men would be locked in the final conflict of the age.

But, before the seventh angel sounded, John said, "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." When the seventh angel sounded, the mystery of God was to be finished for this age, and there at the close of that dread tribulation was the rainbow of God's hope and promise just as it had appeared after the fearful flood in the long, long ago. God is faithful and He cannot lie. He gives His assurance to man that he might know that beyond the dreadful storm clouds that gather on every horizon there is promise — a promise that is fulfilled in God's wonderful Christ.

We have spoken briefly of the covenant, which God made with Noah and we have seen the Almighty confirm that covenant by the sevenfold witness of the rainbow. I may be wrong, but it would appear that the seven colors of the rainbow represent the seven Spirits that are before His throne. Rev. 1:4. These are mentioned in Isa. 11:2 as the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of might, the spirit of knowledge, and the spirit of reverence, or fear. If these be the seven witnesses who notarized the agreement God Almighty made with Noah, his seed, and all the earth, then do you not think it is a

most wonderful thing that the prophet Isaiah, speaking to the rebellious house of Judah on the very eve of her Babylonian captivity, raised his prophetic voice in these words, which without doubt have definite reference to God's covenant with Abraham and his seed after him? Listen to these words of promise to that wicked and rebellious generation of Israel's seed. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee; saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." **Isa. 54: 7-10** As God has sworn that the waters of Noah shall never more go over the earth and has confirmed that covenant by the continual miracle of the rainbow, so has He sworn that His kindness shall never depart from Israel, nor can His covenant with them be annulled or broken. This, we must all admit, is an exceedingly wonderful promise and I am sure every reader will heartily agree.

Every covenant to be effective must have one or more witnesses. Thus when God made His covenant with Noah, He gave a sure, certain and unchanging witness that He would never break His promise. The rainbow every time it appears is God's unalterable signature to the agreement. Every time the storm clouds release their waters upon the earth, God's signature appears in the beauty of a rainbow to assure us that He has remembered His ancient covenant and will never flood the world again. What need has God to be reminded of His covenant? How could He who is omniscient ever forget? Yet listen to what He says regarding the sign of the rainbow: "The bow shall be seen in the cloud: and / will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." **Gen. 9:14-16** "I will look upon it and I will remember My covenant." What wonderful words of assurance are these and what a steadfast assurance of His faithfulness!

As God has sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so has He sworn that He will remember His covenant with Abraham and Israel, his seed, and that His kindness will never, ever depart from them. (Please read again Isa. 54: 8-10) **When the Lord swore to Abraham that (1) he would be a great nation, (2) He (God) would bless him, (3) He would make his name great, (4) he (Abraham) would be a blessing, (5) He would bless him that blessed Abraham, (6) and curse him that cursed him, and (8) in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself (Heb. 6:13) that by two immutable things (God's promise and God's oath) we might have strong confidence, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us. Verse 18. Just as the Lord gave the rainbow as a witness to Noah and his seed, so also He gave an ever abiding witness to Abraham and his seed forever.**

It will now be to our eternal edification to examine the eight ever present, ever abiding witnesses, which God has given to assure us that His covenant with the twelve tribes of Israel cannot and will not ever be broken. An everlasting covenant has need of everlasting witnesses, witnesses that ever live, and signatures that cannot be erased. It would not have been like God to call upon frail men to witness His agreement. It would not have seemed fit for the Eternal to have called upon Lot or Chedorlaomer or Sarah to witness the agreement, for they were only frail mortals, creatures of time that would soon pass from the horizon of all earthly activity and be no more. Men in future ages might argue as to whether such persons ever really existed, as indeed in our day they carelessly do. But when God calls upon witnesses to His everlasting covenant, He must have a more sure witness than the signatures of men. Centuries after the agreement with Abraham and his seed was made, the prophet Jeremiah told us what those everlasting witnesses were. These witnesses, though silent in their eternal spheres, shout aloud their witness every morning and hymn their message every night that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. The sound of their witness reaches into all the world, bearing witness to the extravagant claims of the apostle Paul that **"all Israel shall be saved." Rom. 11: 26**

Though God is ever faithful and all mankind should believe His word, yet, alas, alas, men do not believe Him; neither do they trust His faithfulness. I terribly fear that we shall find the greatest offenders to be those blind leaders of the blind who profess to be shepherds of God's flock and keepers of His promise. Not only are these

an offence unto themselves, but they diligently plant the seeds of doubt and unbelief in the hearts of the unsuspecting millions who listen to them. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established, the Lord declares. But the Lord has added more than two or three witnesses as we shall see - witnesses that do not die, witnesses that do not lie, witnesses that cannot change their minds with the passage of time or the turn of events, witnesses that silently and continually declare that all is well, that God is in His heaven keeping diligent watch over His chosen nation, fulfilling His word, and carrying out His promises toward them and His purpose in them.

The ten tribes of the house of Israel had been carried away into their Assyrian captivity more than one hundred years when Jeremiah gave the prophecy I shall now quote. The two tribes of the house of Judah were on the very eve of their Babylonian captivity when the weeping prophet Jeremiah called on eight everlasting witnesses to attest God's faithfulness to His covenant; "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is His name: If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord." **Jer. 31:35-37** Then in **Chapter 33:23** he continues with these words: "Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying," Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen, He hath even cast them off? Thus they have despised My people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the Lord; If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be the rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." **Jer. 33: 23-26**

Eight unimpeachable witnesses to God's covenant with His earthly people are called upon here to bear witness - the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, the earth, the sea, the day and the night. As long as these continue, the Almighty declares, so also will His covenant continue which He made with Abraham and with His seed, which Jeremiah identifies as the two families, which the Lord has chosen. Verse 24 The two families are the house of Israel, consisting of the ten tribes, and the house of Judah, consisting of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

If the rainbow, appearing occasionally in the cloud was to be an everlasting witness that the earth would never more be destroyed by a flood, what shall we say of these eight ever, present witnesses that are about us, reminding us continually, both by day and by night, that His covenant with the seed of Abraham can never fail. Cast your eyes heavenward by day, O man, and you will see the fiery witness of the sun as he smiles the message: "God will never forget His covenant with His people." Lift up your eyes to behold the magnificent heavens at night, for her innumerable lights give the assurance, "The Lord has remembered His covenant with Abraham and his seed forever." Praise Him, oh ye sun and moon! Praise Him, all ye stars of light! Praise Him, oh ye heavens above, that His promise shall endure while lights do shine and be steadfast while they remain unaltered and unhindered. His promises abide unswayed and unsullied by the failures of carnal man, whose unbelief momentarily hides His face from theirs. Let him that rideth upon the sea remember forever that her mighty waves, crashing with violence upon rock and shore, call with their every rising and falling that, while her waters fill the seas, God's covenant with His people abideth sure. Let every farmer who plows the earth and every miner who digs for treasure in the bowels thereof remember the covenant of the Lord, for every plowing, each lump of coal or nugget of gold that comes from the miner's digging, bears witness with its silent voice that God's covenant with Abraham and his seed is standing sure, and while earth and things therein endure, so also will His covenant endure. Thus saith God, "While sun and moon and stars endure, my covenant shall endure." When these shall be no more, covenants will be needed no more at all.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father!
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not; Thy compassions they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.
Summer and winter and spring time and harvest,

Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Jeremiah did not stop here, however, even with so great promises as these. His heart, though crushed beneath the load of judgment that had befallen his people, was yet overflowing with the knowledge of the faithfulness of God. Lifting up his prophetic voice with tears and triumph blending, he cried aloud this assurance: "Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David, My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David My servant, and the Levites that minister unto Me." **Jer. 33: 20-23**

Somewhere upon the earth today the families of God's chosen people exist, both the unbelieving house of Judah and the rebellious house of Israel. So also must exist the seed of David and his throne, reserved until He comes whose right it is to reign, and until the day comes when man has opened the earth and measured its depths, and stretched out his line to measure the expanse of the heavens, he must stop his vain imagining that God has forgotten his covenant with Israel. When the sun and the moon, the stars and the heavens and the earth and the sea are all removed, then and not until then may the covenant with Abraham and his seed be done away. Even then the covenant shall endure but, the promise being fulfilled, will have no further need of witnesses. Powers of earth, powers of heaven, and powers of hell are impotent in the light of God's promises. His promises are sure. None of His words are ambiguous. His covenants are positive, definite and reliable. All are aionian and as durable as the sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the earth, and the heaven above.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning," saith the Lord. "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." God can never cast off His people - not for all their horrible sins, their unbelief, and their turning to other gods. His covenant to Abraham is certain and sure, and when He has brought them by the way which we humans cannot fully understand and their learning is complete, they will be re-gathered according to the word of the Lord.

Hear the word of the Lord as the great prophet Isaiah foretells the days of Israel's captivity and feel the glory of the promises and the assurance of their regathering. See how beautifully he looks beyond the shadows of the dark days that lay before them unto the blessed day when the Lord shall say of them, "Their righteousness is of Me." "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shall break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shall not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth; and shall not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou was refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold. I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shall be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by Me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed

against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." **Isa. 54: 1-17**

I trust that, as my story unfolds, every devout reader will discover for himself the infinite purpose the Lord had in mind when He made such an everlasting covenant as this with Abraham His servant and Israel His heritage. We poor humans with our dull lowland ears and heavy hearts so filled with doubt and misunderstanding are inclined to think the Lord of heaven and earth could be as changeable and vacillating as we are. Men and nations, sad to say, willingly enter into solemn covenants only to forget all about them in the first moments of inconvenience. I wonder how many solemn covenants have been made and broken by men and nations since that fateful day in 1914 when Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany discarded as a "scrap of paper" his solemn agreement with England? Men and nations are seldom worthy of trust. Their solemn agreements crumble and are discarded on every hand. He whose name is faithful and true calls heaven and earth to witness that His word to men and nations is sure and changeless unto a thousand generations. Deut. 7:9

Now if in our deliberations concerning the Lord and His faithful covenant with Israel we come to the childish conclusion that the Lord was doing no more than making favorites among nations as some unwise parents do among their children, then we would have reason to question His wisdom; but when with the eye of faith we see in this relationship the unfolding of the purpose of the ages, then our spiritual eyes are enlightened and understanding floods our path way. Who dare challenge the wise Creator if He be willing to plant the seed of universal blessing and restoration first in one man and then more abundantly to show unto his heirs the immutability of His promise by confirming it with an oath, that by those two immutable things - God's promise and God's oath - we might have strong confidence to lay hold on the promise before us? If God could possibly fail in His unconditional promise to Abraham and his seed, then who could ever trust Him? How could we be certain that His promise to us could not fail? But He is faithful who promised. Five hundred years after Abraham was dead, He renewed His oath to Abraham's seed in the Promised Land, saying, "**I will never break My covenant with you.**" **Judges 2:1**

It is through Israel - all twelve tribes of them - that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Gen. 12:3 All the families of the earth! How vast and all-inclusive is that mighty promise! The millions; yea, billions, that have lived and died through ages and dispensations, never once having heard the name of Abraham or his seed, which is Christ, shall in eons yet unborn receive the blessing of God, for He is faithful who promised, who also will do it. I cannot believe that the Lord was lacking an eternal purpose when He made man in the beginning, for He has spoken of the restitution of all things and clearly announces a time when every knee shall bow to Christ and every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth will be heard confessing with joy that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. I read in God's word of a vision John saw on the Isle of Patmos, a scene wherein every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth and in the sea was heard glorifying the name of the Lord, saying, "**Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever.**" **Rev. 5:13** And Paul, writing by the wisdom of God, spoke of that redemption wrought by Christ, saying that God by Him has reconciled all things unto Himself. "**And having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.**" **Col. 1:20** What a glorious plan God has designed! There is coming a season in the dispensation of the fullness of times in which our heavenly Father has decreed that He will gather together all things into His Christ (Eph. 1:10), which Christ is the seed of Abraham as I shall later show.

At this present moment blindness in part has happened unto all the twelve tribes of Israel. The house of Judah is in great blindness, for, while thousands of them know that they are the seed of Abraham and heirs of the promises of God, they have rejected their Messiah and believed not on the Lord Jesus Christ. How clearly the word of God describes their blindness and unbelief when the Holy Spirit said, "**He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.**" **John 1:11** The house of Judah was especially His own - more, in a sense, than the ten tribes of Israel - because it was of Judah that Christ would come. It is written: "**The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come,**" **Gen. 49:10** Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the root and offspring of David (Rev. 5:5), who also was of Judah. The house of Judah should have known their Lord, but they knew Him not. "Away with such a fellow from the earth," was the malevolent cry of their unbelief. "We will not have this man to reign over us. We have no king but Caesar." "His blood be upon us and our children," they demanded; and truly His blood has been upon them and their

children, but in spite of their blindness and unbelief they are still "heirs according to the promise," and the Lord has not forgotten them.

In God's holy word the house of Judah is likened unto a fig tree. Jer. 24:1-8, The Jews understood this symbol in their day as clearly as though the Lord had called them by name. The account of the cursing of the fig tree (Matt. 21:19) is vivid in the mind of every student of scripture. The story records that Jesus, being hungry and ready to eat, saw a fig tree afar off having leaves upon it, but, upon coming to the tree, He found to His surprise that there was no fruit upon it. Though the time of figs was not yet, this strange instance is explained by the simple fact that, unlike other trees, it is the nature of the fig tree to bear her fruit first and the leaves afterward. Therefore, since there were leaves, the Lord was right to expect fruit also. What a picture this is of the house of Judah! Plenty of leaves! All manner of outward show! But no fruit. The children of Abraham on the outside, but the children of the devil within! So Jesus pronounced a curse upon the fig tree, which is symbolic of the house of Judah, commonly known as the Jews, saying, 'May no fruit grow on thee to the age.' Matt. 21: 19 (Diaglott). And when they returned and saw the tree the next day, it was dried up. In cursing the fig tree, He was symbolically cursing the house of Judah unto the age, that is to say, unto the kingdom age. It is not correct to use the word forever here as in the common version, for Judah will be restored in the kingdom. True to God's word the entire age of grace has come and gone, but nationally the Jews are as blind and fruitless as they were in that day when the Lord pronounced the curse upon them. They rejected God's Christ and God has rejected them for this entire age of grace. As a result they have wandered homeless throughout the whole earth as foretold by Jeremiah. Jer. 24:9-10 Only now are they being gathered in darkness, blindness and unbelief according to the word of the Lord, for He can never break His covenant with them.

Even the apostle Paul, who upon several occasions, clearly stated that he was a Jew, for the tribe of Benjamin belonged to the house of Judah, made the significant statement that he was as one "born out of due time." **1 Cor. 15:8** In other words it was not yet time for Judah to be reborn nationally, but because the Lord elected him to salvation, his eyes had been opened by Christ in spite of the curse that had been pronounced on the nation as a whole. This is the clearest possible evidence of the power of election.

Now the ten tribes of the house of Israel, to whom we will make only a passing reference here, have a completely different story to tell. The house of Judah, blind as they are to Christ, are very much aware that they are Israelites, of the seed of Abraham and heirs of the covenant. The house of Israel on the other hand is exactly opposite to this. They know who Christ is, for Christ is the glory of His people Israel (Matt. 2: 32), but the so called lost ten tribes of the house of Israel are blind as to who they are. They have lost their own identity and imagine that they are Gentiles. Thus blindness in part afflicts them. The house of Judah is blind to God's Christ and knows Him not. The house of Israel is blind to her national identity, knowing not that they are the children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. In short Judah knows her own identity but is blind to who Christ is. Israel knows who Christ is but is blind to her own identity.

The word of the Lord clearly shows that in the end of the age "all will know Him from the least to the greatest" and all will understand God's secret purpose for the nation, for it will come to pass that in the same place in which God said to them, "Ye are not My people," in that place shall He say unto them, "Ye are the sons of the living God." **Hosea 1:10** To those who have believed in Christ Jesus our Lord the darkness is past and the true light now shineth, but it will come to pass that all shall know Him from the least to the greatest, for it is written: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." **Jer. 31:34**

Christians who permit themselves to see in Israel nothing more than that handful of unbelieving Jews now returning to Palestine are allowing their spiritual minds to be blinded to one of the most important truths of the age. The Bible gives more than seventy identification marks by which we may identify the house of Israel in our day and it is a most remarkable fact that the house of Judah possesses practically none of these identifying marks. Simeon prophesied, saying that Jesus would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy (God's) people Israel." Jesus has certainly not been the glory of the Jews, so we must look elsewhere for nations who glory in Him. Ask any man in the Anglo-Saxon world, whether he be saint or sinner, and he knows who Jesus Christ is and, except in the case of some professed atheist, he will tell you plainly that Jesus Christ

is the Son of God. "He shall be the glory of Thy people Israel;" said the anointed Simeon, and all over the Anglo-Saxon world every day, week after week, year after year, and century after century millions of people, both saved and unsaved, lift their voices to sing aloud.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round His head sublime."

And again we hear them sing:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

We love to sing:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

Do you not think it is a singularly wonderful thing that all over the Anglo-Saxon world we sing:

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all.

Certainly these words, though spoken in our blindness, bear witness that Christ is indeed the glory of His people Israel. Do you not think it is a most wonderful thing that all our lawyers and our statesmen sign their documents, "In the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and such and such," and even the anti-Christian Jews among us must of necessity date their documents from Jesus Christ. Letters written by the humblest citizen in our land are dated from the birth of Christ, who is the glory of God's people, Israel.

Who we are is not the theme of my message in this Chapter. Therefore I shall speak no more of it. My whole purpose in these two Chapters has been to show that God has chosen a special race from the hosts of all mankind. These are the descendants of Abraham through his sons Isaac and Jacob. This is the seed through whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. They are the people through whom the promised Redeemer came. Furthermore, from these covenant people the great host of the body of Christ will come, and in that great millennial kingdom the remainder of this same people will be purified and prepared as the New Jerusalem bride of Christ. The twelve tribes of the children of Israel will be the principal peoples during the millennial kingdom. This, I think, seems clear from the words of Jesus when He said, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration (that is, the kingdom) when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It is during the millennial kingdom that the bride of Christ is prepared. For this reason Israel comes in for special judgment during the kingdom age, and at the end of that wonderful age the apostle John was shown the glory of the New Jerusalem bride descending from heaven, adorned for her husband.

During this present age of grace the body of Christ is being prepared. The body of Christ is composed of the sons of God. The whole creation is now groaning for their manifestation. The bride of Christ is nowhere in evidence in this present age. Only the sons of God are being prepared now. The whole millennial kingdom is for the preparation of the bride of Christ. During that marvelous age "all Israel will be saved." During the Old Testament period the Head was being prepared. During the present age of grace the body is being prepared. During the millennial kingdom Christ the bride is being prepared. The head, the body, and the bride, when

united, will form one glorious Christ, male and female in one as Adam before the fall. No wonder Paul says the marriage union is symbolic of Christ and the church!

Following the preparation and presentation of the bride at the end of the millennial reign (Rev. 21:9-27) the wonder of all ages appears. The twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are swung wide open for all races of mankind to enter freely, and with the opening of those twelve gates goes forth the message never before heard in the history of the world: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." **Rev. 22:17**. The opening of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem bride of Christ at the beginning of the dispensation of the fullness of times and the going forth of the message, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come," will result in the restitution of all things and the fulfillment of God's covenant to Abraham, 'In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

I am well aware that what I am saying is not the thing that has been generally taught and accepted, but must truth lie forever concealed because we fear tradition? Must the eternal working of the purpose of the ages be nothing but a conundrum in our minds because of our unwillingness to see the unfolding of God's purpose in the covenant He made to Abraham, a covenant that was to endure as long as the sun and moon and stars endured, a covenant that could not fail while summer and winter, day and night, seed time and harvest and ocean still remain as witnesses to it? No! Let God be true and every man a liar. We have only to consider the nations of the earth who from time immemorial have always sat in heathen darkness and the shadow of death and we will see that the promises of the Abrahamic covenant never belonged to them nor were the promises at work among them. The time for the enlightenment of the heathen nations has not yet come and all the missionary efforts of this present age cannot convert a heathen nation to Christ. It is true that an elect number will come in from every kindred of the earth, but the time of their national enlightenment will come when the gates of the New Jerusalem bride are open wide, never to be closed again. Then and only then will the nations bring their glory and honor into that holy city and the restitution of all things will be on the way. The purpose of God overwhelms my spirit and my soul rejoices in His unchanging purpose!

Summer and winter, spring time and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
Hallelujah!

CHAPTER THREE THY SEED WHICH IS CHRIST

When God made His immutable covenant with Abraham, He made him to know by some very definite promises that his seed would increase to be an innumerable multitude. They would become as the dust of the earth, the sand of the sea, and the stars of the heaven in numbers. The dust of the earth signifies a purely earthly seed, which was to come through Ishmael and Esau and through the offspring of Abraham's marriage to Keturah. None of these children were children of promise nor were they included in the Abrahamic covenant. When the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, he revealed a truth that had hitherto been somewhat obscure. Paul explained that the blessing of Abraham was not to come through Ishmael nor any of the sons of Keturah nor through Esau, "For," said he, "they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Rom. 9:6-7 See also Heb. 11:18 and Gen. 21:12 Therefore we must conclude that, though the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael and the sons of Keturah have become as the dust of the earth for multitude, these nations are not to be accounted as the seed through whom God's blessing is to come upon the races and nations of the earth. I have already pointed out that three kinds of seed came from Abraham - the dust, which represents Abraham's purely earthly seed who have no part in the promise, these being the children of Ishmael, Keturah, and Esau; the sand seed, which I suggest represents the countless millions of those who have descended from the twelve tribes of Israel, all of whom are heirs of the promise made to Abraham, for the promise was "to thee and thy seed;" and beyond this again the promise, "Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven." This is a spiritual seed and includes all those who are born again by faith in Christ Jesus whether Israelites or Gentiles or heathen, for it is written, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

It was not Paul alone, of course, who signified that the blessing of God would come upon the nations through Isaac. This truth we find very early in scripture. Though Abraham had produced a son through his handmaiden Hagar (Gen. 16:15) and had actually pleaded with God to establish Ishmael as his heir, saying, "O that Ishmael might live before me," (**Gen. 17:18**), the Lord replied, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac..." **Gen. 17:18-21** This last statement is tremendously important. When Sarah, after Isaac was born, saw Ishmael mocking her son Isaac, she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even Isaac." **Gen. 21:10** This demand was very grievous to Abraham (verse 12), but the Lord said unto Abraham, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

All these things are very significant. Indeed, they are an important allegory (Gal. 4:24). Ishmael, being born of a bondwoman, is typical of those who are under the bondage of the law and have not come into the freedom of faith and redemption in Christ Jesus. Isaac, being born of a free woman, not by works but by promise alone, is typical of those who through faith in Christ become the children of God and thus inherit the promises to Abraham. These of whatsoever race they be become heirs of God's covenant with Abraham and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. They become inheritors of every blessing of Abraham. As Abraham "believed" and it was accounted to him for righteousness, so these also believe and inherit "all things."

We must now notice how the Holy Spirit, speaking by Paul, spoke of the promise made to Abraham and his seed. In a most remarkable way Paul emphasizes one particular seed, which was to become prominent above all other. We read: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." **Gal. 3:16**

There is one particularly vital lesson that must be learned by all mankind whether they be of the seed of Abraham according to the promise or whether they be heathen, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers according to the promise. The lesson is this: Salvation is by faith unto all and upon all who believe, for there is no difference. The covenant made with Abraham was by promise, without any conditions attached. Furthermore these promises were made four hundred and thirty years before the Law of Moses was given or put into effect. Therefore the apostle gives this clear understanding of the meaning of the allegory by saying, "And this I say, that the covenant, (that is, the Abrahamic covenant), that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." **Gal. 3:17-18**

The law is very necessary, for it portrays the nature of almighty God, and we sinful men, seeing our inability to keep it, are persuaded to flee to Christ. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." How then can a man ever come under true conviction of sin if he does not know and heed the law? The law is the very nature of God Himself. The scripture describes it as holy and just and good. O that in our day men knew that God has said, "Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not bear false witness. Thou shall not covet. Honor thy father and thy mother." Thus the law becomes our schoolmaster (pedagogue) to bring us to Christ. The Roman pedagogue did not leach, but was a slave whose duty it was to escort the children to school. This is what the law is for - to bring us to Christ. Can any among us imagine what good effect would come upon our society if our nations and people kept even so much as one of these wonderful commands? What a tremendous drop would come in the prices of consumer goods if America kept the law, "Thou shall not steal." It is estimated that two hundred and fifty million dollars worth of grocery carts are stolen from the supermarkets each year. Add this to the other billions that are pilfered by shoplifting and open robbery and we may have found one of the greatest reasons for the dreadful upswing in prices. Can we imagine the impact upon our nation if everyone kept the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." What a revolution would take place in the homes of the nation! What a reuniting of families, of parents and children! What an emptying of divorce courts and what peace and tranquility would follow! Can we think how blessed it would be if in this day of rebellion children

knew the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother" and were made aware of the promise that attends this command - "that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long in the land"? Can we begin to imagine what tranquility would result if the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other god's before Me," and "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," were obeyed? These laws, beloved, are more than the commandments of the Lord. They are a revelation of God's great heart, a manifestation of His very character and nature. When the kingdom of God comes to spread its glory over all the earth in righteousness and truth, these holy laws will be the law of the kingdom, written and engraven in the hearts of all mankind. These laws in Moses' day were written on tables of stone that rebellious and carnal men might read. It does much good to read the law, but the law itself has no power to change the sinful heart. That is why Paul said, 'The law was weak through the flesh.' The great benefit comes when the law is written in our hearts. A new spirit is given to us and a new heart.

The prophet Ezekiel, even while warning of the awful calamities which were to come upon all Israel during the terrible night of their captivity, spoke of a better day - a day when they would have learned their lesson and repented of their sins. Therefore he says, "Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." **Ezek. 11:17-20** This great change of heart comes when we repent of our sins. This change is evidence of the new birth. It was of this that Jesus spoke when He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." **John 3:3**. Jeremiah adds much to this truth by saying, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." **Jer. 31:33**

The crude notion propagated by many who call themselves theologians, teaching that God has done away with the law, is not the truth or the teaching of scripture. If God ever did away with the law, He would have to do away with His own holy nature. God has not done away with the law. He fulfilled it in Jesus Christ and we are "in Him." Every man in Christ joyfully fulfills every letter of the law by the power of his new nature. The Lord by the regenerating power of the new birth transferred the law from the tables of stone to the tables of our hearts. He has taken away the nature that rebels against and hates God and His law and has given in its place the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill the law - every jot and tittle of it. The law of God brings sinners to Christ. Paul says this is a pedagogue to bring us to the Saviour. **Gal. 3:24** The law proves to the carnal man that he can never hope to keep its precepts while he remains a natural man, unregenerate and dead in sins. The fiery law of God points with unerring finger to Jesus Christ, our Lord, who fulfilled every jot and tittle of it, as it is written, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." **Matt. 5:18** And Christ, having fulfilled all the law, bowed His head on Calvary's cross and cried that heaven and earth, angel and sinner might hear, 'It is finished.' The law had been perfectly kept in Him. The work of redemption from the curse was complete. Not one soul in the universe could convince Him of sin, for he had none. And now, having bowed His head in death, He sealed the new covenant with His own blood, thus making it an unbreakable covenant. By death He released His own Spirit that we who believe might freely partake of His Spirit that Christ, the giver of the law, might henceforth live in the hearts of all who believe the promise long before given to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed." The first true blessing of Abraham is justification by faith, for all who believe in Christ are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses. **Acts 13:39** Man cannot be justified by the law of Moses because sinful man cannot keep such a holy law, but when we come to Christ in repentance and His Spirit comes into our hearts, then the law-giver Himself has come to dwell within, filling the heart with His life and joy and holiness, as it is written, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and I will give them a heart of flesh." **Ezek. 36:26**

"In Isaac shall thy seed be called," He said. Not "seeds" as of many, but "thy seed, which is Christ." Jesus Christ is the most important of all the seed of Abraham, because from this seed comes the true church, the sons of God, and the bride of Christ. Christ is the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world. He came unto His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become

the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." **John 1:12-13** Jesus Christ, our Lord, is of the seed of Abraham. With His coming into the world there comes an entirely new revelation and fresh understanding of the immutable purposes of God. With Him begins the unfolding of the promise, "Thy seed shall be as the stars of the heaven for the multitude." From the Christ seed comes the church of the living God, from whose multitudes will arise the glorified ranks of the sons of God. These in the age to come will reign with Christ in glory over all the earth. They will sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, from whom will come the New Jerusalem bride in all her heavenly glory. We will consider the bride in a later article.

Do you see them coming, brother,
Thronging up the steeps of light
Clad in glorious, shining garments;
Blood-washed garments pure and white?
'Tis a glorious church without spot or wrinkle,
Washed in the blood of the Lamb.
'Tis a glorious church without spot or wrinkle,
Washed in the blood of the Lamb.

That Jesus Christ, who is Lord and Head of the Christ body, was of the seed of Abraham the first verse of the New Testament is quick to point out with these inspired words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." **Matt. 1:1** This first verse of the New Testament is one of the most important verses in the entire Bible, for if Jesus of Nazareth was not both son of David the king and son of Abraham, with whom God's covenant was made, then He is not the promised seed at all and could not possibly be accepted as the Christ. The evangelist Matthew was well aware that his gospel would mean less than nothing to his Jewish readers if the Jesus of whom he wrote with such exquisite detail should prove to be of other than the seed of Abraham. Upon that first verse of the New Testament hangs the proof of who Jesus actually is and even we who believe in Him would be forced to reject Him if it could be proved that He was not that very Son who was promised to Abraham, descended not through Ishmael, but through Isaac, for in saying, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," God was speaking of one special seed and that seed was Christ.

I have always found genealogies to be dull reading and so they really are, but that does not detract one iota from their vast importance. Thus does Matthew with infinite care link by link forge the chain of Christ's genealogy from Abraham forward to Jesus, the Christ, while Luke with care just as infinite traces His genealogy through His mother Mary, who was the daughter of Heli, right back to Adam in Eden's garden, of whom it is recorded that he was the son of God. Luke 3:23-36 We may be inclined, when reading the first chapter of Matthew, to skip over verses one to seventeen as nothing but dry and almost meaningless genealogy. And we may have the same feeling about the long genealogy contained in Luke, chapter three, verses twenty-three to thirty-six, but these verses are full of inspiration and assurance. Without them we would not have known that Jesus was the seed promised in Eden's garden when after their transgression the Lord said the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." **Gen. 3:15** Nor would we have known that Jesus was the special seed promised to our father Abraham had not both Matthew and Luke showed us in such a positive manner that Jesus the Christ was a direct descendant of these two men, David and Abraham. To Abraham was this promise made: "In thee and thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." To David it was promised: "There shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel." **1 Kings 2:4** It is essential that the genealogies show that the promised Christ must come from the tribe of Judah, for the patriarch Jacob prophesied on his death bed, saying, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." **Gen. 49:10** This latter prophecy, in my opinion at least, actually declares that the throne of David should continue to exist as a throne down through the church age until at last at the coming of the Lord He shall come whose right it is, and God will give it to Him.

I take great exception to those unwise and unholy statements that would attempt to make Jesus Christ to be other than an Israelite. If Jesus was not of the stock of Israel, then He must be rejected as an imposter, because He is not the promised Messiah. Furthermore, I declare with great boldness that it was not enough that He should be merely an Israelite, but He must come from one particular tribe in Israel and that tribe is the

tribe of Judah. It was not sufficient that He be merely of the house of Judah, for had He been a Benjamite or a Levite, He would not have been the promised Christ. The scepter of kingship was given to Judah and to him alone. Therefore it is of great importance that Christ be of this tribe, as indeed He most definitely is.

In my opinion the statement that Jesus Christ may have been a Negro is not only erroneous; it is blasphemous. Jesus could not have been a Negro, or a Chinaman or an Indian or a Frenchman or an Englishman. He must be of the tribe of Judah and of Judah alone. Neither was Jesus a man of mixed blood, as one of America's most famous evangelists stated. It is a matter of great concern and tragedy that after all these years the church system has been so slack in setting forth true priorities. Is it any wonder that thousands of people go astray after false Christs who spring from other races and other tribes?

The promise of the ruling scepter was given to Judah. Gen. 49:10 But the tremendously important birthright promise was given to the sons of Joseph. It is clearly written: "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel (that is, Ephraim and Manasseh), and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's." **1. Chron. 5:1-2** Please read Jer. 31:9 where Joseph's son Ephraim is called "My firstborn." In actuality he was the youngest of them all, but God gave him the birthright. Therefore he becomes heir.

Assuring as is the record of Christ's genealogy in the books of Matthew and Luke, it must be remembered that Jesus was much more than a mere descendant of Adam, Abraham, Judah, and David. Paul declares that Jesus was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," but that He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness (the Holy Spirit) and by the resurrection of the dead." **Rom. 1:3-4** Though we may prove that He is a true man of the Adamic race by showing that He is the seed of Adam and that He is the covenant seed by showing that He is a descendant of Abraham, that He is the true possessor of the reigning scepter promised to Judah, and that He is the promised son of David and heir to his throne who will reign over the house of Israel, Jesus Christ is something vastly more than the descendant of men. The Messiah, according to the promise, must be not only the Son of man, but the Son of God as well. This fact is brought out in various ways in Old Testament scripture, a truth too extensive to deal with at this point. Nevertheless, of the Messiah it is written: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (**Isa. 7:14**), the meaning of which is God with us. This birth of the Son of God necessitated a virgin birth as a matter of course. Therefore it is written, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." **Matt. 1:23**. Jesus Christ was in fact and in truth both the Son of man and the Son of God.

A favorite pastime among unbelievers of all ages and of our day in particular is to try to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was nothing more than the healthy son of two normal parents named Joseph and Mary. Not only do the ungodly and unbelieving present their arguments of unbelief, but an ever increasing number of church people are willing to embrace the same error. Let the ungodly believe as they choose, but the faithful believer should be able to see that, if Jesus was not born of a virgin, then He did not come according to the prophecy of Isa. 7:14 - "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." If He was not born of a virgin as some suppose, then the accounts given in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, declaring emphatically that Mary was a virgin, are indeed a sordid deception, a misrepresentation, and a lie from the devil's mouth. Nothing in the New Testament is more definite and clear than the statement of the word of God declaring that Mary was a virgin when she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. **Matt. 1:18** And we are definitely assured that Joseph knew her not until after she had brought forth her firstborn son and laid Him in a manger. **Matt. 1:25** If these things are not so, then God's word cannot be depended upon as truth in anything, and if God's word cannot be trusted, then are our harbors whirlpools and all our mighty rocks are clouds.

When the apostle John wrote his gospel, he did not concern himself with the human genealogy of Jesus Christ. Matthew and Luke had already proven that fact in great detail, but John by the wisdom of God gave us an inkling of His existence in the eternal realm long before Adam and Eden existed. In the following words John gives a genealogy nothing short of divine. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." **John 1:1-2** Jesus Christ was the Son of God as well as the Son of man and the words quoted above are nothing less than His genealogy as God. The scripture

continues. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." **Verses 3-5** The truth continues in **verse 9** "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." **Verses 9-14** Nothing is more certain than that He was the promised Son, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. He is the promised Saviour of the world and the Redeemer of God's people Israel.

If we require further evidence of His genealogy as the true Son of God, we will find it in verses one and two of John's first epistle. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)" **1 John 1:1-2** I would be very remiss if I did not point out here that such knowledge, faith, and assurance becomes an absolute necessity for true fellowship with God and with His blessed saints. John makes this fact abundantly clear by saying, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." **Verse 3**. There is not one possibility in time or eternity that we might ever become sons of God if Jesus, who is our Savior, was not Himself a Son, born not only of Mary but of God.

Genealogies are very necessary, but genealogy alone is not sufficient. There must be evidence more abundant than these if we are to have full assurance that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Son in whom all the world would be blessed. Such evidence is convincingly given in God's word. There came a day in the long ago when from his prison cell John the Baptist sent a messenger to Jesus with this earnest plea: "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" The man who had borne faithful witness that Jesus was the Lamb of God now sought new assurance in his hour of distress. In His reply to John's question our Lord made no reference to His genealogy. He made no reference to that long line of forefathers back through David, Judah, Abraham and Adam, but He made reference to something even more sure than this. We may be sure that John was aware of His genealogy, but Jesus said, "Go and tell John the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." **Matt. 11:5-6** Why did our Lord reply in this manner? The reason is simple. Peter spoke of the "more sure word of prophecy" (**2 Pet. 1:19**), and the miracles being wrought by Christ were being done in fulfillment of many prophetic scriptures given concerning Himself. The prophets long ago had spoken of the coming of the Just One, who would heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and preach the gospel to the poor. No other man had ever appeared on the earthly scene who performed such mighty deeds or spoke with such authority and power. If the prophets have spoken such things of the coming Messiah, then it is absolutely necessary that the Messiah must fulfill those prophecies to the letter or be rejected by all. Through His life of authority and power we have abundant evidence that He did come according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, most of which were given hundreds of years before Jesus came to fulfill them. Though His genealogy could be proved beyond question, yet if He came not in exact harmony with the prophecies concerning Him, He cannot be accepted as the Messiah. Though Jesus was declared to be the Son of man by genealogy, Paul makes it plain that He was declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4), and this according to the Spirit of holiness, guaranteed by the resurrection from the dead. Oh what a world of convincing truth is packed into those first four verses of Paul's epistle to the Romans!

Let us continue with this thought and see further how this important point is stressed by the Spirit of holiness. Our Lord at age thirty was declared to be the Lamb of God. John the Baptist, upon seeing Him, had cried aloud, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." **John 1:29** For the Lord had said to John, "Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I (John) saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." **John 1:33-34** Jesus also and all who stood nearby at His baptism heard the voice of the Lord from heaven, proclaiming, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then was Jesus led into the wilderness to be tempted of

the devil, and, having overcome in all His temptations, He returned from the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit and entered into the synagogue at Nazareth and stood up to read the scriptures. "And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." **Luke 3:16-21** See also Isaiah 61. This was the second time that Jesus had called upon the Old Testament prophecies to confirm His sonship. Never once to my knowledge did He ever make reference to His genealogy to prove His sonship or His Messiahship. In His one brief reference to Abraham He clearly stated, "Before Abraham was, I AM."

Though we may not fully know the Old Testament prophecies relating to the first coming of Jesus Christ, there are well over two hundred such prophecies, every one of which was completely fulfilled in Him, including His genealogy. Every Old Testament prophecy concerning His coming as a suffering Messiah was fulfilled to the letter in His lifetime and, this being so, there is not one possibility in a trillion that Jesus was other than the promised Redeemer or that we need to look for another. Yet had even one of those prophecies gone unfulfilled, we could not have accepted Him as the Messiah.

Perhaps the reader may not realize the import of two hundred prophecies that must be fulfilled. Two hundred prophecies that must be fulfilled give two hundred marks of identification. It is commonly known that our fingerprints differ from every other person's on earth. Yet in law six identical marks are sufficient to identify any man, since no other man in the world has the same six identical marks. You have probably heard of the law of compound probabilities. It works in this manner: Every probability added multiplies the possibility of error. For instance, if the weatherman predicts, "We will have sunshine all day," he has one chance in two of being correct - first, we may have sunshine all day, and second, we may not. If he says, 'We will have snow in the morning and sunshiny in the afternoon," he has only one chance in four of being right. We may have sunshine and snow as he predicted. Then again we may have neither. Again we may have sunshine without snow or we may have snow without sunshine. Should he add a third probability and say we will have sunshine and snow and wind, he again multiplies his chances of being wrong, for we now have eight probabilities. (1) We may have sun, snow and wind. (2) We may have none of these. (3) We may have sun, but not wind or snow. (4) We may have snow, but not sun or wind. (5) We may have wind, but not sun or snow. (6) We may have sun and wind, but no snow. (7) We may have sun and snow, but no wind, and (8) we may have wind and snow, but no sun. Thus you see that with three probabilities there are eight possibilities of being wrong. If you add one more condition, you will find you have sixteen possibilities of being wrong. If you add a fifth probability then you have thirty-two possibilities. Add one more and you have sixty-four possibilities, and so on it goes. Thus, since there were over two hundred identification marks that had to be fulfilled in the Messiah, it would take a large computer to discover the number of possibilities of error there would be or how small would be the possibility that anyone could qualify for Messiahship who was not in fact the Messiah. The infinitesimal possibility would be less than one in many trillions.

To assure us fully that Jesus was He that should come and not another, God has given a vast array of prophecies concerning Him, all of which must of necessity be fulfilled to the letter in the coming Saviour. The Old Testament prophets, speaking by the Spirit, continued to add without hesitation one prophecy upon another with the sure knowledge that every word that God had spoken would be fulfilled to the letter. In only one chapter of the book of Isaiah (chapter 53) **we have these twenty-seven conditions laid down as characteristic identification marks of the coming Messiah.** (1) The unbelief of the people. "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (2) He shall grow up as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. (3) He has no form or comeliness, and when we should see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. (4) He is despised and rejected of men. (5) a man of sorrows and (7) acquainted with grief. (8) We hid as it were our faces from Him. (9) He was despised and we esteemed Him not. (10) He hath borne our grief and (11) carried our sorrows. (12) We did esteem Him stricken of God and afflicted. (13) He was wounded for our transgressions. (14) He was bruised for our iniquities. (15) He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. (16) He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. (17) As a

sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not His mouth. (18) He was taken from prison and judgment, or He was deprived of just judgment. (19) Who shall declare His generation? (20) He was cut off from the land of the living. (21) For the transgression of My people was He stricken. (22) He made His grave with the wicked and (23) with the rich in His death. (24) He had done no violence, (25) neither was deceit found in His mouth. (26) It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. (27) He hath put Him to grief.

These prophecies, found in just one chapter, are but a few of the many concerning the coming of the Just One, all of which had to be fulfilled to the letter at His first coming. The remaining verses of this fifty-third chapter concern themselves with the millennial day when He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. All the prophecies concerning the kingdom have yet to be fulfilled at His second coming.

There was an occasion when an Ethiopian eunuch, who had been to Jerusalem to worship, was returning home and, sitting in his carriage, he read Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit of the Lord had said to Philip, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." And Philip ran thither to him and heard him read the prophet Esaias. "Understandest thou what thou reddest?" Philip asked. He replied, "How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." **Acts 8:27-35**

Oh, with what heavenly assurance can the church of the living God open its mouth and preach that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is He who has come according to hundreds of Old Testament prophecies to redeem from sin, save a world, and restore all things to their rightful owner! We might well fill the rest of the book with prophecies such as these and show in greater detail that our Lord came to fulfill them one and all, but we must turn briefly to other things.

JESUS, THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

Now this Lord Jesus Christ, who came of the seed of Abraham through his son Isaac, is Himself a seed. Abraham was the seed from whom sprang vast multitudes as the dust of the earth, the sands of the sea, and the stars of heaven in number. But Paul, in teaching this great truth, fastens the hope of the universe on one particular seed, and that seed is Christ. This he does in **Gal. 3:16** by saying, "He saith not seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Therefore of all the millions, perhaps billions, who have sprung from Abraham the one seed of greatest importance is Jesus Christ.

It seems a most singular thing that the word seed is used at all. Why did the Lord tell our mother Eve that the seed of the woman (her seed) would bruise the head of the serpent? Why did He use the word seed? Why did He not say that the man that should come from the woman should bruise the head of the serpent? But it was to be "thy seed," the seed of the woman. The truth is that seed is not only the product of some other life before it but seed is also that which reproduces itself and its kind many thousand fold from generation to generation. In the twelfth chapter of the gospel of John certain Greeks came to Jesus with the request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." Philip and Andrew brought the request to Jesus, who made this strange and very remarkable reply: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." **John 12: 20-24** In this passage our Lord likened Himself to a seed, a grain of wheat, which was to fall into the ground and die. He was to be planted as a seed in the earth and be raised again. Not only was He to be raised in glorification, but in centuries yet to come this seed, which was Jesus Christ, would produce a vast company of sons of God in His exact image and likeness. After the seed is implanted in the ground, the process of growth is "first the blade, then the ear, then the ear of corn in the ear." While only one seed was planted in the earth, the multitude that will appear in the time of harvest will be as the stars of heaven in number, every one bearing the image and likeness of that Christ seed which was planted in death.

It may seem to be a puzzle to some that Philip and Andrew, who came bearing the earnest request of these Greeks, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," should be given what appears to be such an oblique reply. In fact, the passage does not indicate that Jesus ever consented to have these Greeks interview Him, though of course

He may have done, but in answer to their request He made this strange affirmation, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." What He really was telling them is this: If they saw Jesus at that time, they would have seen only Jesus the Christ, but He knew there was more, much more to Christ than what they could now see. A multitude as the stars of heaven was to follow in His likeness, born of the same seed, raised in the same resurrection, who would at last be "sons of God" even as He is a Son of God, and these would not be merely many sons, but many sons to form one Christ, each one having the seed of life in himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, appeared as the firstborn of many brethren. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29** Weymouth in his translation of this passage says, 'Those He has foreknown He has also predestined to share the likeness of His Son, that He might be the Eldest in a vast family of brothers.' The seed that was sown in the ground that afternoon of Calvary and its cross and which arose as a tender blade on the resurrection morning will appear in the end of the age as the full corn in the ear, and Jesus the Christ, the Lamb of Calvary, will be heard triumphantly saying, "Here am I and the sons which Thou hast given Me." **Heb. 2:13** This the prophet Isaiah saw in spirit in the sad and desolate hour when the tribes of Israel were being carried away into captivity. He prophesied, saying, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." **Isa. 8:16-18**

The phrase, "Thy seed, which is Christ," is too great and too important for the mind of man to comprehend. We must therefore diligently seek the spirit of revelation that we may know the things that are freely given us of God. It is when men try to understand with their natural minds that they conclude that others who see and understand the deeper things are blasphemers and deceivers, but when the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, then the invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen and we accept them and know them and make them our own.

Though the world itself could not contain the books that should be written of all that Jesus is and all He taught, it will be necessary for us now to leave this part of the truth to the holy minds of saints who believe that each one may seek the mind of Christ for the revelation by the Spirit of the deep things of God to his searching heart.

In this Chapter we have been speaking of God's first perfected and first manifested Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ-Head. It is my hope now by God's help to unfold the truth concerning the Christ-Body and the Christ-Bride, Christ the Head, Christ the body, and Christ the bride. These terms may be unfamiliar to almost all the saints and I use them only with bowed head and godly fear and trembling. Holy and reverend as they are, they are in truth God's covenant to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blest."

Oh, how good it is to know that in this hour of world-wide sorrow, disorder, and distress the immutable promises and covenants of God are progressing toward their final fulfillment and from them will come that order, interdependence, and unity for which we so earnestly pray!

CHAPTER FOUR THY SEED WHICH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." **1 Cor. 12:27** All natural things have spiritual counterparts. The visible things with which we are familiar, which we see about us every day, are all proclaiming some great spiritual lesson. The truth of this statement is set forth in the words of inspiration found in **Rom. 1:20** "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

Though our subject here concerns the body of Christ, which we will speak of as the Christ body, which is a great mystery, we will find much truth concerning our identification with that body by observing the human body, with which we are familiar. I have no hesitation in stating that the human physical body is the greatest

and best visible portrait of the body of Christ that has ever been devised. Paul calls upon it on several occasions to unfold to the hearts of believers that far greater truth concerning the body of Christ, which is the true Christ body.

We have studied the mystery of Christ and our identification with Him, but, though we have written much concerning this and have tried to the best of our ability to explain it, we are certain to fall short in our understanding unless the Holy Spirit opens our spiritual minds and makes us see that the Head, which is Christ, and the body, which we are, together form one Christ. Here we shall call upon that which is natural and visible to explain that which is spiritual and invisible. What person among us has not seen or considered the physical form of a man? Even the blind have an understanding of this. Looking upon the physical form of man, we immediately perceive that he is composed of a head and a body. A head alone is not a man, but the head and the body together form a perfect man. It is not that makes a man. It is the head and body together that forms a man. If the body is without the head, then there is no man, and if the head is without the body, there is no man.

With all the reverence and respect of my ransomed soul I must tell you that the fullness of God's wonderful Christ does not consist of the Head alone or of the body alone, but the Head and the body together make the fullness and completeness of Christ. The saints of God have yet to discover the full spiritual meaning of the words, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." There has been far too much talk about the body but far too little understanding. Christians have seen the Head, which is Jesus Christ, not as the Head of God's Christ, but as the fullness and completeness of Him. On the other hand they have spoken of the body of Christ, not as an integral part of God's Christ, but as something separate and different like the denominational church. They have seen the body of Christ as a church full of divisions and strifes, something that God was trying to save from hell and torment, something that He would take to heaven bye and bye, but which in reality had little or no relationship to Him other than the fact of its salvation.

O my brethren, if you have seen the body of Christ as no more than this tormented denominational thing that mankind is pleased to call the church, you have fallen far short in your understanding, for even nature shows you that the body of a man and the head of a man form one man, complete and perfect in every detail. So also the head of the Christ and the body of the Christ form one Christ, perfect and complete before God. Though I have prayed earnestly that this mystery may be revealed to the hearts of believing saints, I well know that it is not the grand oration or the glib tongue, breaking with eloquence and intonation upon the curious ear, that enlightens the heart and gives understanding of spiritual things, for eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him; but He has revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Pray, therefore, that the Holy Spirit, who was sent into the world to lead us into all truth, will teach us all things and bring all things to our remembrance. May He anoint our eyes and our hearts that we may behold wondrous things out of God's word.

When John wrote the immortal words, "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him," he well understood that it is quite impossible for a man to teach us any spiritual truth. Certainly a teacher may unfold the words of truth and revelation, but it is God who is light and who gives light. Only the Spirit of God can open the eyes of the blind and give them sight. As the invisible wind makes its presence known by moving the curtains of a tent or by letting us hear the sound thereof, so the Holy Spirit reveals Himself by shining His light into the dark recesses of our understanding, making us see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and comprehend the incomprehensible. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That verse does not mean he cannot go to heaven. It means he cannot see, he cannot understand, he cannot know or discern any spiritual thing without a spiritual birth from above. There are many people in the world who talk incessantly about the kingdom of God, but they have never seen it by the Spirit. Many others talk about sonship, but are devoid of the spirit of sonship. A spiritual birth enables us to see and hear by the Spirit of God. This is a transforming thing that brings a believer into the very image and likeness of the thing he sees.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The spirit of man may know the things of a man, but the Spirit of God alone knows the things of God. Jesus marveled that Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel and

yet knew not these things, and with conviction He told him that he would never know spiritual things as long as he remained in the natural realm, striving to understand a higher realm with a natural mind. "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not," He said, "how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" It is when He, the Spirit of truth, is come that He guides us into all truth.

God's people make a serious and fatal mistake when they cling desperately to the tradition taught them at the beginning of their walk with God. When they do this, they shut the door for God to teach them anything. Their tradition at best is only a fragment of the whole. Tradition makes men into unbelievers, because it refuses to allow them to see greater light. Jesus understood this when He said, "Ye make the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Revelation modifies all tradition, delivering men from that which is in part and bringing them out into that which is full. "When I was a child, I thought as a child; I spoke as a child; I understood as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." **1 Cor. 13:11-12.**

The life of a Christian should be a continual progression in God, but he cannot progress without spiritual revelation, and revelation will greatly modify and often times completely break the chains of human tradition. While the boast of some men may be that they are just the same as they always were, let us rather glory in the fact that, as the light of His love grows brighter, we are being changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

I have digressed a little from the subject of the Christ body, but only that we may grasp the truth that spiritual things must be spiritually understood. To see a spiritual truth with the natural mind leaves the beholder unchanged and cold. Our Lord Jesus Christ was called a blasphemer when He claimed to be the Son of God, not because He had no evidence to back His claim, but because the people that surrounded Him and opposed Him so were blind leaders of the blind, held captive by the traditions of the elders, men and women who had not so much as a spark of revelation or spiritual understanding. When Jesus claimed identity with His Father in heaven, they shouted, "Ye have heard His blasphemy!" When He stated the word of truth, "Before Abraham was, I AM," they believed not, but railing against Him in wrath and envy, they took up stones to stone Him.

Do you think, therefore, that carnal Christians will understand when revelation teaches us that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones? Will our faith be accepted or believed when we say we have been made to drink of His Spirit, been baptized into His body and made partakers of the divine nature? All these statements pass as acceptable theology except when they become a burning, transforming revelation to some believing heart. Certainly we may affirm that we are the body of Christ, but when revelation reveals the truth that the members of the body of Christ are in truth part of God's Christ, then men begin to take up stones to stone us. If they do not pick stones from the ground to throw, they certainly stone us with words of discredit and unbelief.

My dearly beloved brethren, we have been made partakers of the divine nature. We have all been made to drink of His Spirit. We have by one Spirit been baptized into one body, and that one body is the Christ body. And, because by such a divine ordinance we have become members of His body, partakers of His Spirit and His life, of a truth we are members of God's glorious Christ, the fullness and completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.

Hear now the inspired words of Paul on this great subject as again he likens the human body to the spiritual body of Christ. "For," says he, "as the body is one, and hath many members . . . so also is Christ." **Cor. 12:12.** We quote the text in part to show that it is the many members of the body, together with the Head that form the complete Christ. But, to quote the entire passage, Paul says, "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." God's glorious Christ is not one member, but many — not the Head alone, but the Head and the body inseparably joined in one Spirit. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ Head, but we, the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, are the Christ body.

I know some will be ready to stone me for that statement; nevertheless, it is true. The age from Eden to Calvary was occupied with the preparation and presentation of Christ the Head. The age or dispensation from Pentecost to the resurrection of the just is occupied with one great, all-important work - the preparation and

presentation of the Christ body. The age which we know as the millennial kingdom will be occupied by the preparation and presentation of the bride of Christ, or the Christ bride, of which I will write more fully in the next Chapter. I fearlessly declare that the work of this age of grace is not the salvation of the world, but the preparation of the sons of God to form the true church or Christ body.

We have often heard of the manifestation of the sons of God. Indeed, the word of God reveals this truth with great care and fullness, and no wonder, for the whole creation is waiting on tiptoe for their manifestation. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature (that is, the whole creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies. For we have been saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." **Rom. 8:18, 25**

The words of the above passage, quoted below from Phillips translation, are a forceful assurance to all who are laying hold on this great message. "In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited - yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God! It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in Him. We are saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience."

What magnificent words these are, describing as they do the awaited glory of God's sons, men and women who are coming into Christ's image, the Christ likeness, to share the Christ body and the glory of Him who, through the fullness which He shall accomplish by adding to Himself these many, many sons, will fill the universe and we shall become the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. This, my beloved brethren, is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is that for which Jesus travailed and, having done so, saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied, for of His fullness have we all received and grace for grace.

On a wonderful night in the long, long ago when Lot, seeing the abundant grass of the valley, had pitched his tent toward Sodom, Abraham, turning his face toward the hills, was led by God's hand out into the starlit evening. As he lifted his face toward the skies, the voice of the Lord told him to behold the stars and see if he could count them, and, knowing that Abraham could not do so, the Lord added yet one more promise to His eternal covenant - "So shall thy seed be." These uncounted stars of the heaven represent the sons of God, who are being prepared for the manifestation for which all creation groans. These are members of the Christ body, who will deliver the creation from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom they themselves possess.

Almost two thousand years ago the apostle Paul basked in the sunshine of this very hope. Far out in the future he saw the prize which he called the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and, upon seeing its glory, gladly unloaded all his religious tradition, stripping himself for the race to press irresistibly toward that high calling in Christ of which I write today. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ," he said. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the

fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Phil. 3:7-14

In Christ Jesus! What a transforming expression that is! Quoted and read by countless millions, but understood, I fear, by practically none. Instead of seeing the boundless wonder and infinite meaning of the words "in Christ Jesus," we have been content to pass over them as though they were practically meaningless, little more than nice, kind sayings that should be a comfort to the people of God. But oh, let me tell you the expressions in Christ, in Christ Jesus, and 2/2 Him proclaim that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and that we who believe are the completeness of Him who filleth all in all. We have all been baptized into His body. We have become one with His Spirit. As He dwells in the Father, so do we dwell in Him. These expressions, and many more like them, teach beyond a shadow of a doubt that God has but one Christ and that Christ consists of many thousands of members, all joined, welded and knit together by one Spirit into one body and one Christ. We said earlier that it took God four thousand years to prepare and present that first manifested Son, Jesus Christ, who was to be the eldest Son and the Head of the whole company of sons of God. Now the Lord has been occupied for the two thousand years of the day of grace in preparing that vast company of sons who will form the body of God's Christ, that the Head and the body may be manifest at the end of this age as one Christ - "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Let the reader visualize the form of a man, standing with his feet on the earth, so tall that his head reaches the heavens above and so broad that his form fills the universe all in all. Then let him examine the scene more closely and his wondering eyes will see that this gigantic man, God's anointed Christ, is a man of many members just as the human body is one body with many members. Look closer still and you will now see that each and every member in that mighty form is an individual man, a Son of God. The Head is the man Jesus of Nazareth. The arms, the fingers, the toes, the heart, the nerves, the blood vessels - every member of Him that filleth all in all is an individual man and every man is a son of God. And, if you will look still more closely, you will see an even greater wonder, for every man, every member, every son in that whole gigantic form is in the exact image of Jesus Christ, the Head, the first begotten Son of God. O, how I hope you can grasp the picture!

It is only when we see the plan and purpose of the Lord that we begin to be changed into the likeness of what we see in the Spirit. We lay aside every weight and the sin, which doth so easily beset us. We strip for the race. We put off anger, wrath, malice, jealousy, envy, pride, foolishness, and fixing our spiritual eyes on the glory of such a goal, we run with patience the race that is set before us. Forgetting our idle traditions, we press toward the mark. We will find ourselves delivering ourselves from hindering friends and obstructing occupations. We will begin to lay aside lusts and passions and turn our eyes away from those troublesome scenes of earth that force themselves upon us and crowd out the heavenly vision from our eyes. We are changed by His Spirit from glory to glory. We see a glory afar off in truth and, believing it, we are changed into the likeness of what we see. Our hearts grasp a revelation and it transforms us. We see a vision of Christ and the glory of the body He is preparing. We realize the possibility of our attaining to that body and, seeing, we lay aside everything that would hinder us from becoming one with it.

To see what I am saying you will have to go far beyond the edge of the crowd. You will need to go beyond the circle of that tired old thing men call the church. The word church has become sorely desecrated, so much so that the picture of what the true church really is has faded away until men can see in the church nothing but million dollar temples standing on street corners or multitudes of people who dwell behind the high walls which they call denominations. But this, my friend, is not the church. This has nothing to do with His mystical body. These denominations are only man made things, little self-appointed Christs who believe that they have the truth and wisdom will die with them. I do not believe that they are divisions in the church or divisions in the body of Christ. They are something altogether aside from the true church and something different from the body of Christ. The church which Jesus called "My church" has never had a division in it. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is that wonderful habitation Jesus spoke of as "My Father's house", saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions." The house, which

the Father is building is the true church, the mystical body of Christ. This buildings rising upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ, the first Son, is the corner stone or the cap stone of it. He is the Head of the body, the church, the head stone of the corner. All other stones are living stones (1 Pet. 2:5), built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. Every living stone in the building is a living person, a son of God, coming into the image of that first Son, who is Jesus our Lord and Head.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims in such a high and holy calling, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. Have your conversation and manner of life honest before all men that they may by your exemplary conduct glorify God when He comes to be their judge. It is the will of God that by well doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. It is well pleasing in His sight if for your godly convictions you endure grief and suffer wrongfully, "for what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps." **1 Pet. 2:20-21**

The wilderness tabernacle, built by the instruction of the Lord, was a tabernacle made with hands. It was not intended to last forever or to be anything more than a type of the true tabernacle, which is the true church, the body of Christ. The tabernacle in the wilderness in its most minute detail was typical of the mystical body of Christ. Though it was a tabernacle of many parts, those many parts formed but one tabernacle. The temple, which God is building is a temple not made with hands. The tabernacle built by Moses and the temple built by Solomon were only temporary types of the true temple of His body, but the temple Christ is building is eternal in the heavens. It, too, has many parts and many members, yet it is but one temple, one body and one Christ.

Likewise the human body, the most perfect and commonly known of all types of the body of Christ, is one body with many members, each member having its own use and its own ministry. So do the members of the mystical body of Christ. The word of God confirms this truth in these words: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. 12:4-5. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," Paul says. **1 Cor. 12:27** Then going into greater detail concerning the many-membered Christ, he taught the truth in these words: "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." (Please notice with much care these four words: So also is Christ.) "For by (in) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." **1 Cor. 12:12-14.**

O my brethren, can you not see the glory of what he is saying? Can you not see that Paul is telling us that God's Christ is not one member, but many? Can you not see that it is the head and the many-membered body together that forms the man, and that man is God's Christ?

Need we search any further for the answer to Paul's teaching when he taught that the body, which we are is the fullness of Him who filleth all in all? Eph. 1:23. Or, as Weymouth has so eloquently translated, that "God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:23.** (Weymouth). When we consider that this great temple of His body, which is now being built during this age of grace, is the fullness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself, then surely our mental vision of a man so tall that he reaches from earth to heaven and so wide that he fills the earth cannot be very far from the truth as God would have us see it.

The next time we read the words "in Christ", let us meditate deeply in the Spirit that God may reveal their true meaning and not pass over them as a statement to be quoted and forgotten. Our spiritual walk is cleansed by the truth we see. When we were sinners far off from God and first heard His voice calling us, little did we realize the glory He was preparing for those who would come to know Him and love Him. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind (homosexuals), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards,

nor revilers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." **1 Cor. 6:9-11.** "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." **Verses 15-17.** It is very wonderful to notice here how Paul, in using these rather crude illustrations, shows beyond any question that the redeemed are in actuality and in fact members of Christ. Twice in the above quotation the apostle distinctly declares that we are members of Christ. Then in verse 19 he crowns the glorious thought with these forceful words of assurance: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. These divine promises give us no room for pride, no room for sin, nor do they give us room to exalt ourselves, but, as for me, they cause me to bow in utter humility before God. As we view these awesome facts in the light of Holy Spirit, we fall as dead men before Him while our lips hymn the gratitude that rises from our grateful hearts. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty! Blessed be He who spoke to Abraham, saying, "In thee and thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed."

When our eyes begin to behold the magnificent glory of the temple which God is building, the sons whom He is preparing to be members of His Christ, the sons who a few short years hence He will make manifest to the whole creation, sons who on the day of adoption will hear the voice of the Father saying of Christ, the Head and the body joined together, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him," then, seeing these things, we begin to understand why it is that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for the adoption, which means that at last we have attained full sonship in Him. "In my opinion, whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited — yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!" **Rom. 8:18-20** (Phillips)

Adoption in scripture was not an act by which a family adopts a fatherless child as we know it in our day. Adoption in scripture was a rite in which a father called his friends and neighbors together and in their presence bestowed upon one of his Sons recognition of his mature sonship and responsibility. We have a perfect example of such adoption given in scripture when at the baptism of Jesus the voice of God the Father proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **Matt. 3:17** That was God's recognition of Christ's full and mature sonship. It was this adoption proclamation that began His great ministry of deliverance. We younger sons have not as yet received our adoption, but we will do so at the time of the redemption of our bodies, which is the hour of resurrection. This is clearly stated in **Rom. 8:23:** "Ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The redemption of the body occurs at the resurrection of the just when the dead are raised and this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal immortality. 1 Cor. 15:52-53 This is the fullness of the adoption for which we groan and for which all creation sighs. Following it will come the mighty deliverance that comes after the manifestation of the sons of God. It is no wonder that we do not at present see the full functioning of the body of Christ, for a moment's consideration would tell us that the body is not yet completely formed; neither has it received the word of adoption from the Father, but when that great hour is reached, the words of Jesus will be fulfilled: "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father." **John 14:12**

The Lord our God has not left us without Bible witness to the stupendous statements we have been making, as we shall now see. There comes a time when all things that are far off are brought nigh. In the fullness of time the invisible things become clearly seen. That which once we saw only by faith becomes a reality and the things for which we hoped we hope for no more, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? The time must come when the vision of the seers, the proclamation of the prophets, and the hymns of the Psalmist are turned into reality. The moment comes when that which was far off on the distant horizon can be touched, it is

so nigh at hand. To Abraham God promised a seed which would come to bless the whole earth, a seed through whom all who have ever seen the light of day would be blessed and delivered. We saw that seed begin in the preparation of a nation, yea, a company of nations, who, as centuries passed by, spread themselves to the north, the south, the east, and the west to shine the light of Christ and His word over all the earth; for Simeon had prophesied that Jesus would be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people, Israel. Our eyes beheld Jesus of Nazareth come to Bethlehem. God's holy word declares Him to be the direct seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but the Son of God with power. We saw Him proclaimed as the Son of God, "Thy seed which is Christ." **Gal. 3:16** To Paul the revelation was given that he might reveal how we, the redeemed of this age, are members in particular of Christ in that we are the Christ body as He is the Christ Head, that the Head and the body together, indwelt by one Spirit, are one Christ, the temple of the Lord and the habitation of God. Paul in spirit clearly saw the day of manifestation of these younger sons of God, at which time the whole of creation would be lifted from the bondage and night of their corruption into the glorious freedom of children of God. Rom. 8:18-23

How wonderful are these things! They are far beyond our expression or the ability of the most eloquent to describe! We cannot stop here, however, for with John the beloved our eyes behold the awful fullness of these things. To John was the blessing given to stand in spirit at the end of this present age to see the incredible wonder of the fullness of Christ. The story is so familiar that we scarcely need to repeat it here, but because the truth it bears is so important, we will rehearse it again that we may be the more familiar with it.

The story begins with the apostle John's being exiled to the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; i am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." **Rev. 1:9-18**

It is my firm conviction that, when John was lifted into the realm of the Spirit on the Lord's day, he was actually carried across the years to the close of the dispensation of grace to behold things as they will be at the end of this age. He who had been so familiar with the lonely Galilean and had walked and talked with Jesus Christ was now to behold Him in a way he had never known Him before. John, who had known Jesus as He was at first, was now to behold Him as He will be at last. His ears would hear Him say, "I am the first and the last." Long he had known Jesus the Christ, the Beginning; now he was to know Him as the End. In Galilee and Judea he had walked and talked with the lowly Alpha; now his wondering eyes were to see the Omega. Long ago he had followed Jesus to Calvary where amid its pain and bloody sweat he had seen the single corn of wheat fall into the ground and die; now his eyes were to behold the full corn in the ear, the fullness of Christ in the harvest. O my brethren, can you not see it? There is a vast difference between Christ the beginning and Christ the end. There is a universe of development between the Alpha and the Omega. The smallness of the seed cannot be compared to the greatness of the harvest, and the voice of the lonely Galilean of the beginning cannot be compared to the voice as of many waters that is at the end.

John had seen God's beloved Son, Jesus Christ the Head of the body, but now at the end of the age he was beholding the glory of the Head joined to that vast family of sons that compose the mystical body of Christ. In spirit I seem to hear this firstborn of many brethren say, "Behold, I and the children (sons) which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:13** "Here am I, the eldest in a vast family of brothers." **Rom. 8:29** (Weymouth). In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks stood one like unto the Son of man. So like Jesus was this mighty one that

the likeness was indistinguishable, yet this one like unto the Son of man was so much greater now - so much so that the extent of it can only be seen by comparing the harvest with the seed, greater now as the body joined to the Head is greater than the Head.

The vision John saw displayed one clothed with a garment down to the foot with what must have been a seamless robe of righteousness and unity, indicating as nothing else could that this vast family of sons, having all partaken of one Spirit, are one Christ - "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The glorious Head, which is Jesus the Christ, was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a flame of fire. See also Dan. 10:6. His feet, the other extremity of His body, the sons which are last to be born, were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, for judgment and the gospel of peace shall be given to them. His voice was as the sound of many waters. Many waters signify many people, for in Christ there are many sons. I know there are at least one hundred forty-four thousand, but there may be many more than that, for these may be only representative of a vastly greater throng. These one hundred forty-four thousand are all chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel, who are the seed of Abraham and heirs of the covenant God made with him.

Many years ago my wife and I attended the Warrior's Day parade in Toronto. The great grandstand held thirty thousand people. We sat for an hour or so waiting for the parade of old warriors to begin - soldiers from the Boer War, veterans from World War I, men from World War II, and one old warrior from the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. As we sat waiting, the multitudes in the grandstand conversed with each other, and while these thousands chatted, we listened. The sound of that multitude of voices was as the sound of many rushing waters like unto the pleasant roar of the great Niagara Falls as it pours its exhaustless waters into the terrible rapids below. We sat fascinated by the sound - a sound that could be described by nothing else than the sound of many waters. The musical harmony as the sound of many waters, falling upon the listening ear of the beloved John, was the myriad voices of the sons of God, all members of God's Christ, the Head and the body complete together, God's beloved Son, all speaking with one mind, all speaking with one authority. "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

Our blessed Lord, when He was here on earth, gave us many beautiful illustrations of the oneness of Himself and His body. On one occasion He likened Himself and the body to a vine with fruit-bearing branches. Where may we find a greater unity than this? On another day He spoke of "My Father's house", which I am assured is none other than the body of Christ. This He likened to a house with many rooms (mansions). Likewise Paul, by the wisdom given unto him, likened the body to Christ to the many-membered human body, showing that, though the body has so many members in it and all members have a different office work, the body is but one. The hand cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of you." Nor can the eye say to the ear, "I have no need of you." Thus it shall ever be with God's glorious Christ. Though many sons form one Christ, the anointed of God, each in ages to come shall have his own office work, all in one Spirit working with that intricate harmony so wonderfully manifest in the human body, until at last through Abraham's seed, which is God's Christ, all the nations and families of the earth will be blessed. Abraham waited long years for Isaac to be born, but when Isaac was given a bride, then the great increase began. The blessing given to Rebecca was that she should be the mother of thousands of millions.

In closing this fourth chapter of the message concerning the Abrahamic covenant, perhaps it would be remiss if no mention was made of the sealing of the one hundred forty-four thousand sons of God from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel as is recorded in Rev. 7. From each of the tribes of Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Nephthalim, Manasses, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph (Ephraim), and Benjamin twelve thousand sons were sealed. The stormy winds were restrained from hurting the earth or the sea or the trees until the sealing of the sons of God in their foreheads was fully accomplished. Rev. 7:3. In my opinion the seal of God in the forehead is the perfect identification of sonship. Jesus Himself was a sealed Son of God. This He revealed by saying, "**Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.**" **John 6:27** In like manner these one hundred forty-four thousand who were sealed in their foreheads are the sons of God, members of the Christ body. The point I wish to make in particular concerns the Abrahamic Covenant, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." These one hundred forty-four thousand are all chosen from the seed of Abraham. These who are to shine as the stars of the heaven were all chosen from that earthly seed, numberless as the sands of the sea, who are the children of Abraham and the children of the covenant.

I am not intending any disrespect to the present State of Israel, which at present occupies a small portion of the land of Palestine, but we would be very misinformed, if not very ignorant, if we imagined even for a moment that this insignificant number of people represents the twelve tribes of Israel. The present State of Israel represents a small portion only of the house of Judah, but many among them are not Israelites at all, just as many in England are not Anglo-Saxons. The house of Judah consists of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, but the ten tribes of the house of Israel are not among the present inhabitants of the State of Israel. Neither are they Jews. The word Jew comes from the name Judah just as the name Jim is an abbreviation of James. The ten tribes of the house of Israel have become nations in the earth, even as Jacob prophesied they would when he called his sons to him and foretold their future for the last days. Gen. 44:49

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation we read of a great wonder that appeared in heaven, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The sun and moon represent Jacob and his wives. This is very clear by reading Gen. 37:9,10. Joseph in this passage had dreamed a dream in which the sun and the moon and the eleven stars (Joseph was the twelfth) bowed down and did obeisance to him. When his father Jacob heard this dream, he understood immediately what the meaning of it was, and with the harsh sound of rebuke in his voice he replied, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying." Here the word of God is definitely its own interpreter, teaching us that the sun and the moon and the twelve stars represent none other than the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

The woman in the wilderness of Revelation, chapter twelve, is Israel - all twelve tribes of them, including the house of Judah and the house of Israel. In her travail she brought forth a man child - first Christ the Head Son and, secondly, the one hundred forty-four thousand sons of the Christ body. I do not say that this is the complete number, for I do not know. In the human body there are many more than one hundred forty-four thousand members; but we may say with certainty that the ranks of the sons of God are not less than this great throng. These do not include the numberless throngs of the redeemed who stand before the throne with palms in their hands. The one hundred forty-four thousand represent the sons of the Christ body.

Israel has always been a woman of the wilderness. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all wilderness wanderers. After Israel departed from Egypt, they wandered for forty years in a wilderness until they entered their own land. Then the house of Israel was carried away to Assyria and were strangers in a strange land. From there they left to wander for centuries in the desolate places of Europe, moving out to the north, the south, the east and the west in exact accord with God's promise to Abraham. Gen. 28:14. Then they moved out into the uninhabited wilderness of new continents and the untamed islands of the seas, for Abraham was the heir of the world and was to be a blessing to the many nations of the world. We will not speak more of this wilderness aspect here except to say that during her wilderness journeys, while making the wilderness blossom as a rose, she had been bringing forth a man child, who will rule the whole earth in the near future with a rod of iron.

"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they, which are not defiled with women (denominations); for they are virgins. These are they, which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." **Rev. 14:1-5.**

"The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter?" **Lam. 4:2.** But "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," (**Isa. 35:10**), because long centuries before the Lord had said to Abraham, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER FIVE

The next chapter will be a message concerning the bride of Christ. In it we will endeavor to show that, as Christ the Head and Christ the body come from the seed of Abraham, in like manner the bride of Christ, or Christ the bride, comes of the seed of Abraham. The term, Christ the bride, is doubtless unfamiliar to most of us. Indeed I have never heard the term used by any other; nevertheless the moment we grasp the significance of the statement, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh," we grasp the vital unity between the Christ bridegroom and the Christ bride, for they two are also one in a spiritual union, of which the union of the flesh we now know as marriage can only be a frail type.

We should not deem it strange that we have not heard these truths before because God reveals truth only when the time is ripe for truth to be revealed. This Peter describes as present truth. 2 Pet. 1:12 It is also stated by Isaiah, "Behold, the former things are come to pass and new things do I declare: before they spring forth, I will tell you of them." Isa. 42:9 It is not strange therefore that practically no one has ever heard teaching concerning the bride of Christ - who she is, where she comes from, her relationship to the Bridegroom, or the magnificent purpose to which she is ordained. Should some think this to be an incorrect deduction, then one might ask himself the questions, "Who is the bride? For what purpose does Christ need a bride? What will be the glory of her ministry in the ages to come?" Upon asking ourselves these questions, we will realize that the truth concerning the bride of Christ has never been revealed nor has her existence been more than merely mentioned. It is deplorable, but true, that in our day, as in centuries past, the teaching has been that the present day church is the bride of Christ. This is a great error, which purposely hides the true bride and her ministry from our understanding.

It is necessary that all truth be revealed in its appointed time because, when truth grips our hearts and we comprehend the magnitude of God's eternal purposes, we are sanctified by the truth, for "Thy word is truth," and laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

It is my earnest and continual prayer that all who read these sacred truths will be seized upon by the spirit of revelation from on high that all may see the length and breadth and depth and height of God's grace and know the love of God, which passeth knowledge, that we may know how long and wide and deep and high God's grace and love must be that we, the seed of Abraham by covenant and by faith, should be included in God's glorious Christ, the Head and the body together forming one Christ and one anointed. Jesus the first born and the many sons who follow after, being baptized into one body and one Christ, therefore being one, will hear again from heaven those same words of adoption, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" This Christ in His fullness, the Head and the body in one together, will be united to the New Jerusalem bride that the last Adam in all His magnified and multiplied glory might be after the image of the first Adam before Eve, the bride, was separated from him. Thus the first man, who was of the earth earthy, is found to be a faint shadow of the last man, who is the Lord from heaven.

The entire dispensation of grace has been occupied by the ingathering and perfecting of the Christ body, or the bridegroom. The millennial age is appointed for the ingathering and perfecting of the bride of Christ, the hosts of the seed of Abraham reserved until now for that purpose. Then follows the dispensation of the fullness of times when through the twelve gates of the city all nations will enter that they might have the right to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the New Jerusalem, the city of God. The nations shall walk in the light of it and shall bring their glory and honor into it until every creature in earth and in Heaven and in the sea will be heard saying, "Glory and blessing and honor to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

CHAPTER FIVE THY SEED WHICH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Studying truth so vast in scope as that which we have undertaken, I frankly admit that it is difficult to find either an appropriate place to begin or a suitable place to end. As God Himself is without beginning or end, so also His eternal truth must be.

When the Lord created the animals, the birds, the beasts of the field, and all other life on earth, He made them male and female; but when He formed Adam from the dust of the ground, this creation was radically different from all others. Whereas lower forms of animal creation were made male and female separately from the beginning, man was made male and female, united in one person, and that one person was called Adam. Thus when the Lord caused every beast of the field and bird of the air to pass before Adam to be named, from all this great host of created life, the scripture clearly states, "for Adam there was not found an help-meet for him." To provide a helpmeet and a wife for Adam the Lord did a wonderful thing. "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." **Gen. 2:21-24** To emphasize a thought, which I wish to introduce later we should remember this notable scripture: "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." **Gen. 3:20** In 1 Cor. 11:12 Paul made this interesting statement: "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman: but all things of God." To the best of my understanding the meaning is this: The first woman who ever saw the light of day came forth out of man, but thenceforward forever every man who would come into the world would come by or from the woman. Herein is a most wonderful thing. None can deny the truth of it. Though the woman at first came forth from the man, yet from that day forth forever all mankind would be born of and come forth from the woman. The marvelous significance of the fact that Adam's wife was to become the mother of all living will never be fully appreciated until generations, dispensations, and ages pass in their procession and we stand at last on that great and high mountain with John, beholding the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, to become in truth the mother of all living. Rev. 21:9-21

Oh the unsearchable riches of Christ! Oh to perceive the irresistible unfolding of His immutable will! Oh to grasp the revelation of His purpose, the purpose that will never deviate from its original intention until at last all things return to God who gave them - not empty as they came out from God, but full of wisdom and knowledge as they will come in! Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him? Or who has been His counselor? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Glory to His eternal name forevermore! It is not from the schools of this world's wisdom that we learn the ways of God. Eternal purposes are not unfolded by the lettered and polished scholars of this dark age. We do not discover the wisdom of the mind that is eternal by studying musty old volumes of church tradition, but we learn the purpose of the ages when in spirit we stand in Eden with the Eternal to look through His eyes down the vista of years to the end of time. Then and then only do we behold the infinite wisdom of the divine mind, the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will.

*"Not Athen's blooms, but those of Calvary
And Gethsemane bring the victory
That causes sinners for home to pine
And turn their backs for aye on husks of swine."*

Our hearts have been thrilled and stirred beyond measure as we have mused concerning the covenant God made with Abraham. From it we have seen a nation and a company of nations rise, whose seed in our day is as numberless as the sands of the sea, a people who even in their unregenerate condition have been a blessing to all other nations on earth because they are the covenant people. From that nation we have seen the exalted Head come forth, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Son of God, the last man Adam, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh and that particular seed which we now know to be "thy seed which is Christ."

Upon a handful of Judean Jews, who were the seed of Abraham, the Holy Ghost was outpoured at Pentecost, the very beginning and foundation of the Christ body, the temple of the Lord. Then again in the Revelation John saw at the end of this age one hundred forty-four thousand sons of God of the seed of Abraham sealed in their foreheads. The sons of God in the extremity of this age complete the fullness of Christ. Wonderful as is the story of the fullness of Christ, it is by no means the end of the story we have to tell nor is it the climax of the covenant God made with Abraham. While Adam was complete as a man before Eve stood by his side, no seed of Adam could possibly have been born until God gave him a bride. Only then did the thousands of millions of

mankind begin to appear on the face of the earth. My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs when I consider the antitype of this great mystery. For six thousand years God has been bringing to fullness and completeness the last man Adam, the fullness of the Christ of God, the Head, which is God's first Son Jesus, together with the vast body of sons to follow, that Christ might stand at the end of this age in all His fullness as John beheld Him in Revelation, chapter one. "Here am I and the sons which God hath given me." **Heb. 2:13** (R.V.) One Lord and one Christ, all baptized in one Spirit into one body and one Christ. Here am I, the Man Christ Jesus, the last Adam, made in God's image, created in His likeness, standing in the end of the sixth day complete in Myself as Adam stood, but with no bride and no wife by My side!

Up to this present time Christian people have had practically no understanding concerning the bride of Christ. Of her very little revelation has been given. The bride has not yet appeared on the earth. Though Adam appeared on the sixth day, Eve did not appear until after the sixth day. How long after we do not know. Adam was revealed as a son of God at the end of the sixth day, and now at the end of the sixth dispensational day since man appeared on the earth the Father has brought the sons of God to fullness. By the ministry of these sons will come forth the many membered New Jerusalem bride of Christ.

During the centuries of the church age many wonderful revivals have taken place. Multitudes of mankind have wept in repentance and contrition at the feet of the Saviour and, being begotten of Him, they rose to walk in newness of life, justified by faith in His blood, but up to the present hour all we have seen has been the gathering of the elect, the sonship company, who at the end of the age stand complete in Christ awaiting only the redemption of the body before their complete manifestation. While these multitudes were being gathered into the fold, unnumbered millions, yea, even billions, have walked in outer darkness, living and dying without even once hearing the message of salvation or ever knowing that the true God existed or that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believed on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. But was not that to be expected? Most certainly it was, for had God intended to enlighten the heathen in this age, His omnipotent power could have done so ten thousand times over, opening their blind eyes and transforming their hearts in a moment of time. It was not until Eve was brought forth to stand by Adam's side that the human increase began. From that union billions have been born. Thus will it be in the end when the bride of Christ is presented to Him at the marriage of the Lamb. Then will the gates of the city be opened wide and the restitution of all the billions who once walked in darkness will begin. Never will the blessed program cease until every creature in heaven and earth and in the sea shall be heard saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." **Rev. 5:13**. Rejoice, O my soul, at the wonder of the thing!

Can we not see that all natural things have spiritual counterparts? Could God's command to Adam to multiply ever have been fulfilled had He not given Eve to be his bride? The Abrahamic covenant, which promised a seed as numberless as the stars of heaven, would have been but idle words had God not given Sarah to Abraham to be his wife. You sit today, oh man, with your children as olive plants about your table, but would they have been there at all had God not first given you a wife? But for her you would have been a dry and barren tree. Why then do we find it difficult to see the anti-type in Christ? Glorious as is our wonderful Christ in His completeness, even He would abide unproductive and alone were it not for the truth most glorious that from Himself will come forth a spiritual Eve, the bride of Christ, who in her time will be the mother of thousands of millions of reborn men, numberless as the stars of the universe.

There has been much misunderstanding concerning the sons of God and the bride. The sons of God now being prepared are the true body of Christ. They must not be confused with the bride. The sons of God compose the bridegroom. Jesus Christ with all the elect sons who have been prepared in this age constitute the bridegroom company. This is the fullness of Christ. Adam is the type; the sons of God are the antitype. Adam was first formed, then Eve. Let us not forget that order. To fulfill the type, Christ, the last Adam, is first formed in fullness, then the bride by Him. The first Adam was formed on the sixth day. The last man Adam is formed on the sixth dispensational day, the age of grace. Eve, the bride, was not formed on the sixth day. She was taken from Adam some time later. How much later I do not know. So also the bride of Christ is not formed on the sixth dispensational day. She first appears in all her glory descending from God out of heaven at the end of the millennial kingdom of God. Rev. 21:9-27 Our understanding of the whole plan of God for the reconciliation of all things becomes clearer once we understand that it is not until the woman, the bride,

appears that true fruitfulness begins. If through Adam and Eve the billions of natural men have been born, then the antitype is abundantly clear that through Christ and the bride all those billions who have been born will now be born again. That is not first which is spiritual but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. Once we grasp the significance of the natural, it is not difficult to follow God's purpose through into the spiritual. The saints may learn a great lesson by noticing that all God's works, both natural and spiritual, follow a distinct pattern. For instance, everything that lives, be it a tree, an insect, an animal, a man or a son of God, grows from a seed. Again, everything in creation travels in an orbit. "Dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return." The wind blows from the north to the south and turns about and blows back to the north again. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is never full. From the place whence the waters came thither they return again. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west and hastens to the place where he arose. See Eccles. 1:4-9 Again, in all forms of life God has made male and female. All living creatures are male and female and not least among them is mankind. God Himself is male and female in one. He could not be perfect if it were not so. When the Lord made Adam in His own image, Adam was both male and female in one person. Thus he remained until the Lord separated the masculine from the feminine, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, to exist separately for the purpose of procreation. Certain as this is, inspiration declares both in the Old Testament and in the New that the man and his wife, though separate, are one flesh. Indeed, it was Adam who first uttered that truth when he said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." **Gen. 2:23-24** Paul likewise knew this truth and added, "This is a great mystery; nevertheless, I speak concerning Christ and the church." Speaking of the church, he was probably referring to that part of the ecclesia which will eventually form the bride of Christ.

Throughout the works of God the pattern is clearly visible, teaching us that the male is fruitless until the female appears. The bachelor must abide alone until he receives a bride. Then and only then the increase begins. We may be reverently assured that this same pattern exists in the spiritual realm. The sons of God, who form the body of Christ and the bridegroom, will become fully fruitful only after the bride appears and is presented to Christ. I will deal more fully with this as we proceed and then I trust we will see the universal increase, which the Word declares with such assurance. Dear reader, I ask this one question of you before we proceed further. In your meditations concerning the bride of Christ have you discovered the purpose for her existence? Or have you thought of her as something romantically meaningless? On the other hand, have you seen the bride as vitally essential to God's plan for the restitution of all things? To me it seems particularly clear that the formation of the bride of Christ is a work completely necessary to the final rebirth and reconciliation of all things. Though God's word declares with assurance that Christ "hath reconciled all things to Himself, the final fulfillment of that work must await the sacred hour when the bride of Christ is complete and ready, as I shall clearly show in the final pages of this chapter.

A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

The Bible is the Word of God. Every jot and tittle of it from Genesis to Revelation is as true as God is true. No man anywhere has ever proved any of its statements to be in error or any of its history or prophecy inaccurate. Not only is the Bible the Word of God, but it is also the most intriguing story ever written. It gives the account of creation and the fall of man. It tells of battles, of shipwrecks, of faithfulness, of murder and betrayal, and it contains without doubt the most romantic love stories ever recorded.

The complete romance of Isaac and Rebekah is a bit too long to write in detail here, but if the reader will refresh himself by reading Genesis, chapter twenty-four, he will have the beautiful account in its fullness. It will, however, be necessary to quote some of that narrative here. As you read the tale, you will become aware that Abraham is a type of God the Father, Isaac is a type of the Son, Eliezer, the servant, represents the Holy Spirit seeking the bride, and Rebekah herself is the bride.

"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him,

Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou earnest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land: He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence." **Gen. 24:1-7**

Reading the above passage, we will be impressed by Abraham's definite command that a bride for Isaac must under no circumstances be sought from among the Canaanites or from among any of the Gentile people. Isaac's bride was not to be a Gentile bride as so many preachers have insisted, but she was to be a girl from Abraham's kindred and from his own country. Gen. 24:4 Abraham was not a Jew, because there was no such person as a Jew until many years after Judah was born. The word Jew derives from the word Judah as Ben is an abbreviation of Benjamin. Abraham was an Hebrew. He was called a Hebrew because he was a descendant of the household of Heber or Eber. Gen. 11:14 I wish here to strongly emphasize the fact that Abraham forbid his servant to seek a bride for Isaac from among any except his own kindred. She was to be an Hebrew of Abraham's own people, for Abraham was an Hebrew. Gen. 14:13 Investigation clearly shows that Rebekah was a second cousin of Isaac or a cousin once removed as some prefer to say.

The genealogy of Abraham is given in Gen. 11:10-30 Briefly stated, starting with Shem, the son of Noah, the genealogy is Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah; and Terah begat three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran, before he died, left three children - Lot (verse 27), Milcah, a daughter, and Iscah. Verse 29. Abram married his half-sister Sarah (Gen. 20:12) and Nahor married Milcah (his niece), who was his brother Haran's daughter. (Verse 29) Please remember that intermarrying with close relatives was not forbidden until after the law of Moses.

When Abraham's servant Eliezer (Gen. 15:2) went seeking a bride for Isaac, he was led by the Holy Spirit to the house of his master's brethren. Gen. 24:27 The account of the journey he took to seek a bride for Isaac is recorded in these words: "And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor (Nahor was Abraham's brother). And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher on her shoulder." **Gen. 24:10-15** This fifteenth verse tells us that Nahor and Milcah his wife had a son whose name was Bethuel, and Rebekah was Bethuel's daughter. Bethuel was therefore Isaac's first cousin and Rebekah was Isaac's second cousin.

I have emphasized this detail to establish the fact that Isaac's bride was not a Gentile bride, as preachers are so fond of declaring, She was an Hebrew just as certainly as Isaac was an Hebrew. Furthermore she could not have been much more closely related to Isaac than she was. This fact is important, because it is through Abraham and his seed that all other nations of the world are to be blessed. Abraham's wife was an Hebrew woman (his half-sister). Isaac's wife was also an Hebrew, and Jacob's wives, Rachel and Leah, were also Hebrew women, daughters of Laban, who himself was a son of Nahor, Abram's brother. Gen. 29:5 Now, since Rachel and Leah were the daughters of Laban, the son of Nahor, and Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, then Bethuel and Laban were brothers and Rachel and Leah were first cousins of Rebekah. I do not see any way to avoid this conclusion. Lot was the son of Haran, Abraham's brother. Therefore Lot was Abraham's nephew. How anyone can conclude that Rebekah was a Gentile bride in the face of this close relationship is more than I can imagine. She was definitely an Hebrew bride.

It is in Abraham and his seed that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. We have already shown in Vol. 15 No. 3 that Jesus Christ, the Head of the body, was of the seed of Abraham according to His natural descent. In article four we showed that the body of Christ is of the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the

promise. Also the one hundred forty-four thousand who were sealed in their foreheads as sons of God were chosen from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel and every one of these sons is of the seed of Abraham according to God's eternal covenant with him. It will be our joy to see presently that the greatest ingathering of all time will be accomplished when the bride of Christ is complete and has made herself ready, for in that glad and holy day all the nations will bring their glory and honor into her. Therefore it is important now to show that the bride of Christ, when she appears in all her celestial glory, will also be of the seed of Abraham. As it is with the types, so must it be with the antitypes. Just as the brides of Isaac and Jacob were of the Abrahamic family, so also will the bride of Christ be of the seed of Abraham. Again we repeat the words of the covenant: "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

It must be clearly understood that, when God speaks of the seed of Abraham, He is speaking of all the twelve tribes of the children of Israel and not merely of the Jews, who represent only a very small section of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who formed the house of Judah. Why is it that Christians universally insist that the Jewish nation, who for two thousand years has been anti-Christ in all its teaching and actions, is predestined to inherit a wonderful future glory, and at the same time insist that the other ten tribes, to whom Christ is a glory, (Luke 2:32), are washed up, rejected of God, and completely forgotten? There is something wrong with such faulty theology as that, for it is certain that far greater promises were given to the ten tribes of the house of Israel than were given to the two tribes of the house of Judah. We must conclude that these ten tribes are in the earth today, bringing forth fruit exactly as God determined before hand when Jacob called his sons and said, "**Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.**" **Gen. 49:1**

The apostle Paul said, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles be come in." Now this blindness is twofold. First the house of Judah is partially blind, for while they know they are Abraham's seed, they do not know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and their promised Messiah. The house of Israel on the other hand is blind in exactly the opposite way, for they almost to a man know that Jesus is the Christ; yet they are totally blind as to who they are, supposing all the while that they are Gentiles when they are in fact the seed of Abraham. As this thought will be dealt with in our final chapter, we will leave it for the present with the prayer that God will open our eyes, which have suffered this blindness in part for so many years, that the house of Judah may see her Christ and the house of Israel may see her identity, her birthright and her calling.

REBEKAH'S BLESSING

The story of Rebekah, the bride of Isaac, is filled with romance and beauty. Read its narrative verse by verse and consider its progress thought by thought and you will discover a beautiful story full of types and instruction that will lead to understanding. You will see Abraham as a type of our heavenly Father, sending forth the servant, who represents the Holy Spirit, to seek out a bride for Isaac, the son. You will see the gifts with which she is adorned, the consecration she willingly made in response to the proposal, "Wilt thou go with this man," and she said, "I will go." You will hear the prophetic blessing pronounced upon her as she departed: "**Thou art our sister; be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.**" **Gen. 24:60**

I trust the reader will not forget that Rebekah is a type of the New Jerusalem bride of Christ. She just may be the only type of the bride of Christ in all the scripture. Therefore I want to greatly emphasize these words of her blessing, "**Be thou the mother of thousands of millions.**" **Gen. 24:60** Rebekah has become the mother of thousands of millions through the centuries, but the wonderful blessing extends far beyond all natural generation, reaching forward to that glad day when the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, Rebekah's antitype, will open her twelve gates to become the mother of all the thousands of millions who have ever existed on the earth. A thousand million is a billion, but the blessing is not to a thousand million, but to thousands of millions. Numberless billions will enter through her wide open gates to partake of the water of life, flowing freely in the midst of the city of God. They will bring their glory and honor into her and she will be the mother of them all, and God Himself will be their Father and dwell among them. "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions" is a mighty prophetic blessing to be fulfilled in its completeness only in the New Jerusalem bride. Oh the knowledge of God as He speaks from eternity to eternity! How unsearchable is His wisdom and His ways past finding out!

"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant (who represents the Holy Spirit) took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country." **Gen. 24:61-62.** Isaac, as you already know, is a type of Christ in this story, that fullness of Christ of which we have spoken before. Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi, which means, "The well of Him that liveth and seeth me." This was the well Hagar named before the birth of Ishmael when the angel of the Lord met her in the wilderness. Gen. 16:1-14. Thou, Lord seest me. "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." **Gen. 24:63-67.**

The story of Isaac abounds in beautiful types. Abraham had waited many long and weary years for the birth of his promised son. All the promises and covenants God had made with him depended entirely upon the birth of this one son. Upon the birth of Isaac depended the promise that Abraham's seed would be as the sand of the sea shore and as the stars of heaven for number. Upon his birth rested the promise, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." If this promised son were not born, then all the promises given and re-given through the years must fall to the ground and become utterly meaningless. But, blessed be God's faithfulness, Isaac was born and with him the promise of all things God had spoken is assured.

In the midst of the gladness this promised son had brought came the command of God that Isaac should be offered up as a sacrifice, for nothing we possess is of any value at all until it is offered in sacrifice to God. So Abraham, in obedience to God's command, took his son to offer him up for a burnt offering on one of the hills of Moriah. Gen. 22:2. (Possibly Calvary where Jesus died and where also, many believe, Adam had been buried.) Though God spared Isaac from death, in type he died, the ram caught in the thicket taking his place. Now, many years after Isaac had been received from death in a figure (Heb. 11:19), he was presented with a bride, through whom all the promises of God would be completely fulfilled. All else is but preparation for the bride, who will be the mother of thousands of millions.

There is so much to write and space seems always insufficient, but we must find place here to explain that man in himself is not complete. When God made man in the beginning, He created him male and female complete in one person, and that person was Adam. All other creatures were created male and female separately, but Adam was made male and female in one person. We cannot tell from the Genesis record how long he remained in that perfect state, but the day came when a deep sleep from God came upon him and from a part of his body, which the Bible calls a rib, the Lord formed a woman, who was presented to him as his wife. From that hour onward the man without the woman was incomplete and the woman without the man was incomplete also, and each without the other remained fruitless. Because both the male and the female are incomplete and fruitless without each other the apostle Paul in wisdom explained, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Nothing proves more conclusively than this passage that the male without the female or the female without the male are both incomplete and fruitless, but when they two are joined together by the power of God, they two are one. After Paul explained this mystery, he proceeded to show how this wonder is itself a type of an even greater mystery, saying, "**This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**" **Eph. 5:32** The true church consists of the sonship company, which is the fullness of Christ in His many-membered body of sons, but the church of the millennial kingdom is the Israel bride - the bride of Christ, not a Gentile bride, but an Israelitish bride as we have before clearly shown.

The book of Hosea will always remain a dark mystery until the reader discovers that the wayward, adulterous, Baal-loving twelve tribes of the children of Israel, restored, redeemed, washed and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, are in truth the bride of Christ. I frankly confess that, until the Spirit made it clear to my own heart that converted and restored Israel is the bride of Christ, the whole book of Hosea and most of the other prophetic books as well were a meaningless jumble that made no sense at all.

The prophet Hosea was told to go and marry two adulterous women (Hos. 1:3 and 3:1) vividly described as "a wife of whoredoms", "for the land hath committed great whoredoms in departing from the Lord." In response to this strange command Hosea took Gomer, who bore him a son, and the Lord said, "Call his named Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel." **Hos. 1:4** (For the sequel of this story of Jezreel please read **2 Kings 10:1-14.**) Then Gomer bare a daughter whom they named Lo-ruhamah, meaning unpitied (**verse 6**), for God said, "I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, (that is, the ten tribes) but / will have mercy upon the house of Judah (the two tribes)."

When Gomer had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she bore a son and called his name Lo-ammi, which means "not my people," for the Lord said, "Ye are not My people and I will not be your God." **Verse 9** Now read **verses 10 and 11** and we will discover what the future holds for these people. "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered: and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

To me it is a most wonderful thing to hear the Lord in one verse condemn these people to the most awful judgment, utterly forsaking them, then in the next verse prove that they are still His beloved people by extending to them the most remarkable and unconditional promises. The day will come, indeed, when the house of Israel and the house of Judah will appoint themselves one head, and that head will be Christ, and Israel - all twelve tribes of them - will become the bride of Christ.

Please notice further that in **verse 10** the Lord distinctly says that it is during the time of their rejection that they will become as numberless as the sands of the sea. Furthermore, in the very place where the Lord had said, "Ye are not MY people," there shall they be called the sons of the living God.

It is a disconcerting conundrum to me to find that, when some anthropologist discovers a nomadic tribe of savages whom he foolishly imagines has some relationship to the lost ten tribes of Israel, all the Christians rejoice and hail his vain notion as a great discovery, though no such prophecy of miserable destitution was ever made of Israel. But, when the claim is made and backed with abundant scriptural evidence that these ten tribes are now a multitude in the earth as difficult to number as the sands of the sea and that they are the head and not the tail among nations and a blessing to all other peoples, having expanded to the north and south and east and west, then the claimant is regarded as a fanatic and a fool even though his claims are soundly based on the Word of God. The very fact that Simeon prophesied that Jesus Christ would be the glory of His people Israel (that is, the ten tribes of the house of Israel) should be enough to identify as Israel those nations who honor Christ as Lord. Since the one hundred forty-four thousand sons of God are chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel, and the bride is Israel, then the matter of who Israel is ceases to be a thing of paltry importance, but a thing of utmost concern, for the word of God still rings loud in our ears, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." All blessing to all other nations must come through the seed of Abraham or not at all. Christ the Head, Christ the body, and Christ the bride must come of the seed of Abraham; otherwise the covenant is void.

Now in Hosea, chapter two, the story of Gomer continues. Please read it carefully, bearing these thoughts in mind. Much of the chapter is taken up with the corrective steps to be taken against the adulterous woman Israel. God will strip her naked (verse 3), make her a wilderness, set her in a dry land, slay her with thirst, hedge her about with thorns, make a wall that she shall not find her paths (**verse 6**) "She shall follow after her lovers, but shall not overtake them; she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now." Verse 7. Her first husband is the Lord. We interrupt the chain of thought here to say that right in our day this same Israel is seeking lovers among the nations, but cannot find them. Britain goes awhoring after the nations in the Common Market, but the whole world knows she doesn't belong there. She is a square plug in a round hole. The more she embraces them the more they reject her. The whole Anglo-Saxon world joins in with the United Nations, going awhoring after Russia and China, but all the reward they get is to pay the bills and be kicked in the face by those they try to help or defend. But the day will come at the end of this age when they will say, "I will return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now."

Has the Lord forgotten His covenant people? By no means! Listen to what He says: "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness (cf. Rev. 12:14), and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her, her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." **Verses 14-15** Now comes the most wonderful verse of all! "And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi (that is, my husband); and shall call me no more Baali (my lord)." Verse 16 Then follows **verse 19**: "And I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which are not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." **Hosea 2:19-23**

The prophecy of Hosea was written principally to the ten tribes of the house of Israel, but as Israel and Judah are both of the seed of Abraham, it was essential that the prophet speak also of them. This he did, saying, "The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will He recompense him." **Hos. 12:2** The punishment of Judah has been very severe all through this past age. Great blindness and distress have been upon them, first, because of their disobedience and whoredoms and, above all else, because of their rejection of their Messiah, Jesus Christ. Judah above all others should have known that Shiloh, the Redeemer, would come through him, but "Who," said God, "is so blind as My servant?" We must not forget, however, that Judah's rejection of Christ and their present blindness was all part and parcel of the great aionian purpose ordained by God from the beginning. Until mankind is able to see that before all things God stands omniscient, immutable, almighty and eternal, they will fall far short in understanding, blundering along in the outer darkness of unbelief.

In the light of these few verses from Hosea the whole book with its curses, its promises and blessings, begins to unravel and unfold until at last we see the adulterous and repudiated wife of Jehovah return to her faithful Lord to become the repentant, restored, purified and prepared bride of Christ. The reader will discover to his delight that this line of thought pervades the messages of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. All the prophets concentrate heavily on this line of thought. All foresaw both the house of Judah and the house of Israel carried away into captivity. All foresaw their whoredoms among the nations and all rejoiced in the knowledge of their final restoration. It is a beautiful though tragic story with a wonderful end, if indeed it can be said that there is an end at all. In every book of the Old Testament and almost every book of the New Testament Israel is always "God's people", whether abiding in obedience in the promised land or scattered in disobedience to the four corners of the earth. Always they are His chosen seed. Always amid their curse and judgment He blesses them, and always foremost is the final purpose to bring them to perfection that in the ages to come all nations who know not God will come to the blessedness of that knowledge through the seed of Abraham.

In the twenty-third chapter of Ezekiel we read the parable of Aholah and Aholibah, daughters of one mother who committed whoredom in Egypt. Verse 4 says, "Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem is Aholibah." Jerusalem, of course, was the capital city of the House of Judah and Samaria was the capital city of the house of Israel. Both of these women (nations) played the harlot, Aholah going after the Assyrians and being eventually carried away by them, while Aholibah went after the Babylonians (verses 22, 23) and eventually was carried away captive by them. But always somewhere in the prophecy is the evidence of cleansing, repentance, a return, for God has not cast away His people which He foreknew; but in the place where He said, "Ye are not My people," there shall they be called the sons of the living God.

We stated before that Israel has always been a woman of the wilderness. As the multitudes of her people outgrew their surroundings, they moved out into the wilderness of new continents, making the land blossom and produce abundantly. Even those Jews who this century returned to the land of Israel after an absence of eighteen centuries found it to be a burning, unproductive wilderness. But today one flying across the country can see in an instant the boundaries between Israel and the Arab lands, because the Arab side is desert and the Israel side is a desert blossoming as a rose.

The end of the age is at hand. The dispensation which Paul calls the dispensation of the grace of God will soon be history. Not that grace will be history, but the dispensation will be passed away. When this age is complete, Christ in His body will also be complete. The trumpet will sound and the "in Christ" will rise first. Jesus Christ the Head will appear with all the sons whom God has given Him, as revealed to John in Rev. 1:9-18. With the defeat of the armies of the Antichrist the Son of God will begin His reign of righteousness. He will take the kingdom and that long awaited day of glory, spoken of by all the prophets, will have come. The wilderness and the solitary place will be glad of them and the desert shall blossom as a rose.

Have you considered how great was the truth Jesus uttered when He said, "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel?" **Matt. 19:28.** Judging the twelve tribes of the children of Israel! To what purpose will God in that wonderful age set His anointed sons to judge the twelve tribes of Israel? His purpose is to pursue to its ultimate fulfillment that original promise He made to Abraham: "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." From Israel He has already perfected Christ the Head. From Israel He has perfected Christ the body, and through judgment of this same Israel in the kingdom He will perfect Christ the bride, that she who once languished as the repudiated wife will henceforth call Him, "my husband." Hos. 2:16.

John on the Isle of Patmos, beholding these glories in the Spirit, wrote: "There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:" **Rev. 21:9-12** Can any picture show more clearly or words explain more definitely than these that the Bride of Christ is the twelve tribes of the children of Israel? Just as the sons of God, the one hundred forty-four thousand, are chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel, so also the bride is the twelve tribes of Israel. The sons of God are the Temple of the Lord, but the bride of Christ is the city of the Lord. The body of Christ is a temple not made with hands in which every stone is living stone, a person, a son of God. The same truth applies to the glorious holy city, the bride of Christ. It is not a metropolis as some evidently imagine, but every gate and wall and foundation in it is a living stone, persons and tribes blood-washed and redeemed, all of the seed of Abraham. The walls of the city were of jasper and the city was pure gold. Gold in scripture is symbolic of God and all that is priceless and precious. The gold of the city was like unto clear glass. "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. (These same twelve stones represented the tribes of Israel in the breastplate of the high priest.) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." **Rev. 21:19-27**

We see here the bride, redeemed Israel, adorned and prepared for her husband. It is not until the bride is joined to her husband that the Last Adam is complete, male and female in one Spirit as the first Adam was male and female in one flesh. When the bride appears, then the increase begins. When she is perfected, we hear the sweet strains of a new message, never heard before in all the history of the world. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Hitherto the Spirit of Christ has invited the elect to come. Henceforth the glorious New Jerusalem bride will join with Christ, saying, "Come," to all the nations of the world, and the restitution of all things will begin. The twelve gates of the city will be opened by day and never closed, for there is no night

there. In response to the message, "Come," proclaimed by the Spirit and the bride, the nations in glad procession will bring their glory and honor into the city, a procession which will never cease until every man who has ever lived or died has come in through the gates of the city back to God from whence he came.

No book could ever be written that could fully describe the glory of this thing. Only the Holy Spirit can carry us away and reveal it to our hearts. The resurrection of the dead will take place in which the millions and billions who never heard that God had a Son will hearken with awe to this beautiful bride of Christ speaking by the Spirit to all nations, saying, "Come." And come they will - by the billions - for the restitution of all things, spoken of by all the prophets since the world began, is the purpose for that final age, the dispensation of the fullness of times. Of the dispensation of the fullness of times Paul triumphantly wrote these immortal words: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." **Eph. 1:9-10** This great final gathering of all things into Christ will come to pass because centuries before the Lord made a covenant with Abraham that was to embrace His purpose for all time and eternity. "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

I have sought in vain through the works of man to find if any had a spiritual understanding of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem bride of Christ, but alas, all seem intent upon calculating the expanse of the city in cubic miles as though it were nothing more than a huge metropolis slightly more wonderful than those at present on earth. One speaker pictured the New Jerusalem as a twelve-story hotel. Another waxed eloquent about the size of the mansion each inhabitant would possess, replete with space for lawns and fountains and other such childish nonsense. Until our spiritual minds are able to grasp the truth that the body of Christ is the temple of God and that every room or mansion in that temple is a living son of God, a literal habitation for God through the Spirit, and until we understand that the stones of that building are all living stones as Christ Jesus Himself is a living stone, we have understood nothing at all. The temple of God is the body of Christ. The temple of God, indeed, is Christ in all His fullness — the Head and all the many members of the body joined by one Spirit and baptized into one glorious body. Did not Paul, because of the indolent understanding of his listeners, demand in amazement, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" **I Cor. 6:19** Oh may the Spirit of God make this a living truth in our hearts! This is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This is "My Father's house of many mansions" in which He prepares a place for every one who by faith has become a son of God. This is what John meant when he said, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." **John 1:12-13** This is the body of the Christ. This is the habitation of God. This is the temple of the Lord.

If we will seek God in prayer and ask the Father in heaven for revelation, the Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto us, and we will rejoice in the blessedness of the understanding He gives. If our spiritual minds can grasp the truth concerning the temple of God, then it will be much easier to understand why the bride of Christ is described as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. In the glory of that wonderful age to come man has no need of houses to dwell in. God does not dwell in temples made with hands. These are only figures of the true. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is the bride of Christ, magnificent in glory and indescribable in beauty, and the bride of Christ is the Holy City. The glory of this truth overwhelms me! Knowing neither where to begin nor where to end, I stumble in words as one whose breath through amazement has been taken away.

See with me the increasing tempo of glory in heaven and earth when the announcement is made, "His wife hath made herself ready." John, lost in spirit at the wonder of the thing, saw the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fall down and worship God that sat on the throne saying, "Alleluia!" "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And He saith unto

me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." **Rev. 19:5-9**

Is it not a marvelous thing to discover that immediately following the announcement, "His wife hath made herself ready," in **verse 11** we see "heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies, which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Following the revelation of the coming Christ and the announcement that the bride has made herself ready, an angel came to John saying, "Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." **Rev. 21:9,19** John saw her myriad ranks of "thousands of millions" descending from heaven, a living reflection of the blessing given to Rebekah forty centuries before - "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions." And thousands of millions there will be in that New Jerusalem bride of Christ - all the seed of Abraham, clad in fine linen, for fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. On a great and high mountain John stood, beholding the unspeakable wonder of the Holy Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. "Having the glory of God," the word declares, "and her light was like unto a stone most precious." We read in Rev. 4:3 that John beheld the throne of God, and Him that sat upon it was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. This same manifestation of God's glory is now seen in the bride, for as the sun lights up the heavens, so the glory of God is the light of the bride, and the city had no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof.

"Thou art our sister: be thou the mother of thousands of millions," were the words of blessing that fell upon the beautiful Rebekah long ago, and the mother of thousands of millions she became, but this sweet and humble girl, the bride of Isaac, so beautiful to behold, was but a frail and fading type of that bride which was to come, when billions of her progeny would be manifested as the heavenly bride of Christ. Now henceforth the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. Now shall the salvation of God be manifest to the nations of earth, who hitherto walked in darkness and the shadow of death. Henceforth walking in the light of the Holy City, they shall be called the nations of them, which are saved. Rev. 21:24 In grand procession forever and ever they bring their glory and honor into it, and the gates shall not be shut at all by day and there is no night there. Each of the twelve gates of that city are wide enough for a whole regiment to march in abreast. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie. As Rebekah, the bride of Isaac, became the mother of thousands of millions, so shall the New Jerusalem bride of Christ become the mother of the billions who henceforth will enter her pearly gates.

Do you see them coming, brother,
Thronging up the steps of light,
Clad in glorious, shining garments,
Blood washed garments pure and white?

Israel, the future bride of Christ, has been described in many ways in scripture. She is seen as a woman in the wilderness, (Rev. 12:6), after whom the serpent cast floods of water that she should be carried away of the flood. Then she is pictured as "having a wall great and high, having twelve gates" or portals through which the billions of the heathen nations shall pass to their reconciliation with God, for long ago Paul proclaimed that God had reconciled all things to Himself. Col. 1:20, 21

With these blessed thoughts in mind, let us muse in spirit with Solomon as long ago he beheld the glory of the bride. "Who is this," he asks, "that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up

under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee. Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm." As the sons of God are sealed, so also must the bride of Christ be sealed. The next lines bring to remembrance God's yearning over His people during the time of their whorish mingling with the nations who knew not God. "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love." Here we are reminded of the floods of water sent out to swallow the woman up while she was in the wilderness in the days of her purification. But the floods cannot drown the love of God for His covenant people. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned." **S.O.S. 7:5-7**

Then Solomon in his song of the bride continued: "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?" The breasts are for nourishment and sustenance of babies, but throughout all the centuries of her existence this little sister, Israel, has been a woman without breasts. I am distressed to tell you that the church system, like Israel, has fed her people on the skimpiest supply of diluted milk until they are utterly impoverished as far as the knowledge of God and His purpose is concerned. Week after week they are bored with the same childish sermons they have heard since their infancy. They never grow, because this woman has no breasts to feed them. This wilderness woman is to be the bride of Christ, and she has been spoken for. Hence Solomon asks in great concern, "What shall we do for our sister in the day she shall be spoken for?" The reply from heaven is this: "If she be a wall, (and she is a wall, for John saw her with a wall great and high, Rev. 21:12), we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door (and she is a door, for John beheld in her twelve gates through which the nations would bring their glory and honor), we will enclose her with boards of cedar." This rising to maturity is the purpose for which she is fed in the wilderness. After this the bride speaks out loud and clear with her voice of many waters (Rev. 19:6). In her triumph she declares, "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers." No longer is this a woman of the wilderness, scarcely able to sustain herself, for now upon her wall rise palaces of silver (redemption), which she describes as "breasts like towers." The nations of them that are saved will walk in the light of her and the Kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into her. Song of Solomon 8:5-10

"How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts are like young roes that are twins. Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to a cluster of grapes. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak. I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: There will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved." **Song of Solomon 7**

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." **Eph. 5:32** The marriage of a man to a woman is a union in which the partners become one flesh. This is a precious type of the marriage of the sons of God to the bride by which they are joined forever in one Spirit. The marriage of the Christ to His New Jerusalem bride is the signal for the restitution of all things. Then will the Spirit and the bride say, "Come," and the nations will enter through the gates that they may partake of the river of life and the leaves of the tree that are for the healing of the nations. With this celestial fullness of the bride of Christ the promised seed of Abraham is complete - Christ the Head, Christ the body, and Christ the bride. This is the seed through whom all nations and families of the earth are to be blessed. When the holy New Jerusalem bride appears in all her glory, the Lord God Almighty will be the temple thereof. From His exalted throne in her midst the water of life will ever flow and the ever, green tree of life, bearing its twelve manner of fruits, will flourish on either side of the river for the healing of the nations who hitherto walked in darkness and the shadow of death. Then shall her twelve gates be opened, and never shall they be closed by day, and there is no night there. Then shall the

holy voice of the bride, speaking by the Spirit of God, say to the billions who until now have never heard that God has a Son or that He died to save them all, "Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the marriage supper of the Lamb! Come through the gates into the city! Come and partake freely of the water of life! Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!" And come they will by the millions and by the billions, bringing the glory and honor of the nations into the beautiful city of God. And the nations of them that are saved will walk in the light of it and there shall be no night there.

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." **Rev. 22:1-5**

With the opening of the gates of the New Jerusalem the restitution of all things will have begun where Christ is Lord of all. "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him (Christ), it is manifest that He (God) is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." **I Cor. 15: 25-28**

Oh the victory of those blessed covenant words, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed!" The covenant made to Abraham so many centuries ago will have been fulfilled and the restitution of all things accomplished. A devout understanding of the eternal purposes of God stands as a mighty bulwark to our faith. He who is faithful and true speaks aforetime His words of prophetic wisdom. Never does He retrieve His statements. Never does He break His covenants or retrace His steps. Well He knows that all things are working together for good. None can stay His hand or say to Him, "What doest thou?" Through mists and rain, through cold and heat, through peace and war, through good and evil His eternal purposes move irresistibly forward to their predestined conclusions and that without let or hindrance till at last all men shall know that every defiant voice lifted against Him and every mailed fist that resisted His will was only part of the eternal program to make His name known in the earth.

Centuries ago, in Psalm twenty-two, King David spoke with a bursting heart the Psalm of the crucifixion. This he followed with the Psalm of the good shepherd. (Psa. 23). Then, lifting his prophetic vision to the distant horizons of the coming age of the restitution of all things, he beheld that city that hath foundations, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Then from his anointed lips the song of glory and redemption burst forth:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of Glory shall come in,
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory. Selah.

Psa. 24:7-10.

And the gates shall never close
To that city foursquare,

Where life's crystal river flows
And there is no night there.
God shall wipe away all tears;
There's no death, no pain, nor fears,
And they count not time by years,
For there is no night there.

CHAPTER SIX THE NUMBERLESS MILLIONS OF THE COVENANT WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?

For many years I preached that the fall of man in Eden's lovely garden was a tragedy of incomparable magnitude, an error that had, in fact, uprooted and destroyed the whole plan and purpose of God for man. But one blessed day of revelation the Holy Spirit opened my eyes and showed me that with God there are no mistakes, errors, or unknowns, but only purposes. The fall of man in Eden's lovely garden was neither a mistake nor a tragedy, but a design carefully planned in the wisdom of Him whose mind is infallible and whose arm is almighty, for said Paul, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** As I recovered somewhat from the shock of such a revelation, the Holy Spirit through the intervening years has unfolded before the wondering eyes of my understanding the glory embraced in that hope so deeply conceived in the heart of God.

For more than twenty years I preached the Romish doctrine of the eternal damnation of sinners, that merciless dogma which made no allowance for the fact that eight hundred million Chinese now living and half a billion Indians, with myriads of other heathen, have never once heard that God had a Son who came to seek and to save that which was lost. According to the merciless theory I then held, all these were doomed to the fury of eternal torment, the distressing fact of their ignorance making no difference, even though the Word of God said it did. O what joy and relief came to my heart one day, as I read Eph. 1:10, to hear the Spirit declare that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, God would gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Him!

What a blessed and thrilling revelation it has been to have the Spirit unfold the wonders of His aionian covenant with Abraham! Here we see the Lord with one man, and him as good as dead, give birth to a nation through whom He will bring forth the fullness of His Christ - first, Christ the Head, then Christ the Body, and finally Christ, the New Jerusalem bride, upon whose lofty gates are emblazoned the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and upon whose foundations are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. That city for which Abraham looked is a city formed of Christ people, which has no need of the sun, nor the moon, nor the light of any candle, for the Lord God is the light thereof. Through those open gates no evil thing will ever enter. Within its precincts stands no temple made with hands, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it. Description is far beyond me! Its fame escapes me! Methinks we can but belittle its exalted glory by our frail attempt to describe it. It will abide forever and through those wide gates that never close the nations of them that are saved will pass until God has gathered together in one all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth.

Now since it is through God's covenant people, Israel, that Christ, the Saviour of the world, has come, and since it is principally from these people that the glorious ranks of the church are formed, as we pointed out in chapter four, and since all Gentile believers become the seed of Abraham through faith, and since the one hundred and forty-four thousand sons of God are sealed from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and since those twelve tribes, all redeemed, restored, and saved, will form the bride of Christ, the Holy City, through which all other nations will partake of the water of life, then surely it should be to the interest and benefit of every reader to search out and discover as nearly as possible who these covenant people are with whom the Eternal made an everlasting covenant that cannot be revoked while sun and moon and stars still glide in their courses, and while earth abides and day and night, winter and summer, springtime and harvest do not fail.

God hath not cast away His people, whom He foreknew. Rom. 11:2 "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now

if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?" **Rom. 11:11-12** "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" **Rom. 11:15** Christians should spend hours of meditation in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans. These are key chapters that unlock the door to the whole plan of God and the understanding of them is a refreshing revelation.

It is a great mistake to imagine that God has altered course in midstream, changed His intention, cast off His people, broken His covenant with Abraham, and substituted the church in place of Israel in the hope that it would accomplish what Israel failed to do. Until we can see that the whole program with all the people involved is part and parcel of one eternal purpose, we have missed even the rudiments of spiritual understanding. God has neither cast off His people nor changed His purposes in any degree. Who could trust Him if He were not immutable? The New Testament church with its very elect throng is but one integral part of that original covenant, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The restitution of all things is the final intention of God.

It is impossible to rightly grasp the fullness of this truth until we clearly observe the important distinction between the two houses of Israel - the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Until we grasp this fact, we will always remain in darkness, because the promises given to each house were different one from the other, and unless we distinguish between them, we will always grope in a deepening fog of confusion.

Almost universally among church people we find the erroneous understanding which teaches that Israel is the Jew and only the Jew. This is a gross error, which can only produce confusion and unbelief. It is true that many who call themselves Jews are Israelites, yet these Jews represent only a very small part of the house of Judah, and none of them - and I repeat, none of them - belong to the house of Israel. Until the searcher learns that the house of Judah and the house of Israel are two distinct and separate parts of one nation, each having different callings and different promises, he can never hope to understand their separate callings in the world today or embrace the verities of the covenant God made with them.

Until the end of the reign of king Solomon, the twelve tribes of the children of Israel composed one nation under God. Immediately following king Solomon's death, because of his oppressive taxation, the ten tribes rebelled against the house of David, forming a completely separate nation, thenceforth known as the house of Israel. These ten tribes crowned as their king the wicked, idolatrous Jereboam, who made Israel to sin. The tribe of Judah, along with the tribe of Benjamin and much of the priestly tribe of Levi, remained faithful to the house of David (that is, the Davidic line of kings) and from that day until now they have been known as the house of Judah. This important distinction is recognized everywhere throughout scripture, and our failure to understand it will confuse us greatly as to the calling of each nation. Tom Paine became an atheist and lost his soul because it was very evident to him that the Jew did not and never could possess the promises given to Israel. Like thousands of others he failed to see this simple, but important, distinction between the two houses of Israel. This above all else was the cause of his unbelief. Henceforth throughout scripture where mention is made of the house of Judah, the reference is to Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes of the southern confederacy; but where mention is made of the house of Israel, the reference is to the ten tribes of the northern confederacy. This distinction never varies throughout the entire Bible. It should be easy, therefore, to understand that the future of these two Israelitish nations could be as diverse as that of China and Spain.

Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph, was given the birthright and placed by God as the first born. Jer. 31:9. Because of this the ten tribes of the house of Israel are sometimes referred to as Ephraim, Ezek. 37:16, and occasionally as Joseph. Ezek. 37:19. But neither of these terms ever applies to the house of Judah. This thought is borne out frequently in the book of Hosea. The house of Judah is mentioned thirty-seven times in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. The house of Israel is mentioned approximately ninety-four times in the Old Testament and four times in the New. The fact that the house of Judah and the house of Israel were actually mentioned separately several times before the death of Solomon should add weight to the thought that the Lord had ordained their separation. See 2 Sam. 21:8.

It is interesting and important to note that, after the house of Israel rebelled against the house of David and became a separate nation, king Rehoboam of the house of David raised an army, intending to force the

rebellious house of Israel back into subjection to himself. After the battle preparations were made, however, Shemaiah, the prophet, forbade him to fight with them. In 1 Kings 12:19-24 the details of the rebellion and the reason for it are given in the following words: "So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only (and Benjamin, verse 21). And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from Me." In other words, this seemingly tragic division between the house of Israel and the house of Judah was after all ordained of God, because in His eternal purposes these two brother nations were to inherit entirely different and distinct callings in their mission of blessing to all the nations and families of the earth. The division of the twelve tribes of Israel into two kingdoms - the house of Judah and the house of Israel - was not the work of the devil, as the ignorant would suspect. This seeming calamity was just one more of God's mysterious ways by which His wonders are performed, but everything remains within the framework of the Abrahamic covenant.

In the forty-eighth and forty-ninth chapters of Genesis Jacob by prophecy outlined the future of all his twelve sons, emphasizing especially their place of greatness in the last days, that is, in our days. The possession of a birthright, in scripture, is a very important thing, because through the birthright comes the principal blessing of the entire family. In **Gen. 48:13-22** we read the account of Jacob's blessing the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. In the prophetic blessing Ephraim, the younger, was set before Manasseh, the elder. Ephraim was to become a company (or commonwealth) of nations and Manasseh was to become a great nation. **Verse 19** "And he (Jacob) blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh." That is to say, Jacob made Ephraim the firstborn and heir of the blessings of the firstborn son. This is God's doing and not man's. The prophet Jeremiah definitely states that Ephraim is the firstborn. Jer. 31:9. Ephraim and Manasseh are the two branches of Joseph, which are said to "run over the wall." Gen. 49:22. Upon their heads fell all the wonderful blessings of their father Joseph, given in such detail in Gen. 49:22-26. These blessings were to prevail to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. Verse 26. Ephraim became the head and often the name of the ten tribes of the house of Israel; therefore, his blessings fall upon the whole house of Israel.

We are blind readers indeed if we have not already noticed that none of the blessings of greatness and nationhood, given to the sons of Joseph, fit the Jews in any sense of the word. The royal scepter was given to Judah, as it is written. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," (**Gen. 49:10**) but the birthright, with all the world-wide blessing it entailed, was given to the sons of Joseph. Regarding Judah's scepter, it is of great interest to note that every nation in Europe that has a lion on its coat of arms can trace its royalty to Judah.

I am aware, as the reader must be, that the fullness of these promises have been realized only in part. Of the house of Judah Christ came as the suffering rejected Messiah, but He will come again as King of kings and Lord of lords to take the throne of David, which will be waiting for Him, "for unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." **Gen. 49:10**. Though the nations of the house of Israel are at present the leading nations of the world, only an elect company is being chosen from among them to form the Christ body of sons, but the day will come when all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26), and shall be all righteous. Then the stick of Judah and the stick of Israel will become one in the hand of God, (Ezek. 37:16-19), and they, again united, will become the New Jerusalem bride of Christ.

Israel has always been "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" (**Acts 7:51**) and ever stubborn and rebellious, but God has never broken His covenant with them nor forgotten His agreement with Abraham. It was through the stubbornness and rebellion of the house of Israel that the nation was overrun and carried away captive to the land of Assyria in the year 721 B.C. The story is told in detail in 2 Kings, chapter 17. Though it is not generally realized, it is true that at this time a large part of the house of Judah was also carried

away captive to Assyria with the house of Israel. Other portions of Judah, principally Jerusalem, remained in Palestine for another one hundred thirty-four years, then, through their evil, they were carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the years 588 and 587 B.C. There they remained for seventy years, after which forty thousand of them returned to Palestine and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra. It is from this remnant of forty thousand that the present day Jews are descended. The word Jew is an abbreviation for Judah, as Joe is an abbreviation for Joseph.

From the time of the captivity of the house of Israel in 721 B.C. unto this day, the ten tribes, to whom God made such wonderful promises, have been known as the lost tribes of the house of Israel. Jesus referred to them as the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But they are not lost! God would not be God if they were not at this very moment fulfilling every detail of His covenant with them even though they be blind in part to their own identity. How pitifully strange it is that, when someone imagines he has discovered Israel in some primitive nation such as the North American Indians or perhaps a half-savage tribe in Africa or central Asia, all the Christians hail this as some remarkable discovery, but let it be asserted that Israel is found, not among primitive tribes, but among the leading nations of the earth as God said they would be, then at once indignation and anger are aroused and friends become enemies. Yet did not God say that Israel should be the head and not the tail? Deut. 28:13. Did God not say that Abraham's seed would be great and their name great? Why then should we not look for them at the "head" and not at the "tail?" Why should we not find them among the "great" and not among the small and insignificant?

The following story may be fictitious, but the truth it exemplifies is irrefutable, demonstrating as it does the great importance of identification marks. (Though the finger prints of every person on earth differ from all others, in British law six identical marks are sufficient to identify a criminal as separate from all others on earth.)

A family in England suffered the great misfortune of losing a baby boy by kidnapping. The police were immediately put on the track of the child, but in spite of the most intensive search no trace of the missing boy was found. Weeks increased into months and months grew into many years. Finally all hope of finding the child was abandoned and, except for the heartbreaking memories the parents endured, the tragedy was forgotten. Twenty years had passed when one day a ray of hope dawned that set the hearts of the parents bounding with expectation. A letter had arrived from a lawyer in Spain telling of an old gypsy woman who had just passed away. To ease her troubled conscience as she lay dying, she had confessed that the young man who had passed for many years as her son was not her son at all, but was a boy she had stolen as a baby from England many years before and from the very county in which the bereaved family lived. Did the lady think, questioned the lawyer, that this young man could be her son? If so, could she give any marks of identification by which he could be positively identified? Almost beside herself with anticipation, the mother wired back the following marks of identification:

- (1) A birthmark the size of a cherry on the back of the neck.
- (2) A double birthmark one inch long on the middle of the back.
- (3) A scar on the outside of the left leg, half an inch in length.
- (4) A scar over the right ear, half an inch in length.

Immediately a wire was returned from Spain, saying that all the marks had been found, and the woman with her husband left at once to see for themselves, but, upon arriving in Spain and seeing the young man, their hearts sank in despair. The young man was not at all what they expected to see. He was tall of stature, speaking fluently in a foreign language. He was a gypsy. He had gypsy manners, gypsy language, and wore gypsy clothes. Concealing her disappointment, the mother asked to see the scar over the right ear, and, seeing it, hope again sprang up in her heart. She turned down his sock and looked for the scar on his left leg and found it exactly where she knew it to be. With feverish excitement she looked at the back of his neck and there to her amazement and joy was the birthmark the size of a cherry. Scarcely able to contain herself, she made the big fellow strip off his shirt, and there, plainly visible, was the double birthmark on his back. Upon seeing it,

all doubt vanished from her mind. This tall, sun-tanned young man with gypsy bearings could be none other than her long lost boy. Flinging her arms about him in utter joy, she kissed him repeatedly and claimed him as her long lost son. Do you not think you would have done the same thing? Is there a possibility in all the world that this boy was not her lost son? I do not think there is. Yet I am certain that had three of those marks been present and only one missing, then, indeed, he would not have been her son.

Now here is a lost son. He does not know who he is. He does not know from what country he came, nor exactly how he came to be where he is. He does not remember his parents. His language and customs are completely foreign, and yet his identification marks prove beyond any possibility of doubt that he is indeed the long lost son, who was carried away by a gypsy as Israel was carried away by the Assyrian. If such certainty of identification can be made through four definite marks of identification, then I invite the reader to follow me through thirteen marks of identification, and let us see if we can discover this lost house of Israel, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

Throughout the pages of Holy Scripture, by prophecy and type, our Lord Jesus Christ has been given some one hundred seventy-five marks of identification. If indeed He is the Christ, then all marks of identification must be fulfilled in Him that all pretenders to His office may be ashamed. It is impossible within our limited scope to examine more than one small segment of truth in our search for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Books without number have been written on the subject, each one adding point to point, fact to fact, history to history, prophecy to prophecy, and tradition to tradition, each in some way helping to identify the people who are the ten lost tribes of the house of Israel, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. Because of the vastness of the material available, it is impossible for me in so small a space to give more than the tiniest smattering of truth. We will therefore leave history to the historians while we search briefly for these people through their marks of identification as laid down for our instruction in the infallible word of truth. Personally I cannot imagine how such an honest search could be considered a waste of time, for surely it must be of great importance that we should identify this house of Israel, to whom pertaineth the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law, the service of God, and the promises; through whom Christ came, through whom the sons of God come, through whom the bride of Christ comes, and through whom, when all are blood-washed and redeemed, the final restitution of all things will come. By far the greatest promises lie out before us.

Lest I should leave the reader in doubt, I will state first my personal belief in this matter; then through only one line of reasoning (Israel's identification marks) I will tell you why I believe it. These reasons are being stated because the subject is a Bible truth and is, therefore, of great importance. I have no quarrel with any man who does not see as I do and trust that those who do not see as I do will refrain from quarrelling with me. A sincere study of the scriptures reveals at least seventy marks of identification, which place the identity of the house of Israel beyond doubt. Other nations may have one or two of these marks, but only the house of Israel will have them all. Because of this fact and many other investigations, I have come to firmly believe that the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the world represent the greater part of the house of Israel, together with a portion of the house of Judah. These include the Anglo-Saxon people of the British Isles and the far flung British, commonwealth of nations. They include the "great nation", the United States of America, as well as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, part of Belgium, and many of the Germanic people, together with the Israelitish remnants scattered throughout European countries. Let us remember always, as we progress, never to confuse the house of Judah with the house of Israel or to make the mistake of thinking that the modern Jew is Israel. The modern Jew is only a very small segment of the house of Judah. They are Israelites, but are not of the house of Israel.

Before proceeding with the identification marks of the house of Israel, the following observation should be in order. Speaking of Israel, the apostle Paul made this very revealing remark: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." See Rom. 9:7, Heb. 11:18, and Gen. 21:12. As there are no vowels in Hebrew, the proper name Isaac is pronounced SAK or Saac. Thus Isaac's sons would be called Saksons or Saxons. The custom of creating surnames by adding the word son to a given name is commonly practiced to this day in the Scandinavian countries. By way of example we might cite such names as Jacobson, Abrahamson, Israelson, Johnson, Isaacson, from which last comes the name Saxon, or Isaac's sons. One sage has wisely remarked that a reference to a Scandinavian telephone directory is enough to assure one that they are Israelites.

Of the seventy marks of identification we have space to deal with only thirteen in this writing.

Number 1. Israel was to be a great nation. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee. . . ." **Gen. 12:2** "Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation..." **Gen. 18:18** There are only perhaps a score of nations in all the world that could be called great, chief among whom would be the United States, Great Britain and her world-wide commonwealth, France, Germany, Russia, China, Italy, Spain, and a few others. We will mention this point later, but the reader will have observed how this one identifying mark - a great nation — has already eliminated all of the nations of the world except a mere handful, and most certainly it has eliminated the Jew, for never at any time in history has the Jew been a great nation, and surely no one would be hardy enough to contend that the present Jewish state in Palestine is a great nation.

Number 2. "I will make thy name great." Gen. 12:2. It is not generally known that the Lord had said that Israel was to be called by a new name. This is definitely stated by the prophet Isaiah in these words: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." **Isa. 62:2**. While we do not wish to be unnecessarily dogmatic about this point, because it is God's word and therefore not to be contradicted, it is worthy of our consideration that (1) Isaiah had said, "Thou shalt be called by a new name." and (2) that the Lord had told Abraham, "I will make thy name great." At any rate, we are faced with the indisputable truth that in all the world today there is but one nation that is called great and that one nation is Great Britain. Furthermore it is certain that among the great nations of the earth Great Britain is the only one, which has the word great included in its name. We do not read of Great Russia, Great China, Great France, or any other.

This name, Great Britain, becomes even more significant when we learn that the Hebrew word bereth or bryth means covenant and the word ish means man. Thus the compound word British must mean covenant man and the word Britain means covenant land. The only people in the world with whom God made a covenant was Israel. In the name, Great Britain, we have the fulfillment of Gen. 12:1 - "I will make thy name great," - and in the name British we are assured that these are the covenant people, dwelling in a new and covenant land, Britain, which we will consider under the next proposition.

Number 3. Israel was to have a new homeland. After Israel was firmly established in the land of Canaan and the great king David had subdued her enemies round about, David purposed to build a magnificent temple of worship for the Lord. God was not displeased with this plan, but He sent Nathan the prophet to David with this strange but enlightening message: "I will appoint a place for My people Israel and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime." **2 Sam. 7:10** This planting in a place from which they would not move any more could not possibly have referred to Palestine for the simple reason that all the twelve tribes of Israel did move from thence when they were carried captive into Assyria and Babylon. See also 1 Chron. 17:9 Though the Lord allowed Solomon to build the temple and the nation of Israel to rise to tremendous heights of blessing and achievement under his reign, the scripture is very clear that immediately following Solomon's death the nation was divided in two (1 Kings 12) and later, because of abounding iniquity, was carried away captive, the house of Israel and part of Judah to Assyria (2 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 18: 13), then later the remainder of the house of Judah to captivity in Babylon. (2 Kings 25). Of these latter; only forty-two thousand, three hundred sixty ever returned to Palestine.

The ten tribes of the house of Israel grew mightily in numbers during their captivity in Assyria. Please read the significant passage Hosea 1:10. The renowned Jewish historian, Josephus, writing in A.D. 70, gave us this historic record. "The ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates until now and are an immense multitude, not to be estimated by numbers." To this statement of Josephus the prophecy of Zechariah is in total agreement: "They of Ephraim shall be as a mighty man... and they shall increase as they have increased." **Zech. 10:7-8** Israel has always been noted for a rapid increase. When we realize that the seventy souls who went down to Egypt with Jacob emerged after two hundred and fifteen years of the rigors of slavery as a nation two and one half million strong, it is not hard to believe that this same people during the four hundred and ninety years of prosperity in Palestine had multiplied many times. The renowned evangelist, F. F. Bosworth, states that they had probably increased to forty or fifty million by the time of the captivity. It is no wonder that Josephus, writing

almost seven hundred years later, described the ten tribes as an immense multitude not to be numbered. This testimony of Josephus is also in exact accord with the promise given by the Lord to Abraham - that his seed would be as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven for multitude.

Zechariah, writing two hundred years after the captivity of the house of Israel, makes this subtle prediction of their emergence from captivity as they made their way from Asia Minor toward their appointed place in the west: "I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember Me in far countries; and they shall live with their children and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea (possibly the Mediterranean or Black Sea) with affliction, and shall smite the waves of the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart away. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord." **Zech. 10:9-12** This scripture definitely shows that, when Israel left her Assyrian captivity, she journeyed west, for all these places are west of Assyria. This is also in exact accord with the statement in **Hosea 12:1** "Ephraim (which is another name for the house of Israel) followeth after the east wind." It goes without saying that an east wind blows toward the west and anyone following the east wind is certainly journeying toward the west. Thus did Ephraim, when he left Assyria, follow the east wind on his journey across Europe toward the British Isles.

Furthermore this is in total agreement with the prophecy given in the apocryphal book of Second Esdras. The Esdras of the Apocrypha is the same man as the Ezra of the Bible. In second Esdras we read this very definite statement concerning the way by which the ten tribes left the land of Assyria: "And whereas thou sawest that he gathered a peaceable multitude unto him; those are the ten tribes, which were carried away prisoners out of their own land in the time of Osea the king, whom Salmanasar the king of Assyria led away captive, and he carried them over the waters, and so they came into another land. But they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt, that they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land. And they entered the Euphrates by the narrow passages of the river (going west). For the most High then showed signs for them, and held still the flood, till they were passed over. For through that country (Europe) there was a great way to go, namely, of a year and a half: and the same region is called Arsareth. Then dwelt they there until the latter time..." **2 Esdras 13:30; 46**. Arsareth is the territory to the west of the Black Sea. Surely, if we can believe Josephus, we should be able to believe this prophecy of the godly Esdras!

The latter time, referred to here by Esdras, must mean the end of the dispensation of law rather than the end of the present dispensation. The first epistle of Peter, written about A.D. 60, was addressed to the strangers who were at that time scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. A glance at a Bible atlas will show that these countries are all in southern Europe and the region of the Black Sea. The epistle of James was addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad and undoubtedly took in a much greater territory than that named by Peter. Likewise our Lord Jesus, after He had called His twelve apostles and given them power, sent them forth and commanded them to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 10:6. Jeremiah 50:4-6 says that both the house of Israel and the house of Judah are lost sheep. It is evident that our Lord sent the twelve apostles on a very long journey and that He did not go with them. We may be sure that after His resurrection the twelve apostles continued in this command, because Jesus had said, "Ye shall not have gone over all the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come." **Matt 10:23** Well did Jesus know that even then Israel was as numberless as the sand of the sea and her cities were scattered far and wide beyond Palestine.

I shall not hide the fact from those who seek for light and understanding that the smug, cosy, cut and dried teachings of the church system have blinded our eyes to ninety percent of the glorious revelation of truth awaiting those who search it out. The absurd notion that the handful of subjugated Jews who dwelt in Palestine in Jesus' day embraced the numberless millions of both the house of Judah and the house of Israel is as ridiculous as to imagine that all Americans live in New Mexico.

Though we dare not investigate the thought now, there is abundant evidence to show that even in Solomon's day the vast increase of Israel's population, finding Palestine far too small, was expanding out and colonizing all along the shores of the Mediterranean and into Iberia, which is modern Spain, crossing the Dardanelles into

Europe where they are referred to by Roman writers as Cimmerians, Gauls, and Senones. Senones were men of the tribe of Simeon. The possession of the tribes of Simeon and Dan was cut off from the other eight tribes of the house of Israel when the nation was divided, and there is good reason to believe that thousands of these men had left Palestine long before the Assyrian captivity and had made their way both by land and by sea to the coasts and isles of the west. Roman writers speak of Cimmerians who, coming from the Black or Cimmerian Sea, roamed over Europe for centuries. The Cimmerians were Israelites. It is a Latin name derived from the Hebrew Chemarim. The name of the Crimea is derived from this source.

Every person who has read the Bible has certainly read this passage concerning the sea-faring activities of Solomon's day: "All king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold... for the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom." **1 Kings 10:21-23** All the earth sought Solomon. They brought every man his present. This one passage shows clearly that Solomon's navy sailed the seas and made regular trips to Tharshish (Britain) one thousand years before Christ. Israelitish people have always been seafaring people and tremendous colonizers, as God said they would be, extending to the north and south and east and west, inhabiting the desolate places of the earth and making them blossom as a rose. Does anyone imagine that Solomon, who exceeded all men both before and after him in wisdom, was so dull witted that he could not build a navy to exploit the riches of England and Ireland and begin the colonization of those islands? He most certainly did. But I will go one step further and say that, almost one hundred years before the reign of Solomon began, Israelitish people had already begun to colonize the British Isles. The old British Chronicles gives the name of one, Brutus, as the first king of England, beginning his reign in 1103 B.C. He was therefore a contemporary of King Saul of Israel. David and Solomon, kings of Israel, were descended directly from Judah's son Pharez, and Brutus of England was directly descended from Judah's son Zarah, the twin brother of Pharez. Seventy-three kings are listed in the old British Chronicles, covering the period from 1103 B.C. to 35 A.D.

It is not true that, when Caesar came to England, he found painted savages inhabiting the island. That is just wishful thinking, for never in history has a tribe of white savages been discovered. The kind of people who could build Stonehenge and the Avebury Circle must have been possessed of the Wisdom of Solomon. It would be extremely difficult for modern engineers to duplicate such a remarkable feat. Strabo, the Greek geographer, writing in 29 B.C., describes the Briton of his time in these words: "He came, not clad in skins like a Scythian, but with a bow in his hand, a quiver hanging from his shoulder, a plaid wrapped around his body, a gilded belt encircling his loins, and trousers reaching from the waist down to the soles of his feet. He was easy in address, agreeable in conversation, active in dispatch, and secret in management of great affairs; quick in judging of present accuracies, and ready to take his part in sudden emergency; provident withal in guarding against futurity; diligent in the quest of wisdom; fond of friendships, trusting very little to fortune, yet having the entire confidence of others, and trusted with everything for his prudence. He spoke Greek with fluency and you would have thought he had been bred up in Lyceum and conversant all his life with the Academy at Athens." If this is the testimony of a Greek, speaking in 29 B.C., then anyone who can imagine such a man as a painted savage has a vivid imagination, indeed.

The great truth missed by almost all is that a large portion of the house of Israel had already moved into the British Isles centuries before the Assyrian captivity began, and that captivity affected only that part of the ten tribes who still remained in Palestine. After their captivity of several hundred years was ended, they also began moving toward their brethren who already were in the British Isles and the coasts of Europe, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The sudden appearance of the fair-skinned, highly cultured Etruscans in northern Italy about the year 700 B.C. would certainly indicate that these were Israelites who had left Palestine en masse rather than be captured by the Assyrians. A very interesting account of these people is contained in the National Geographic Magazine publication, Greece and Rome, beginning on page 250.

Though the Bible does not speak in detail of the vast efforts of colonization carried on by Israel, it does speak definitely of their moving to the north and south and east and west, inhabiting the isles and desolate places of the earth. In the excellent work, Tracing Our Ancestors, by Frederick Haberman, he makes this remarkable statement: "At the very time the Lord made promise to David, about 1040 B.C., 'I will appoint a place for My

people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own,' (2 Sam. 7:10), that promise was being executed. In fact, sixty years before the promise was made, Brutus (a descendant of the royal line of Judah through his son, Zarah) had arrived in the isles of the west in 1100 B.C. and had named them BRITH AIN, the covenant land. Until this day the only name in the Hebrew for Britain is Ai-Ha-im, the isles of the west, Ai or Hy being the origin of isle. In earlier days the Isle of Iona was called the Hy of Iona."

We pointed out before that Israel, during the five hundred years of their sojourn in Palestine, increased by many millions, and during those five hundred prosperous years they left Palestine to settle in distant lands. They left, family after family, boat load after boat load, for their far off western colonies just as centuries later English, Irish, Dutch, Norwegian, and many others left Europe to find new homes in America, and with no better ships than they had in Solomon's day. After five centuries of such emigration there were still over five million in Palestine at the time of the captivity. Many times this number, however, had already left the country and were therefore not affected by the captivity at all. It is evident that a constant traffic between Israel and her colonies in the west had been in progress for centuries, and Solomon's navies roamed all over the known world. A. D. Eldud, a Jewish historian of the ninth century B.C., wrote: "In Jereboam's time (970-900 B.C.) the tribe of Dan, being unwilling to shed their brethren's blood, took a resolve to leave the country." Moses prophesied of Dan in these words: "Dan is a lion's whelp; he shall leap from Bashan." Deut. 33:22. What did Moses mean? Well, Dan did leap from Bashan and leave the country, and the tribe of Dan appears in the Irish Chronicles, Tuatha de Danaan, which means The Tribe of Dan. The Irish Chronicles tell us that the landing of the tribe of Dan in Ireland was opposed by the inhabitants, but in the ensuing battle the Danaan (Danites) were victorious. But, finding that the inhabitants spoke a language similar to their own, peace was made by which it was agreed that the Danaan would occupy the northern part of Ireland, called Eldh - now Ulster. A. B. Grimaldi, quoting an early Jewish rabbi, states that the early Irish were men of the tribe of Ephraim who left Egypt before the exodus. To this the Book of Jasher (chapter 75) agrees, though it appears that most of those who left were slain in battle with the Philistines.

At Loughguir, near Limerick, and elsewhere in Ireland, there are today ancient stone circles, consisting of twelve stones, one large stone in the center and eleven smaller ones standing in a bowing attitude around it. Irish antiquaries tell us that those circles perpetuate the dream of Joseph as recorded in Genesis, Chapter 37, in which Joseph dreamed that the eleven sheaves of his brethren did obeisance to his sheaf.

There is voluminous literature in existence, which indicates that up to the end of the eighteenth century the scholars of Britain knew that their people descended from the sea-going Hebrew-Phoenicians and from the Anglo-Saxons, who came from the shores of Summerland on the Black Sea. But since the nineteenth century the trend of thought has been to follow the scepticism of Voltaire, Thomas Paine, and the German school of higher critics.

The Scottish Declaration of Independence of the year 1320 A.D., a much prized national archive attested to by Robert the Bruce's barons in parliament, asserts that the more ancient portion of the Scottish nation came first from Scythia by way of Spain. Scythia lies to the north of the Black Sea and is, of course, in the vicinity of Israel's Assyrian captivity and was without doubt the route they traveled in their journey to the western isles. The wonderful romance of the arrival of the Israelitish tribes in the British Isles at different times and from different directions, some by land and some by sea, is beautifully portrayed by the Bard of Erin, Sir Thomas More, in these lines:

They came from a land beyond the sea,
And now o'er the western main
Set sail in their good ships gallantly
From the sunny land of Spain.
"Oh where's the land we've seen in dreams,
Our destined home or grave?"
Thus sang they as by the morning's beams
They swept the Atlantic wave.
And, lo, where afar o'er the ocean shines
A sparkle of radiant green,

As though in that deep lay emerald mines
 Whose light through the waves was seen.
 "'Tis Innisfail! 'Tis Innisfail!" (Beautiful Isle)
 Rings o'er the echoing sea,
 While, bending to heaven, the warriors hail
 That home of the brave and free.
 Then turned they unto the eastern wave,
 Where now their Day God's eye
 A look of such sunny omen gave
 As lighted up sea and sky.
 Nor frown was seen through sky or sea,
 No tear o'er leaf or sod,
 When first on that isle of destiny
 Our great forefathers trod.

Tracing our Ancestors. Page 119.

Surely in all these things we can hear the ringing voice of Isaiah, the prophet, as he speaks to the covenant people in the isles afar off! "Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name. And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid me; and said unto me, Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." **Isa. 49:1-3**. Please notice that in verse three the people of the isles are called Israel.

Notice again that in **Isa. 51:4, 5** Isaiah speaks to God's people Israel in the isles. "Hearken unto Me, My people; and give ear unto Me, O My nation: For a law shall proceed from Me, and I will make My judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth, and Mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arm shall they trust."

Number 4 Israel was to be exceedingly fruitful and very populous. See Gen. 28:14; 49:22,26; Isa. 27:6; Num. 23:10; Hosea 1:10. The increase of the Saxon race is nothing short of phenomenal. National statistics show that Russia doubles her population every one hundred and forty years. Spain doubles in one hundred and forty-two years, France in one hundred and fifty years, and Turkey in five hundred and fifty-five years, but England doubles her population every forty-five years, and the United States doubles her population every twenty-five years. Is it any wonder the prophet said, "Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nation . . . Thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth." **Isa. 26:15** Nothing could be more true than this, since the sun never sets on the British Commonwealth or the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the earth. Of Joseph Moses spoke, saying, "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim (Great Britain), and they are the thousands of Manasseh." (Undoubtedly the United States). **Deut. 33:17** To see a true picture of the future blessings and fruitfulness of the tribes of Israel, please read for yourself the wonderful account given in Deuteronomy, chapter 33.

Number 5. Israel was to be the first among the nations and to spread abroad to the north and south and east and west. Gen. 28:14 and Isa. 43:5,6. Abraham and his seed were to be the heirs of the whole earth. The British Commonwealth is a free association of sovereign, independent states and embraces the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Gambia, Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Kenya, Malta, Zambia, together with some fifty dependencies including Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Guyana, Honduras, Solomon Islands, Virgin Islands, Fiji, Gibraltar, Ellice Islands, Grenada, Hong Kong, New Hebrides, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, The Seychelles, Rhodesia, Tonga, and many others too numerous to mention here. This vast list does not, of course, include the United States of America, which, like South Africa, is a separate Israel nation that at the present time represents the greatest single concentration of Anglo-Saxon, Israelitish people on earth. It can be shown beyond any reasonable doubt that the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, have become the two great brother nations of the earth. The United States of America, the great nation, and Great Britain, the

company of nations, strictly in accord with the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. 48:16-19) and Joseph's blessings (Gen. 49:22-26), fall to his sons Ephraim and Manasseh. When the patriarch Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, as recorded in Genesis, chapters 48 and 49, he said that Ephraim would become a multitude (that is, a commonwealth) of nations and that Manasseh would become a great nation. See also Gen. 35:11. In Eph. 2:12 Paul speaks of Israel as a commonwealth. In all the world today there is only one commonwealth of nations, and that is the British Commonwealth of nations, which is a world wide community of English speaking nations. Not only is Britain the only Commonwealth of Nations, but it is a fact that no other Commonwealth of Nations has ever existed in history. No previous empire was a commonwealth of free nations. Furthermore, this Commonwealth of Nations is very distinguished in that we have a brother nation who is a great nation, and that big, brother nation is the United States of America. It is significant that on the beautiful Peace Arch standing on the Canadian-United States border at Blaine, Washington, the following inscriptions are found: On the Canadian side are the significant words; BRETHREN DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY, and on the United States side the equally significant inscription, CHILDREN OF A COMMON MOTHER. Nothing could be more correct than this, for Ephraim and Manasseh were indeed the children of a common mother, and that mother was Joseph's wife (Gen. 46:20) the daughter of the prince of On. (The Hebrew word kohen may be rendered either priest or prince - see Young's Concordance. I do not believe that Joseph's wife was an Egyptian, as some suppose, but a daughter of the prince of On. Egypt in Joseph's day was ruled by Hyksos Dynasty, which was Syrian and therefore Semitic, not Egyptian.)

If we are convinced that Ephraim became a company of nations, or a commonwealth, then certainly we must be correct in saying that Manasseh has become a great nation. The United States is without doubt the greatest individual nation ever to exist on the earth. Her greatness is not in numbers or in military power alone, but in every form of useful industry, production, and ingenuity she is definitely a leader. Her wealth is beyond belief. Her resourcefulness knows no bounds. Her helpfulness and beneficence is of world wide renown. Any nation in distress can depend upon her aid. Her missionaries are known all over the earth. Her Bible Societies have translated and given the Word of God to millions. The American-Canadian border, almost four thousand miles long, is unfortified. Why would brethren, dwelling together in unity, need to fortify their borders? In two world wars the Anglo-Saxon nations have delivered Europe from tyrants and the countries thus delivered were immediately returned to their rightful owners while our enemies were given billions of dollars in aid to help them recover from their losses. Russia or China may be great nations in power and population, but what light has China given to the world or where are the Russian missionaries or Bible Societies, or wherein do they minister to the poor and needy of the earth? We hear of no philanthropic acts or oppressed nations being set free by them. Thus, while Ephraim England has become a world wide commonwealth, Manasseh, his brother, has become the greatest nation on earth.

I am sure that every sincere student of scripture and prophecy must realize that that greatness prophesied to the brothers Ephraim and Manasseh is fulfilled to the letter in the two great brother nations, the United States of America and the Anglo-Saxon people of the British Commonwealth. Indeed, all the fabulous promises of blessing so freely given to Joseph (Deut. 33:13-17) were to find their fulfillment in his two sons, the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh. "Joseph is a fruitful bough . . . whose branches run over the wall . . . His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence (Jacob) is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy Father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." **Gen. 49:22-26** Any thinking person must surely know that the Saxon nations have been and still are the recipients of all these blessings of heaven and earth and the wealth that lies under the earth. Why then should students of scripture waste their valuable time searching for Israel among the primitive and poverty-stricken tribes and nations when God's word declares that His covenant people are to be the leading nations of the world and this is especially so in the last day. Gen. 49:1.

The great American industrialist, Henry Ford, Sr., wrote the following remarkable words, which seem so fitting here that I must quote them. "The fathers of our nation were men of the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic race. The men who came from Europe with civilization in their blood and in their destiny; the men who crossed the Atlantic

and set up civilization on a bleak and rock-bound coast; the men who drove north to Alaska and West to California; the men who opened the tropics and subdued the Arctic's; the men who mastered the African veldt; the men who peopled Australia and seized the gates of the world at Suez, Gibraltar, and Panama; men who have given government and livelihood to every people and an ideal to every century. They got neither their God nor their religion from Judah, nor their ruling speech nor their creative genius. They are the ruling people, chosen through the centuries to master the world by building it better and better and not by breaking it down."

To enlarge upon the abundance of information at our disposal would be merely to quickly run out of space. I will therefore confine myself to a few more of Israel's identification marks and trust that the reader will search out the scripture for himself.

Number 6. Israel's throne and nation was to continue forever, and not disappear with the captivity of the house of Judah. 2 Sam. 7:16, 24,29. 1 Chron. 17:21-24. Jer. 31:35-40. The method by which the royal seed was transferred to the isles of the west is one of the marvels of the ages.

Number 7. Israel's home was to be north and west of Palestine. Isa. 49:12 and Jer. 3:18. These passages speak of Israel returning to Palestine from the north and the west at the end of this age. The British Isles lie in a straight line north-west of Palestine. Though the oft-mentioned isles were to be the home of Israel until they had renewed their strength, (Isa. 41:1), we must not forget that Abraham and his seed were the heirs of the whole world. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Deut. 31:8. All history has proved that, when Israel needed more territory, the aboriginal people had their borders adjusted to accommodate the need. See also Exod. 34:23-24

Number 8. Israel was to have many colonies. Gen. 17:4, 6, 16; 35:11; 48:19

Number 9. Israel, after expanding from her new home, was to lose a colony of her children, and then expand again into new realms. Isa. 49:20 This is obviously a prophecy of the American War of Independence, at which time the thirteen New England states were separated from the main body of Israel that Manasseh might become a great nation separate from Ephraim. But after this separation the expansion continued until the commonwealth embraced the vast regions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and islands and territories too numerous to mention.

Number 10. Israel shall reign over many nations, but none shall rule over her, and shall lend to many, but not borrow. Deut. 15:6

Number 11. Israel was to possess the gates of her enemies. Gen. 22:17 There are certain strategic places in the world that can correctly be termed gates. These gates through which the commerce of the world passes are Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Aden, Suez, the Panama Canal, Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope. All these strategic gates have for many years been controlled by the British Commonwealth or the United States of America, and Suez since 1967 has been controlled by the State of Israel now in Palestine.

Number 12. Israel was to have a new covenant. Jer. 31:31-34 This new covenant found the beginning of its fulfillment in the born again believers of the Christian church, when God began to write His law on the fleshly tables of their hearts. Gentile nations were not excluded from the blessedness, but the new covenant was made with Israel.

Number 13. Israel was to be a people glorying in Christ. This thirteenth mark is one of very great importance. Though the Jew has always been an enemy of Christ and as a people has maintained her anti-Christ attitude for two thousand years, the exact opposite is true of the house of Israel, for Jesus Christ was to be "the glory of Thy people Israel." This fact was stated in the most unmistakable terms by the anointed Simeon, when he prophesied that Jesus would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel." **Luke 2:29-32** It is clearly evident here that Israel does not refer to the anti-Christian Jew, but to the house of Israel, for the Jew has never honored Christ. Though the mass of Anglo-Saxon nations are only nominally Christian, throughout all their nations Jesus Christ is honored as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Church

denominations, worldly as they may be, preach that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. Congregations fulfill Simeon's prophecy in such beautiful songs as

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers 'round the head sublime."

And unknowingly they confess their Israelitish identity as they fervently sing,

"Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all."

With many other such magnificent hymns do these people testify that Christ is the glory of His people Israel. Every man on our streets knows who Jesus is and every lawyer, be he Jew or Mohammedan, must date his documents by the year of our Lord.

Though we have written at some length concerning Britain and the United States and their relationship to Ephraim and Manasseh, the story of the house of Israel has scarcely begun. It is a tremendous revelation to follow the exploits of other Israelitish nations such as the Danes - or more correctly, the Dans - the Dutch, the Norwegians, and the Swedes. The Norwegian Vikings are known to have roamed far and wide over the oceans of the earth, reaching America some six hundred years before the arrival of Columbus. According to Landnamobok, eighty-four per cent of the Icelandic colonizers came from Norway, three per cent from Sweden, and twelve per cent from the British Isles. The Vikings flew the wolf banner on all their ships. The wolf was the banner of Benjamin and it is reasonable to believe that the tribe of Benjamin is strongly represented in Norway. "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at evening he shall divide the spoil." Gen. 49:27 How accurate this prophecy has been! Sweden (South Dan) and Denmark (Dansmark) are evidently of the tribe of Dan. Dan has the custom of naming his conquests after himself, and by this method it is easy to see his serpent's trail all across Europe and into the British Isles. There are no vowels in the Hebrew language; therefore Dan is spelled Dn. Consequently Dan may be spelled Dan, or Don, or Den, or Din, or Dun, and, when a place name includes this syllable, it is reasonable to believe that Dan, or Dn, was there. Bible examples of this custom are found in Joshua 19:47, where Dan captured Leshem and changed the name to Dan, and again in Judges 18:11-12, where the Danites changed Mahaneh to Mahanehdan. Again, when they captured Laish, they changed the name of the city to Dan. The path Dan took across Europe is traceable in the following place names - Jordan, Dardanelles, Macedonia, the Danube, the Dneiper, the Dneister, and the Don. Professor Totten says: "There is no grander theme upon the scrolls of history than the story of the struggle of the Anglo-Saxons westward. The very streams of Europe mark their resting places and the root of nearly all the ancient names (Dan and Don) recall the sacred stream, the Jordan, from whose banks so far away the exiles set out." The naming of these places serves to trace these wanderers like a trail. The Danube, the Dneiper, theDneister, theDanau, theDaninn, the Danast, the Dandari, the Danez, the Vdon, the Eridon, and many others right down to the Dans and Denmark, the very word Scand/navia encompasses the name of Dan.

Should some think this to be unsound reasoning, would they not concede that the numerous cities and places in New England bearing English names would certainly indicate that early settlers of New England came from England? Those states abound with such names as Norfolk, Portsmouth, Wilmington, Hampton, Gloucester, Dover, Aberdeen, York, Lancaster, Reading and many others. Is there not plenty of evidence that Pennsylvania was settled by the Dutch and that Louisiana and Quebec were settled by the French? This is sound reasoning and a fact of history. This being so, would we not agree that Ireland, England, and Scotland must have had a strong representation of Danites, since the country abounds with such names as Danslough, Dan Sower, Dan Monism, Dwndalke, Dwndrum, Donegal, Dwnglow, Londonderry; Dwngarven and Dunsmore (meaning more Dans). Dan shall judge his people. Gen. 48:16. In Irish dunn means judge. In Scotland and England there is also an abundance of Dans, Dons, and Dins, such as Dundee, Dunkirk, Dunbar, Dunraven.

And the name Dan lies hidden in both the capital cities, London and Edinborough. The house of Israel under Jeroboam became idolatrous worshippers of Baal, and because of this the Israelites attached the name of Baal to many places in Palestine, such as Baal-Peor, Baal-Hazor, Baal Zephon, Mt. Baalah, Baal-Gad and others. If these are the same people who migrated to the isles of the west, then it is most significant that the name of Baal is found in many places in Ireland, such as Baal-y-bai, Baal-y-Gowan, Baal-y-Nahinsh, Baal-y-Castel, Baal-Moni, Baal-y-Ner, Baal-y-Garai, Baal-y-Nah and many others.

There is far too much evidence to sort through here, but surely the thirteen identification marks we have given should serve to identify these Israel nations and separate them from all others even as the scars and birthmarks identified the gypsy boy at the beginning of our story. Furthermore, we will all agree that the marks of identification I have given from the Bible do not apply in any degree to the other great nations of the earth, such as China, Russia, or Japan, but they apply only to the Anglo-Saxon peoples and in particular to Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph - Ephraim the commonwealth and Manasseh the great nation. The enormous wealth, power, world-wide influence and blessing of these two great brother nations bring vividly to our minds the words spoken by Jacob as he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh." **Gen. 48:20** Joseph, because he was separate (or separated) from his brethren (Gen. 49:26), was given a double portion in Israel. Henceforth the tribe of Joseph was to become two branches, Ephraim the first born and therefore head of the tribes, and Manasseh the thirteenth, but both enjoying the blessing of Joseph to the fullest possible extent. Thus the tribes were Ephraim, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Benjamin, and Manasseh.

The heraldry of any nation is an extremely important thing, for in heraldic symbols the history and principles which surround the origin and destiny of the nation are emblazoned for all to read. Benjamin Jonson, in the following verse, gives voice to his truth.

"Was not all the knowledge
Of the Egyptians writ in mystic symbols?
Speak not the scriptures oft in parables?
Are not the choicest fables of the poets
That were the fountains and first springs of wisdom
Wrapped in perplexed allegories?"

Heraldry is a parabolic language. Jesus, the greatest of all teachers, taught the people in parables. Those among His listeners who understood the symbols also understood the parable. When Joseph told Jacob that in his dream the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to him, Jacob was quick to grasp the symbols and understood exactly what they meant. The Great Seal of the United States, seen on every dollar bill, is replete with significant heraldry. I trust I will not be misunderstood when I say that in my opinion practically every symbol in this undoubtedly inspired work of art depicts as nothing else can the origin of the United States of America. It will probably be noticed at once how prominent is the number thirteen. Manasseh was the thirteenth tribe. There are thirteen stars, thirteen stripes, thirteen arrows in the eagle's left claw, thirteen olive leaves and thirteen olive berries in its right claw, Written on the scroll fluttering from the eagle's beak is the inscription with thirteen letters, "E PLURIBUS UNUM," meaning, ONE OUT OF MANY. This nation is not only the thirteenth tribe, but it is as well the great gathering place of all thirteen tribes. Thus the significance of E Pluribus Unum.

It will be noticed that the thirteen stars are set in a glory cloud above the eagle's head, that the eagle's wings are spread, and that it is facing toward the west, which is the continual direction of all Israelitish migrations. For the sake of brevity we shall state that the thirteen stars represent the thirteen tribes of Israel, of which tribes Manasseh himself is the thirteenth. The glory cloud in which the stars are set represents the glory cloud that led Israel all through the wilderness journey, covering and protecting them from all enemies, guiding them through the trackless future, (Psa. 105:39; Num. 10:34; Exod. 14:19-20), sheltering them from the heat by day and the frost by night, standing between them and their enemies, and directing them in all their wanderings.

The eagle itself is always associated with the heraldry of Israel. Ezek. 17:3-5 It is one of the loftiest of scriptural emblems. Her courage and farsightedness is stated in Job 39:28-30 Her swiftness is alluded to in Deut. 28:49

The remarkable phenomenon of the renewal of its youth is mentioned by David. Psa. 103:5 The likeness of one of the beasts about the throne was the likeness of an eagle. Rev. 4:7 The eagle was the standard of the camp of Dan, which included Asher, Dan, and Naphtali. "He bore them on eagles' wings" (Exod. 19:4) is the symbolism used to represent the escape of Israel from bondage to freedom. The eagle is not a bird of carrion and is not a menace to smaller birds. This, I think, is not only an excellent symbol of Israel, but that part of Israel which is the United States of America. No small nation need fear her and she is the defense of all her community. As Shakespeare said most impressively, "The eagle suffers little birds to sing."

The olive branch, upon which cluster thirteen berries and thirteen leaves, is also a symbol of Israel, who is referred to in scripture as an olive tree. **Jeremiah 11:16** says, "The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree," and Paul in his warning to the Gentiles speaks of Israel as an olive tree. Rom. 11:17-24 It is most significant that the dexter talon holds the olive branch with its thirteen olive berries and its thirteen leaves, the symbol of peace, but the sinister talon holds the thirteen arrows of war. Israel, when she went against a city in battle, was commanded to follow these instructions. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it... and if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it." **Deut. 20:10-12** First the enemy is offered the olive branch of peace and, if this is refused, then comes the arrows of war. The arrow had a special place in the heraldry of Manasseh, since he is Joseph's son, for unto Joseph the Lord had said, "His bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." **Gen, 49:24** Well might we ask what all these thirteen's represent if they do not represent the thirteen tribes of Israel, of which Manasseh was the thirteenth tribe.

The Great Seal of the United States is the only seal that has both an obverse and a reverse side. The reverse side of the seal is a pyramid with thirteen courses of masonry. Floating above the pyramid is the capstone or chief corner stone surrounded by a glory cloud. In the midst of the stone, watching over the nation, is the great, all-seeing eye of God, indicating most explicitly the long-standing mottoes of America. ONE NATION UNDER GOD and IN GOD WE TRUST. As the capstone of the Great Egyptian Pyramid is missing, because it was rejected by its builders, so in the Great Seal the capstone is not yet in its place. It must remain in glory above until Christ, the chief corner stone, comes to take His place at the head of His covenant people and the Head of His true church, which is His body. Why should a pyramid find prominence on the Great Seal of the United States? There are no pyramids in America. Surely this wonder of heraldry reminds us, not of America, but of Egypt, the land where Manasseh and Ephraim his brother were born. The thirteen courses of masonry represent not only the thirteen original American colonies, but the fact that Manasseh himself is the thirteenth tribe and also the gathering place of all thirteen of the tribes of Israel. The whole display is nothing short of an inspirational marvel. Little did the men who designed it realize how much inspiration they enjoyed.

Looking still further, we find the reverse side displays the thirteen-lettered inscription, ANNUIT COEPTIS, meaning, HE HATH PROSPERED OUR BEGINNINGS, which truth applies not only to the United States, but to the Israel nations as a whole. At the bottom of the reverse side are the beautifully significant words, NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM, meaning THE NEW ORDER OF THE AGES. These words are more prophetic than historic, because they speak of an age to come when the Head Stone of the corner takes His rightful place. Then in Israel, the seed of Abraham, all the nations of the world will be blessed. Surely a Bible reading saint in a far distant land, having never heard of the United States of America, would, upon seeing these symbols, proclaim. "These are the emblems of Israel!"

As the double-sided Great Seal of the United States magnificently displays the Israelitish ancestry of that nation, the tribe of Manasseh in particular, no less forcefully does the British COAT OF ARMS display the Israelitish ancestry of Britain, the tribe of Ephraim in particular.

When Israel camped in the wilderness, they camped beneath four standards. On the north side was the Camp of Dan, consisting of Asher, Dan, and Naphtali. Their standard was the eagle. To the east was the camp of Judah, consisting of Is-sachar, Judah, and Zebulun. Their standard was the lion. To the south was the camp of Reuben, consisting of Gad, Reuben, and Simeon. Their standard was a man. To the west was the camp of Ephraim, consisting of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin. Their standard was the ox, or unicorn. See Numbers chapter 2. The prophet Ezekiel received a great vision of God which he describes in these words: "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side: and

they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle." Ezek. 1:10 Now, reading this remarkable passage, could anyone possibly doubt that the man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle seen by Ezekiel were in some vital way connected with the twelve tribes of Israel, whose camp emblems were the man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle? No reasonable, thinking person could possibly conceive that these emblems of heraldry apply to any other than the nation Israel!

With this thought in mind we notice that nothing in the heraldry of the British Coat of Arms is English, but everything is Israelitish. On the dexter side of the Coat of Arms is the rampant lion with a crown upon his head, representing England.

Is it not a fact that the lion is Israelitish rather than English? This king of beasts is the emblem of Judah (Gen. 49:9) and wears the crown because God said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come." On the sinister side stands the unicorn, representing Scotland. Is it not also a fact that the unicorn is the personal emblem of the tribe of Ephraim? Deut. 33:17 Its prominence bears witness that England is the new home of Ephraim, to whom the promise was given that he would become a company, or commonwealth, of nations, pushing the people together to the ends of the earth. Most certainly Ephraim England has been and still is the mother country to the entire commonwealth, or company of nations.

In the lower dexter corner may be seen the harp of David, representing Ireland. But what connection has Ireland with a harp? For two thousand years Ireland had no other emblem than the harp. Irish tradition still insists that Tamar Tephi, daughter of Zedekiah of the seed of David, arrived in Ireland with the prophet Jeremiah about the time of the Babylonian captivity and was married to Eochaidh, who was of the seed of Zarah, the son of Judah, thus uniting the seed of Zarah-Judah with the seed of Pharez-Judah. From the union of Tamar Tephi of the Judah-Pharez line with Eochaidh, the prince of the scarlet thread of the Judah-Zarah line (see Gen. chapter 48) sprang the long list of Irish overlords who for one thousand years were crowned upon the Stone of Scone (now in the British Coronation chair) and wielded the sceptre of Judah over the whole of Ireland. It has been stated that every nation in Europe, which has a lion in its coat of arms can trace its royalty back to Zarah, the son of Judah. In the midst of the Great Shield may be found the figures of seven lions. I cannot tell what such heraldry can possibly represent unless it represents the young lions of the British Commonwealth.

In the beautiful crown may be seen a diadem of twelve precious stones. It is more than coincidence that these twelve stones in the British crown are the same twelve stones that are found in the breastplate of the Israelitish high priest, namely, a sardius, a topaz, a carbuncle, an emerald, a sapphire, a diamond, aligure, an agate, an amethyst, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. See Exod. 28:17-20 These are the same as the foundations of the Holy City, (Rev. 21:19-21), though five of the stones have a different name here. Above the crown, barely seen in the picture, is the orb, representing the entire earth, and upon the orb is the cross, indicating the day when the Christ of the cross will take the throne of David and reign over the world. Above the crown may be seen another lion, not the rampant lion of Judah, but a standing lion with a crown on his head, representing the house of David, to whom the Lord swore, saying, "Thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." Jer. 33:17 Please note that the reference here is to the house of Israel rather than the house of Judah. Beautifully engraved below the shield are the words DIEU ET MON DROIT, meaning GOD AND MY RIGHT, and on the device surrounding the shield are the very significant words, HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE, meaning literally, SHAME ON HIM WHO THINKS EVIL OF IT.

Dieu et mon droit (or God and my right)! To what right do these words refer? It was Ephraim, the "firstborn", (Jer. 31:9), who received the birthright and all the blessing of heaven and earth and seas. How much more significant then are the words, HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE, which literally mean, SHAME ON HIM WHO THINKS EVIL OF IT. What other meaning can we find than this: God has given the birthright to Ephraim, and shame on him who thinks otherwise. "Dieu et mon droit" and "Honi soit qui mal y pense."

I have touched all too briefly on the magnificent heraldry in the British Coat of Arms, every item of which is deep rooted in the heraldry of Israel, bearing little or no significance to England apart from her connections with the seed of Abraham. Space will not permit me to speak of the significance of the Stone of Scone, which rests in the coronation chair and whose history dates back to the captivity of Judah, nor of the orb and the scepter,

nor the fact that the British monarchs are anointed with oil at their coronation, compounded from the same properties as that used to anoint the kings of Israel. Nor can I tell of the magnificent west window of Westminster Abbey, bearing the figures of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, and Moses, under which every British monarch passes on his way to coronation.

We must now close this all too brief message on the Abrahamic covenant. It is my earnest prayer that those who have read this humble effort will realize that for many years our eyes have gazed upon truth that shouts aloud of our Israelitish heritage, though our eyes have been closed and our ears stopped because blindness in part has happened to us. These great nations, so richly blessed with blessings temporal and blessings spiritual, are the descendants of that great man to whom God swore, saying, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." These are the people who have become as numberless as the stars, through whom Christ came, through whom the body of Christ has come, and who, when their repentance and cleansing is complete, will be the New Jerusalem bride of Christ, and through her twelve gates will enter the countless billions of human kind, billions who hitherto never knew that God had a Son, or a body of sons, or a bride. The endless billions of earth will enter through those holy gates into the city of God that they might be partakers of the Tree of Life. At the beginning of his journey Abraham looked for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:10 He shall see that city in all her magnificent glory with her twelve glittering foundations and her twelve pearly gates opened wide, never to close. Then shall her charming voice, joined in sweet harmony with the Spirit, speak to every creature in the universe, saying, "Come! Come, take of the water of life freely, without money and without price. Let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely." "I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star." Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Amen!

APPENDIX.

In a writing of this nature there is such a vast wealth of material from which truth should be gathered that the effort at best is very limited in scope. Many subjects upon which I have touched should have been more fully developed, but for want of space in so small a booklet it was necessary to strictly limit each one. Much more history should have been explored to show how the royal lines of Pharez and Zarah, the two sons of Judah, were united about the time of the captivity of the house of Judah, from which union the British royal family is descended. Queen Victoria of England paid three hundred thousand pounds to have her genealogy traced. This genealogy, tracing her ancestry back to King David of Israel, now hangs worked in tapestry in the great hall of Windsor Castle and may be seen by any visitor when the Queen is not in residence.

The existing church has for centuries vainly endeavored to make the world wide promises of God for the house of Israel fit the Jewish people and, finding this impossible, many have turned skeptics and unbelievers. The Jew cannot possibly fulfill the world wide promises given to the house of Israel. The Jew himself would be the first to admit that from the manger of Bethlehem until now his whole attitude has been anti-Christ. How then could the promise made of Jesus, "He shall be the glory of Thy people Israel," be made applicable to them?

Among the many promises concerning the whole house of Israel and all their world wide power there is one special prophecy that has to do with the moment in which we live. It is this: "... and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." **Dan. 12:7** The present crumbling of the British Commonwealth and Empire, together with the dreadful weakening of the power of the United States of America, is definitely foretold in scripture and is one the principal signs that we are at the end of the age when all things shall be finished.

If the reader will glance at a map of the world, he will notice that in our day the only nations of the world that are yet free from the dominion of tyrants are the Israel nations and those vitally connected with them, such as France and Germany, many of whose people are also of Israelitish stock.

I have dealt with the great covenant God made with Abraham because the Bible deals solely with the seed of Abraham from Genesis, chapter twelve, to the last chapters of Revelation. Therefore we should readily receive that no man can properly understand the plans and purposes of God nor the great prophetic utterances of the

Old and New Testaments until he can see that Israel is God's elect, through whom all nations are to be blessed. God has not cast away His people, which He foreknew, but the sun, the moon, the stars, the heaven, the earth, the seasons, and day and night still testify that God remembers His ancient covenant, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Slowly but surely from the covenant seed comes Christ the Head, Christ the Body, and Christ the bride, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, through whose lofty gates all nations will pass to partake of the tree of life in the midst of the city.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said, To you who refuge to Jesus have fled?

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 28
CREATION, REDEMPTION, AND THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-4

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INTRODUCTION

I do not wish to over-emphasize the importance of this article, or the truth it contains, but I am constrained to say that these truths are of immense importance because they are foundational. Upon their firm footing rests the whole superstructure of God's plan of the ages. If we cannot see how in the very beginning God created man for the specific purpose of ruling the universe, and to have dominion over all the vast sidereal with its infinite space and multi-billion galaxies, then we have missed the heart of God's intention completely and we become doomed to spend our lives in the idle pettifogging of the Romish and Protestant systems, which give neither reason for man's existence nor cause for his humiliation and fiery testings in the realm of death. Even redemption, full and complete as it is and in spite of its infinite cost, will fail to reconcile and save more than one percent of all creation, if the fruitless interpretations of the Babylonish system are to be believed.

How different does all this appear when our hearts grasp the understanding that before all things, back of all things, beneath all things, and above all things is the majesty of God's eternal intention and the immutability of His purpose to make man in the image of Himself - infinite in wisdom, perfect in understanding, faultless in counsel, almighty in power, unchangeable in purpose, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, unswerving in faithfulness, and doing the wonders of God throughout the universe as sons of God and members of His family, man complete in God's image and likeness.

The answer to the eternal question, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him," is twofold, because the question is two-fold. What is man? The answer by example is JESUS CHRIST highly exalted, His name being above every name. He is the first man and the last man. He is the beginning of the creation of God and He is the end of the creation of God. We are His younger brothers, all members of the same family, first of men and secondly sons of God. What He is we are becoming, to which the scripture clearly attests, saying, "**As He is, so are we in this world.**" **I John 4:17** Every creature, whether of beasts or birds or fish or any plant or insect, brings forth seed after his kind, and shall it be different with God? Shall He not bring forth after His kind? Shall not he who is begotten of God be a son of God and a member of His family? Did not Jesus settle the contention forever when He said, "**If He called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?**" **John 10:35-36** Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and we, too, are sons of God because we are members of the family of God.

The first part of the question is, "What is man?" The second part of the question is, "That Thou art mindful of him?" Or, "What hast Thou in mind for man?" The answer is that man will be given dominion, when his perfection comes and his Christ-likeness is complete, over fish, over birds, and over the beasts and creeping things of the earth. Gen. 1:26. The fish represent the things beneath. The birds represent the things in the heavens above. The beasts and creeping things represent things on the earth. That is what God decreed in the beginning, and that is His immutable intention now and in the ages to come - man in God's image, ruler and lord of the universe. - G.R.H.

CHAPTER ONE
FIVE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

"The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: ...And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end..." **Dan 11:32, 35** "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book ...And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever... Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand', but the wise shall understand." **Dan. 12:1, 3, 10.** I have quoted these scriptures from the book of Daniel that we might be assured that in the last days there will stand up a people who know their God, and, because of their knowledge of Him, (hey will be strong and do exploits.

We are living in days of incredible wickedness. Crime and violence abound in such enormous proportion that no equal can be found except the inexhaustible evil that cursed the earth in the days of Noah, when wickedness was so great in the earth that every imagination and thought of men's hearts was only evil continually. Even Sodom was less evil by reason of her ignorance and her lack of truth and light, but the wickedness of our day is committed in the face of light and in spite of it. Well did our blessed Lord say, "**Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes,**" **Matt. 11:21.** "**It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the Day of Judgment, than for that city!" Matt. 10:15.**

There is little need at present to take great pains to prove I that we are now living in the closing days of this age. That reality seems to have been breathed into the very atmosphere that surrounds us until mankind has become aware of an impending something, which they do not understand. But the wise shall understand, and they who know their God will be strong and do exploits.

My purpose in writing this article, is to consider three great aspects of the eternal purpose of God - first, creation; secondly, redemption, and thirdly, the restitution of all things. My purpose will be to show that creation, redemption, and restitution are all priceless threads forming the warp and woof of the seamless robe of eternal purpose. They cannot be understood separately because together they display the infinite pattern of the ages.

It is not until the eyes of our understanding become enlightened by the Holy Ghost that we begin to see God and hear Him declaring the end from the beginning, calling the things that are not as though they were. It is little wonder that our heavenly Father should know the end from the beginning, because He is the end and He is the beginning. The little boy, peeping through a knothole in the high board fence, sees the parading hosts only as the procession passes before his restricted vision, but the eternal Father from His throne on high sees the marshaled host from the beginning to the end. The little boy knows not what the parade is all about, neither does he bear any responsibility for it. He knows not whence it comes nor whither it goes, but the eternal Father Himself, the Author and Finisher of it all, smiles in the knowledge that He, who has begun a good work, will faithfully perform it until every original intention has been fulfilled and every portion of His immutable will has been accomplished.

O that men might know the Lord, for, when they do, the dark shadows of their unbelief disperse before the rising of the sun of righteousness and the turmoil that fills the heart untutored by divine wisdom ceases from its restless raging as the knowledge of His faithfulness whispers, "Peace, he still." Our gracious heavenly Father has deemed it good to hide His boundless understanding from the wise and prudent men of this age, and has cast the darkling cloud of unbelief over the minds of (hem who vainly imagine that God and His truth can be known and dissected by the prying of the natural mind. Let the theologians invent their dead theories if they will, but as surely as a living dog is better than a dead lion, so one man with an experience in God is better than ten thousand who seem to have an indisputable argument. "**O that I might know Him,**" **sighed Paul, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.**" **Phil. 3:10-11**

That we may better know God and that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened, I wish to present briefly five elementary but basic truths that concern our heavenly Father. These truths should enlighten every believer to fill his heart and transform his mind with the majesty of God. I am not only afraid, but sure, that to most people God is little more than an idol to adorn a shelf - someone who needs to be protected and coddled lest His very name should disappear from the face of the earth. I once visited the San Fernando Mission in California and, being somewhat a lover of history, I greatly enjoyed the visit. But never shall I forget the two grotesque images that stood on either side of the altar, one bearing the inscription, God the Father, and the other the inscription, God the Son. No one who knows God could condone the sight of such a blasphemous thing as that, yet this very thought fills the minds of multitudes. To millions of Christians God is a sort of convenience. He is someone to be sought in times of trouble, sickness, or death, but the rest of the time, when there is no need or distress, He is somewhat of a hindering influence that should be kept in the background lest He hinder the works of our flesh. But the wise shall understand, and they that know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

FIVE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

An attribute is that which is attributed to a person or thing. It is a property or a quality. Therefore, when we say God is love, love is understood to be an attribute of God. It is a quality and property of Himself. It is part of Him. Just as sweetness is a quality of honey and bitterness a quality of herbs, so love is a quality and therefore an attribute of God. He cannot be God without it. He neither endeavors to manifest it nor searches to find it, for it is part and parcel of Himself. "Love is of God, little children, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in Him. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

1. Omniscience. Now wisdom is the principle thing, we are told; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding. This being so, we will begin with the attribute of omniscience, for omniscience concerns wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. God is omniscient. By this we mean that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, whether in heaven or earth, abide forever in Him. There is nothing that He does not know and there is nothing that He does not understand. God knows all things. His wisdom and knowledge, His ways and His judgments, are unsearchable. He knows and understands all things in nature, in science, in astronomy - everything concerning the heavens above and the earth beneath. He knows all history, whither written or unwritten, and He sees with unerring accuracy all the events of the endless future. All are purposed and designed by His infinite mind. He knows all things of man, the purpose of his being and the end in view for him. He knows what man will do and ordains the end that will be accomplished in his doing it. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" **Rom. 11:33**

I dare not attempt more than a sketchy outline of the limitless truth concerning the attributes of God. Nevertheless, because the Spirit has impressed me to make His name glorious to those who read, I will endeavor to show briefly some of the truth the scriptures teach concerning His attributes and leave the remainder to be revealed to the reader as the Holy Spirit illumines the truth to every heart.

As David was carried away in the Spirit to the mountain peaks of understanding, his soul caught a fleeting glimpse of the omniscience of God, and his spirit, thrilling with the greatness of God's glory and power, burst forth with these revealing words: "Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite." **Psa. 147:5** That which is infinite is so great as to be immeasurable and unbounded. It is limitless, inexhaustible, all-embracing and perfect. It is only when men and women are carried away into the glory of His eternal greatness that they begin to comprehend the infinite. The understanding of the perfect and upright Job searched infinitely beyond his own pain and suffering, yea, and his own wisdom also, when he boggled the imaginations of his earthly-minded adversaries with the amazing query, "Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" **Job 37:16** And the beloved John, who had seen the glories of the mount of transfiguration and felt the sublime exultation of the Isle of Patmos, wrote to God's dear people to say, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth nil things." **1 John 3:20**

Hear now the inspiration of prophets and sages, the apostles and God's only begotten Son, as they tell us in words indisputable that our heavenly Father is omniscient. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." **Prov. 15:3** "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names." **Psa.**

147:4 "The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth, He fashioneth their hearts alike; He considereth all their works." **Psa. VV 13-15** "Thou knowest my down-sitting and my uprising," said David. "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off... There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." **Psa. 139:2, 4** "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" said Jesus, "and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." **Matt. 10:29-30**

From the scriptures quoted above we can arrive at only one conclusion. God is omniscient. There is nothing He does not know. All His works are done in wisdom and understanding, for He knoweth the end from the beginning. Nay, we can say much more than this, for He who cannot lie has faithfully declared that He is both the end and the beginning. These inspired utterances prove above all else that God's wisdom is perfect, extending to the balance of the clouds, the names of numberless stars, the thoughts and intents of the human heart, and the number of hairs of one's head; and even the death of a tiny bird does not pass without His notice. He considers all the works of men, and ponders all their goings. He hears every word of the human tongue and knows the thoughts and imaginations of the human heart. Furthermore, the apostle clearly states that God thoroughly knows every detail of His own work, for saith he, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." **Acts 15:18** Our own election is according to the foreknowledge of God, for "whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." Not only is this true, but He also tells us with great clearness that He is well aware of all things which are to come to pass in the ages yet unborn. With this knowledge Paul wrote in **Eph. 1:9-12**: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in Him. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." With what unwavering faithfulness has the word of the Lord declared, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." **Col. 2:3** To this sublime statement our hearts echo and re-echo the words of the apostle Paul: "How inexhaustible God's resources, wisdom and knowledge are! How unfathomable His decisions are, and how untraceable His ways! Who has ever known the Lord's thoughts, or advised Him? Or who has advanced anything to Him. for which He will have to be repaid? for from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen." **Rom. 11:33-36** (Goodspeed)

2. Omnipotence. That we may understand in a greater way the extent of God's glory, and that our hearts may be prepared for the truth I wish to bring, we will be greatly helped by a perfect assurance that God our Father is omnipotent. Omnipotence simply means unlimited or universal power; almighty power. The Holy Scriptures abound with proof of God's almighty power. We cannot use them all, but the few passages we have space to use will show with great clearness that our Father and Lord is all powerful and in every respect omnipotent. There is nothing He cannot do; neither is there anything beyond the reach of His power. Men and angels and every element of the universe are subject to His authority, and Satan himself, to whom so many mistakenly attribute great strength, has no power at all except that which is permitted by the Lord Himself for the accomplishment of some divine intention.

"With God all things are possible" were the words of God's first begotten Son (Matt. 19:26), who during the days of His sojourn on the earth manifested the glory of God and on many occasions displayed the omnipotent power that was at His command. He who could enter a room though doors were locked against every intruder can with the same ease pass a camel through the eye of a needle if He wills, or enter the fast closed door of the human heart whenever it pleases His blessed will. With God all things are possible.

Centuries ago Abraham and Sarah were waiting for the son whom God had promised many years before. The sands of time with alarming speed were running through the hour-glass of their lives. They were both old and well stricken in years. The spring had gone from their step as it had gone from their lives, and gloomy beyond words was the knowledge of them both that "it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women." **Gen.. 18:11** And when the Lord appeared to them to renew His promise, saying, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son," Sarah could not refrain from laughing within herself. But the Lord demanded, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child,

which am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord?" **Gen. 18:13-14** Our solemn reply must always be a sober and reverent no, for with men many things are impossible, but with God all things are possible.

See with what words of omnipotence the Almighty sweeps away doubt and fear from our timid hearts declaring and declaring again that all things are made by Him, all things are upheld by Him, and all things live and move by Him. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: He layeth up the depths in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebuketh thesea and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers... The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation"! And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him." **Nahum 1:3-6**

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." **Psa. 33:6** Angels and principalities and powers are subject to Him. Col. 3:15. Demons are cast out by the word of His mouth, and Satan himself is completely limited to the word of God's permission as we see so clearly demonstrated in God's dealings with Job. Job 1:12 and 2:6. And who better than Job, after God's dealings with him were complete, was able to say, "I know that Thou canst do everything, and no thought can be with holden from Thee." **Job. 42:2**

How sublime are these mighty statements of God's omnipotence that fall like manna from the sanctified lips of the redeemed when compared to the paltry humbug called evolution as taught to our children in schools in the name of science. They would have us believe that man evolved from some lower form of life that somehow chanced to be and that our limbs and oilier faculties developed as necessity required them as our manner of living changed. If this be so, I would surely think that presently men may be born with smoke stacks on their heads!

Once I was a polliwog beginning to begin:
Then I was a froggie with my tail tucked in!
Then I was a monkey up a banyan tree;
Then I was a man with a big D.D.
A polliwog, a froggie, a monkey, and a man;

Glory be to nature for her wondrous plan! Stupid as is this silly ditty, who can deny that it contains in essence the obnoxious humbug that is being taught to our little boys and girls in grade school and our adolescents in high school and university? There is no denying the truth of that is there? How different from this science, falsely so called (1 Tim. 6:20), is the wonderful utterance of inspiration, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. 1:16-17

Never allow your understanding to be confined by the limitations of human power or might, for with God all things are possible. "Let there be light," He commands, and there is light. "Let the waters be divided," He decreed, and the waters divided. "Let the seas swarm with life." He cries, and living things appear in the oceans from the microscopic plankton to the mighty blue whale, whose head is as large as an elephant, whose heart is the size of an ox, whose weight is one hundred and thirty tons, and who esteemeth iron as straw and brass as rotten wood. God speaks, and birds fly through the heavens. He hisses and the hornets come. From His finger tips worlds glide forth in their orbits, and mighty stars as numerous as the sands of the sea circle forever in their courses with the sweet precision of a mighty dynamo. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" the Lord demands.

"Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of water may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" **Job 38:31, 34, 35** So declares eternal wisdom concerning the omnipotence of our God, who speaks and worlds obey, who commands and the heavens give

audience. Let our hearts be well assured of all these things, for the knowledge that God is both omniscient and omnipotent will dissolve our every doubt and fear.

The Saviour can solve every problem,
The tangles of life can undo;
There is nothing too hard for Jesus;
There is nothing that He cannot do.

3. Immutability. "I am the Lord, I change not" was the word of God by the prophet Malachi. Mal. 3:6. Though we may write whole books and carefully considered manuscripts to teach the immutability of God, and though we may show from many scriptures that the Lord is changeless, we cannot with ten thousand words say more clearly that God is immutable than is stated here in these seven words of inspiration, "I am the Lord; I change not." Wonderful as it is to know that God is omnipotent and has all power, and blessed as is the assurance that He is omniscient and knows all things, this would give us little comfort if our hearts once lacked the blessed assurance that the Lord we love and serve is also unchanging. What wretchedness would fill our minds if we were cursed with the thought that God could someday change His mind or alter His eternal purposes or turn about in His course! I can think of nothing that would throw my faith into such confusion as the thought that God might change, but with what assurance we pursue the eternal goal when we hear His blessed voice saying clearly, "I am the Lord; I change not."

When I read this statement - I am the Lord - my own mind was caught away to two separate and very significant instances recorded in the word of God. When Moses stood unshod before the burning bush, hearing the awesome instructions of the Holy One of Israel, his poor human heart trembled as the angel, who was the Lord Himself, spoke to him, for Moses had turned aside to see the strange sight of a bush that burned and was not consumed. **Exod. 3:1-4.** The Lord called to him from the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." **Verse 6** Then, as the weight of God's ordination seemed to numb his very mind, poor trembling Moses, hoping to find an exit from the great commission the Lord had given him, inquired in dread, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say (into them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; then I hey shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said. Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." **Exod. 3:13-14**

The Lord has many names, every one of which is a revelation of Himself. We dare not turn aside here to feast in these green pastures lest we fail to return to the subject we are considering, but of all the names the Lord has taken to Himself none portrays His immutability and His absolute changeless-ness to such a degree as does this name I AM. What He was when He appeared to Abraham He still was when He came to Isaac, and what He was when He appeared to Isaac He also was when He manifested Himself to Jacob. And now, as Moses bows his head and heart before the Lord, he finds Him to be still the same unchanged I AM in that present moment as He was centuries before. Can we not hear the prophet echoing the fact of His immutability in the scripture we have quoted above, "I AM the Lord; I change not?"

It was centuries later that our Lord Jesus Christ stood in the midst of the unbelieving Jews to tell them, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad. I hen said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." **John 8:56-58** How truly have the saints been singing.

Yesterday, today, and forever
Jesus is the same.
All may change, but Jesus never!
Glory to his name.

"Remember the former things of old," said the prophet Isaiah, "for I AM God, and there is none else; I AM God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." **Isa. 46:9-10** Again speaking of the

immutable purpose of the Lord, this same Isaiah wrote: "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" **Isa. 14:26-27** "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vessel shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years have no end." **Psa. 102:25-27**

God is immutable. He cannot change. All His purposes shall stand. Every purpose that ever came from His divine mind is progressive, growing larger and more glorious as the plan unfolds, but all this endless expansion was decreed by Him in the beginning and all He decreed must certainly come to pass. Let not mankind vainly imagine that the Lord of heaven and earth faints and grows weary of His task or that He ever changes His mind or alters His course. We hear the voice of the harlot system trying to persuade the people that Christianity must be made adaptable to the changing times so that it will relate to the progress of the people. Mankind, they tell us, must be liberated from the old morality to embrace the new morality. O foolish man, will you never learn that all your attempts to liberate yourself bring you nothing but greater bondage in the end? He whom the Son sets free is free indeed, and none other is free. See what devilish bondage has come to those who have tried to practice what some have dared to name the new morality. The so-called new morality is nothing more or less than the old immorality that has cursed us from the beginning. They have dressed this ravaging wolf in sheep's clothing to make it appear acceptable. Behold what havoc it has wrought upon mankind in broken homes, diseased bodies, confused and unstable children, to say nothing at all of the attendant torrent of dings that are destroying the minds of vast numbers of the rising generation, rendering them unfit to ever take their place as men and women should. The dreadful conditions in the world today come as a harvest from the noxious seed of self-expression that was sown by foolish professors half a century ago, and now today the world is being ruled by the offspring of those men who never once felt the rod of correction. Because those in authority learned no discipline, they know not how to deal with criminals who break the law and destroy the peace and safety of our land. Thus we have come to the painful and unenviable position of seeing law-abiding people hiding behind locked doors while those criminals who should be incarcerated roam at large murdering, looting, raping and robbing whensoever and whomsoever they please. But mankind, with all his demand for Change, will find in the end that, though men may sin at will, God has not changed His attitude toward sin, since He is immutable and has appointed a day when every man shall be tried according to the deeds done in the body, and his punishment or reward will be according to his works whether they be good or had.

Let all those who love God rejoice that the Lord of hosts has said, "I AM the Lord; I change not." God is immutable. Every purpose He has decreed is in the process of being fulfilled. "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the 1'itlu'r of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," **James 1:16-17**

4. Faithfulness. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." **Prov. 25:19** It matters not how much such a man swears to be faithful; he will always let you down. You cannot trust a drunkard with money to buy the baby's milk. He will come staggering home without it, thinking he has done the right thing. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." **Eccles. 1:15** There is no possible way by which a man could have faith in God if God Himself were unfaithful. It is therefore of great necessity that our hearts embrace with fervent joy the assurance that God is faithful. Much more than this it is essential to know that faithfulness is as surely an attribute of God as is omnipotence, omniscience or immutability.

My purpose here in writing briefly concerning the faithfulness of God is that the elect who live in this very evil day should have a lasting assurance that every divine purpose will be fulfilled and is being fulfilled in exactly the same manner as Omniscience decreed before the ages began, and that everything He has said wilt be done and all He decreed will come to pass. Not one jot or one tittle of all that has been spoken by the law, the prophets, or the apostles will fail until all is fulfilled. "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." **2 Tim. 2:13** Even in this dreadful hour of unbelief when man in his incredible carnality does not like to retain God in his knowledge, the Lord abides faithful and true both to those who against hope believe in hope (Rom. 4:18) and to those who never believe at all. Even these defiant doubters, though He will sorely wound

them, will learn at last that faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Prov. 27:6

When saints were exhorted to "holdfast the profession of their faith," they were given the assurance that they might do so without wavering because "faithful is He who promised." **Heb. 10:23** The faithfulness of God is manifested in that He never fails to keep His promise. He may tarry for centuries or even millenniums and the time appointed for the fulfillment of His promises may be long (Dan. 10:1), yet the word spoken is always true and will always be fulfilled in God's time. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely mine, it will not tarry." **Heb. 2:3**

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." **Prov. 25:2** Often, if not always, God's purposes are concealed beneath the dark and stormy clouds of bewildering circumstances, all of which seem to be working against the promises of God, making their fulfillment appear impossible. Prophecy is spoken, yet nothing immediately comes to pass. Promises are given and months drift into years and years drag into centuries, yet the promise remains unfulfilled. The Lord speaks to Abram, saying, "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the world be blessed," and, having thus spoken, He straightway shuts up Sarah's womb that she cannot bear a child at all. And when Abram is old and his wife well past the age when children can be born, the Lord calls him aside and changes his name from Abram, which means high father, to Abraham, which means the father of many nations. Gen. 17:5 Still no son appears; then at last, when every human hope was gone forever, the one son of promise is born, but only one. No multitude, no seed as numerous as the stars or as numberless as the sands or countless as the dust but just one child of promise - Isaac. Even when the second generation had come and gone, there was still only one son of promise - Jacob, of whose seed in the third generation there were only twelve, yet God is faithful and the promise is sure. Because He made it, it cannot fail. God is faithful. He is not only faithful, but immutable; not only immutable, but omnipotent; not only omnipotent, but all-wise. Thus in our day, four thousand years after the promise was given, we see the seed of Abraham as numberless. Abraham has three kinds of seed - the dust (Gen. 13:16), fulfilled in Ishmael and the Arabs; the sand (Gen. 22:17), fulfilled in Jacob and the children of Israel; the stars (Gen. 15:5), fulfilled in Isaac through Jesus Christ. Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:17-19 All of these are innumerable.

"It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed," wrote Jeremiah the prophet, "because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness." **Lam. 3:22-23** Neither centuries nor millenniums of time have any bearing on the faithfulness of God except to prove it to the end. What He has said will surely come to pass. It has only to wait until the appointed time arrives. Later in this study we will be considering that great edict of creation, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." and we will see how these prophetic words are coming to pass slowly and steadily through the ages in exactly the manner the Creator decreed. When the Lord said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," His unerring wisdom was reaching forward, spanning thousands of years. Four thousand years were to come and go before the first begotten Son, the Saviour of all mankind, was presented faultless and in the image of God, made perfect by the things He suffered. Few knew that another two thousand years would pass away before the first fruit company, the body of Christ and the brothers of Jesus, would be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24), and faultless before the throne. Rev. 14:5 Every day it appears that man is becoming more unlike God, and so he is; yet He abides faithful who promised. Even in the very midst of man's unbelief and turmoil the mighty fiat sounds forth, declaring in the face of all unbelief, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in His sight." **Col. 1:16-22** Though the work of reconciliation takes millenniums of time to be accomplished, yet, because He is faithful and cannot fail, it is stated as though already accomplished. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." **2 Cor. 5:19** "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." **Psa. 119:89**

In the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews the testimony is given of what Paul is pleased to describe as a great cloud of witnesses. **Heb. 12:1** We are told of the wonderful things that were accomplished by faith in the faithful promises of God, and the reading of this account has caused many a saint to greatly rejoice in his God. Yet this eleventh chapter, which so vividly describes the mighty exploits of faith, ends on a note that seems to be almost off key when we are told that these all died in faith, not having received the promises. Verse 13. Surely one would think that he who died without seeing the result of his faith must either have had no faith at all or, worse still, have felt that the God he trusted had proved unfaithful. But should it be thought a thing impossible that God should raise the dead? Why do so many accept the truth of the resurrection of the dead, yet fail to see that it is by the resurrection that the faithfulness of God will bring to pass the greater part of all His aionian promises? Thus, when the Spirit says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises," the word is quickly added, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." **Verses 39, 40** Should it be deemed a thing impossible that God would raise the dead? Should it be thought strange that the fullness of God's promise should wait until the resurrection morning? What act could better declare that it is God, faithful and eternal, who is doing the work? None of God's promises are ever completely fulfilled until the time of the resurrection whether the promise be to the just or to the unjust. As man says, "I will do so and so," not knowing what a day will bring forth, so the faithful God, the author and finisher of our faith, counts a thousand years as one day and a thousand years as yesterday when it is past.

"Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." **Psa. 119-89-90**

5. Omnipresence. God is present everywhere. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" was the word of the apostle Paul. Acts 17:28 It is most wonderful to learn of God's almighty power and to discover that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge dwell in Him. It is blessed beyond expression to know that He is immutable and does not change His course nor alter His mind to suit the whims of a changing world. Our hearts rejoice in the knowledge that He is faithful, that God is love and all who dwell in love dwell in Him. Our hearts are overwhelmed by the greatness, the goodness, the power, the faithfulness, and the loving kindness of Him who is the author and the finisher of our faith.

There is yet one other attribute that for the good of this article we must briefly consider. It is the attribute of omnipresence. Many people, if not all of us, have at some time felt ourselves to be forsaken of God. Even our Lord Jesus Christ ended those fearful moments on the cross with the terrible, earth-shaking, heaven-rending cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But, though for a moment it was necessary that the great omnipresent Father should withdraw all manifest presence from the Redeemer, in response to the agonizing cry of His beloved Son His omnipresence was manifested in a most unmistakable way by the terrible quaking of the earth, the awesome rending of the rocks, and, perhaps most miraculous and significant of all, by the rending in twain of the veil in the temple from top to bottom. The graves, too, of men long dead were opened in preparation for their coming forth on the morning of His resurrection. No! The omnipresent God had not gone away. He was close enough to hear the prayer of His beloved Son and near enough to receive the spirit of Him who committed Himself into His hands.

I have listened with wonder to the testimonies of some of God's most holy saints who told how to all outward appearance and inward witness God had withdrawn His presence from them for eighteen and twenty years; but they found in the end that He had been with them all the time, carefully watching, carefully guiding every foot-step and jealously guarding them as His choice treasure. You ask me, "Why does the Lord do things like that?" My answer is, "I do not know." Only omniscience, full of understanding and infinite in patience, can know what manner of vessel He is forming for His glory. The thing then for my faith to grasp is simply this: God is ever present and present everywhere.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness will cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered

me in my mother's womb." **Psa. 139:6-13** "When thou passes! through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." **Isa. 43:2** "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." **Psa. 91:9-10** With these and many other faithful promises does the omnipresent Father assure His children that He is always with them. Whether it be in life or in death, heaven or hell, fire or water, lion's den or fish's belly, He is a very present help in trouble and is not far from any of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Yea, even from the lips of the Master Himself these words still sound through the meadows of our soul, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

We shall not attempt at present to explore those scriptures, which show that God is eternal, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. Nor shall we speak of His attribute of holiness, for I think that is much too great a task for a man who was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. I, at least, feel incapable at the moment of saying more than this: He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. **Exod. 15:11** Perhaps some other day we can ravish our souls in the greatness of His attributes of love, loving kindness, and tender mercy. The devout reader, considering the truth written in this article, may have wondered why I should take so much space here to write concerning the attributes of God since our subject is "Creation, Redemption, and the Restitution of All Things". My explanation for this is very simple. Since these subjects are so vast in their scope, eternal in their import, and incapable of being carried out by any but God Himself, it is of unspeakable value that we be assured how great and powerful, how wise and immutable is our God, who doeth all these things. How unchangeable are His ways, how omniscient His mind, how faithful His intention, and how ever present He is to carry out every detail of His infinite purpose! Let those bow down who will before the little "church God" of human theology, but let those whose hearts have been opened to grasp the truth that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him worship that same God who in the beginning of the ages proclaimed the unalterable decree, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let us give him dominion." Know then that He, the Almighty, who is possessor of all these attributes, who spreadeth out the heavens with a span and hangeth the earth on nothing, is abundantly able to carry out His infinite intention. Neither shall one jot or one tittle fail of anything until all be fulfilled. Nothing can stay His hand. None can alter His will. No power can resist His purpose.

CHAPTER TWO CREATION

It was our purpose in the first part of this article to so magnify and exalt the greatness of God's power and the infinite perfection of His wisdom and understanding that all who would read the remaining pages might clearly understand that He, because of His omnipotence, worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. **Eph. 1:11**. There is nothing that He does not know. There is nothing that He cannot do. There is no place where He does not dwell. His Spirit filleth all in all and with Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. "Of His own will begat He us..." (**James 1:18**) and "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven." **Dan. 4:35** He Himself is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. **Isa. 11:2**

In His eternal omnipotence we live and move and have our being. It is with Him we have to do. Therefore I charge all those who read these truths to earnestly consider that our heavenly Father, all powerful and all wise, full of grace and truth, is not the enemy of mankind, but their gracious and faithful Creator. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." **1 Pet. 4:19** From this passage it may be clearly seen that the work of creation did not stop with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but the work of creation is even now in progress. Therefore we who now live are admonished to yield ourselves to the faithful Creator. Let him that readeth understand that at this very moment he is in the process of being created by the skilful hand of the master Craftsman. Step by step the Holy Spirit is moving upon him to bring him into the image of Him who once in ages past proclaimed, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, for "the first man is of the earth, earthy; but the new man is the Lord from heaven. ...And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." **1 Cor: 15:47-49**

Many centuries ago Job uttered an inspired statement as he sat among the dust and ashes of his awful grief and pain: "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed times will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee; Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands." **Job 14:14-15** If a man die shall he live again? Of course he will, because death and resurrection are part of the plan devised by God to make man in His own image. That is why Jesus, who Himself was raised from the dead, was able to say, "I am the resurrection and the life," and "because I live, ye shall live also."

In the passage quoted above, however, Job spoke of more than a resurrection. He made reference to an appointed time of waiting, through which we must pass until our change come. That appointed period of waiting is the time during which the work of creation is proceeding. It is the long, long night of waiting until our fondest dreams come true, but there is not one experience that is unnecessary, not one precious moment that is wasted. All things are working together to fulfill the eternal purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will that we should be to the praise of His glory who were the first to fix our hopes in Christ. Dread not this long, long night of waiting. Dread not the rigors of this difficult school of experience. It is God Himself who has ordained that we should proceed this way, and, when He has tried us, we shall come forth as pure gold. Yea, we shall come forth in the likeness of Him who at this very moment is in the process of creating us in His image.

The last statement made here by Job is the most significant for our study now. "Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands." Once we recognize that man is the work of God's hands and that He has a special desire toward that work, then we can know that infinite wisdom, limitless understanding, unending faithfulness and almighty power cannot fail or be discouraged until that work and purpose is carried triumphantly to its perfect final and ultimate conclusion. We are the workmanship of God's hands. The eternal has no mere passing interest in this handicraft. It is His one absorbing, consuming devotion in this present age of grace! If we might enquire of the eternal Father to know His principal work and interest throughout all these generations since Adam, He would not tell us that His time was occupied in creating worlds and stars, suns and moons or angels of light. He would say to us, "Ye are God's workmanship. You are the work of My hands. This is the work that I desire to accomplish, for I have a desire to the work of My hands." O that saints and sinners alike could learn and embrace this truth, for then would life and death, pain, tribulation and sorrow be recognized as fashioning tools in the skilful hands of an all wise Creator, who has a desire to the work of His own hands, the work of creating man in His own image! By His own special skill His work will be perfect and in His own likeness when it is finished. "Why should there be tribulation?" some trembling soul may ask. To this the kindly Creator replies, "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." **Rom. 5:3-5** O dear reader, can you not see from this that God is love, and he who would have the love of God shed abroad in his heart must first yield himself to the painful, refining tools of tribulation, patience and experience that he at last may be as perfect in God's image as was Jesus Christ, that first perfected Son of Adam?

The Father has a desire to the work of His hands, and I am thankful to be one small part of the work of His hands. He is like a craftsman so intent upon the work he is doing that the hours slip by like minutes and a thousand years are as yesterday when it is past. I have a little workshop in the basement of our home in which I make all manner of things. Often I have seen the hours slip by almost like minutes because my mind was absorbed in the thing I was doing. What I was creating was paltry indeed, sometimes even useless and soon forgotten, but the work of God's hands is a creation as eternal as God Himself, and by that creation, when it is completed, He will govern the universe in righteousness. So taken up is He with the work of His hands that a thousand years is as one day and whole millenium as yesterday when it is past.

This work of creation, which God is so faithfully doing cannot all be done at once, but it is accomplished one piece at a time. He first took upon Himself to make one man, but that one man though bearing the likeness and image of God, was not by any means the finished product God had in mind. The man God formed from the dust of the earth was in God's image only as the unfinished potter's clay is in the image of the finished ceramic that will take its place on the rich man's mantelpiece after the terrible fire has baked it into a vessel of beauty, usefulness and excellence. Our all wise Lord does but one work at a time. He formed one man of the dust of

the earth. He made him a natural man of the earth earthy, but the work of creation was not finished. The work of creation continues steadily through the ages of time until that which at first bore only the image of the earthy now bears the image of the heavenly and that which was of the earth earthy is at last the Lord from heaven when creation's work is complete. 1 Cor. 15:48-49

Each man, we are told, comes into this resurrection glory in his own order. 1 Cor. 15:23 The first to be made and completed and finished in God's image is Jesus Christ, our Lord. He is the beginning of the creation of God. Rev. 3:14 If He is the beginning of the creation of God, then He is not only the beginning of the new creation, but He is of necessity the beginning of the old creation as well. Just as we once bore the image of the earthy and through God's grace we are beginning to bear the image of the heavenly, so also did that first begotten Son once bear the image of the earthy, and, though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience through the things He suffered, and He, being made perfect, became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him, being called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Heb. 5:8-10

O that men could lay aside their paltry little philosophies, their blinding religious traditions, their little "church God" and the heavy chains of their human theology that they might really see into the heart and mind of our heavenly Father! Then would they embrace what Jesus intended them to understand when He said, "I am the first and I am the last." "I am the Alpha and the Omega." "I am the beginning and the end." Does divine wisdom not assure us that, since He is the first and He is the last, then wherein so ever He is the first He must of necessity be the last also? Is it not equally true that whereas He is the Alpha He must also be the Omega? "Certainly," you reply. "These things are indisputably true." Now let us follow the truth we read that we might see some of the hidden meaning and understand its end, for how can we avoid the conclusion that the opposite of this is also true? I mean to say that wherever He is the Omega then He must be the Alpha. If He is the end of anything, then He must be the beginning of it also, and, if He is the last, then He must of necessity be the first. Would you not deem it true, if He is the first and the last, He must also be the last and the first? Can we not see then how significant it is that Paul by inspiration plainly said that Jesus was the last Adam? Not the second Adam as so many are prone to say, but the last Adam. Thus He divulges a secret kept hidden from the foundation of the world. The last must also be the first. So the first man Adam made his appearance as a living soul, but the last man Adam, made perfect by partaking of all the suffering and temptation that other men have endured, was made a life giving Spirit, to be presented in the end of the age, perfect and able to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. O with what new and wonderful significance does the proclamation of Jesus Christ now echo through the corridors of our spirits as we hear Him saying, "I am the first and I am the last. I am the beginning; I am the end. I am He that liveth and was dead and am alive forevermore, and hold the keys of death and of hell." Blessed be His name forevermore!

We are talking about creation now. We are showing that God meant all that was in His heart when He said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." See with what care Luke in his gospel gives a faithful record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, tracing His forefathers name by name, step by step, from Heli (who was Joseph's father-in-law and Mary's father) back to the Garden of Eden and to the first man Adam, saying, "... which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." **Luke 3:38**

I often apologize to my Lord for the fearful deadness of my own understanding. How I regret the years I have followed the tradition of men, which in the final analysis is tradition we inherited from Rome! Why do we read scriptures that convey whole realms of truth only to brush them aside in fear that a little investigation of them might upset some of the petty theories that have blinded us so long? Why, I confess with shame that I often catch myself in the act of doing that very thing! Let us then hear the word of God and, hearing it, we will be changed into that same image of Jesus Christ. Hearing we are beholding, and beholding we are being transformed. 2 Cor. 3:18

"That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." **1 Cor. 15:46** Hear, then, and understand the words of Him who speaks with the voice of many waters, declaring, "**I am the first and I am the last.**" **Rev. 1:17** Hear Him, I say, as by the lips of the apostle Paul He says, "**The first man Adam was made a living soul: the last Adam was made a quickening (life giving) spirit.**" **1 Cor. 15:45** Should we think it is a thing impossible that the Son of God should have been manifest in the first Adam, since the

Spirit has plainly said that Adam was the son of God? Ah, yes, you say, but Adam transgressed the command of God: and to this I agree in part only, for there is a passage of scripture in the New Testament which, though kept obscure, throws tremendous light upon the thought that is before our minds. When Paul was writing his instructions to Timothy regarding the conduct of the church, he made this most remarkable and enlightening statement, every word of which I believe. Hear well what he said: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." **1 Tim. 2:12-14** Paul did not make this statement because he was a woman hater and this truth should never be used to condemn Eve or any other woman. The truth is, however, that Eve was taken from the flesh and bone of Adam and made separate from him in order that the transgression should be accomplished. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. **Rom. 8:20** The transgression is not a mistake! It is part of the plan of creation, and God's great redemption is also a part of that same plan of creation.

Observe, then, how the scripture clearly states that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. What then shall we say about the man? The truth must be that, if he was not deceived, then he entered into the transgression with his eyes wide open, because he knew and thoroughly understood God's plan - that God through temptation, suffering, and death would eventually present the finished product, man in the image of God. Have you not read and have you not wondered with great amazement at the scripture, which says, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him?" **2 Cor. 5:21** Did Jesus want to be made sin for us or did He yield Himself to it, understanding full well what the purpose of God was? No one dare say that Jesus was a sinner; yet He became sin for us. Adam, too, being not deceived, entered into the transgression because he foreknew and understood that it was the purpose of God that the whole creation should be lowered into the realm of death. He was not acting in defiance of God, but yielding himself in submission to the purpose of the ages.

Paul, writing the deepest of church truth to the Ephesian congregation, made these remarkable statements: "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." **Eph. 5:23-24** Let those who will look only at the surface meaning here. The hidden meaning is this: As Christ is the head of the body, the church, so Adam was the head of Eve; and as Christ is the Saviour of His body, the church, so Adam was the saviour of his body, Eve. The Emphatic Diaglott reads thus: "Husbands, love your wives even as the Anointed One loves the congregation, and delivered Himself up on her behalf." **Eph. 5:25** (Diaglott) Note those words: "Delivered Himself up on her behalf." Because of the love of the first Adam for Eve, his own body, and because he understood how the divine purpose was to be worked out, he was not deceived, and he delivered himself up for her who is the mother of us all and became the forerunner of Him, Christ, who delivered Himself up for us all. As in the first Adam all die, so in the last Adam shall all be made alive. The word all in the second case is as all-inclusive as the all in the first place. How beautifully in the light of these things has the scripture said, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin!" **Heb. 4:15**

God did not need to make man at all, but, when He proclaimed His intentions to make man in His own image and after His likeness, all the sons of God in heaven entered into the plan. Job spoke of a day when the "morning stars" sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. Sons of God are the morning stars. Jesus said, "I am the bright and morning star," and far away in the depths of my spirit I have a very real sense that you and I were also there. We were sons of God even then, but nothing of the dimension we shall be when the ages have rolled by and the plan is complete, for we will be like the Prince Captain of our salvation. Of Him it is written that He was made perfect through suffering, and, being made perfect, He became the Author of aionian salvation, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

The things that I am writing are difficult to say and hard to be understood, and they who are unlearned and unstable will probably wrest them to their own destruction. Paul found this distressing lack of understanding when he wrote to the Hebrews concerning the priesthood of Melchisedec. It would not be difficult to fill the remainder of these pages with truth concerning that most remarkable priesthood but our minds today are often

as dull of hearing as they were then, for, after two milleniums have passed away, men who should be teachers of the mysteries of God must still, I regret to say, be fed with milk and not with strong meat. It is pitifully true that what men believe to be strong meat is, in fact, very diluted milk!

To those who can receive it the following words of the apostle Paul will give help and light, but let us not try to evade their true meaning just to make them acceptable to our old theology. Let us rather change our theology to suit the clear teaching of the word of the Lord. Introducing his explanation of the priesthood of Melchisedec, Paul said, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He (the Father) that said unto Him, Thou art my son, today have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of His flesh (He is still speaking of Melchisedec) offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death." **Heb. 5:5-7** The Emphatic Diaglott says, "Out of death," and that is certainly correct. I have stated many times in these writings that death is not the grave or the coffin. Death is this whole realm in which we have existed ever since the transgression in Eden. Melchisedec understood that fact far better than I do and He prayed to God to be delivered from it: and God delivered Him not from the grave, but out of death and the realm of death altogether.

Now this Melchisedec was without father, without mother, without beginning of days nor end of life. Search how we may, I think we must conclude that there is really only one man who ever lived on earth who fits that description, and he is the first man Adam. But this Melchisedec was more than that - much, much more! He was made like unto the Son of God, and he abides a priest continually, or perpetually. Heb. 7:3 Furthermore, he is called the King of Salem, which means King of peace, and his name, Melchisedec, means King of righteousness. Who alone fulfills this marvelous description but that last Adam, unto whom the Lord swore and will not repent, saying, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." **Heb. 7:21-22.** "This man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law. maketh the Son (high priest), who is consecrated for evermore." **Heb. 7:24-28**

Not many hours before Jesus departed out of this world, He lifted up His eyes to heaven in prayer. The words He uttered form without doubt the most remarkable prayer ever offered, but they were more - much more - than just a prayer. Those words revealed some of the deepest and most sacred truth of the whole life and ministry of the Son of God. "I have glorified Thee on the earth," he said. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." **John 17:4-5** The fact that Jesus, God's beloved Son, had laid aside His heavenly glory that He might become a man and be made perfect through suffering is truth that has been accepted for centuries. Both you and I thoroughly agree that He did lay aside His heavenly glory to enter His God-given ministry and calling, but few people have ever given serious thought as to when and at what time He laid aside that glory. In the solemn prayer quoted is a very revealing statement, a truth hitherto known only to Himself and the Father, as He prays that the glory might be restored to Him that was His "before the world was." From this statement we must conclude that Jesus did not lay aside His glory when He came to the manger of Bethlehem. He laid it aside before the world began, while yet the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep — before ever there was a garden of Eden or a first Adam in it. It was before the world began that this blessed elder brother, this one that was anointed of God for the task, laid aside His heavenly glory and entered into the realm of death according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. For this reason He prayed, saying, "Glorify Thou Me ... with the glory which I had with Thee before the world wax." **John 17:5**

I think this understanding will give much greater meaning to Paul's inspired description of the seven steps of humility that were taken by the Son of God as He laid aside that glory before the foundation of the world that He might lead all mankind through the valley of the shadow of death into the image of God. Listen with

reverence as we here recite the seven steps He took as given by the apostle Paul. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but

- (1) made Himself of no reputation,
- (2) took upon Him the form of a servant,
- (3) was made in the likeness of men, and
- (4) being found in fashion as a man,
- (5) He humbled Himself, and
- (6) became obedient unto death (the whole realm and curse of death),
- (7) even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:5-8.

This last step was accomplished when He appeared in the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It was then He became obedient, even to the death of the cross. These were the seven steps taken by our blessed Lord as He laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, and this laying aside of His glory occurred before the world was.

But now, after ages had passed, lifting up His eyes to heaven, He began His humble prayer with these revealing words: "Father, the hour is come," What hour was this to which He so reverently referred? This was the hour appointed by God before the foundation of the world. This was the hour for which all creation had groaned; yea, and this was the hour for which He Himself had waited, in which for the joy that was set before Him He would endure the cross and despise its shame, knowing that thereafter He would be seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, henceforth expecting till even His enemies be made His footstool. This was the hour in which the glory He had laid aside before the world was and before His long ministry began would be restored to Him now that His work was complete. This is the glory that John beheld in part as on lonely Patmos He saw one like unto the Son of man standing among the seven golden candlesticks, saying, **"I am the Alpha and the Omega (the first and the last)... He who is and was and is to be - the Ruler of all." Rev. 1:8** (Weymouth) "His head and His hair were white, like white wool — as white as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like silver-bronze when it is white-hot in a furnace; and His voice was as the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and a sharp, two-edged sword was seen coming from His mouth; and His face was like the sun shining in its full power. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead. But He laid His hand upon me and said, **"Do not be afraid: I am the First and the Last, and the ever-living One. I died; but I am now alive for evermore, and I have the keys of the gates of death and of Hades." Rev. 1:14-19** (Weymouth)

"I am the first and the last," said the anointed One, God's first Son made perfect, who through suffering and the whole realm of death learned obedience. Wherefore God has restored His glory - the glory that He had before the world began, before He became the first born of every creature (Col. 1:15), before He became the beginning of the creation of God. Rev. 3:14 Could we be wrong in saying that the glory God gave Him in the end was greater than the glory He had in the beginning? Is not this the truth that Paul was telling us when he said, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name?" He who said "I am the first and the last," was much more exalted as the last than He was as the first. And so also shall it be with you, my brother, my sister, when the purpose of God is complete, for you who came out from God as a very little son at first to suffer the humiliation of temptation and death will at last be presented faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

As I write these glorious things, I cannot but remember what I was at first when

I was sinking deep in sin,
Far from the peaceful shore;
Very deeply stained within
Sinking to rise no more.
But the Master of the sea
Heard my despairing cry;
From the waters lifted me.

Now safe am I.

What we were at first and what we are at last are very different things: For the first man is of the earth earthy, but the last man is the Lord from heaven. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them: that they may be one even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world." **John 17:22-24**

As long as we remain bound hand and foot by the Babylon system, our spiritual understanding will never expand beyond the weak and beggarly traditions of that system. It is when we "go unto Him without the camp" that we begin to realize our relationship to Him. It is when we open the door to invite Him in that He communes with us. Then He breaks the bread of life to us and our eyes are opened to "see Him as He is." The revelation of the Lord to our longing hearts sanctifies the soul. The greatness of His infinite purpose for all creation sets aflame the love of God in our hearts until every breath we breathe is a fervent prayer, saying, "Thy will be done! Thy will be done!"

While men and women remain bound by their church tradition, truth kept secret from the foundation of the world remains hidden to them. They read, but perceive nothing. Eyes they have, but they see not. Ears they have, but they hear not. Hearts they have, but they do not understand. Indeed, they close their eyes lest they should see and stop their ears lest they should hear! My experience with the average Christian has disclosed the painful fact that Christians do not want to see, neither do they want to hear, lest they should see and hear and understand and should receive healing from the Lord. But let us not be as they are. Let us rather request that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened that we may know the hope His call inspires and that the path of the just may be as a shining light that shineth more and more until the day is full.

Many names are given to Jesus, the Son of God. They are far too numerous to begin to name them here, but every one of them conveys much more than a name. They are really titles, signifying some eternal truth. Jesus is a human name; it signifies that He is a true man. Christ means the anointed. Immanuel means God with us. Thus we might consider the one hundred or more titles given to Him in the word of God. No title is used so frequently by the Lord Himself as the title Son of man. The name Jesus is used more times, but not by the Lord Himself. In the four gospels the title Son of man is used by Jesus with reference to Himself at least seventy-one times. Again I say that this is not merely a name. It is a title of great significance. The title Son of man signifies as nothing else can that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, has a very definite and special relationship to the entire human race. He is the beginning of it and the end of it, the Father of it and the Redeemer of it. That, I think, must be the true meaning of that remarkable passage found in Isaiah 9:6-7, part of which has puzzled so many people. "For unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." This passage speaks of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Every word in it signifies this. The term everlasting or aionian Father definitely connects Him with the entire human race and makes Him, not only the Saviour of us all, but the Father of us all as well.

There was a certain day in the ministry of Jesus when first the Herodians, then the Sadducees, and finally the Pharisees pooled all their resources to try to entangle Him in His talk. The Herodians asked a tricky question about the tribute money. The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, tried to confound Him concerning the woman who outlived her seven husbands. When the Pharisees were gathered together against Him, Jesus asked them a simple but very revealing question. This was the question: "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them. How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He (Christ) his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions." Matt. 22:41-46

Let us not pass by this question in ignorance as did the Pharisees. What does the saying really mean? "The Lord said unto my Lord!" There can be no doubt whatsoever that Christ was the Son of David, but since David in spirit called him Lord, then He which is the first and the last must be David's father just as surely as He is David's son. The question dumbfounded and completely confounded the Pharisees, and it will dumbfound you, too, until you see that David descended from the first Adam, but the last Adam descended from David. Why should we who confess that God can raise the dead find it impossible to believe that the first shall be last and the last shall be first, or that the first man Adam was made a living soul, while the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit? "I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore." Should we think it impossible that he who was at first a living soul should be at last a life-giving Spirit? The genealogy given in the third chapter of Luke's gospel, verses 23 to 31, shows beyond question that our Lord Jesus (the last Adam) was, by natural descent, the son of David. But verses 32 to 38 show beyond question that David was the direct descendant of the first Adam who was the son of God, so that Christ is both David's son and David's Lord.

We are all familiar with the account of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus and of our Lord's teaching concerning the necessity of the new birth, but we may have missed some of the significant things that were said. We are, I fear, like Africans walking aimlessly on diamonds, not knowing they are of any value. Let us pray for the spirit of understanding to understand the relationship of Jesus the Christ to the whole human race. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? No man hath ascended up to heaven, but (except) He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." **John 3:12-13** The long standing idea among Christians has been that Jesus became the Son of man when He came to Bethlehem, born of Mary, but, if I read this scripture aright, Jesus is saying that He already was the Son of man before ever He came to Bethlehem, and to add greatly to the strength of this He made a much stronger statement a little later on. Many of His disciples had turned their backs on Him because they could not accept His teaching, saying, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" But when Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, **Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" John 6:61-62** Let us get that straight! "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" I do not know how we can avoid the conclusion that Jesus is telling us that He already was the Son of man before He came down to the manger of Bethlehem. Thus he establishes beyond human understanding and beyond question His vital relationship to the entire human family in every sense of the word. And **"now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:26-28**

"We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" the Psalmist asks. The answer to the question, "What is man?" is this: Man is Jesus Christ made perfect through suffering, who, though He was rich before the world began, for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Jesus is the finished product - man in God's own image, who has been through all the process including all the temptations and trials as the first Adam, having experienced nine hundred and sixty years in the valley of death; but, being made perfect. He became the author of eternal salvation to every one who believes, being made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. The scripture distinctly declares that Jesus, though a Son, learned obedience through the things He suffered, and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation. Heb. 5:8-9 I have always found it difficult to believe that He was made perfect after He came to Bethlehem. His suffering and perfection came before Bethlehem, it is very plain that, when He came, He was presented to the world, not as one immature and needing to be perfected, but as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," God's "beloved Son" in whom He was well pleased, appearing now in the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

"Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," was the proclamation of the Lord, and having so proclaimed His intention, the Father set in motion a plan that would span thousands of years before the first Son of man, the first begotten Son of God, would be presented perfected and faultless as the Captain of our

salvation and the Redeemer of us all. Then, after perfecting the first Son, other thousands of years would roll by while "He who had begun a good work in us" is performing it right up until the day of Christ, which is still in the future. Phil. 1:6 This scripture shows beyond any possibility of contradiction that saints who died millenniums ago are still in the process of being perfected. He who began a good work in them long ago is still performing it and will continue to perform it until the day of Christ, when He shall present every man faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

O that men might see the whole plan of creation as a celestial harmony, hymning its beautiful song from the gates of the Garden of Eden to the gates of the new heavens and the new earth and spreading its glorious wings in loving care from the moment God said, "Let us make man in our image," until that wonderful day when all things are subdued unto Him. Then shall the Son be subject to Him (the Father) who put all things under Him. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, for He hath put all things under His feet. God's determination to create man in his own image was no mere passing fancy. It is the purpose of the ages, and, when that purpose is complete, the ages will be no more, for time as we have known it will vanish away and we will be found to be inhabitants of the eternal realm. There shall be no night there, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. All mankind will be in the image of God.

The things I have written are hard to be understood, but shall truth remain forever silent because we fear to proclaim its infinite worth? Must thoughts, placed within our hearts by the Holy Spirit, perish in the womb because we fear the traditions of men or because there is much about them that we ourselves cannot fully understand? Our gracious heavenly Father knoweth best how to accomplish His eternal purpose. Who therefore among His creatures may lift his voice to say to Him that made him, "Why hast Thou made me thus?" Hath not the potter power over the clay? Thus in creation I hear Him say, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," and, having so said, with skilful fingers He formed man from the clay, and, having formed him and made him alive with the breath of God, He placed His workmanship in the fire as a potter does his vessel that through suffering and death tribulation might work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, that through these fires we, being perfect and entire, might be presented spotless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy.

This then is God's work of creation - first to perfect the Prince Redeemer, the first begotten Son, the apostle and high priest of our confession, and the head of the body of Christ. Having completed this, He next must bring to perfection the sons of God who are the completeness and fullness of the body of Christ and, when their creation and perfection is complete, then the bride must make herself ready, and she, too, having come to the fullness of Christ, shall open her twelve gates that the nations may bring their glory and honor into her. Then it will be universally seen that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

God is still in His work of creation, bringing every son of the first Adam into the image of the last Adam, which is the image of God. He is still adding to the body those whom He is perfecting. That which is corruptible is putting on incorruption. That which is mortal is putting on immortality. That which was sown in weakness is being raised in power. That which was of the earth earthy shall be revealed as the Lord from heaven. Very soon the work of creating man in the image of God will be complete and the voice of God will proclaim of the whole body of Christ, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void. . . . And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." **Gen. 1:1-3** Three great divisions of time are clearly seen in these opening sentences of the Bible: (1) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, (2) and the earth was without form and void, and (3) and God said, "Let there be light; and there was light."

There is no way by which man can compute the timelessness of the past. Man does not know God's works of old nor the boundless fecundity of His creative mind, but of this we may be certain: the Almighty did not begin His work of creation with the six days of labor recorded in the Genesis record. This fact He seems to indicate clearly as though with an apparent sweep of His great hand He points to the far flung heavens, the planets, the

stars, and the great sidereal, saying, "In the beginning God created them all." How distant that creation was no human mind can ever tell because we at present are dwelling in the realm of time. Here everything is limited by the rising of the sun and the going down thereof. How, then, can He who inhabits eternity, unshackled by the crippling bondages of the thing men call time, explain things eternal to creatures who know only that which passes away? God's people owe neither heed nor homage to any so-called science that by its lying wonders would aspire to prove the Genesis record wrong. Scientists are creatures confined by the bondages of time, but God in the timelessness of eternity was creating creations for His glory.

If the world were filled with endless light, as it was "in the beginning." and if there were no sun to rise and set, but only the light which He Himself is, how could man measure time? There would be none. And if no sentence of death had been passed upon him, how could he number the days of his life or by what means could it be said that he was old? But the mystery of His divine wisdom brought about some great cataclysm that caused the earth to be filled with darkness and all the teeming life that then was to be destroyed. The relics of ancient dinosaurs and many forms of life from those previous creations are with us today. Even creatures that appear to be man-like were creatures that existed in the vast realms of time before the earth became without form and void and darkness hung its gloomy mantle upon all the face of the deep.

When the judgment of darkness had fulfilled its divine purpose, there came at last the wonderful hour for the earth to be regenerated in preparation for that race of men who throughout the centuries and millenniums of time would be made in the image of God. How great a space endured between the time when the earth became without form and void and the Spirit of God once more moved upon the face of the waters I dare not attempt to say; for I do not know. God has hidden all these secrets from the wise and prudent of this world notwithstanding their most recent methods of computing time by atomic radiation. Surely the Lord must laugh at the wisdom of this world and say afresh in His heart of love, "The wisdom of man is foolishness with God," and you, too, dear reader, reading the paragraph I have just written, will surely sigh as you see how in my endeavor to explain eternal things I am so hopelessly plagued by expressions of time such as days and years and space. This cannot be helped, I suppose, since we are as yet but creatures of time. Our change will have to wait until that glad morning when there will be no need of sun to shine by day nor the moon by night, for the Lord God giveth them light, and there is no night there. That, praise God, is the eternal realm.

Do not be deceived by the exploits of geologists and anthropologists who hope by their diggings and excavations to find evidence that man existed long before Adam, neither be deceived by any lying evidence that would seem to prove that man evolved from some lesser creature. Personally I do not believe that any human relic has ever been found that pre-dated Adam; nevertheless, if such as been discovered or in the future should be found, rest assured that it belonged to some previous creation and is unrelated to the Adamic creation. The very words of scripture, "Let us make man in our image," to my mind at least construes the thought that some creation akin to man existed long before Adam. Adam, however, is different in this respect: He is a new creation, not merely man, but man in God's image. (I have written more particularly concerning this in the article Six Days Shall Thou Labor, available upon request.)

MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE

On the sixth day the Lord said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him..." **Gen. 1:26-27**

When the Lord said, "Let us make man in our image," He was speaking not only of Adam, the first man. His mighty edict included the entire human race, which included every descendant of Adam from Adam himself to the very last man who shall be born of his family. I am a son of Adam, and so also are most of those who read this article. I believe there is a considerable mass of evidence in scripture to show that the Negro is a special creation for a special purpose and is not a member of the Adamic creation. All creatures from the beginning were to be produced kind after his kind. Gen. 1:24-25 It is genetically impossible for a white man to father a black man. However much we may squirm to rid ourselves of this fact, the truth of it will always remain. I do not

have time nor space to consider the wisdom of this plan at present, but for this reason the mixing of races is an abomination in the sight of God. It defiles the original purpose of the Creator and all who disobey will bear their judgment. God has made of one (not one blood as in the King James Version, but of one, i.e. Himself) all nations to dwell on the earth, and He has appointed the bounds of their habitation. See Acts 17:26. As long as we stay within the bounds of our habitation, all is well. It is when we cross our own bounds into the realm of others that all our trouble begins.

"Let us make man in our image" is the word of God. Gen. 1:26 This decree includes all mankind from the Garden of Eden to the end of the world. The teaching, which leaves the impression that the Lord made the first man in His own image and after His likeness, and when He had put breath in Him and placed him in Eden, the work was finished, is both childish and very misleading. It leaves us in the unenviable position of having to believe that Satan is wiser and more subtle than the Omniscient Himself. It leaves us believing the lie that God was tricked by a creature of inferior wisdom. Yea, such a thought denies all the truth we taught in Chapter one, showing that God is omniscient, omnipotent, immutable, omnipresent, and faithful. The idea that such as He could be outsmarted and outwitted by such a one as Satan is both repugnant to the soul and contradictory to the truth. Nevertheless this childish nonsense has been upheld as truth by the church system for centuries, and even today is rigidly adhered to by millions of Christians. I do not hesitate to declare such thought to be filled with error, for how can He who is almighty be weaker than another or the loser in the greatest work ever undertaken by His omnipotent hand or designed by His omniscient mind?

What then are we to conclude, since we know that both the transgression and the fall of man are facts that cannot be denied? Are we to say, as so many have done, that this was something God did not anticipate? Are we to say that this fall was an unexpected eventuality? Or shall we believe as Paul taught us to believe when he displayed the wisdom of God by plainly declaring, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (the Almighty) who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** Paul was teaching us here that Adam, though made in God's image, had yet a long and toilsome journey to walk through the vanity of the valley of death and through the rigors of a hard and difficult school before he would be complete in God's image and tried, tested, and ready to take the dominion promised him in Gen. 1:16-17

I fearlessly declare that the fall of man was part of the plan of creation and altogether essential to the process of bringing man into the image of God. The first step in making man in God's image following man's actual creation from the dust of the ground, the first step in perfecting him in the image of God, was to lower him into the awful realm of death by means of his own transgression. Thence from the shadowy realms of death, full of wisdom attained from its suffering, He would redeem him to present him at last faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. Jude 24.

As we consider this truth, we should especially notice two most significant statements. First, "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, etc..." **Gen. 1:26** This statement, which seems so simple is a shadow of things to come. It is a well concealed prophecy displaying to the spiritual mind the vast extent of man's authority in that coming day when, perfect in God's image, he is presented faultless, tested, and ready to receive dominion. First "Let them have dominion over the fish," said God; that is to say, "Let us give him dominion over all things under the earth." Second, "Let them have dominion over the fowl that fly in the heavens," - that is to say, "Let us give him dominion over the things in the realm of the heavens. Third, "Let them have dominion over the cattle and creeping things." - that is to say, "Let us give him dominion over the earth and all things thereon." See now how David takes up the parable to greatly enlarge upon this thought. Considering what God has in mind for man, he says, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." **Psa. 8:3-8**

Yet again in Hebrews 2:5-8 the Holy Spirit greatly enlarges on this vital truth of God's intention for man, first stated in Gen. 1:26-27 Here the apostle says, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world (the inhabited earth) to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place (Psa. 8:3-8) testified, saying, How poor

a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels - even Jesus (the first perfected Son) - because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace He might taste death for every man." **Heb. 2:5-9** Weymouth. As we read these words of inspiration, it is plain to see just what the Lord had in mind when He said, "Let us make man in our image, and let them have dominion..." The dominion that would be his after he was perfected through the dreadful sufferings of death was to extend, not merely over fishes and beasts and birds, but over those things which they foreshadowed, i.e., things beneath the earth, things upon the earth, and things in the vast universe reaching to the sun and the moon and the stars, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to him. Col. 2:10

The second point we must notice concerning Paul's inspired statement in **Rom. 8:18-21** is that, when he said, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (the omniscient God)..." he also very clearly gave the reason for God's expectation from the whole mass of His creation in these words: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Paul is saying here that the whole of creation from the fishes of the sea to the angels on high and from the earth itself to the most distant star are all waiting like patient, groaning sufferers for the hour when man's preparation is full and complete. Yea, they are standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's finished, completed and mature sons coming into their own - the image of that first Son who was presented perfect before God two thousand years ago.

When man was lowered into the realm of death, all the rest of earth's creation was similarly lowered with him. All the birds, the beasts, and the fishes of the sea were lowered into bondage to complement the fallen estate of man. There they will remain in their lowly bondage until the work of the Creator is complete and the finished product in God's image stands faultless before the throne of His glory. All natural gifts that are in the world today are actually spiritual gifts that have been lowered to the realm of fallen man. The great musicians that have delighted the ears of men are using God-given gifts that are now as far beneath what they originally were as earth is far beneath the heavens. Singers with gifts like Caruso, beautiful as their voices are, will be found beyond compare when they are delivered from the bondage of corruption, and, when they are lifted to the sublime heights of their resurrection, they will sing more gloriously than the angels sing. How can we account for the talents of Thomas Edison, Einstein, or ten thousand others if we cannot see that these men, though fallen, are still possessors of frail fragments of the omniscient mind? It must be so, and it is so, but the day will come when these fallen gifts will be raised, not only to their former glory, but to an exalted glory even as with our blessed Saviour, who, after laying aside the glory that He had with the Father before the world began, was made in the likeness of men, and, after humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto the uttermost in death, even the cross, was highly exalted and given a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, even as typified by the birds, the beasts, and the fishes that swim in the sea in that blessed parable of Genesis 1:26-27.

How our hearts praise Thee, O Almighty Father, for such infinite purpose, for as Thy Son came forth from God to enter willingly into the lowly sufferings of earth and death that He might through the goodness of God be given a name which is above every name, so we, Thy younger sons, have come forth from Thy presence to follow in His train that we, too, after suffering awhile, being made white through the blood of Thy everlasting covenant and being purged by the refining fires of the Holy Spirit, should in our time and order be presented faultless in the image of God to receive from Thy gracious hand the commission that Thou didst ordain on that momentous day in which the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy when they heard Thy immutable word, saying, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion..." And we, O Lord, in our own turn went forth from Thy presence into the realm where the dead know not anything that we at last, through suffering death and sorrow and through the glory of Thy redeeming grace,

should return after many days, as bread cast upon the water, perfect and complete and mature in the image, the likeness, and the glory of Him who loveth all. Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, who speaks, and it is done; who purposes, and the ages bring it to pass; who commands and all the forces of the universe rush forward to fulfill Thy holy will? What thoughts can compare with Thine own? Shall not we now bring glory to Thy name since Thou hast revealed Thine intention to our hearts? Can we longer find rest and comfort in the lusts of the flesh or the desires of the human mind? Can we who have shared Thy eternal secret find hope or comfort in riches or in lands? "Nay, world, I turn away, though thou seem fair and good. Thy friendly, outstretched hand is stained with Jesus' blood." For the joy that is set before us, even the hope of Thy eternal likeness, we gladly endure the cross, despising any and every shame, that we may be seated with Thee in Thy likeness. This is Thy hope, O Thou Creator, the joy of Thy created ones, and the earnest expectation of every creature.

How easy it should be for the devout mind to understand that the Lord God has a desire to the work of His hands, a purpose which cannot be upset or thwarted! How easy it should be for the devout mind to understand that the high exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ became His eternal reward, because He willingly yielded Himself to the great humiliation of being made in the form of man to become a partaker of death and to go beyond the common death to one of sacrifice for all, even the death of the cross! The great truth that I pray may grip your hearts, my brethren, is simply this: God is making man in His own image and after His exact likeness. He never intended to do this by simply forming a man of dust and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, but He brings about this perfect image and likeness by taking the mortal man He has made and lowering him into the realm of transgression, death, and suffering, together with every imaginable test and trial that the fall can bring upon him. All this is part of his creation and perfection. Then, when man has by experience learned all the ramifications of transgression and the dreadful consequences of it, even to death itself, comes the other side of his redemption, the redemptive process by which he is lifted to be seated on the throne with that first perfected Son of man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All of this mighty redemption, I repeat and repeat again, is part of the work of creation. You who read this article are at this moment of your lowly estate in the process of being created. All things that are happening to you now, whether they be good or evil, are for your eternal good. They are all working together for your good, changing the heart, renewing the mind, enlightening the eyes, filling with life eternal. Everything, I say, everywhere is working without let or hindrance toward that one eternal purpose of making man in God's image. This is God's way. There is no other way. The iron may grumble and fuss as the blasting heat of the furnace dissolves it. It may splutter and hiss as it is taken from the fire and plunged into the icy water to be tempered, but all this is part of the process that brings the perfection required. The clay dug from yonder pit may resent the actions of the potter upon it — the intricate preparation, the whirling of the wheel, the baking in the fiery oven — but, when it is finished at last, it is a thing of beauty and great usefulness. We must further add that neither the iron in the forge nor the clay on the potter's wheel had any choice as to their being there. They were chosen by the skilful craftsman to be formed into vessels that pleased him. Thus saith the Lord of you, my brother, **"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you..." John 15:16** And **"He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." Eph. 1:11-12**

"The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand... for the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Isa: 14:24, 27 **"Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it. What makest thou? or Thy work, He (God) hath no hands?" Isa. 45:9.** **"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Rom. 9:21.** The sovereignty of God is seen to be divinely supreme throughout the pages of Holy Scripture. Even the gathering together of nations and kings of the earth against God's Christ was ordained by the Lord Himself as we shall see in the words that follow. **"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts 4:26-28** Do not these verses clearly show that God is sovereign in all these things? Do they not assure us that we are the clay and He is the potter? Do they not plainly declare that He is both the Author and Finisher of our faith and of our entire sons/up and final perfection in His lineage and likeness? Once your

spiritual mind is able to grasp the truth that it is God who ruleth all, then your very existence will take on new dimension. Your tribulation will be recognized as but a light affliction ordained by Him. Daily working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, as you look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4:18. What man, sweltering in the consuming heat of the fiery furnace of his affliction, can understand that naught but his shackles are being removed, but not one hair of his head is being singed? What man, receiving stripes, can know that the devastating stripes themselves are becoming the marks of the Lord Jesus? How pitifully few of the masses of mankind, now walking in weariness through the valley of the shadow of death, really know that "Thou art with me!" Let me repeat a truth I have stated many times before! Death is not the grave. Death begins in the cradle and ends in the grave. This whole experience which men call life is the death that was promised to Adam in the day of his transgression. There is much scripture to substantiate this truth. This whole realm from the cradle to the grave is the valley of the shadow of death, yet all through this dim valley of outer darkness the Lord is with us, leading us by the hand, supporting us with the staff, feeding us betimes in green pastures, refreshing our souls at the gushing streams of the water of life, and anointing our heads with the oil of the Spirit; and in the knowledge and glory of it all our cup runneth over.

"Let us make man in our image," said the Lord, and in saying so He spoke not of one man only, but of all mankind, even every far off son of Adam's race. Through the valley of the shadow of death, through death itself, through correction and just punishment and tribulation, through hell and the grave, through the resurrection of the just and the unjust He leads man steadily toward that distant goal of which He spoke, saying, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." Even our Lord Jesus Christ, the redeemer and reconciler of things in heaven and things in earth, walked this way before us as the first born of every creature. He, too, was made perfect through the things He suffered, and, being made perfect. He became the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him. Heb. 5:8.9. This word of inspiration is most certainly declaring that the Father perfected the Redeemer and made Him faultless, proving Him by all manner of suffering, and, raising Him from the dead, He presented Him as the spotless Lamb of God, the Saviour of the world and the giver of life, even the life of God. Therefore whosoever believeth in Him is justified from all things and whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have the life of the ages. Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. James 1:18

When a child of God obeys the Lord and comes out of the confusion of the established church system, then the path of the just begins to shine more and more upon him. The eyes of his understanding begin to open to see the hope of his calling and the riches of God's inheritance in the saints. Indeed, so vast does the unfolding of truth become that our minds are staggered by the greatness of it all! We seem like men walking from continent to continent through the depths of the mighty ocean. It is the wisdom of our gracious Father in heaven to hide certain truth from us in our infancy that He might cause their rays to shine more gloriously upon us in his appointed time. By this shall all men learn that the Omnipresent is with us even in the darkness and shadow of death. Should we make our bed in hell, He is there, and while we are ascending into heaven. He is there. How wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, and Thy ways past finding out!

There are many thousands of people who do not like to believe that all things are of God. 2 Cor. 5:18 They much prefer to believe, as the harlot system has taught them, that in the beginning God made man perfect. Then Satan came in and destroyed the work of God's hands and so degraded the darling of His creation that the Lord Almighty Himself was hard put to the test to discover some way to rescue the man He had made from the clutches of the devil. Those who hold this view often do so because they imagine that to hold any other view would make God responsible for the transgression and fall of the man He had made, and, not knowing that "through death He would destroy the power of death," they think that such a thing could not be. They prefer to believe that the almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent God was in some manner tricked by a creature vastly inferior in wisdom and power, making this inferior creature responsible for man's fall, instead of believing that "all things are of God." They prefer to believe that God's will can be thwarted and disannulled, but, if this be so, how then are we to believe the scripture which plainly tells us that "**the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope?**" **Rom. 8:20** If you prefer to believe that God's will was thwarted by Satan in the Garden of Eden, then I ask if you have ever considered the jeopardy into which such doctrine would lead you. If God's will could be thwarted even once,

could it not be thwarted again? If Satan was able to enter the Garden of Eden in spite of God's omnipresence and regardless of His omnipotence, may he not in some like manner enter that paradise which is yet to come? If Satan was able to get the better of God once, should it be thought impossible that he may do so again, for God is not more omnipotent now that he was in the Garden of Eden? You see where all such reasoning leads you. Indeed, it jeopardizes our whole future, making our foundation shaky, uncertain, and disappointing. If, on the other hand, you see the fall of man as part of the plan of creation, and the redemption of man as also an integral part of the creation, then all the many pieces of the puzzle begin to fall into the proper place to form the master portrait showing how man comes into the image of God. Then and only then do our rejoicing minds grasp the truth that all things, absolutely all things, are of God. Then with Paul we breathe the words, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth... but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we in him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge..." **1 Cor. 8:5-7** We should be quick to remember that predestination with all its intricacies was established before the ages began, and for that reason the apostle says that by it we obtained our inheritance in Christ, "Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." **Eph. 1:11**

I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of Isaiah may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do till these things." **Isa. 45:7** Evil is not always sin, you know. War is evil and famine is evil, and the Lord sends them both. Why should puny man attempt to shield God from the responsibility He Himself has taken? If He says He creates peace, then believe Him. If He says He creates evil, then believe that, too. Do you remember how they brought the blind man to Jesus, and, as the poor fellow stood there, the disciples said to Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus replied, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." **John 9:2-3** So through the evil of blindness the glory of God was manifested in the end. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that wicked man of rebellion against all that was of God, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth?" **Rom. 9:17** The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be ascertained by these carnal little heads of ours. We must banish our childish theology and bring our minds into harmony with the mind of Christ. We must begin to peer through the mighty telescope of God's wisdom as it looks through the tragedy of the fall to the glories of the ages to come when every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea shall be heard, saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." **Rev. 5:13**

The things we have stated above, though at first seemingly incredible and difficult to believe because of the traditions of the past, become clear and understandable the moment we see that the fall of man is part of the work of creation. How clearly we can see that the work of creation is still in progress as we consider the words of Peter, who comforted the suffering saints with these words: "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." **1 Pet. 4:19** I suppose we have often read this beautiful passage, but missed the true significance of what He said. Peter did not lack the knowledge that our redemption is part and parcel of the work of creation, and with this knowledge he exhorts all who are walking through difficult places of trial to commit the keeping of their souls to Him as unto a faithful Creator. He is our Creator now just as surely as He was in the beginning. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, the work of the Creator. Think it not strange that the work of creation still continues; yea, it will continue until every son of Adam has come into the image of God.

It is very necessary that we be able to see that the new creation comes forth out of the old. The same body that was nailed to the accursed tree is the body that came forth from the tomb and ascended into heaven. The same little body that lies in the cradle is the body that will lie in the tomb, and the body that lies in the tomb is the body that will rise transformed and incorruptible in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the resurrection of the just. The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." **1 Cor. 15:46** "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." **1 Cor. 15:42-44** God is not discarding or

abolishing the first creation. He is creating it! He is changing it! He is transforming it just as He decreed when He announced the plan, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." The first step was to make the man from the lowly dust. The next step was to let him fall and through transgression to lower him into the realm of death that he might learn obedience by the things he suffered and that through death he might destroy both death and him who had the power of it. For this reason it is written, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

CHAPTER THREE REDEMPTION

Redemption is the third step in the creation of man in God's image. The natural mind with all its human understanding is a barren wilderness. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." **I Cor. 2:11** The more the natural man tries to probe into spiritual mysteries the more mysterious they become until the human mind becomes a veritable bog of misunderstanding and an ugly quagmire of unbelief. The investigations of the natural mind are responsible for all the unbelief and self-will in the world today. Man cannot understand God; therefore he vainly declares, "There is no God." The human mind cannot comprehend the mysteries of creation; therefore it tries to persuade itself that creation is not creation at all, but a process of evolution, stretching out over untold billions of years, finally evolving into what we now see today. The proponents of this ridiculous theory do not really try to explain why creation is not evolving now, nor do they attempt to explain why there are no intermediate stages with us now.

I always revel in the words of Mr. Etheridge, a foremost expert of the vast British Museum of Natural History, who, when asked by Professor Post, a scientific gentleman from Syria, to show him in that great museum some of the proofs of Darwin's theory of evolution, astonished his visitor by replying, "In all this great museum there is not a particle of evidence of transmutation of species. It is not founded on observation and facts. All the talk of the antiquity of man is of the same value. There is no such thing as fossil man. I have read all their books and they make no impression. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of such views."

The true reason why men try so hard to rule God out of creation, if not out of existence, is found in the words of the apostle Paul, who wrote, "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." **Rom. 1:28** The universities and pulpits of the land are today filled with professors who are of this sort, men with reprobate minds scoffing at God, scoffing at His power of creation and substituting their own vain theories, which in the end will do naught but bring the judgment of God upon them. The scripture is still in the Bible and it still remains the word of God, warning these perverted unbelievers that they shall give an account to God on the Day of Judgment for every idle word they have spoken. **Matt. 12:36** They will have the whole terrible period of the second death to repent of their blasphemies, and the awful refining power of the lake of fire to purge them of their wickedness until they, like all others in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, bow the knee to confess to the glory of God that Christ is both Lord of all and the Creator of all.

The readers of this message will surely be aware that in the minds of most people the work of redemption had nothing whatsoever to do with the work of creation. The general opinion is that God created man in His own image and after His likeness, but Satan slipped in unnoticed by the omnipresent One and with one cunning act of deception destroyed the very foundation of God's beautiful plan, casting the broken pieces at His feet. Then they picture the almighty God, as though in some form of panic, holding a hasty conference with the angels in heaven to devise a scheme whereby He might partially redeem the awful situation and at least save some of the broken pieces from eternal destruction, even though the greater mass of His creation must be hopelessly lost forever. I do not think I am overemphasizing the utter stupidity of this position - not by one hair's breadth - even though I may be guilty of oversimplifying it. Needless to say, I do not believe these jejune claims and I make all haste to reject them entirely. That one attribute of God's omnipresence gives the lie to all such fallacy, not to mention God's omnipotence and the inscrutable glory of His omniscience.

Redemption is not an afterthought of God by which He hopes to salvage a few broken bits of His creation. Redemption is part and parcel of the plan of creation. If the fall of man is part of the creation, as we have proved it to be, then the redemption of the fallen creation must also be part of the same plan that issued forth from the fathomless depths of His inscrutable mind. If Paul was speaking the truth when he wrote, "The

creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (or by the will of Him) who subjected the same in hope," then the fall of man must certainly be part of the plan of the Creator. Since this is so, we need not be amazed to find that redemption is no afterthought of God, but part of the original plan. Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rev. 13:8 For what possible purpose was the blessed redemptive Lamb slain before the world began if redemption itself were not part of the plan of creation? We love to quote John 3:16. It is possibly the best, known verse in all the Bible. Yet what does it tell us when it says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son?" Does not Rev. 13:8 make it very plain that the actual giving of that Son was before the world began and before the garden was planted eastward in Eden? Certainly the agonies of the cross were endured only two thousand years ago, but the actual giving of the redemptive Lamb took place before the world began. It was then, before the world began, He laid aside His glory. (See John 17:5). God does not dwell in the realm of time. He inhabits the eternal realm; therefore He speaks of things, which to us as yet are not as though they were things of the past, for with Him they are already accomplished.

We humans are always saying silly things! How often we recite the story of our salvation in the terms of happenstance! We happened to read a certain tract. We happened to listen to a certain preacher, or we happened to be passing by and heard a certain man preach the gospel. Indeed, all these things played their part in the plan of our personal redemption, but be it known to everyone that they did not merely happen. All such things are ordained before the world began. There is a time to be born, and there is also a time to be born again, and, when that time comes, all the powers of evil cannot let or hinder it in any way.

Hear what the scripture says about the choice of God's saints, and it will be very clear that there is nothing left to chance or happenstance. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." **Eph. 1:3-5**. Predestination goes hand in hand with foreknowledge, and our being called unto God at any particular time is the result of these. Thus it reads, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son... Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29-30** Peter, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to tell us, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." **1 Pet, 1:18-20** Thus from these scriptures it is clear that the plan of redemption was laid out in its fulness before ever creation began. It was not completed just in case man should fall, but because the fall of man and His redemption from sin was part of the process by which he would come into God's image and live in the eternal realm as a creation of experience and knowledge, completely redeemed, completely purified, completely justified, and completely incapable of sin forever more. Is it any wonder that Paul, exulting in such a plan as this, cried out in ecstasy, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, is risen again..." **Rom. 8:33, 34**

Redemption and creation walk hand in hand through all the pilgrim journey from Eden to the new heaven and the new earth. Christ is undoubtedly the redeemer; and so it is written, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." Is that not creation? Is not Paul here connecting the new creation with redemption? Can there be any doubt about that? Is not this new creation the completion of the original creation, as Paul taught by saying, "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual?" **1 Cor. 15:46**. And again, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order..." **1 Cor. 15:22-23** The scripture is very explicit in saying that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph. 2:10

"...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." **Phil. 1:6** If I understand this scripture correctly, Paul is telling us that the work of creation is by no means finished, but that good work is going on in us right now during all our daily struggles, and it will continue to progress not only

throughout our lives in this age, but right up until the day of Jesus Christ. Again Paul says, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." **1 Cor. 1:8** Briefly stated, the day of Christ is the day of His coming, but we will not try to consider that now. Our main thought is that this creative work, this being brought into the image of God, continues from the gates of Eden to the gates of Paradise. It includes in one that which is of the earth earthy and that which is at last the Lord from heaven.

It will be a great blessing to every saint of God when he sees by the Holy Spirit that, just as surely as our creation in the first Adam was a creative act of God, so our creation in Christ, the last Adam, is a creative act of God. God the Father is sovereign in each of them. There can be no question about it. The useless and slavish tradition concerning man's free will is a myth, concocted by the carnal mind. Our minds are greatly enlightened when we understand that we are God's workmanship, and not our own. We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. We are God's workmanship, and He will have a desire to the work of His own hands. He doeth His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" See **Dan. 4:34-35** "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand... For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn his back?" **Isa. 14:24,27**

I do not hesitate to say to the glory of our almighty God that all things are of Him. When He uttered the command, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," His searching eye beheld all the work of His hands from the original natural creation through the Garden of Eden, the temptation, the transgression, the valley of the shadow of death, the great redemption, and the resurrection to the transformation and final presenting to Himself of a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. So has the Spirit in one great prophetic sweep explained: "Whom he did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29-30** If any passage of scripture ever traced the history of man from his original creation to his glorification in the image of God, surely this is that scripture. And, when at last the work of creating man in God's image is completed, then and then only will commence that latter part of the great edict - "Let them have dominion." I know not how many ages will roll past before all is complete, but I suppose that eternity itself will not be too long to complete the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

"The same day came to Him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection, and asked Him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**" **Matt. 22:23-30**

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. We poor human beings are forever building and fortifying our doctrinal viewpoints upon the basis of the little we know, the emptiness of our spiritual understanding. I suppose if things were judged only on the shaky ground of human understanding then our conclusions would sometimes be right, but that, too, is doubtful. The theologians of our day certainly had their counterpart in the Sadducees and Pharisees of long ago. These men, because of their human reasoning and their carnal deductions, had completely discarded any hope of a resurrection upon the basis of the impossibility and the impracticability of the belief that God could raise the dead. As far as they were concerned, there were no holes in the garment of their theology, and the case they had built against the possibility of a literal resurrection was to their earthly minds like bullet-proof armor.

Knowing therefore that Jesus taught the resurrection of the dead and that He Himself had claimed to be the resurrection, they confidently approached Him with what seemed to them an unanswerable question, as stated in the passage we have just quoted above. First they rehearsed the command of Moses concerning the obligation placed upon a man under the law to raise up seed to his brother. Then they averred how, in obedience to this command, all seven brothers in succession had married the oft-widowed woman, but all in turn had failed to raise up seed unto their brother. Therefore, since none of them had more claim upon her than the other, whose wife would she be in the resurrection? To their natural minds this seemed to be an indisputable case against the hope of any future resurrection, but their faulty, human deductions, like so many reasonings of men, falls far short in understanding, for the weakness of God is stronger than man and the foolishness of God is wiser than man. Therefore, replying to their question, our Lord said, "You do greatly err." "To err is human," some sage has said, and no truer word was ever spoken. Jesus faithfully showed them that their particular error was based upon two cardinal points. Firstly, they erred because they did not know the scripture; secondly, they erred because they did not know and understand the power of God. Upon this basis of wisdom and power the difficulty that to them had seemed insurmountable was explained with the greatest simplicity, "For" said Jesus, "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Here He shows how the power of God is interjected into the realm of the impossible. With God all things are possible simply because He understands His own purpose and creation, all things being designed to carry out His blessed will.

After having explained how the resurrection is accomplished by the power of God, Jesus proceeded to demonstrate to them how obscure texts of scripture, that pass completely unnoticed by the many who read, spring into newness of life, bringing light and understanding from their darkness and obscurity, when the Holy Spirit breathes His breath upon them. "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God," He questioned, "saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." **Matt. 22:31-32** When the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine. How wonderful was this answer of truth from the scripture! If you will read the remainder of the chapter, you will clearly see how such seemingly obscure passages of truth open whole realms of spiritual understanding to every seeking and searching heart.

Though Jesus with masterful skill proved beyond any doubt that there would be a resurrection of the dead, we need not imagine that He convinced these doubting Sadducees nor were they converted from their error. They continued just as stubborn as they had ever been, still insisting that there could be no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit. Surely these men must have been well nigh atheists. In any case they were still active and still resisting the truth when Paul, in danger from the multitude, knowing the crowd was partly Pharisees and partly Sadducees, cried out in a word of wisdom that saved his life, "I am a Pharisee... of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." **Acts 23:6** This statement caused such dissension between them that he had to be rescued from them. "Ye therefore do greatly err." **Mark 12:27** Christianity is floundering in ever increasing error, very largely because God's people are lacking in these two necessary things, spoken of by Jesus Christ: first, not knowing the scriptures, and, second, not knowing the power of God. Whenever you find two scriptures that seem to set forth conflicting views, there is always a simple explanation, and, if we will diligently enquire of the Lord, He will give us a definite answer. Human understanding is almost always prone to seize upon one side of a statement and will cling to that with the grip of death, refusing to even investigate or seek the wisdom of God to harmonize the truth. Worldly wise men are forever saying that the Bible contradicts itself. They show, for example, how the four evangelists each give a different account of the superscription that was written in Greek and Latin and Hebrew upon the cross of Jesus. It is true, of course that the accounts do differ. Matthew says the writing was, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," while Mark says, "The King of the Jews." Luke says, "This is the King of the Jews," and John says, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Certainly one might smugly say that these seeming differences prove there was no inspiration in these four statements, but the truth of the matter is simply that the whole Bible, unlike all other books, is written upon the principle of line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Therefore, when you add all the parts together, you have the complete story as it reads in full, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Each man was telling the part which impressed him most and which was most useful to the people to whom he wrote. Have you ever known a case where two people gave an identical account of an accident, an earthquake, or a fire? Certainly not! They always emphasize the incident that impressed them most while other

important happenings passed almost unnoticed. It is not until all the parts are added together that we have a true understanding of what really happened.

The further removed I am from the Babylon system, and by this I definitely mean the existing church system with all its vaunted orthodoxy, the more I am convinced that for the most part all its teachings are inside out, upside down, and backward. The systems place the responsibility for the fall of man squarely on the shoulders of man. The Bible places the responsibility for the fall squarely on the shoulders of the Creator, as is so clearly stated in the words of inspiration we have frequently quoted: "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him (God) who hath subjected the same in hope." **Rom. 8:20** There is an abundance of scripture throughout the word of God that clearly demonstrates that we are God's workmanship, that the Lord has a desire to the work of His hands, that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it unto the day of Christ, that the Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world, and that every preparation was made by the Creator for the completion of His work - and this not only for a few, but for the whole mass of mankind. It is written, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." **Rom. 5:18-19**

We must repeat and reiterate with all the emphasis possible that man is God's workmanship. We must never for a moment lose sight of the words of the original edict, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." We must never entertain the damning doubt that would lead us to imagine that the immutable Lord has changed His original plan or His purpose, but we must embrace with much certainty the indisputable truth that everything that has transpired from Eden until now and everything that will transpire in the days yet to come has in the wisdom of God been planned for the carrying out of His original intention to make man in His own image and likeness. Therefore all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose, even as the scripture has plainly declared. **Rom. 8:28**

Let us henceforth begin to see things as God sees them. Let us stand with Him in the height of His holy mountain, viewing the end from the beginning. Say not that He who has placed us in the furnace of affliction has done so in wrath to destroy us, for such vain thought is not the truth. Yield yourself rather unto Him as unto a faithful Creator. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." **Isa.46:9-10**

When for the first time in your life the Holy Spirit begins to reveal the immutable plan of God, a vast transforming change commences to take place in your understanding. The rough places become smooth. The difficult, mysterious things become simple, as the blind are led by a way which they knew not. Recently a trivial incident occurred that taught me afresh how different things appear when we see them through the eyes of God. There is a large sport shop in our town, which is always busy and alive with customers. One day I walked into this store, and for once it was empty of patrons and I was the only customer. The owner, a Jew by nation, whom I have known for twenty-five years, engaged me in conversation concerning the recent edict of the Roman church which exonerated the Jews from responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ. A few days ago, he told me, a certain man had come into his store and said, "Well, - I suppose you feel good now that the Pope has decided you are not guilty of crucifying Christ!" To this my friend replied, "It doesn't make any difference to me. All the harm is done now." I could not help but feel some indignation because of the blindness and stupidity of the man's statement, and so I replied, "It is stupidity to blame the Jews for crucifying Christ. Listen to what the scripture says." "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." **Acts 4:24-28** When I had ended the quotation, I noticed his eyes were moist, and he said with conviction, "It seems as though it was pre-determined, doesn't it?" "Yes," I replied, "that is exactly the way it is."

O the grief and frustration we encounter by not knowing that God is supreme and that He doeth all His will in the army of heaven! There is no one who can withstand Him or alter His course! All things were created by Him, and for His will they are and were created. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." Isa. 45:7 He worketh all things after the counsel of His will and, in doing so, He is slowly but surely bringing to pass His original edict, "Let us make man in our image." "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Isa. 14:24, 27

CHAPTER FOUR THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

When Peter stood up to preach before the wondering crowd who were eye witnesses of the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, he told his hearers in no uncertain tones, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead..." Acts 3:14-15 But, after having said this, he consoled them with these wonderful words: "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:17-21 Peter's statement speaks clearly of the times of the restitution of all things. Restitution, according to the best English usage, means the act of restoring something that has been taken away or lost; the act of making good or rendering an equivalent as for loss or injury. (Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary) This is in exact harmony with the Greek work *temuriak*, which means restoration.

Some will no doubt reply to this by stating, as many do, that Peter was not promising that God would restore everything, but only those things of which the prophets had spoken. I wish, however, to show as clearly as possible that the grammatical construction of this sentence declares the exact opposite to be the truth. I mean that Peter was actually saying that all the prophets from the beginning of the world had prophesied that there would be a restoration of all things and that the restoration would indeed be universal and would include all things. You will notice that in the scripture quoted (Acts 3:21, King James Version) there is a comma after the word things. This comma indicates that the clause following - "which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began" - is what is known as a nonrestrictive clause. A nonrestrictive clause is one, which can be omitted without changing or destroying the meaning of the principal clause or main statement. (See Mastering Effective English by Tressler-Lewis, Revised Edition, Pages 545-546.) It simply adds further information. Now read the scripture, omitting the clause in question, and you will find the meaning is clearly stated and nothing of the sense is destroyed. If this clause were modifying the word things, it would be restrictive and no comma would be used.

To this agree the words of many scholarly translators, a few of whom I will quote here for the benefit and understanding of all who read.

"That the Lord may send Jesus, your long-decreed Christ, who must be kept in heaven till the period of the great Restoration. Ages ago God spoke of this by the lips of His holy prophets." Moffatt

"Heaven must receive Him until those times of which God has spoken from the earliest ages through the lips of His holy prophets - the times of the restitution of all things." Weymouth

"He must remain in heaven till the time for the universal reformation of which God told in ancient times by the lips of His holy prophets." Goodspeed

"Whom it behooveth heaven, indeed, to receive till times of a restitution of all things, which God spake through the mouth of all His holy prophets from the age." Young's literal.

We could easily fill the page with the words of many other translators, but I think the above is sufficient to testify that this is the true meaning of the words of Peter and that he was teaching us and all who have ears to hear the Spirit's voice that there is coming a time of universal restitution and reconciliation in which all things will be restored, whether they be things in heaven, things in earth, or things under the earth.

It should be very evident to us all that, if the scripture says that all the prophets spoke of the restitution of all things, then there should be some evidence that they did. Though we have neither space nor ability to peruse all the inspired teaching of the prophets concerning that coming age of blessedness and restoration, it is time well spent to notice it at least in part. Isaiah above all others seems to have been given the great prophecies of restoration and they are so extensive that they seem to touch life and creation in every phase. To me it is a most significant and wonderful thing to notice how the prophets, while prophesying terrible doom on the unbelieving and rebellious people, suddenly break off their message to revel in the coming glory. A good example of this is found in the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, in which the prophet tells of Judah's coming captivity in Babylon. Then he breaks forth with these revealing words of consolation: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 40:1-5**

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." **Isa. 35:1-7** With many such statements of restoration and restitution does Isaiah picture the glory of those coming times as he speaks of the restoration of nations, of Israelites, of Gentiles, of rugged land and barren places as well as wonderful physical restoration, which undoubtedly prefigures the coming state of incorruption and immortality.

Surely Daniel was carried in spirit far into the times of restoration when he said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." **Dan. 7:13-14**

Great as are these prophecies, they are limited by man's ability or inability to understand them. Like so many statements of scripture, they are really only shadows of things to come. See Col. 2:17 where Paul shows that meat and drink, holy days, new moons and Sabbaths are in reality shadows of things to come. A shadow is caused when a body or some object obscures the light. It is not the shadow that is important, but the body that made the shadow. That is why Paul says here that new moons and feasts and holy days are shadows, but the body is Christ. All these things foreshadow the day when He will be all and in all, and when He will be our Sabbath of rest, our holy day and our meat and drink.

We have already noted how the simple statement of **Gen. 1:26** - "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" - is really a foreshadowing of the day when God shall put all things under the feet of man, who is being created in His own image. It seems only normal that the prophets of the Old Testament were largely confined to prophecies concerning Israel and her coming restoration, yet their prophecies reach out to the Gentile nations and proclaim that all flesh shall see the glory of the Lord. Wonderful and glorious as

are the prophecies and shadows of the Old Testament, it is not until we begin to see the vastly extended and infinitely brighter light of the New Testament that the picture of the complete reconciliation of the universe begins to unfold before our wondering eyes.

The inability of God's people to understand and accept the restitution of all things, which was spoken of by all the prophets since the world began, may be traced to three great faults in our traditional teaching. Firstly, very few people are familiar with the truth that there is a coming age which the Bible names the dispensation of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10), and that that age above all others has been specially set aside for the work of reconciling all things in heaven and in earth and bringing all things into Christ. The age, as I will point out presently, is the age of the ages. It is the greatest age of all ages and is the time in which the Almighty God brings to completion the unfailing word spoken before time began, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." **Isa. 42:3-4** Secondly, God's people fail to see the final restitution of all things because they also fail to see the greatness of the work of Christ and the all-inclusive faith which God the Father has in that marvelous work of redemption. Thirdly, and perhaps most important of all, is the failure of God's people to see that all things are of God, that He is working all things according to the counsel of His own will. Nothing has ever gone wrong with the merciful purpose of God. Once these three truths become clear to the spiritual mind of a devout child of God, then the mysteries of the ages disperse like mists before the rising sun and all the parts of the puzzle begin to fall into their appointed place to form a perfect blueprint of the progression of God's purpose through the ages.

Though I have dealt with this third proposition many times in the past, and more especially in my book According to the Purpose (available without cost upon request), because of its great importance we shall consider it briefly in these pages also. When we are considering the works of God, we must reverently call to mind that we are not dealing with one whose power and might is only slightly greater than our own. God is not such an one as ourselves. "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." **Psa. 100:3** The Lord He is God! He hath set His throne in the heavens and His kingdom ruleth over all. When we are speaking of God, we are not speaking of an angel, or a seraphim, glorious in wisdom and knowledge as such may be, but we are speaking of Him who created such celestial beings as these, granting them some small measure of His own wisdom and power. We are speaking of Him who is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, omnipresent, eternal, full of loving kindness and tender mercies, who will not always chide nor be angry forever. He is the one who sees the end from the beginning.

Yea, much greater still, He is the end and He is the beginning. He it is whose inscrutable wisdom laid the foundations of the earth and hung it upon nothing. Job 26:7 He is the Father of lights. With Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. By His own will begat He us that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. And we know very well that firstfruits is an assurance of an abundant harvest to come.

Not only did He lay the foundation of the earth in wisdom but He ordained the ages in His understanding, appointing to each age some particular blessedness to be fulfilled in its order as the divine intention progressed. (This was pointed out in the article The Six Water Pots of Stone, available upon request.) He, who in wisdom laid the foundation of the earth, is almighty in His power and ability to carry out the glory of His own purpose. No power in the universe can let or hinder Him. Satan has no power at all except by divine consent and permission, as may be clearly seen in the story of God's dealings with Job. When Satan was permitted by the Lord to tempt Job and destroy all that pertained to him, it was for Job's own betterment and eternal good this was done, and I do not think I am overstepping or demanding too much of the type when I say that the whole story of Job becomes an allegory of the entire human family, whom God in His wisdom has lowered into the realms of death to be cruelly afflicted of the devil. From his hand we suffer great pain and tribulation through our lack of understanding, but, when calamity has been completed and every earthy stronghold and carnal argument has vanished away, then comes the revelation of God Himself and of His perfect will; and, following that, the restitution of all things, yea, double all things. Job 42:10 "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear," cried Job, "but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust

and ashes." **Job. 42:5-6** And so shall it be with all men and all their frail arguments in the end. They will at last see the Lord and, seeing Him and understanding His purpose, they will abhor the flesh and the world and themselves and will repent. Then from the coldness of their death and the darkness of their understanding shall come light and wisdom and truth, that the latter end may be much more glorious than it was in Eden in the beginning.

Jesus is all this poor world needs today.
Blindly they strive, for sin darkens the way.
O, to draw back the grim curtains of night!
One glimpse of Jesus and all will be bright.

How can He who is omniscient, omnipotent, and immutable ever fail in His purpose? Why, my brother, my sister, it is blasphemous to imagine that such a thing could possibly be!

I do not believe that the Bible anywhere teaches that man is a free moral agent. That teaching is a figment of the imagination of the harlot church system. In fact, the Bible teaches the exact opposite. It tells us, "It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." **Rom. 9:16** Someone will ask, "Will God save men eventually against their will?" The answer is! He will have no need to do that, for all men will be one hundred percent willing when God reveals Himself to them. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. We have only to consider the case of Saul of Tarsus to understand the miraculous power of the Lord to change the leopard's spots and melt the heart of stone. No man was ever more hateful toward Christ than was Saul of Tarsus, yet, when his turn came to see the light, he changed in an instant, crying out in fear and trembling and with bitter repentance, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and "What wilt Thou have me to do?" It is God that controls the will, and He turns the hearts of mighty and rebellious kings as easily as He turns the water courses. Even in the case of Pharaoh the Lord Himself took the responsibility for the hardening of his heart. Had He not done so, Pharaoh would have yielded long before he did. The truth is that Pharaoh's hard heart was not hard enough to accomplish the difficult task the Lord had appointed for him, so the Lord undertook to harden his heart on six occasions until all His plan and will was accomplished through him.

There is an overwhelming desire in my heart that God's dear people might know that God is God, glorious in power, fearful in praises, doing wonders. I long with a great longing that His people will repent of ever having believed the insipid and useless traditions that make the almighty God seem to be a victim of the will of His own creation. It is my opinion that most of the theology of the church system is insipid humbug that seeks to render the almighty God impotent by robbing Him of His omnipotence. It teaches that God gave His Son that all the world through Him might be saved and then renders His sacrifice hopeless by leaving ninety-nine percent of all His creatures in the hands of the devil for all eternity. Such a doctrine as that belittles the power and wisdom of God and does despite to the Spirit of grace, the atoning work of Christ, and the precious blood that He shed so that the world through Him might be saved.

Now our second proposition was that Christians fail to see the restitution of all things because they fail to see the greatness of the work of Christ. The apostle John remarked that, if all the books were written that should be written, the world itself would not contain them. Therefore we know before we start that it would be completely impossible to do more than probe the fringes of the greatness and completeness of the work of Christ, and to exhaust that ocean of its truth is beyond the power of even the most inspired pen. Nevertheless, there are one or two points, which should be made clear. These, I regret to say, I have never seen mentioned by sermon or writing in all the years of my life.

The book of **Romans** is a most remarkable book, and I think I cannot be far astray in saying that all Paul's other epistles are sermons enlarging on texts from this book. This remarkable book shows the progression of the plan of God from Alpha to Omega, from beginning to end, from Eden to Eden, from paradise lost to paradise regained, and from the fall of man in the beginning to the manifestation of the sons of God in the end. Chapter one brings the whole world under condemnation. Chapter two condemns the Jew. Chapter three shows how both Jews and Gentiles are justified only by faith, and chapter four proves that this is so. **Chapter**

five, with its key expression "much more" repeated five times, shows with the greatest possible clearness that everything that was lost in Adam has been regained, and much more, in Christ, as the writer so clearly states in **verse 18**: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Chapter six manifests the complete identity of the believer with Jesus Christ in death, burial, and resurrection life. Chapter seven sees the believer delivered from the power of the carnal nature. Chapter eight is the very heart of the whole epistle — so much so that I am tempted to say that it is the heart of the whole Bible and the very heart of all Christian experience from the time the believer begins to walk in the Spirit until he emerges as a manifested son of God, inseparable from Jesus Christ. We do not have space here to mention the themes of the remaining eight chapters, but we trust this brief synopsis may aid us in our understanding of the whole.

Now after Paul, in chapters one and two, has brought all mankind under condemnation and the guilt of sin, he proceeds to unfold God's one true method of justification. Having said in chapter three, **verse 20**, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin," he says in **verses 24, 25, and 26**, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The word propitiate means to appease, to soothe, and to conciliate. When Paul says, therefore, that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation, the great question that must be answered is this: Whom is Christ propitiating? Whom is He appeasing? Whom is He soothing? Whom is He conciliating? Is this propitiation for His benefit? Or is it for the sinner's benefit? Is God trying to conciliate Himself or is He conciliating the sinner? You know as well as I do that the church system has always erroneously taught that it is God who must be propitiated, conciliated and soothed, but I want you to know that such teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense. It springs from that Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the one who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and conciliated. The following words from a hymn show how deeply engrained this error really is:

"Five bleeding wounds He bears Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers, They strongly plead for me.
 Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
 Nor let the ransomed sinner die."
"The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One:
He cannot turn away The presence of His son." etc.
 "My God is reconciled;
 His pardoning voice I hear," etc.

The opposite of all this is the truth. It was God the Father who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He did not give that Son as a propitiation for Himself or to appease His own wrath. He gave Him for you and He gave Him for me. He did not die that I might live, as is so commonly taught. He died that He might give His life to me. And to this truth the scripture endlessly attests. All sermons and songs that picture God as a God of wrath who must be appeased by the cruel death and bloody sweat of His Son are heathenish and should be discarded from our shelves, because they form the wrong picture entirely.

God hath set forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. The idea that God would set forth His Son to propitiate and appease Himself is exceedingly absurd. There is not one scintilla of evidence in all the Bible that would hint that God would ever need to be reconciled to man. It is man who needs to be reconciled, not God. It is man who needs to be propitiated, not God. God does not need to be reconciled, because He knows what the plan is. He understands why the fall came. He takes the responsibility for the act of subjecting the creature to vanity, and He also shoulders the responsibility of raising that creature to a greater glory than he could possibly have had, had there been no fall at all. Therefore, He has given His perfect Son, in whom is life and from whom comes all life, as a propitiation that through His death on the cross He might give His life to all mankind, as it is written: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but

if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Life can only be released by death; and that first and foremost, above all other, is the reason God gave His Son, who to give us life became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Our heavenly Father, full of all grace and truth, does not have to be reconciled to man. He does not have to be propitiated, appeased, soothed, or conciliated. He gave His Son willingly, not only for our pardon, but also to reconcile the man and dispose the man to His loving favor that He might deliver him from sin and death. All this was done as part of His original intention to make man in His own image and likeness. The death of the Son of God was the ultimate wickedness and the blackest crime that sin was able to commit. Sin can reach no deeper depth than the murder of God's Son, but God's intention was that He through death would destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them (all of us) who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, so that what sin hoped would be the ultimate triumph proved to be its own destruction. The death the great Redeemer died heralded the wonderful day when death and sin will be abolished from the universe and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth only righteousness.

The erroneous notion that God must be propitiated and reconciled to man has given rise to all those Romish doctrines such as prayers for the dead, intercession through the virgin Mary, prayers to the saints, purgatory, indulgences, penance, and a host of other unscriptural errors, all of which make God the Father to be a grudging despot who needs to be placated continually and whose reluctant mercy may diminish or increase as more or less is done to conciliate Him. All such doctrine is hateful and does despite to the true spirit of grace and the infinite love of our kind heavenly Father.

Let us notice one thing further. Paul, writing that wonderful twenty-fifth verse, says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood..." Now who is it that Paul says has faith in the blood of Christ? I know that all theology and past teaching will oppose me, but the truth is simply this: It was God the Father who had faith in His Son and in His blood, and because of that faith in the blood of His Son, He openly declared His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that is to say, all the sins of the world from Adam to the cross, and undoubtedly for the ages ahead. The life is in the blood. Do not forget that cardinal truth. So great was God's faith in the life blood of His Son that was released by crucifixion and death that He declared the remission of all the sins of the past, making Christ the justifier of all who believe in Him. This surely is the meaning of the text, "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus." **Rom. 8:26**

So, then, we see from this that it was God who gave Christ as a propitiation and that that propitiation was given to propitiate man, not God. Furthermore it was God Himself who had faith in the blood of His Son that through Him all the world will be saved. There can be no question about that; and, when this truth is revealed to us, then our own faith rises up and we too have faith in that mighty atonement, and we are justified and at the same time cleansed and made righteous in the sight of God.

See how thoroughly the truth concerning the faith of God is confirmed by verse three, which says, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings and mightest overcome when Thou art judged." **Rom. 3:3-4** Thus these verses clearly teach that it is God who propitiates man, and it is God first of all who has faith in the blood of Christ for man's justification. What a tremendous thing it is to know that by one stroke of faith in the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, God the Father remitted the sins of the past, which includes all the generations before the cross, and that Christ after His death, according to the faithful word of the apostle Peter, went in the Spirit and preached to the spirits in prison, which had been disobedient when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared! See 1 Pet. 3:18-21. And what did He preach to these long-departed souls? Well, **1 Peter 4:6** certainly answers that question! By it we are informed, "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit..." The gospel was preached to them, informing them of the death of God's Son, who was given as a propitiation and a reconciliation for them, and that God had faith in the blood of His Son to deliver them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. Shall our unbelief make the faith of God without effect? Certainly not! If we believe not, yet He abides faithful. He cannot deny Himself. God's plan goes on just the

same, and He will bring all men to faith, each in his own order and in his own appointed time. Does my unbelief make your faith of none effect? No! Certainly not! Much less then shall the unbelief of the world or the unbelief of God's own children annul God's faith in the great propitiation of His Son or make it of none effect.

More and more I am compelled to say that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. He doeth His will in the army of heaven and none can resist His intention. None can hinder His cause. Therefore, when we do but faintly glimpse the immutable purpose of God, we can see that the Father, before ever time began or sin blighted our way, laid down the plan in every detail for the restitution of all things.

Lastly, let us consider briefly that great age which the word of God describes as the dispensation of the fullness of times. Eph. 1:10. Time is not eternity. There are many times and many dispensations, but there is only one eternity. Eternity does not begin; neither does it end, but times, dispensations, and ages all have beginnings and all have ends. It is wrong to assert that, when time ends, eternity will begin, because eternity has no beginning. Neither did it end when time began, as so many charts indicate. Ages have their place in eternity in the same way that minutes have their place in years, except that years end and eternity does not. Therefore it is very important that we make a clear distinction between ages, which belong to time, and eternity, which is timeless. It is more important still that we, in our study of the Bible, search out diligently those passages, which refer to time and those, which refer to eternity. In making this search, I strongly recommend that wherever possible the searcher avail himself of a good, exhaustive concordance such as Young's Analytical or Strong's, available at almost any good book store. Both of these give the correct meaning of every Greek and Hebrew word in the Bible. I also highly recommend the use of the Emphatic Diaglott, which emphasizes emphatic word translation rather than any beauty of style.

It is most regrettable that many Bible translators have been careless in their translation of words that concern the ages. The common thought seems to have been that any age following this present age must be identical with eternity, which, of course, is gross error, and we get ourselves into all manner of confusion by thinking that such is the case. For instance, according to the King James Version Jesus, speaking of the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost is clearly quoted as saying, "**He that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness.**" **Mark 3:29**. Because of this faulty rendering we have concocted the fallacious notion of an unpardonable sin. But the Emphatic Diaglott translates the passage correctly thus: "Whoever may blaspheme the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness to the age, but is exposed to aionian (age lasting) judgment." The age referred to here is the millennial age. Likewise also the passage in **Matt. 12:32**: "**...Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**" The word world here, as the margin of your Bible will probably indicate, is translated from the Greek word aion, which means age or some indefinite time. See also Young's Concordance. Hence the translation should be, "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming age." Diaglott. Jesus was born in the age of law. Therefore, when He spoke of this age, He was speaking of the age of law, the age to come being the age of grace in which we now live. Our problem concerning the ages will be cleared up if we remember the following simple facts. The Greek noun aion, which literally means an age, or an indefinite period of time, (Young), has been translated into the following fifteen different words and phrases in the King James Version of the New Testament: age (2), beginning of the world (2), course (1), world (32), eternal (2), world began (1), forever (27), for evermore (2), ever (1), while the world standeth (1), for ever and ever (1), for ever and ever (20), for evermore (1), never (7), world without end (1). Along with this the adjective aionios is translated eternal 42 times, everlasting (25), and for ever (1). Yet all these words, which you may look up in your own concordance and at your leisure, come from one original word, aion, which means age and should be so translated.

Anything and everything that has to do with an age or a dispensation has to do with time and therefore has both a beginning and an end. That which is eternal has nothing whatever to do with time, because that which is eternal is timeless. Eternity cannot be described as endless time, because there is no such element as time in eternity. It may come as a great surprise to most readers to learn that the Bible does not use any word that is equivalent to our English word eternal. All God's dealings with man concern ages, dispensations, and times. It is not until Christ delivers up a perfect universe to the Father that time will be no more, and there will be no need of the sun to rule by day nor of the moon by night, for the Lord God giveth them light. Where there is neither day nor night there is no time. That is the eternal realm. In that realm there is not only no more time, but

a complete absence of things that belong to time - no pain, no crying, no tears, no more hell, no more lake of fire, no more judgment, and no more death, for all the former things will have run their course of duty and will have passed away. All will be perfect in God's universe. All will be reconciled and all will be restored.

There are yet at least two great ages to come, first, the kingdom age, which in scripture is often referred to as the age, and following this there comes the age of the ages, which in Eph. 1:10 is named the dispensation of the fullness of times. Our failure to recognize God's workings in that wonderful age of the fullness of times is the reason so many thousands of God's good people fail to see the restitution of all things.

Reading from the King James Version, **Eph. 3:21** reads thus: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Now since the word world here is translated from the Greek aion, it can hardly be called a good translation - simply because the word world is translated from aion (age), and an age cannot be without end. The Emphatic Diaglott renders the passage correctly by saying, "to Him be glory in the congregation by Jesus Christ to all the generations of the age of the ages." This, of course, conveys the correct meaning. This age of the ages, which is identical with the dispensation of the fullness of times, embraces some very important teaching simply by reason of its name. First of all let us notice that it is the age of the ages. I am not at all sure how many ages there have been in the past. There could have been countless ages for aught I know. I do know, however, that ages existed before Adam. There was a great age from Adam to the flood and another great age from the flood to the resurrection of Christ. The age of grace or the church age, of which we are now a part, runs from the resurrection to the setting up of the kingdom. The kingdom age, next in order, will last at least one thousand years. Rev. 20:4. Then follows the age of the ages, or the dispensation of the fullness of times. The term age of the ages identifies this age as the greatest of all the ages. No age, not even the kingdom age, can be compared to it. Just as the Song of Solomon is the song of songs, that is, the greatest of all songs, and as the holy of holies is the holiest of all, so the age of the ages is the greatest age of all the ages, far surpassing even the millennial kingdom in its power and glory, its revelation of God, and its wonderful reconciliation and restitution. Men today use such terms as "the greatest day of my life," "our finest hour," or the "day of days." It is in this same sense that our almighty Father speaks of the dispensation of the fullness of times as the age of the ages.

As we read **Eph. 3:21** from the Emphatic Diaglott, it may have escaped our notice that the text says, "To Him be glory in the congregation by Jesus Christ to all the generations of the age of the ages." The expression, "to all the generations of the age of the ages" gives us some slight conception of just how long a period of time the age of the ages may be. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established, and I think it is of singular interest that twice the inspired writers of scripture made clear reference to a thousand generations. "Know ye therefore that the Lord Thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." **Deut. 7:9** And again, "Be ye mindful always of His covenant: the word which He commanded to a thousand generations." **1 Chron: 16:15** These mighty statements of truth are not mere picturesque flourishes. These are statements intended to tell us truth that belongs to the whole plan of redemption. As yet I have not found any man able to say accurately just how many years are encompassed by one generation, but, supposing it to be such a small number as forty, a thousand generations would comprise forty thousand years from the time God gave His covenants to Abraham until the end of the dispensation of the fullness of times. I am not trying to say or guess how long a period of time is indicated by these thousand generations, but we may be certain that it was to them that Paul was referring when he wrote, "To Him be glory in the church throughout all generations of the age of the ages." Can you not see that God has allotted almost infinite time to His Christ and the glorified church to accomplish the purpose of the redemption and the reconciliation of all things?

There is yet one more truth I would like to present concerning this age of the ages. That truth concerns the name of the age, the dispensation of the fullness of times. Eph. 1:10. Now all ages have to do with time and times, but there comes an hour eventually when time has reached its fullness. When all other ages have run their course, then we have come at last to the fullness of times. Time is full, time is complete, and time shall be no more. At the consummation of the fullness of all time the purpose of God, laid down in the edict, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," is complete, and time shall be no more. The dispensation of the fullness of times is the eighth dispensation. The dispensations of innocence, conscience, human

government, promise, law, grace and the kingdom - these seven - will have run their course and all will end in judgment, but the dispensation of the fullness of times is the eighth dispensation, and it will conclude all former things. It will end death, judgment, pain and tears, and its final act will be the delivering up of a perfect kingdom to the Father of all. Then time will have reached its fullness and will be no more.

The number eight in scripture is the number of new beginnings. That is why the dispensation of the fullness of times is the eighth dispensation. If the first day of a month falls on a Sunday, then the eighth day of the month is also a Sunday, as you will see in the months of April and July, 1973. So, if the first day of man's time was in Eden, then the fullness of time, the eighth day, brings us back to Eden again, not in the weakness of the first Adam, but in the strength and imperishable life of the last Adam.

Let us notice the extent of the promises made for the age of the ages, for I think in so doing our hearts will be assured that that age is indeed the age above all other ages. Nothing can be compared to it. Even the blessed millennial kingdom has some rebellion in it and ends with the armies of Satan gathering together against the camp of the saints. But not this age of the ages!

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is a very wonderful book. Above all other of Paul's writings it manifests God's purpose in calling and perfecting the church. Those foolish people who in their willful and petulant ignorance dare to say, "If God is going to save everyone, why need I bother?" really do not deserve either recognition or an answer. Since my eyes have caught a glimpse of the supernal glory of the work of reconciliation and my ears have heard the word of Christ saying that He has committed to us the word of reconciliation, my heart responds with the greatest eagerness, and, laying aside every earthly weight, I grasp with joy the hope that is set before me. My hope has made me like Elisha, who would not let his master out of his sight lest he miss the double portion in store for him. Let the foolish delight themselves in their God-rejection and idle words, for God has said, "Him that is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is unholy, let him be unholy still." The lake of fire that burns with refining brimstone is reserved for their purging throughout the generations of the age of the ages, but let us, who are of the light lay hold on the promise that is set before us, for herein is the refining, the finishing of our faith.

So Paul wrote to the Ephesians to lay the plan of God before them in the hope of quickening their step and increasing their faith in God's purpose. Turning their eyes to their ministry in the age of the ages, he wrote, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." **Eph. 1:9-12** Is that promise not reason enough for going all out that we may attain, since we have been predestined to such a glory as this? This is the hope that consumes my life and all my waking hours, and beside it all else is the grossest and lowest vanity. Stir yourself in repentance and in prayer and consecration, ye worldly-minded, wealth-seeking souls, for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul or be cast away to endure the lake of fire and brimstone until his refining comes? Is it any wonder that Paul said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." **Phil. 3:8-9** It is when we begin to see the plan of God that we willingly lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us. It is when we see the plan of God that all things begin to make sense, and then and then alone does our walk with Him become something real and worthwhile.

Now I want you to pay particular attention to what God says regarding the mighty work of the age of the ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times. In it we are promised that He will gather together in one all things in Jesus Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. Eph. 1:10 I don't know how the Christian who disbelieves God's power to restore all things is going to explain this mighty statement. Even blind unbelief can find no explanation for it, for there is no way around it. This is a clear statement of reconciliation, definitely declaring that during the dispensation of the fullness of times all things are to be

gathered into His Son, Jesus Christ. The statement is unconditional. There are no conditions attached in any way, shape or form. It is an edict of the Almighty, and it is saying with the greatest power and simplicity that He intends to restore absolutely everything and gather it all into the Prince Redeemer, Jesus Christ, whether it be things in heaven or things on earth.

The dispensation of the fullness of times is the age of the ages. It is the greatest age of all time, and with its end time shall be no more. The dispensation of the fullness of times is the day of God. The present day with all its corruption is the day of man. The millennial kingdom is the day of the Lord. 2 Pet. 3:10 The dispensation of the fullness of times is the day of God in which all things are made new and we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Pet. 3:13

Because this final age is the dispensation of the fullness of times, we know that it belongs to time. Because it is the age of the ages, we know that ages have not yet passed away. Many things are to be accomplished in that age that are at present far beyond our comprehension. In it the Lord has declared, "Behold, I make all things new." **Rev. 21:5** Before its end every knee shall have bowed and every tongue will have confessed that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In it the old heavens and the old earth pass away and a new heaven and a new earth take their place. All the havoc caused by ages and dispensations of man's evil reign will be cleared away and blotted out as things are made new.

The end of this present age of grace will be marked by the resurrection of the just. Rev. 20:17 They will reign with Christ over all the earth for a period of at least one thousand years. Few scriptures are more specific as to length of time than this, in which the term one thousand years is used six times. First Satan is bound for one thousand years, at which time the reign of the saints for a thousand years begins. In Rev. 21:5 we are distinctly told that the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. No unbeliever has part in the first resurrection. Then at the end of the thousand years all the rest of the dead, both small and great, are raised to stand before God to be justly judged before the great white throne, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. Rev. 20:11-15

I do not wish to over-emphasize the importance of this article or the truth it contains, but I am constrained to say that these truths are of immense importance because they are foundational. Upon their firm footing rests the whole superstructure of God's plan of the ages. If we cannot see how in the very beginning God created man for the specific purpose of ruling the universe, and to have dominion over all the vast sidereal with its infinite space and multi-billion galaxies, then we have missed the heart of God's intention completely and we become doomed to spend our lives in the idle pettifogging of the Romish and Protestant systems, which give neither reason for man's existence nor cause for his humiliation and fiery testings in the realm of death. Even redemption, full and complete as it is and in spite of its infinite cost, will fail to reconcile and save more than one percent of all creation, if the fruitless interpretations of the Babylonish system are to be believed.

How different does all this appear when our hearts grasp the understanding that before all things, back of all things, beneath all things, and above all things is the majesty of God's eternal intention and the immutability of His purpose to make man in the image of Himself - infinite in wisdom, perfect in understanding, faultless in counsel, almighty in power, unchangeable in purpose, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, unswerving in faithfulness, and doing the wonders of God throughout the universe as sons of God and members of His family, man complete in God's image and likeness.

The answer to the eternal question, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him," is two fold, because the question is two-fold. What is man! The answer by example is JESUS CHRIST highly exalted, His name being above every name. He is the first man and the last man. He is the beginning of the creation of God and He is the end of the creation of God. We are His younger brothers, all members of the same family, first being sons of men and secondly sons of God. What He is we are becoming, to which the scripture clearly attests, saying, "As He is, so are we in this world." **1 John 4:17** Every creature, whether of beasts or birds or fish or any plant or insect, brings forth seed after his kind, and shall it be different with God? Shall He not bring forth after His kind? Shall not he who is begotten of God be a son of God and a member of His family? Did not Jesus settle the contention forever when He said, "If He called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the

scripture cannot be broken, say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" **John 10:35-36** Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and we, too, are sons of God because we are members of the family of God.

The first part of the question is, "What is man?" The second part of the question is, "That Thou art mindful of him?" Or, "What hast Thou in mind for man?" The answer is that man will be given dominion, when his perfection comes and his Christ-likeness is complete, over fish, over birds, and over the beasts and creeping things of the earth. Gen. 1:26 The fish represent the things beneath. The birds represent the things in the heavens above. The beasts and creeping things represent things on the earth. That is what God decreed in the beginning, and that is His immutable intention now and in the ages to come - man in God's image, ruler and lord of the universe.

The teaching concerning the lake of fire does not appear anywhere in scripture except in the book of Revelation where it is spoken of in the following scriptures: Rev. 19:20, 20:10, 20:13-15, and 21:8 This last scripture definitely states, "but the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." There should be no question remaining as to the certainty of this lake of fire; neither should there be any doubt as to the awful consequence of having to be cast into it. These scriptures with their dreadful foreboding should be a fearful warning to all unthinking and foolish people who, because of their love for the baser things, have dared to ask why we should serve God now if we are all going to be saved eventually. Such people have no love for God, and they manifest by what they say that their professed serving of God is only a pretense, arising - not from any true love for Him - but from fear of punishment. It is not thus with those who truly love God, for they serve not from fear, but from pure love and devotion.

Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the lake of fire, I would like to make the following observations: First, to show the meaning of fire and brimstone, and, second, to show that the lake of fire is the second death.

In my study of the lake of fire and brimstone I was very much helped and impressed by the understanding given by Charles H. Pridgeon, M.A., and because of the excellency of his work I would like to quote several paragraphs in full, knowing that my own ability falls far short of his. The following paragraphs are from his excellent work, *Is Hell Eternal*.

"The lake of fire and brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone. The word brimstone, or sulphur, defines the character of the fire.

"The word *theion* (Greek), translated brimstone, is exactly the same word *theion*, which means divine. Sulphur, or brimstone, was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks, and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and to consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense... The verb derived from *theion* is *theioo*, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god. (See Liddell and Scott Greek English Lexicon, 1897 Edition.)

"To any Greek, or to any trained in the Greek language, a lake of fire and brimstone would mean a lake of divine purification. The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it.

"The word *torment* needs study. In the New Testament the same word is used of one "sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." (Matt. 8:6). It is used of the disciples' ship in Galilee, and is translated "tossed with the waves" (Matt. 14:24) It is translated by the word *toiling* in Mark 6:48. It is translated by the word *vexed* in speaking of Lot. (2 Pet. 2:8). It is translated by a word that means birth-pains (Rev. 12:2). In other scriptures it is translated by the word *torment* or *tormented*. The original idea of the verb is "to put to the test by rubbing on a touchstone." Then it means, "to question by applying some test or torture to discover whether true or not."

The original idea was to test some metal that looked like gold to find whether it was real or not. The meaning and usage of this word harmonizes with the idea of divine purification and the torment, which is the test to find whether there has been any change in the sufferer or not. Through the hidden loving purpose of God, every pang of torment will be a birth-pang; and the grace of God will not be absent - and, as He says, "Behold, I am making all things new" (literal), He will leave no spot in the universe unrenewed. "Every knee shall bow and every tongue... confess" (Phil. 2:10-11, literal). The ages of the ages come to an end. "Then cometh the end (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Time ceases.... There will be no "day and night" in eternity. The suffering lasts only while there is "day and night". Rev. 20:10." End of quotation.

I realize that the above quotation covers the subject very briefly, but how can we put the ocean of eternal truth into the cup of our human understanding? If there is to be ^restitution of all things, and the scripture is very clear on this issue, and if it be true that Christ has already "reconciled all things to Himself," as the scripture clearly says He has (Col. 1:20), then there must be a way by which all truth falls into perfect harmony. We do ourselves much injury when we seize upon every scripture, which proclaims the reconciliation of all things, but carefully avoid all scripture, which speaks of the fearful judgment of the wicked. Yet even greater harm is done when people insist upon taking the other point of view, as almost the entire church system has done for centuries, emphasizing only those scrip-tures which seem to teach the unending doom of those unfortunate creatures who never once heard that God had a Son and skillfully avoiding every direct statement of scripture which indicates that God has reconciled all things to Himself, and that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to God of things in heaven and things in earth and under the earth. There is always a place of harmony if we look for it, and it is not usually difficult to find. Otherwise we will be forced onto that untenable ground of having to say that the Bible contradicts itself - which, of course, it never does.

I have already pointed out that the Greek word *aion* has been translated into fifteen different English words and phrases, many of which - such as eternal, everlasting, and forever and ever - convey the wrong meaning entirely. Any thinking person should clearly see that if you translate the word *aion*, which means an age by the word eternal, which has nothing to do with time, you immediately get the wrong idea. The same thing applies when the word *aion* is translated by the word world. It is incorrect and brings nothing but confusion. There is a great deal of difference between the expression, "He shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," and the expression, "He shall be tormented day and night unto the age of the ages." For ever and ever has no end. The age of the ages does have an end, and its end will see every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:10-11; Rom. 14:10-11. The first expression forebodes complete hopelessness for billions and makes the faith of God of none effect. The second expression, which is completely correct, not only offers hope but expresses the ultimate fulfillment of the purpose which was purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began or before the ages were formed.

Everyone who considers himself a student of God's word should familiarize himself with the facts I have mentioned above. Purchase a good concordance such as Young's or Strong's and learn how to use it. Also get a good Greek-English lexicon such as the Emphatic Diaglott so that you can check these things out for yourself. Then you will not have to depend on what I or some other human being has to say about it. The fifty scholarly men who sat for ten years, translating the King James Version of the Bible, produced a magnificent work. We cannot speak too highly of it, and I sincerely doubt that any other work of translation has ever remotely equaled its style and beauty; but with a task so great as theirs it is no small wonder to discover that a few inconsistencies in translation crept in. Many Christians fail to realize that no translation of the Holy Scripture is inspired. Only the original writings by the apostles and the prophets were inspired. Since, then, the original writing was done in Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament, all translating into the multitudes of other languages has had to be done by learned scholars of Greek and Hebrew, and these for the most part have done a masterful work.

No other book that ever was written can be compared to the Bible, which is the word of God. Because the Bible is a spiritual book, it has very little appeal to the natural mind. This wonderful book of God does not unfold its mysteries to the careless reader. Its parables were not written to make spiritual truth clear to the simple and careless. Parables were not given that a child could understand, as we have been taught in the past. Parables were written for exactly the opposite reason. Do you not remember that on one occasion, when

Jesus had been speaking to the people in parables, His disciples asked Him, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" **Matt. 13:10** He said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." **Matt. 13:11** Again in **Luke 8:10** we read, "But to others in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand," or, as He said in **Matt. 13:15**, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive." So you see from the words of Jesus that parables were not given to make the mysteries clear to everybody, but rather to hide the mystery from some and to reveal it by the Spirit to those who were ordained to understand.

This wonderful book is literally packed full of mysteries, parables, types, shadows, and allegories, which are only unfolded by the Holy Spirit when it is in the best interests of God's infinite purpose to unfold them. It has been a thing of endless delight and surpassing joy to me to have made the discovery that the Bible itself and everything in it is a parable, setting forth by many means the intention of the all-wise, all-powerful, unchanging Lord. As these wonderful truths fall into place before the eyes of my spirit, each one in its turn signifies the immutable purpose of God, who, after having made a man of the clay, undertook to lower the work of His hands into the fiery realm of death for his own edification, his good, his learning and his understanding. Then comes the restoration of the creation, not merely to what it was originally, but to an exaltation so high that our minds completely fail to grasp its supernal eminence. Even the life and experience of our blessed Redeemer becomes a parable of the truth of restoration, for He, who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled Himself to take upon Himself the form of a man, and, being found in fashion as a man, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name, which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Can we not see here how the Son was first lowered into death and then highly exalted? Have we failed to perceive that "us He is, so are we in this world!" Is it too much for us to believe the parable set forth here, pressing forward in faith that we may attain the prize that is set before us as we look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross and despised the shame and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high! Is not this the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," for whom we have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that we may win Christ and be found in Him without spot or blemish? So if the life of our Lord becomes a parable and a type, how much more shall lesser things!

We have already considered how Adam's dominion over the fish beneath the earth, the animals on the earth, and the birds above the earth was a prophetic foreshadow of man's eventual glory as judge and ruler of the universe under God's authority and with the mind of Christ. Furthermore in His saying, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness," He was saying that this was His unchanging intention, not only for Adam, but for mankind as a whole. The first man was presented faultless two thousand years ago, and His beautiful perfection is a pledge and guarantee that before the age of the ages has run its course all men will be presented faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. It cannot be otherwise, for we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. And He, tasting this death, for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high, henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool, or a resting place for His feet.

Paul gave us a remarkable clue to these great mysteries when He explained that the whole national existence of Israel was a parable or an allegory teaching great spiritual things. "These things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (ages) are come," he said. **I Cor. 10:11** You know the history of Israel as well as I do. You have read of their beginnings, their rebellion against God and their punishments, and how some of them have been scattered among all nations while other of their tribes have become mighty nations in the earth, though they are so blind that the vast majority of their people have completely lost sight of their national identity. Shall we believe that all these people will be cast away and lost forever? Or shall we let our faith embrace the immutable promise of God, as Paul has said, "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid... God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." **Rom. 11:1-2** Then by his pertinent question and its positive answer the apostle explains the mystery of their being cast away, for he says, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world what

shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" **Rom. 11:15.** Someone will say, "I cannot understand this mystery," and I confess I cannot understand it either, but shall my unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid. **Rom. 3:3.** "But I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel (all Israel) until the fullness of the Gentiles (nations) be come in. And so shall all Israel be saved." **Rom. 11:25.** Well, what do you think of that? Shall we not say that God is true though every man be a liar? In the light of such fathomless wisdom is it any great wonder that the apostle breaks off in the midst of his explanation to burst forth into heavenly praise crying, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." **Rom. 11:33.**

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the parable from the life of Job? Notice how this perfect and upright man, who feared God and stayed clear of every evil, was delivered into the hand of the enemy that through his dreadful experience in the valley of the shadow of death he might come forth refined by its fire and brimstone. Was it not the torment and tribulation of this first death that delivered his soul from all his carnal arguments and set him free from every last remaining trace of self-righteousness, until from out the fire and brimstone of his experience — yea, the fiery trial that was to try him — he came forth as gold tried in the fire with shining face and glorified vision, crying, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42:5-6.** Certainly we can see all these things, but let us notice still further how this man, who lost all things when he was lowered into such a fearful death, a loss that included both his riches and his family, had all restored when the fire had devoured his corruption — and not only restored, but restored double in all things until he was much richer and exceedingly more famous and influential than he had ever been before. Shall we not see in this story a parable of the history of all mankind from the time man was lowered into this realm of death, passing through the fiery furnace of affliction into the image of God and the restitution of all things? Let us not be like those adamant folk who, because of their impenetrable hardness, seeing, see not and hearing, hear not, neither do they understand, but let us see with our eyes and hear with our ears and understand with our hearts and lay hold of the promise of restoration that is clearly set before us.

What shall we say of Nebuchadnezzar, who through God's decree left his high estate and was lowered into the realm of the beasts and was given a beastly mind? There in the degrading realm of beasts he remained until he learned that God is all in all. Then, when seven times had passed over him, his humiliation and repentance were complete, the glory of his kingdom was restored to him and he, walking in harmony with God, commanded all men everywhere to fear and tremble before the God of heaven. In my book, *The Mind of Christ*, (free upon request), I have gone into greater detail to show that the experience of this man was a parable of the experience of all mankind from the time of their transgression and humiliation until the exceeding glory of that day when all will possess the mind of Christ and all will be fully restored.

I suppose I could fill whole volumes with the unfolding of these blessed things, but I shall now leave the parables, the types, the shadows and prophecies of the Old Testament to speak of Jesus Christ our Lord and show how His life and ministry was a prophecy, a parable, a living witness and testimony of the restitution of all things. Hear Him as He reads this scripture: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." **Luke 4:18, 19.** The acceptable year of the Lord is nothing less than the kingdom of God, that millennial kingdom for which all creation groans. The day of the vengeance of our God (Isa. 61:2) I believe to be identical with the dispensation of the fullness of times, the age of the ages, in which the Lord through the fiery judgment of the second death will gather into Himself everything in heaven and in earth. **Eph. 1:10.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not attempt to heal every diseased person during His brief ministry on earth; neither did He deliver every captive nor restore sight to all the eyes that were blind. He did not set at liberty all that were bruised, nor did He heal all that were broken-hearted. It was never God's intention that all the ills of earth should be cured during the short period of His first advent. The ministry of Jesus, wonderful and remarkable as

it was, was only to be a beginning, a foreshadowing and an ensample of that mighty work of restoration, reserved for the kingdom age, which will be completed when the body of Christ is complete. The truth that His earthly ministry was only the beginning seems to be taught in the words spoken of the miracle performed at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus and manifested forth His glory," (John 2:11), and is certainly confirmed by Luke's words, "All that Jesus began to do and teach." Acts. 1:1

There was a day when the disciples came to Jesus with the question, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise also shall the Son of man suffer of them." Matt. 17:10-12 Then they understood that He spoke of John the Baptist, but I am not so sure that this was His final meaning. At any rate the restoration was not to be completed then. His ministry was to be only a foreshadow of the restoration of all things, which, though begun in some small degree then, would not be completed until the age of the ages. In my meditations before God I have become convinced that the mighty signs and wonders wrought by the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ were not wrought entirely for the sake of those few tormented people who were healed and delivered from their afflictions, but this manifestation of His glory was intended to be a literal and living witness, a life full of prophetic acts foreshadowing the kingdom of God and the final dispensation of the fullness of times that will complete the restoration of all things. The gospel Jesus was preaching was not the gospel of grace. It was the gospel of the kingdom of God and His mighty works were a foreshadow of that acceptable day of the Lord. Luke 4:19. The acceptable day of the Lord is the kingdom day. As the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration was a miniature fore view of the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:28), so the entire ministry of Jesus Christ was a foreshadow of the extent and fullness of all the mighty wonders that are reserved for that wonderful Sabbath day which is to come.

It would be quite impossible for us here and now to trace the full glory which each act in His mighty ministry foreshadowed, yet be it known that each and every wonder of His life from the miraculous draught of wine at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee to the healing of the ear of the centurion's servant tells us some new story of the wonders that are to be when He is King of kings and Lord of lords in the ages yet to come. The changing of water to wine at the wedding feast portrays the difference between our present realm of death and that wonderful realm of life when He has taken His bride, the New Jerusalem, and that age of the ages begins. However, to avoid any doubt as to my meaning, we will consider just a few events in the life of Jesus that clearly demonstrate how His whole life and ministry was a prophetic foreshadow of the acceptable day of the Lord, which is the kingdom age of one thousand years. We will certainly not try to cover all the events, but if you will think each one out for yourself in the Spirit and with the mind of Christ, you will uncover a whole realm of truth hitherto hidden from your eyes.

Among the first of the works Jesus did was His calling of the twelve disciples. This is a very important and significant thing. These men were chosen to minister with Him and were given power over all manner of sickness and disease and over demons. The common thought prevalent in our day is the notion that the main purpose of this present age of grace is the conversion of the world and the salvation of as many as possible. The real truth is that this entire age has been set aside in the wisdom of God to "take out a people for His name." Acts 15:14, According to James this is in harmony with the prophecies of the Old Testament. These people who are now being "taken out" from the mass of mankind are a people being prepared to reign with Christ in the kingdom of God, and they will be used in that wonderful ministry of destroying the works of the devil. Therefore, when Jesus in this age of grace speaks to the heart of any man or woman, saying, "Follow Me," it is an extremely important event. I am not saying that all who are thus called will be chosen, for "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14), and those who are finally with Him are "called, chosen and faithful." Rev. 17:14 Only those who lay aside their own minds and become possessed of the mind of Christ will have any hope of reigning in His kingdom. The carnally minded, though they are believers and though they be saved, will not reign with Christ in that wonderful kingdom. No carnality will reign with Him. Only those whom the scripture speaks of as "in Christ" will reign with Him; and I shall add that the term in Christ excludes most of the professing Christians. While some will have an abundant entrance (2 Pet. 1:11), others will be saved "so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15) Let us neither forget nor neglect these things, but let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race before us, looking unto

Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

In the Gospel of Mark the mighty works of Jesus are recorded in quick succession. Immediately after He called His disciples, Jesus is seen entering the synagogue, and there He taught a doctrine that astonished the people. Mark 1:21 Let me say that if ever the truth is told in our modern synagogues, those steeple houses that men speak of as churches, the people who hear will be astonished. They will either accept the message as wonderful and life-giving or else they will brand the messenger as an heretic, a false prophet, or a nut and cast him out. What Jesus taught He taught with authority (Mark 1:22), and authority in teaching is something the people are not accustomed to. What a watered-down gospel the poor people have been compelled to hear decade after tiresome decade, and century after weary century! The wicked thought now prevalent in the minds of preachers is to give the people what they want. They do not give them what they need as shepherds should do, but they prophesy falsely, and the people love to have it so. Jer. 5:31

The next great thing of note was the discovery that right in the synagogue there was a man possessed with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth. Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." **Mark 1:24** Now I wonder who that man was who was possessed with an unclean spirit? I dare not be certain, but I will tell you who he may have been and who he probably was. He was probably the leader of the synagogue. Are you horrified at my suggestion? Well, you need not be, for I have on my desk at this moment a large picture of a preacher with a reverse collar and all the regalia of a minister, marching with a crowd of homosexuals, all replete with signs and banners, agitating for public acceptance and recognition. Do you know what Moses said of homosexuals? He said they should be cut off from among the people. Lev. 18:22-29 Yet in our day these abominable demon-possessed people are being ordained as ministers of the gospel! If Jesus walked into their congregation today, He would have no choice but to cast the devil out of them, for all homosexuals and lesbians are sodomites and possessed with an unclean spirit.

There are other devils in the church system besides this one. There are false prophets, covetous, boasters, men who do not believe in the resurrection, the blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit, or regeneration. The Roman system from start to finish is a "do it yourself religion. I do not hesitate to say that all who are rubbing shoulders with it and glorying in ecumenism and the charisma of the whole evil business are coming under the control of Satan and the power of devils working miracles. Rev. 16:13, 14 Have you never read this scripture? "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." **Rev. 18:2**

Following the casting out of the unclean spirit, Mark tells of the healing of the fever. Mark 1:29-31 The whole church system and the entire world system is in a dreadful burning fever. Men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth, for even the powers of the heavens are being shaken. Nations are rising against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms, states against states, provinces against provinces, husbands against wives, children against parents, man against the elements, the floods, the earthquakes. The sea, the land, and the air groan because of the awful pollution. The whole creation is in a ferment. But Jesus, the Prince of Peace, took the fevered woman by the hand, and the fever left her. So it will be when the kingdom shall come and the saints shall reign. The fever will be gone and hushed will be all the vain strivings of sinful men.

Following the account of all these works of power comes the announcement of the healing of all that were sick. Mark 1:32

At even, when the sun did set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;
O with what divers pains they met,
And with what joy they went away!

This mighty manifestation of His power was also a foreshadow of that coming day when all who dwell in the light of His throne will be free from the sorrows of the past; for there shall be no more sickness, no more pain, nor sorrow nor death nor sighing. Neither shall there be any more tears, for the former things are passed away.

Rev. 21:4 Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He healed the sick who came to Him, was not making an effort to cure the world that then was of all sickness and disease. Had that been His intention, he would not have ceased until His work was done. Because He came preaching the kingdom of God, He was demonstrating the glory and the power of that coming kingdom and showing us the wealth of its glory by doing for the few what will be done for the all when the light of His kingdom shall cover all the earth as the waters now fill the sea.

Thy kingdom come!
Thy will be done in earth!
Even as it is done in heaven!

Then in Mark 1:40-45 we have the account of the healing of the leper. Leprosy is always considered to be typical of sin. It is a disease in the blood. It is a fearful, wasting disease that has always forced men to live separate from all society. This disease was always considered incurable by human means. Leprosy is a physical type of inbred sin. Poor mankind in his blindness vainly hopes for a remedy, but there is no healing medicine for that which has rotted the flesh away. Only Jesus Christ can heal the wasted body or soul. All our efforts at self-reformation are useless, for they leave the soul even as it was. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses from all sin, and there is no other remedy either in heaven above or in earth beneath; neither is there any other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

So Jesus cleansed the leper. His divine power alone could cleanse the filth away. What heart is so vile that He cannot cleanse it? In that coming age, when the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth as the waters cover the sea, the multitude of the nations will walk the highway to Jerusalem where His throne abides, for "in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." **Zech. 13:1** "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one." **Zech. 14:9** "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." **Zech. 14:16** "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; ...yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts..." **Zech. 14:20, 21**

Jesus paid it all!
All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.

Now consider the healing of the palsied man, who had control neither of his limbs nor of his actions. How truly this poor afflicted fellow typified the mass of mankind in our day who "do not know what makes them stumble]" But Jesus knew that at the base of his uncontrollable self and the hopeless shaking of his limbs lay sin yet unforgiven; and when the sin was gone, the sickness, too, was soon remedied. What demonstration of Christ's power could show more forcefully than this that He who has power over palsy has power to forgive sin and cleanse mankind of its crimson stain? Thus shall it be in the kingdom of God where the whole mass of mankind is concerned, for the leaves of the tree, which He Himself is, are for the healing of all nations that inhabit the earth.

The Jews were always greatly offended when Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, or did any manner of good on the Sabbath day. It seems to me He often chose that hallowed day above all others to work His wonders. He did not do it, I assure you, to rouse their anger, but to demonstrate with power that, when the millennial Sabbath finally comes, it will be a blessed day of deliverance from all the evil of the previous six days of man's misrule. "Six days shall thou labor," saith the Lord, "and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work..." **Exod. 20:9, 10** The six thousand years or the six dispensations that have passed away since Adam - these have been man's six days of labor, and what a tragic mess, what a mass of confusion and disorder has followed his rule! But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. The seventh day, the seventh dispensation, is the kingdom of God. The seventh day is God's day. It is the kingdom of God. In it man will labor no more. God will loose the thirsty ox from the stall and lead him away to the watering. Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, and in that day He will deliver the captives, recover the

sight of the blind, set at liberty the bruised, for that is the acceptable year of the Lord. He will show that the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath day.

In that day "the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; (Allelujah!) we will rejoice and be glad in it." **Psa. 118:22-24** "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: ...And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." **Isa. 35:5-7, 10**

And what shall I say of the healing of the poor man with the withered hand, which infirmity had rendered him powerless to work for either himself or His Lord? And what shall we say of the power that healed him or of the significance of the fact that it was done on the Sabbath day? Mark 3:1-5. What of the new relationship we read of in Mark 3:31-35, which sets aside the bonds of the flesh and makes all who do God's will His brothers and sisters? Or of the healing of the maniac of Gadara who sat clothed and in his right mind? Mark 5:1-15. Is he not a parable of the insanity and ruthless power of man today? We have read of the feeding of the five thousand, not from bread in store, but from the wonder of His blessing, and of the stilling of the troubled sea, which must be likened to the turmoil of our nations, and of how He rebuked the wind, the restless spirit, that troubled them so. If the reader will diligently search into all these things, the Lord will reveal to his heart how great a gospel Jesus Christ came to preach when He came in the power of the Spirit to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to display in parables, in mighty sayings, and in mighty deeds that glory which will fill the earth when that which was first preached as a gospel shall become the established authority and rule of all the earth. He, who was at first but the lonely Galilean, shall in that day stand tall and mighty among His many brethren to establish the acceptable day of the Lord in all the earth.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

From north and south the people meet
To lay their trophies at His feet,
While western empires own their Lord
And savage tribes attend His word.

Such were the teachings of Jesus Christ and I shall not hesitate to say that His whole life and ministry was a mighty, though miniature, display of the glory and power of the kingdom, which He preached. It was a beautiful parable of His coming reign with the saints.

The second point I wish to consider is the subject of the second death. Failure to understand the second death hinders the full view of the restitution of all things. In my article From Death to Life, Vol: 10, No. 9, I carefully pointed out that it is impossible for one to understand what the second death is until he understands what the first death is. (I would strongly urge every reader to re-read the article mentioned above. If you do not have it in your possession, it will be sent to you gladly upon request). The truth, briefly stated, however, is this: Adam in the beginning was warned of God, "In the day that thou eatest thereof (of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) thou shalt surely die." **Gen. 2:17** The fatal truth is that in the self-same day he ate the fruit, in the same day he died, both spiritually and physically. We are wrong when we affirm that he died spiritually the same day, but lived physically nine hundred and sixty years. Our whole trouble is that we have not learned what death is. That thing which God calls death is the self-same thing we have been erroneously calling life. But let us see how the scripture will help our understanding of this matter.

Paul, writing to Christians born of the Spirit, said, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10** Previous to their conversion both the spirit and the body were dead, as is clearly stated in **Eph. 2:1**: "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins."

But now that the spirit has partaken of the resurrection life of Christ, only the body remains dead. "Ye are dead," says Paul, "and your life is hid with Christ in God." Again, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11** Jesus, too, definitely spoke of man's present condition as death. When the young man requested, "Let me first go and bury my father," He replied, "Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou Me." By this statement He was indicating that the men who carried the coffin were as dead as the man that was in it. Paul also, speaking of the pleasure loving, who above all others believe they are enjoying life to the full, wrote to show that what the pleasure loving mistakenly hail as life is, in fact, naught but death, for said he, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." **1 Tim. 5:6**

From these statements of Holy Scripture we must confidently affirm that the very element which man mistakenly believes is life is in fact that which from the beginning God has spoken of as death - the death that was promised when He said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Therefore our whole present existence from the cradle to the grave is the first death. Everything in it and about it is death and the grave is only the final consummation of the death experience. When David wrote, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he was speaking, not of some brief illness before he was taken to the cemetery, but of his whole earthly journey, which is in truth a valley where death is everywhere. Though we, for want of a better expression, speak of our earthly pilgrimage as life, the real truth is that what we are now experiencing is in fact in truth the first death, and this I have proved in no uncertain manner in my book 'From Death to Life.' If we have a clear understanding of what the first death is, then we can easily grasp what the second death would be. The believer enters into life by the resurrection unto life; but the unbeliever will also be resurrected, not to life but to aionian judgment or the second death. And I shall add with much emphasis that the second death, which follows the resurrection of the unjust, will be much more severe than the first death, through which the world is now passing. Even in this life, which is really the first death, men suffer fiery trials that are to try them, and we are told that it is through much tribulation we enter the kingdom of God. The Bible is packed full of evidence that confirms that this first death is replete with fiery trials both for those who believe and those who do not.

We have read with reverent awe of the blessed saints who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens; women received their dead, raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. Heb. 11:32-35 And all this fiery trial that was to try them belonged to the realm of the first death. How much more severe, then, shall be those fiery trials, which God's word describes as a lake burning with fire and brimstone - which is the second death! We have noted above that the word brimstone, translated from the Greek theion (Rev. 21:8), means divine fire, and it should be so understood. The word fire in Rev. 20:10, 14, 15 and 21:8 is translated from the Greek word pur and is exactly the same word as used in Acts 2:3 where it is stated, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like unto fire." That fire is divine fire to judge, to cleanse, purge and purify until every knee has bowed, every tongue has confessed, and every garment has been made white in the blood of the Lamb.

O how good it would be if God's dear people would only seek to understand that the omniscient Father is preparing every man in his own order! In each and every age He seeks to accomplish some definite purpose, and, having accomplished it, He moves on to the next. In this present age He is calling out an elect people for His name. These people are being perfected as sons of God. At the end of this age Jesus Christ will no longer be the lonely man of Galilee, but the firstborn of many brethren, as it is written, "Behold I and the children (sons) which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:13** During the coming age, which is the millennial kingdom, God will perfect the bride, and at the consummation of that wonderful age of righteousness the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, will be seen descending from God out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev. 21:9-27 It is easy to see the marvelous procession of His eternal purpose. When the New Jerusalem bride is united in marriage with the sons of God, then (and certainly it is no wonder) will begin the age of the ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times. It will begin with the resurrection of all the dead of all ages who were not raised in the first resurrection. Rev. 20:1-6 They will be judged and their second death experience of fire and brimstone will begin. But the gates of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, shall never be shut day or night

throughout all the age of the ages. The nations shall walk in the light of it and the people shall bring their glory and honor into it. Both the Spirit and the Bride will be saying, "Come," and whosoever will may take of the water of life freely.

Before that age is over (I am not sure how long a time it will be), every knee in heaven and in earth and under the earth will have bowed to Christ and every tongue will have confessed to God that He is Lord to the glory of God. Phil. 2:10 The name of Jesus signifies much more than is implied by the simple use of the name in speech. According to the Hebrew idiom it signifies "in the very nature of Jesus", and as no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:3), we know that there will be no hypocritical confession nor will there be any confession by compulsion, but a true confession of Christ by every creature in the universe and that to the glory of God the Father.

As I have concentrated upon the message Creation, Redemption, and the Restitution of All Things, I am well aware that I have barely scratched the surface of any of these momentous truths, but may the eternal God give us ever increasing understanding in the knowledge of His will and purpose that we may see in part what was in His infinite mind when He said in the beginning, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion..." God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, and He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But very man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him (Christ), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that did put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." **1Cor. 15:20-28**

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" **Rom. 11:33** "For from Him every thing comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever! Amen." **Rom. 11:36** (Goodspeed)

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 29
THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING OR WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-4

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CHAPTER ONE
THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

Of all the mysteries that have perplexed the people of God throughout the ages none has proved to be more disconcerting to the saints than the mystery of suffering. The question, "Why do the righteous suffer," has at some time baffled the mind of every saint until the depths of its enigma have hung like a shadow over the brightness of their experience in Christ. Why, so often, do the wicked prosper, flourishing like the green bay tree, while righteous men perish and no man layeth it to heart? How often have we heard Christians testify through blinding tears that crowded over their sight that all went well with them and care was but a feather while they lived for the trivial things of this swiftly passing world, but after they were converted to Christ and began their heavenward journey, trial and affliction beset them! Tribulation and anguish like ravenous beasts crowded their pathway, making their lot hard and their way difficult and treacherous.

The failure to understand the mystery of suffering must in great part be laid at the door of those blind leaders of the blind who have glibly taught the people that, after a sinner comes to Christ, all will be glory from that day forward. Henceforth he will always wear a happy smile and live in the wonderful assurance that all is well with his soul and the knowledge that, should he die at any moment, he will go straight through the pearly gates into heaven. While this in a manner of speaking may be true after he learns to understand God's ways, be warned that anyone who imagines he can be a victorious Christian without ever fighting fierce and bloody battles is certainly an armchair philosopher to say the least.

All over the land today — alas, alas — we hear the radio preachers persuading the trusting and ignorant people that the saints of God should have the best of everything. They should have perfect health for their bodies, instant healing whenever they need it. They should have the best of salaries, live in the finest of homes, drive the most expensive cars. Why, they will even bless our purses for five dollars and assure us that, if we give them ten dollars, we will get one hundred in return! Then, glory be, after these flower-bed Christians have spent their lives in luxury, they will be taken to heaven to spend eternity doing nothing, and if tribulation should come while they are still on earth, they will be immediately raptured to escape it. Let those who will teach these absurdities and imbecilic inconsistencies and let those who will believe them, but I hear the voice of the blessed Galilean ringing clear above all other voices, saying, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." I hear Him warn His beloved saints in these awesome words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." To the rich He says, "Sell that ye have, and give to the poor, and thou shall have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me." Never once in all His life did Jesus or His apostles ever dangle glittering prizes before the eyes of the people, but always prominent in His statements the cross was seen, casting its ominous shadow across the pathway of His beloved saints.

At the beginning of this subject I felt it necessary to make a few interrogations and observations. Why has the whole world from the beginning of time been filled with the groans of suffering? Why must people suffer tribulation, anguish, misunderstanding, envy, malignity, sickness, pain, war, terror, bereavements, death, and a thousand tragedies far too numerous to mention until the whole creation with every created thing is heard groaning in pain and anguish waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body? We may not think it

difficult to understand the suffering of the godless and the wicked, because their own wickedness chastises them and is a judgment unto them, becoming betimes a burning hell of indignation. But, mystery of mysteries, the same tribulation suffered by the world is often endured by the people of God, and to this Peter soberly attests when he writes, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." **1 Pet. 5:8,9.**

The shallow understanding of the church system and the unwise teaching of its hireling ministry are the basic causes of the gross ignorance among the people concerning the refining, purifying fires of suffering. As long as people are kept ignorant of the eternal purposes of God, they will always remain ignorant of the eternal blessing of their sufferings with Christ. If Christians understand no more than the common thought that they are saved now to be taken to heaven later on to spend their eternity playing harps and shouting "Hallelujah" in the bliss of a dreamy "isle of somewhere", then indeed there would be little purpose in suffering in this present age at all, for even if saints were no worse off for their suffering, they would be no better either. But when God, through infinite grace, reveals to the saint that it is His marvelous intention and purpose that all eternity will be occupied in a mighty master plan of restitution and restoration in which sons of God, who through trial, suffering, and fierce temptation have come into the image of Jesus Christ, will reign with Him in the perfection of wisdom, the fullness of understanding, the beauty of justice and the omnipotence of power, every son having the mind of God and needing not to ask questions about anything, but having perfect knowledge, justice and equity to carry out the intricate and infinite will of God, then all our tribulation becomes pregnant with meaning. Among that holy, omnipotent company of sons there will be no carnal minds, no dissensions, no inharmonious notes in all their ranks, but with justice shall they judge the meek of the earth and with equity shall they rule the nations until all things everywhere are subdued unto Christ and Christ shall present a perfect kingdom to the Father.

It will not be earth alone that will come under the reign of these blessed sons of God, but all the celestial universe which everywhere at this moment is a chaotic, rock-strewn mass of waste. These void vastnesses, even as the earth upon which we dwell, will partake together of the universal restoration. So great will be the rehabilitation that eternity itself will not be too long for the mighty program which God's inspired word foreshadowed in the words of David: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" **Psa. 8:3,4.** And again: "It is not to angels that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of which we speak. But, as we know, a psalmist has exclaimed, "How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him, and hast set him over the work of Thy hands. Thou has put everything in subjection under his feet. For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him." **Heb. 2:5-9.** (Wey-mouth).

Now since such glories are in store for the saints of God, can any man longer question why our kind heavenly Father should be at such pains to bring His sons to perfection? Is it not right that He should choose any method He deems necessary to transform His sons from corrupt and carnal creatures of dust and clay to beings of heavenly light and understanding? Would anyone dare to imagine that any of the leaders of this present world system would be found fit candidates for the work of the restitution of all things? If we at this moment can lift up our eyes to God and there comprehend the infinite purpose He had in His mind when He created us in the beginning, then for the first time in our lives we will begin to understand the purpose of suffering, of trial, of tribulation and pain. If we can see no more hope in His calling than that we should die some day and go to heaven and there do nothing more forever than to sit on cloud nine and play a harp, then it is little wonder that suffering and tribulation are a conundrum and a wretched nuisance to us now. But, if we can grasp the cardinal truth first declared by God Himself in **Gen. 1:26** — "Let Us make man (Adam) in Our image, and after Our likeness, and let them have dominion ..." — then we will understand why the Lord takes such infinite care to bring His sons to perfection. Do you think for one moment that in those coming ages of blessedness and restoration the kingdom will be left to other people! I trow not. The kingdom and the dispensation of the fullness of times, which is to follow, will be given into the hands of God's choicest sons —

saints fully grown, perfected through suffering, matured through trial, far beyond the reach of corruption and decay, far above the realm of greed and selfishness or any such thing. If this perfection should be lacking in even one saint, then in some future day or in some future age a wicked one might arise as one did in the past, saying in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars (sons) of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." **Isa. 14:12,14.**

No, my suffering brother and sister! This scene shall never be repeated because here and now in this world our wise and heavenly Father is perfecting through suffering a race of twice born men, who in every respect are becoming like Jesus Christ, their Master, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." **Phil. 2:6-8.** And He, having been made perfect through suffering, was highly exalted and given a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. If you will re-read my little book, According to the Purpose, your eyes will catch a fresh vision of God's eternal purpose and plan for the Adamic man He is making in His likeness.

Through the valley of death into the realm of life and joy is God's way to sonship, and the secret of "glorying in tribulation" is to understand the eternal purpose of trial. He who has his eye on the glorious result of his suffering and sees the perfection toward which God is moving him and the end grand and glorious will not kick against God's methods of making that perfection a reality, even though he should sweat great drops of blood in the trying process. Even a worldly person might glory in the severest trials if by such trials he could be assured that he would reach some high or lofty position of power and wealth. He would not glory in suffering for suffering's sake, but in the hope that by this means he might attain his end.

Did not Paul set forth this principle when he said, "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." **1 Cor. 9:25.** Is it not true that athletes in their various fields of endeavor always master their own bodies and bring them into subjection? Do boxers striving to obtain world titles allow themselves to become fat, lazy gluttons? No, indeed they do not! Do long distance runners attain world renown by spending their days in idleness and ease? No, they do not! They spend hours and days in often agonizing preparation. Yet theirs at best is only a corruptible crown, which within days will fade as a leaf and be forgotten.

If, then, these men strive so hard to gain a few pounds of hard muscle in their efforts to obtain a fading crown, what shall we say of those saints whom God is preparing to become the lords and rulers of the universe? Shall not they be led through trials, temptations, sufferings, tribulations, sickness, pain and death or any other circumstance known to God by which He might perfect the work of sonship He has begun? Should it seem an unthinkable thing that saints, realizing the glorious end of their suffering, should begin to glory in tribulation? Surely Paul must have reached this state of blessedness when he wrote, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Can we possibly imagine Paul making a statement like that if his spiritual mind were unable to grasp the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory these sufferings were working for him? No, he could not have done so, for Paul was like all other men. In the natural he shrank from infirmities, but when he saw that through these very weaknesses and distresses the all-wise Lord was making him strong, then he gloried in them, even as we also will do the moment we see beyond the distress of our pain and tribulation into the glory our sufferings are working in us.

Nothing I can write or say on this subject of suffering can produce anything like the understanding the word of God will give as the Holy Spirit reveals His truths to our hearts. Let us then take special notice of some of the statements given by inspiration for our learning and eternal good. Peter was the apostle to whom Jesus said, "Feed My sheep," and of all the Bible writers I have not found any more capable of feeding the soul and spirit than this man Peter. Paul was the most logical of writers. James seems to be the most practical; but Peter is a feeder of the sheep, filling his epistles with blessed food for the soul of man.

In the first epistle, chapter four and verse one, he uncovers in the simplest fashion the first and most elementary purpose of Christian suffering. First he sets forth the sufferings of Christ and asks that we have the same mind as our blessed Lord. Then he discloses the most basic reason for suffering in the most beautiful but forceful terms. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Now when a man or woman comes to Christ and believes on His name, that person is undoubtedly saved. Christ has redeemed him. He has put His Spirit within him and the believer is "begotten of God." If he has thoroughly believed in Christ, then he is thoroughly saved. But I need hardly remind you that from the moment of his salvation onward the Lord requires a steady growth in grace. Whether Christians like the expression or not is no concern of mine, but the truth is that from that moment forward the newly saved man must work out his salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), knowing that it is God that worketh in him to will and to do His good pleasure. If that new-born Christian does as ninety-five per cent of all Christians do, saying in his heart, "I am saved. I am ready for heaven. I will just wait until I die or until the Lord comes and then enter into rest," that man will go along in the doldrums of Christian experience for the rest of his days, never becoming a mature son of God. No new revelation will brighten his life. No new understanding will enlighten his mind. After fifty years of such a life he will find he has not advanced in understanding nor matured in spiritual stature. I have heard preachers discourage their people from reaching out unto God with words such as these: "We are saved. We have received the baptism of the Spirit. We believe in divine healing, and we are waiting for the coming of the Lord. There is no more than this." Ah, my brother, you have not yet touched the fringe! There are mighty oceans of experience before you that no man has ever yet explored. There are unspeakable things unlawful for a man to utter. 2 Cor. 12:2.

Once upon a time, so the fairy tale goes, there was a frog who lived in a well. He was happy with his surroundings and was quite sure he possessed all the water there was in the world. When one day he was told of lakes and rivers outside, he would not believe. Neither did he pay any attention when others described the mighty oceans that lay at the river's end. "Oh, no," he said. "That is all nonsense and there is no truth in it. I have lived here for years. There is no water other than this and this is good enough for me."

Poor, foolish little fellow he was, but not nearly as foolish as those self-satisfied Christians who make no attempt to add to their faith that list of Christian graces which Peter so beautifully enumerates in these words of wisdom: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he has purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the: everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." **2. Pet. 1:5-11.** Surely we can see from these words that the Holy Spirit intends to do an almost endless work of refining in the life of every believer as with infinite care He prepares His saints to reign with Christ on His throne.

You may dislike to hear it, my brothers and sisters, but the church system in our day is full of Christians who, though they believe in Christ, walk almost entirely after the flesh. They live in the spiritual predicament in which Paul found himself when he wrote the seventh chapter of Romans. They live on the low spiritual plane where the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are so contrary the one to the other that they can never do the things they would. More and more in these last days the church system manifests the seventeen works of the flesh. The more we see of these modern revivals with their card signing and handshakes, along with their lightness and flippant familiarity, the more prevalent do these works of the flesh become. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time

past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5:19-21. All these works of the flesh are found among Christians who live not after the Spirit, but mind the things of the physical body, which is the flesh.

With these precepts in mind we will have a better foundation from which to understand the words of Peter quoted above. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." I am not sure that I can satisfactorily explain just why or how it is that he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, but I am sure that those saints who have been buffeted during their lives with much suffering will understand better than I am able to explain how it happens that he who suffers in the flesh finds the flesh with all its enormous propensities for sin begin to fall off and lose its power, "for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." Suffering has a marvelous sanctifying and cleansing power. Its power to bring saints to maturity is boundless to say the least. There are many, many ways by which Christians suffer, and if we find space, we may enumerate some of them, but let us begin with physical suffering as it concerns sickness and pain.

You are probably aware of the fact that, while men and women remain healthy and strong and able to boast that they have never known a day of sickness, they are inclined to lean far more on their paltry natural strength than upon the power and health of God. To them the flesh is strong and will never know any need. We become like the Egyptians, who put their trust in horses and chariots and not in the Spirit of God, knowing not that their horses are flesh and not spirit. But, when suddenly this strong tree of the flesh is smitten, as was the case with the boasting Nebuchadnezzar, and without warning this tower of human strength is struck down in utter helplessness and we find ourselves tormented with unaccustomed pain and beset with incredible physical weakness until perhaps we are unable to swallow even water, and, being unable to rise, we must be waited upon hand and foot by others until in our forlorn distress and weakness we begin to feel that we may die, then for the first time in our lives we are brought face to face with the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh. Only a week previously all things in the world loomed large and looked worthwhile, but now they are poor fading leaves, so temporal, so weak, so insecure that now they hold no glamour at all. There in the valley of pain and misery, we begin to cease from the lusts that create sin to lay hold rather on the things that are eternal and can never fade away. In our weakness and infirmity our minds begin to travel beyond the veil of the flesh, beyond the realm of the natural, and beyond the domain of the physical and the passing to lay hold on things, which are spirit and abide forever. The spirit so long obscured by the flesh now reaches far beyond the dominion of decay to the meadows where flowers never fade, beyond the mortal to the immortal and beyond the corruptible to the incorruptible. In his distress and pain the sufferer knows full well that, if God in grace should restore him to health again, he henceforth will hold with a slackened grip the earthly things that appeared so big and precious heretofore, "for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

What I have said may come as a surprise to those who have never known illness of any kind, but the words I speak will be as showers upon mown grass to those who have passed through the experience. I give my personal testimony to say that I am most thankful to God for a long life of good and vibrant health, scarcely ever knowing what it is to be sick or tired, but thrice in my life I have been struck down to experience for a season something of the misery of pain and the wearying weakness of the flesh. Let me testify further to say that always in those times of weakness and misery the things of the natural realm faded into nothingness and insignificance while the things of the Spirit became strong and important. It was then above all other times that the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh became increasingly evident. Then and there it was made abundantly clear that the flesh profiteth nothing and the things of the flesh profit nothing. In such times as these, though one had thrilled to earth's vain pleasure, it profited nothing now, and though one were a millionaire, his money could not help him now, for money buys things only for the flesh. But the things of the Spirit, which hitherto had been somewhat carelessly shoved aside, were those that now became strong, altogether worthwhile and eternal. With these things in mind we begin to see afresh the blessing of suffering and we understand aright what the wise apostle meant when he said, "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he should no longer spend the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Though we have mentioned first the possibility of physical suffering through illness, physical suffering is by no means the greatest of all suffering. I suppose there may be ten thousand different avenues through which

God's people suffer and, though I shall not attempt to mention more than a few of them, I am sure that the Lord will make real to every reader the blessing of the particular kind of suffering God will use to bring about the kind of perfection each alone must have. Do you not think it is a most remarkable achievement just to gain the knowledge that "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"? What a blessing it is to know that our suffering has not been purposeless, but is accomplishing something great and eternal in causing us to see the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh and of every temporal and natural thing!

No man on earth can foretell by what door suffering will enter nor down which pathway his stealthy feet will tread, as the poet said so well:

"I was standing by my window yester-morning
Without a thought of sorrow or of care,
When I saw the postman coming up the pathway
With such a merry tune and jolly air.
He rang the bell and whistled as he waited;
Then he said, 'Good morning to you, Jack!'
But he little knew the sorrow that he brought me

When he handed me a letter edged in black." How suddenly and unexpectedly tragedy falls across our pathway! But if our understanding is right and our faith good before God, each and every trial and affliction that arises in our lives will serve to wean us away from the flesh and cause us to lay hold upon the things of the Spirit. As we bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in our mortal flesh. Compare 2. Cor. 4:10.

The moment we fall into suffering, affliction, tribulation, failure in business, loss of friends or any such trial, there will never lack a host of Job's comforters who will seize upon the opportunity to show us that our sufferings have come upon us because God is displeased with our lives and is punishing us for our wrong doing. Never lend an ear to such unlearned, unenlightened and ignorant people! Rather call to mind the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Remember our blessed Lord, who knew no sin, who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again. When He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously, who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

In a meditation on a subject of such far-reaching potential as that of Christian suffering one can do little more than introduce the truth. It will be an immeasurable blessing for all who suffer tribulation of any sort if they will take their Bible concordance and follow through scripture the themes of suffering, tribulation, affliction, temptation and trial. They will be both surprised and gratified by what they discover and what they will learn. I guarantee that those who are willing to let the word of God speak for itself will develop an entirely different attitude and understanding toward suffering in all its dimensions once they begin to see the eternal weight of glory their trial is working in them for the benefit of the ages to come.

The Apostle Paul was a giant in spiritual experience; yet for all that he was constantly amazed and distressed by the endless trials, temptations and afflictions that like parasites and unwelcome guests crowded into his pathway. So troublesome, hateful and distressing were these afflictions to him that he describes them as a "thorn in the flesh". Anyone who has endured the painful misery of a thorn in his flesh that continually pricked and jabbed at every movement of the body, or a particle in the eye that tormented to distraction, may understand the abhorrence Paul felt toward these constant and detestable buffetings, which he endured all his life. In the eleventh chapter of second Corinthians, after relating the account of his sufferings at the hands of spurious apostles and false brethren, he proceeds to tell of the violence he suffered throughout his ministry. "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that

which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." **2 Cor. 11:23-30.** These together with a long list of other sufferings endured by Paul continually were undoubtedly the "buffetings" he referred to as "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations." See **2 Cor. 12:7.**

Do not suppose for one moment that Paul was not concerned or distressed by all these tribulations. They were just as fierce a lion in his path or as weighty a millstone about his neck as they would be to you or to me. Crushed and devastated he sought the Lord in his distress three times, earnestly requesting the removal of these afflictions. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." **Verse 8.** No doubt he reasoned how much better and how much more efficiently he could do his work if he were free from the continual, violent and unreasonable opposition arising from the Jews and false brethren, how much more effective his ministry would be without the continual weariness of body, the perils of the wilderness and of the city, and the disgusting beatings with the lash and with the rod and the constant danger of being stoned or thrown into jail. It would have been so much easier, so he thought, if all had gone smoothly and everybody had been amiable toward him and he had been a hero, well spoken of by all. For this reason he earnestly sought the Lord twice, and still there was no change or relief from his suffering. Then in his desperation he sought the Lord a third time that these distressing tribulations and sufferings would depart from him. To his amazement the Lord spoke to his heart and the message He gave was not the message he expected, but this: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." **Verse 9.** What an incredible revelation that was! Who but Christ could have revealed a truth such as that? This not only explained the purpose of his own suffering but also made clear the mystery of the sufferings of the prophets of old, so vividly described in Hebrews, chapter eleven. It explained how even Jesus Christ Himself was made perfect through suffering and it showed in most eloquent terms the enigma of the suffering of saints throughout the entire church age, and, if we can believe it, it throws abundant illumination also on our own sufferings.

When the Lord by this revelation opened the eyes of Paul to see the true purpose and the absolute necessity of his tribulation and the sufferings of every other saint as well, his lips were opened to speak forth the most blessed confession of his heart, a confession which seems to be one of the most remarkable expressions of spiritual consolation and comprehension ever spoken. Listen to him as he utters these words of understanding: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Some men glory in visions and others in revelation, but Paul, who had more of these than they all, said, ". . . Of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." **2 Cor. 12:5.**

Long centuries ago the disconsolate Jacob moaned over the distressing tribulations that beset his way. He seemed to have lost two sons and now the prospect loomed large that he would lose another. His sorrow and heartache, he feared, would bring his gray head with sorrow to the grave. In his inconsolable misery, he wailed out the woes of his heart in these disconsolate words: "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me" **Gen. 42:36.** Poor, broken-hearted old man from whom the kind hand of God's guidance was hidden! How closely does his lamentation resemble the complaint of thousands of saints in our day, who, knowing nothing of the wonder working power of tribulation, fiery trial and affliction, think their God has departed from them and they are doomed to perish in despair. Oh, the difference the light of understanding brings to our grief stricken hearts! Poor Jacob in his desolate dejection wailed out the woeful words, "All these things are against me!" But Paul in the light of what he had learned through his own tribulations victoriously cried, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." **Rom. 8:28.**

Notice now what wonders are wrought by the suffering God in His grace has permitted to perfect us and how step by step that very suffering leads us to the most excellent of all things. Jacob once saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven upon which angels ascended and descended. Paul in spirit saw another beautiful ladder whose shining steps rose one above the other in their ascent to the realms of God. In Romans, chapter five, he writes, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." **Rom. 5:3-5.** If these be not ladder rungs from the lowly realm of the flesh

to the more excellent way of the Spirit where the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, then I know not what these may be. Tribulation leads to patience; patience leads to experience; experience leads to hope; and hope makes not ashamed because there the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Each rung in this ladder rises in a giant step toward the plateau of mature sonship.

We cannot now consider each step at length. Let us notice, however, that tribulation worketh patience. Now we see what a wonderful advance this is, for James has bidden us to "let patience have her perfect work" that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Oh, suffering brother or sister! Is it not a giant upward step to discover that our tribulation works patience and that, when patience has completed her perfecting work, we stand before God, perfect and entire, wanting nothing! Why, in my opinion, this one promise alone would be worth a lifetime of suffering. Surely such a triumph as this would be unattainable any other way! I suppose it was in the knowledge that tribulation works patience that Paul taught us to be patient in tribulation. If we are patient in tribulation, then patience can have her perfect work. If this should take a lifetime, surely that would be immaterial. Only this morning I made my complaint to God, saying, "Lord, there are so many things I don't understand!" But no sooner had I uttered the words and waited briefly for a reply than the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "There are so many things you do not need to understand." So, if you question why your affliction besets you all your life, leave it in the hands of God. He alone knows how much firing and tempering you need that patience may have her perfect work, making you perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Now patience worketh experience. I cannot overestimate the extreme value of experience. After fifty years of serving the Lord I am thoroughly convinced that nothing is ever fully learned but by experience. Talk as we may about suffering, tribulation or any subject we wish, our words will be little more than idle philosophy until the Lord has caused us to walk with Him through the valleys of death, the paths of tribulation, the place of betrayal by false brethren, the unreasonableness of unfilial children, the despair of paternal neglect, and a thousand other stormy seas. Those who have suffered with Him understand by reason of their experience.

Experience, once it is attained, leads to hope. I should like to write a book on hope, but let me say that hope always precedes real faith. Never, never be ashamed of hope. It is the hope of salvation that first brings sinners to the feet of Jesus. It was hope that made the little woman with the issue of blood push her way through the crushing throng to touch the hem of Christ's garment. It was hope that made the blind men shout, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" It was hope that made the father of the demoniac cry, "If Thou canst do anything, have mercy on us and help us!" It was hope that made the men tear the tiling from the roof to get the palsied man to Jesus. It was hope that made the impotent man lie for thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethesda. Hope maketh not ashamed. Hope cares not what enemies think. It steps right over the heads of unbelieving men. It causes the love of God to spring up in the troubled breast. Paul even ventures to say that we are saved by hope. Rom. 8:24.

Hope is one of the three virtues that abide forever. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." **1 Cor. 13:13**. It was hope that brought our forefathers to this new world. It is in hope that we labor, plant our fields, and do our work. It is through hope that Abraham believed in hope. The light of hope is the first step toward real faith and hope that maketh not ashamed places our feet in those Elysian Fields where, glory of glories, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Blessed and wonderful as these things are, we must never forget the lowly root from which these glories sprang the root of suffering where tribulation worked patience, and patience worked experience, and experience worked hope; and hope makes not ashamed because the love of God is being mightily shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. How often I have heard Christians say, "We need more love." Well, love, my friend, is a spiritual thing. It is a grace that comes by the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ. It cannot be manufactured, possessed or shown apart from Him. It has its roots in tribulation. No tribulation no patience, no experience, no hope and no love.

Let no man be moved by these afflictions, for "yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." **1 Thess. 3:3**. "We ourselves glory in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations which ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." **2 Thess. 1:4, 5**. What marvelous words are these!

However much we are afflicted in this vale of affliction, or however much we suffer in this valley of the shadow of death, or however fierce our tribulation in these burning fiery furnaces, be consoled by remembering this: Our affliction is light indeed compared to the glory it is producing. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

CHAPTER TWO THE FRUIT OF SUFFERING

The Apostle Paul wrote a fatherly and confidential letter to his spiritual son Timothy. The illustrious apostle had known long years of experience in the faith. Times without number he had discovered that men were seldom loved because they were godly, but all too often they were persecuted for righteousness' sake, even as our Lord Jesus Christ had warned His disciples. Timothy was a man of God with an honorable background of godliness, but compared to Paul he was yet a youth in experience, though it is believed by some that he was at least forty years old when Paul wrote his epistles to him.

Paul had much truth to impart to this young man, not the least of which was the important fact that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." **2 Tim. 3; 10-13.**

Recently I received a letter from a sister in Missouri in which she makes this well-considered and thoughtful statement: "I find myself so often having to explain to people the 'why' of (heir sufferings. I know of almost no one who has come out unto I he Lord who has not been attacked by parents, friends, and people whom they love. This is what hurts. We can suffer hurt from strangers and it means nothing; but from close relatives and friends it hurts. The Lord led me through many coals of fire until it nearly took my life. I literally almost died from a broken heart more times than one and through it all I learned the reasons; and when I knew what God was doing, not to me but for me, I could rejoice and see the results. God showed me that the mulish emotions hurt. Jealousy, revenge, unforgiveness, pride, selfishness in any form were a cancer that had to go and that, when these were wounded, they must be wounded to death. In other words, they must suffer until they no longer exist. Also I learned that we can let, that is, permit, them to go and thus shorten our sufferings or we can stubbornly continue to lick our wounds and continue to suffer. These things are difficult to get across to someone who is wounded."

To such a statement of truth as this we assent with a hearty amen, firstly because such understanding is born of experience and secondly because these words bear witness to the truth. Many thousands who ponder these precepts can attest to the agonizing sufferings they have endured because people they loved more dearly than their own souls have well nigh killed them by breaking their hearts through their maliciousness, malignity, indifference, unbelief, ungodliness, unthankfulness and misrepresentation. But, brother, sister, I urge you to learn this superlative fact: The suffering you endure is killing only those things in you that God has decreed must die. Perhaps it is personal pride that is hurting and giving so much pain. Had all gone well on your behalf, all men would have said you were blessed of God, but because in the eyes of friend or foe you suffer while men of lesser consecration exult in prosperity and well-being, both friend and foe gather as Job's comforters to condemn you. But they do not know this magnificent truth: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." It may be that God intended that some subtle unbelief should perish from our hearts, for it is often true that, though we have committed our lives, our plans, and our children to God, we are betimes inclined to get ourselves into a state of bewilderment and unbelief, completely forgetting that the Lord has promised to keep that which was committed to Him, whether it be our children, our lives, or the daily affairs that concern our existence here on earth.

Some time ago a dear brother confided to me some of his family problems. It seemed he had one son who was causing him much concern and distress. One day, as he earnestly sought the Lord concerning his son, the Spirit halted him in the midst of his intercession to speak directly to his heart, and this is the manner in which the Lord spoke to him: "Never mind your son. I am not interested in him just now. I am interested in you." So the dear father ceased from his worrying over the actions of his son to put his confidence in the Lord and give ear to what the Spirit would have him learn. Brother, Sister, if we could only learn, and that right early, that it is for our sake and our eternal good and sonship that these sufferings fall upon us, we could release the problem that causes such distress, commit the matter to God, and see the Lord's face shining as a sun of consolation through our bitter tears. We would then have learned the lesson we needed to know, it may be patience or forgiveness or longsuffering or to cease from unbelief or some sin. There is no way we humans can tell what glory the Lord has accomplished through our suffering, but know this: Our light affliction, cruel as was its power to crucify the flesh, enduring but for a moment, worked for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory and we like Job, of whom we wrote before, have come to see the glory of God in a new way, and, seeing Him, we have been changed more into His likeness, for our Father has added to us double of His goodness and glory.

Thirty years ago my wife and I endured one of the most disconcerting tribulations of our lives. Not only had our life's work been swept away through the envy and malice of conniving men, but lies and misrepresentations were circulated from coast to coast with what at least appeared to be the hope of bringing us into perpetual disrepute. In the midst of this tribulation one good sister, who had read the evil reports, said to me, "Why don't you write an article and give them back as good as you got?" But the Spirit had told me to keep silent, and so I replied, "Sister, if I did that, I would be as bad as they are." Learn to relinquish your woes, dear brethren. Do not hold on to them or in any way justify yourself. Your sufferings are of God. Therefore let them go. Commit them into the hands of Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." **Rom. 12:20, 21.** In your suffering commit the keeping of your souls unto Him as unto a faithful Creator.

You will discover that time is a great leveler. It has a way of bringing down the mighty from their high seats. Time has a way of bringing out the truth. It has a habit of burying in the dust those who were your tormentors. For a little moment it may seem better to be the persecutor than the persecuted, the scoffer than the scoffed, the afflicter than the afflicted, the reviler than the reviled, the scourger rather than the scourged, but it is God who is with His people. One like the Son of God will stand in the fire with you as He walked in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The angel of the Lord was in the lions' den with Daniel. He is there now with you, too. The Lord shook loose the bonds of Paul and Silas. A mighty angel smote Peter on his side and led him forth from his chains and imprisonment. The angel of the Lord is breaking your bonds, too. One man is a majority when God is with him and all the hosts of the world are a miserable minority when God is not on their part.

Fear not; I am with thee! O be not afraid!
For I am thy God; I will still give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." **2 Tim. 3:12.** The spirit of Christianity is so opposite to the spirit of the world that he who gives himself up entirely to God, making the Holy Scriptures the rule of his life and action, will be always more or less reviled and persecuted for righteousness' sake. If the Christian gives no quarter to vice and iniquity, we may be sure that vice and iniquity will give no quarter to him either. Beware when all men speak well of you, for, if they do, you are compromising with sin somewhere. Otherwise they would not be so friendly toward you. While "evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." **2 Tim. 3:13-15.**

It has always been a source of amazement to Christians to discover that their godliness and well-doing is often times the basic cause of their suffering. People seldom love you because you have done them good. It is hard to deny the fact that there is a strange basic tendency in humanity that often causes mankind to resent the good that has been done to them and return evil in its place. This strange evil tendency can be clearly seen even on an international plane, as, for instance, is seen in the oft repeated unkindness and ill-disposed spitefulness of France toward the Anglo-Saxon world, who twice in the last century has rescued them from their enemies. Very early in life I learned that friends could not be won by doing them favors, for they, alas, soon begin to expect the favors and show resentment if they are not forthcoming. Many thousands of parents are making the same mistake with their children. They lavish every imaginable gift and kindness upon them and in return receive neither thanks, appreciation, or love. Does not the scripture speak thus of Christ, who "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." They resented His kindness and mercy and, I thought He came to deliver them, in essence they cried, "We will not have this man to rule over us. So they rejected Him and hanged Him on a tree, though not one of them could find fault in Him at all or convince Him of any sin. If a man therefore in good conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully, let him take heart and be of good courage, for if, when you do well and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. "For what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently?" Almost any reasonable person is aware that our faults need to be corrected, but if our good is evil spoken of and we receive it with patience and understanding, this is acceptable with God. When people dislike you, they will find fault with the way you hold your spoon, but if they like you, they will overlook almost any fault.

"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their (error, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." **1 Pet. 3:13-18.**

Suffering of any kind, rightly accepted and understood, always works death to the flesh, but life to the spirit. Through suffering the things of the corrupt and carnal mind perish and die, but the things that are of the Spirit increase and grow. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance. All these things grow and increase under fiery trial, affliction, suffering and temptation. Conversely, the works of the flesh, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like, are cut off and perish from the lives of those who are under affliction. I do not think we can emphasize too strongly that suffering for righteousness' sake is a God sent purifier, putting to death all corrupt and carnal tendencies while being at the same moment a prolific fertilizer to all graces of the Spirit. Since every son of God must be brought to perfection before the blessed day of their adoption and manifestation, let us then with great willingness yield ourselves to the refining fires of the Spirit, knowing that in all things it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.

To suffer for righteousness' sake is the honor and happiness of Christians. To suffer for the cause of truth, a good conscience or any part of Christian duty is a great honor. The delight of it is greater than the torment, the honor much more than the disgrace, and the gain much more than the loss. God's people have no reason to be afraid of the threats and rage of their enemies, because their enemies are God's enemies. His face is against them. His power is above them. They are objects of His curse and can do nothing to His children but by His permission. Instead of being terrified by the fear of men, we should sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and let Him be our fear and dread as I lie prophet Isaiah stated (8:13) or as Jesus said, **"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I shall forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him (that is, God) which after He hath killed hath power to cast you into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him."** **Luke 12: 4, 5.**

The more we fear God, the less we fear men. Therefore a sense of all God's divine perfection is a perfect antidote against the fear of man or any suffering he can inflict upon us. To Understand the perfect ways of God is a great fortress against all despondency in any manner of suffering, trial or tribulation. If we know that with God and with them that love Him all things absolutely all things — are working together for our good whether we understand it or not, then is not this a mighty bulwark to our faith? Does it not make us say, "I can do all things, be all things, and suffer all things for Christ's sake and for the sake of the wonderful good He is working out in our lives"? All confession of our faith before men ought to be made with meekness and modesty in the fear of God.

How good it would be if every saint could learn early in his Christian experience that his life is as clay in the hands of the potter to be molded, not according to his likes and dislikes, but according to the design of the potter. From the time of our it-generation until the day we stand before the Lord complete and perfect there will never be a day in which the Lord will rest from His marvelous work of grace and sonship. This work must continue unabated until we stand complete in Him. If we submit ourselves to the fashioning of His skilful hands, we will be vessels unto honor and praise and glory in His presence, but if we squirm and struggle and resist, we may not be found perfect In (he day of His coming. It is very, very easy for Christians to sing:

"Have Thine own way, Lord; have Thine own way.
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting yielded and still.

It is easy to sing that beautiful verse of song, but the test of our sincerity will be revealed when the Spirit of the Lord begins in earnest to break us, melt us, and mold us after His will. How will we react when He begins to wash the rocks and corruption out of the clay of our lives by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning? What will we do when the Potter begins to make the clay pliable by beating out and crushing the material, which must be removed before our vessel can be molded at all? How will we react when He places us upon the wheels and, without asking our permission, begins to mold us into the vessels of His choice — not the vessels of our own choice? And what will we say when the vessel He has molded is placed upon the slab and pushed into the roaring furnace for the final fiery process of tempering before it is presented to Him in perfection?

All these molding processes speak of suffering, pain and tribulation, and every one of them is designed by God to rid us of all unnecessary and detrimental things, while on the other hand adding to us those graces of the Spirit that must be manifested in the lives of the saints of God. Listen to the beloved Peter as he unfolds the wonderful process by which we become partakers of the divine nature, thus securing an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God, and by which also we escape the lust and corruption that is in the world. Give careful audience to what he says, for it is weighty and true. "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:3-11.**

Is not this another spiritual ladder by which we rise from the lowly earth of our carnal selves to the vaulted skies of sonship und identity with Jesus Christ? We read over these productive passages much too quickly and with far too little thought and consideration of their weightiness. Enough truth lies in the fertile field of these few verses to keep us pondering for months to come. Add to your faith virtue. Of virtue Funk and Wagnall's dictionary has this to say: "It is the quality of moral righteousness or excellence; rectitude. The practice of moral duties and the abstinence from immorality and vice; a life devoted to virtue; sexual purity; chastity. A

particular type of moral excellence, especially one of those considered to be of special importance in philosophical or religious doctrine." A few of the synonyms of this word are — goodness, morality, rectitude and righteousness. Let the Holy Spirit add these virtues to your faith while you shun the repugnant filth and corruption offered by this Sodom-like age.

To virtue we are exhorted to add knowledge — not the knowledge of the world that puffs up, but the knowledge of God that gives understanding. The knowledge of the holy (one) gives understanding. Prov. 9:10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Prov. 1:7. He that loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but fools despise knowledge and instruction. "Wisdom is the principal thing," said the wise man; "therefore get wisdom, but with all thy getting get understanding." First to our faith we add virtue and then to our virtue we add knowledge. Here we are brought in contact with the mind of Christ. Casting off the carnal mind with its human way of looking at things, we begin to let the mind of Christ dwell within us. Then to knowledge we are to add temperance. Be temperate in all things as the scriptures tell us. Temperance appears to me to be the very first rung in the ladder leading to the fullness of the nine graces of the Holy Spirit, thus: temperance, meekness, faithfulness, goodness, gentleness, longsuffering, peace, joy, and love. Love is the Ultimate. It is not something we can turn on at will and show, as so many Christians imagine. It is a grace of the Holy Spirit, which either we possess because of His indwelling or we do not possess. Love is the more excellent way. It is a virtue of God. Love is never given as a gift to any man. It comes as a result of the Christ dwelling and living His life in our hearts. Love is a fruit of God's Spirit. It cannot be separated from the Spirit. It is the highest and most sublime of all spiritual virtues. Even true faith worketh by love. Gal. 5:6.

To temperance Peter exhorts us to add patience. Call to remembrance here that "tribulation worketh patience." Lest we forget that suffering is the true theme of our study, let me remind you that Paul teaches us to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and continue instant in prayer, Oh brothers and sisters, how impatient we become in our tribulation! How we chafe in our sufferings, so often demanding instant relief! And, if in sickness we are unable to get quick relief and healing from the Lord, how quickly we forget to be instant in prayer to go running instead to the doctor to get him to do what the Lord delayed to do! Should our suffering come from another source, we seek the help of the arm of flesh to deliver us from the tribulation into which the Lord has brought us for our betterment. The time has certainly come for us to present our bodies a living sacrifice upon the altar — not a dead sacrifice, but a living sacrifice, placing ourselves upon the altar as Isaac did, fearless of the knife that was intended to destroy his natural life.

Abraham, in offering his son, knew that God was able to raise him from the dead, not in the likeness of his old self, but in newness of life after the Spirit. This kind of sacrifice is our reasonable service. Rom. 12:1. "Be not conformed to this world," said Paul, "but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." How wonderfully these scriptures lead us step by step in Christian experience until at last we stand in the likeness of Christ, possessing the renewed mind, which is the mind of Christ.

To patience we are to add godliness. 1 Pet. 1:6. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," said Paul (1 Tim. 4:8), but "bodily exercise profiteth little." Therefore in verse 7 he exhorts us to exercise ourselves unto godliness. Most men suppose that gain is godliness, but the Holy Spirit teaches us that godliness with contentment is great gain. Others have a form of godliness, but totally deny the power of it, but Paul instructs the saints to lead a quiet life in all godliness. 1 Tim. 2:2. The mystery of godliness is perhaps the greatest of all mysteries. 1 Tim. 3:16. The mighty mystery of godliness is seen in that God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit by His resurrection from the dead. Christ was seen of angels and of men for forty days after His resurrection after which He was received up into heaven from whence He poured forth His glorious Spirit of power. The sacred mystery that God was manifest in the flesh continues to this very hour and is manifest anew each and every time Jesus Christ our Lord comes into the life of a sinner to transform him into a child of God. When the creator made the first Adam, the dust of the earth was made flesh, but when Jesus Christ, the last Adam, appeared, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Can we wonder that the apostle exclaimed, "Great is the mystery of godliness!" Believers become Godlike, not by trying to be so, but by letting Christ live His life in their mortal flesh that it be "not I. but Christ." He gives to us the mind of Christ that we may be transformed by the renewing of the mind. The three English words transformed (Rom. 12:2), changed (2 Cor. 3:18), and

transfigured (Matt. 17:2) are all translated from the Greek word metamorphoo, from which comes our English word metamorphosis, which means to change from one form or substance to another. To be changed thus is the beginning of the resurrection. Can we wonder, then, that the Spirit exhorts us to add godliness, or God-likeness, to the virtue of patience?

To godliness we are to add brotherly kindness. "His merciful kindness is great toward us," the **Psalmist** said (117:2), and "let the righteous smite me (this could be suffering): it shall be a kindness." **Psa. 141:5**. To be kind is to be gentle and considerate in behavior, good hearted and benign. A kind act is a manifestation of good heartedness. Therefore the scripture urges, lie ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." The loving kindness of God is shed abroad in all the world. It is manifested toward those who love Him and to those who know nothing of Him. Even when He smites or wounds, it is done in kindness. It shall be an excellent oil. Saints should never engage in any act for which they will afterwards be sorry. Neither should they ever repay evil for evil, knowing that the evil they have received and the tribulation they endured are part of that suffering sent by God for their eternal benefit.

To brotherly kindness add love. The love of God is always the highest rung in the ladder. I know it is true that all God's works are done in love. Love never dies, but abides forever. God is love and the end of all godliness is that we should be like Him. It was God who so loved the world that He gave His Son, and the good apostle tells us, "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and gave Himself for us."

I have enlarged somewhat on these precious virtues that we may be the more aware that suffering in whatsoever form it comes is for the definite purpose of bringing the saints to maturity in all that is Godlike and of decreasing all that is natural and of the first Adam. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." **1 Pet. 4:1,2**. "For even hereunto are ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." **1 Pet. 2:21-23**.

In this beautiful passage Christ Jesus is set forth as the example for all to follow. "He committed Himself to God, who judgeth righteously." This principle is of utmost importance in all tribulation and affliction. We need not defend ourselves. God will take care of our foes. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He suffered, He threatened not. He stood as a lamb dumb before her shearers and answered nothing. Man in his reviling could say what he pleased, think as he pleased and judge as he pleased, but Jesus Christ rested in the assurance that God, the judge of all, was fully aware of all the truth. Therefore with humility and confidence He committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. What a lesson for sons to learn! Oh that suffering saints would learn to commit the keeping of their souls to God! Cease from your own arguments and the striving to defend yourself and let Him be your mighty rock and Impregnable defense. Cease from trying either to convince your enemies or to convince God and remember rather the word of wisdom spoken by Peter: "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." **1 Pet. 4:19**.

Three outstanding truths are immediately evident in this verse. First, our sufferings are usually according to the will of God. Secondly, the faithful Creator is at work in our sufferings, hinging us into the image of Christ; and, thirdly, we should learn to take our hands off the whole affair and commit all into the hands of the faithful Creator. Then will "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, lengthen, settle you." **1 Pet. 5:10**.

One of the most famous utterances ever made by the apostle Paul is found in Phil. 3:10-14. It is really a prayer. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." We cannot here launch into a lengthy exposition of this beautiful scripture, but it is plain to see that high above all other desires was the longing to know Him well in

doing so to experience the power of His resurrection and to be made conformable to His death in the hope of attaining the resurrection out from among the dead. Well did this man of God know, however, that all this hinged on one thing — the fellowship of His sufferings. Without that there could be no vital experience of or true conformity to Christ's death. Without conformity to His death there could be no resurrection from among the dead ones. After the sufferings of his life Paul knew he had reached the experience that could be identified as death. Having entered into fellowship with Christ in suffering, he had become partaker of His death and burial. Nothing pertaining to the natural realm mattered a straw to him any more. "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," he said; and on another occasion, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." No more did he hold tenaciously to this realm of death and darkness. In his identification with Christ he had died all the death it was possible to die. Henceforth resurrection and life were before him. He was attaining resurrection from among the dead ones who existed round about him — attaining it while he still walked on this earth among men. While the dead buried their dead, he was following Christ to life. To attain incorruption or immortality without death is impossible, but we can attain conformity to His death and identification with Him in it while we still walk in this world of dead men.

Even our Lord Jesus Christ "learned obedience by the things He suffered, and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." **Heb. 5:8,9.** "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." **Heb. 2:10.** It must be noticed here how consistently Paul connects perfection with suffering, not only in the two passages quoted here, but in most of the passages we have studied. Even in Verse 9 this same thought appears. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." The crowning with glory and honor came after the suffering and not without it nor before it. The whole realm from the cradle to the grave is the realm of death — not life, and in it all creation groans and groans in the agonies of the death experience. But "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." **2 Cor. 4:17,18.** "Take, my brethren, the prophets," says James, "who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." **James 5; 10,11.** Would you not say that the end of the Lord here mentioned refers to Job's perfection through suffering?

We should direct our thoughts to yet another consideration. In Col. 1:24 Paul made a statement, which cannot be understood except by the help of the Lord. Speaking of himself as a minister of the gospel (verse 23), he says, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church." I am sure that neither Paul nor anyone else could have added aught to the sufferings of Christ, for they were complete, God had witnessed the travail of His soul and was satisfied. But Paul, being a member of the body of Christ, was wise enough to see that a full amount of suffering and affliction had been allotted to each member of the body of Christ and that suffering was not yet full, but must continue until all the sons are presented in perfection. On the day that Ananias was sent to lay hands on Paul after his memorable conversion, the Lord said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." **Acts 9:16.** To this Paul attested when he said, "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." **Acts 20:23.** Until these were fully accomplished, he knew he had not yet fulfilled the full extent of his own suffering.

He was not, however, mindful only of his own sufferings. Paul well knew that he was a true member of the mystical body of Christ. For years he had taught that Christ's body was composed of many saints, all of whom, like Christ the head, must be perfected through suffering. There is no way of avoiding the conclusion that all the sons of God, members of the Christ body, must come to perfection by being chastened as sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? If, therefore, we receive not chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons (see Heb. 12:7,8); that is to say, we are illegitimate sons, not real sons. In the modern church system there are, I fear, many bastards. Many, many are loudly claiming sonship who refuse to take up the cross of suffering that they might be made conformable unto Christ's death.

Paul was showing here that Christ the body must be perfected through identification with Christ in His humiliation just as Christ the head was perfected through suffering. There can be no difference. Paul knew, as you and I should also know, that our sufferings are not only bringing eternal benefit to us personally, but they are bringing eternal benefit to the whole spiritual body of Christ. Did not Paul say, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members are honored with it"? **1 Cor. 12:26.** Can the hand be crushed and the whole body not feel the distress and pain? If a foreign particle is in the eye, will not the whole body feel the pain and will not every member strive to bring relief to the afflicted member? Therefore of a truth, when one member suffers, all suffer; when one member rejoices, all rejoice. The sufferings of Paul helped to fill up and complete the full complement of sufferings of the universal body, but to no greater extent than your sufferings and mine serve to perfect the body by filling up the full amount of its sufferings, that the body of sons in entirety may be presented faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

The suffering of the church must never be considered a matter for great depression and sadness. It was for the joy that was set before Him that Jesus Christ endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Paul, because he understood the wonderful work his own sufferings were accomplishing, said, "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong," and again, as we have just read, "who now rejoice in my sufferings." It is not the grief and pain the saints enjoy, but their cause for rejoicing is in seeing the invisible glory that is being accomplished both in them and in the entire Christ body. We, like Him, see the travail of our souls and are satisfied.

Brethren, I deplore the vain twaddle that is being preached today concerning the abundant life. From coast to coast preachers are saying the very opposite to what I am saying here. They unashamedly tell people that any kind of suffering is unnecessary. In fact, they say it is a sign of God's disfavor. They persuade the Christians that they should have the finest and best of all the good things the world has to offer — the best of jobs, the highest salaries, the finest homes, the choicest automobiles, good and luxurious furniture and an abundance of all the amenities of life. My brethren, this is not the abundant life of which Jesus spoke when He said, "I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." The abundant life consists not of temporal things. If God has favored you with them, then you may accept them, but do not deceive yourself by thinking that these temporal things are the abundant life. Job possessed all these things for which men seek, but his abundant life in Christ came when all these things were swept away. Then and not until then his eye saw the Lord. Earthly possessions are bondages and chains that tie men to this present world system, and if we set our hearts upon these uncertain riches, they will ruin us. Was it not earthly possessions that kept the rich young ruler from coming to Christ? Was it not earthly possessions that caused the rich man to say, "I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and all my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But the Lord answered and said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

As we rapidly approach the end of this age and tribulation looms larger by the hour, as we see the financial systems collapsing and money becoming worthless and losing its meaning, as we see one worlders aiming at a world government, a world money system, and a world religion, as we see that Babylon has fallen and become the hold of every unclean and hateful thing, it is time we began to look at life as it really is and the future as it will be. It is time we learned to say with Paul, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content," and cease from our love of this world's goods.

We could scarcely close this study with more fitting words than those written by Paul to the troubled Thessalonians: "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer ... And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels."

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.

The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

CHAPTER THREE SUFFERING TRIBULATION

The word of God tells us in unmistakable terms that the final days of this age of grace are to be fraught with great tribulation, and that tribulation, if we err not in understanding, will be of a kind such as the world has never before known. All previous ages have ended their course with judgment and calamity. The Edenic age, the age of innocence, ended with man's transgression and his subsequent expulsion from Eden. The age of conscience ended with the devastating flood, whose raging waters swept practically all life from the face of the earth. The age of human government ended with the tower of Babel, the catastrophic confusion of tongues and the dispersion of the people. The age of promise ended with God's chosen people, the covenant seed of Abraham, in bondage and slavery and devastating judgments against Egypt. The age of law ended with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. The age of grace in which we now live will end with great tribulation, the coming of the Lord, and the judgment of the nations. Even the blessed millennial kingdom, for which all creation has waited and prayed from time immemorial, will end with one final insurrection when Satan is loosed from his prison to gather the unbelieving nations in one last rebellion against the government of Christ. Rev. 20:7-10. In the light of these indisputable facts it is no great wonder that this age, which is the end of man's iniquitous rule, will also end with great tribulation.

Without the crucible of tribulation and suffering it is almost impossible to know a true disciple from a false one. The world is full of fair weather Christians and professors, people who "go along for the ride" or because it is the popular thing to do. I am making no mistake when I tell you that religion in general and evangelical Christianity in particular is harboring many money-hungry pulpit orators who are nothing but pretenders. They give glowing testimonies of what Christ has done in their lives, yet they go right on with their Hollywood acting and their shows in the night clubs of Reno and Las Vegas. Many of their professions arise, I fear, from the wealth they accrue rather than from a sincere change of heart. Being no true testimony to godliness, they cause others to follow their pernicious example. They popularize such sacred truths as the new birth and thus by evil usage ruin its true message. They degrade the high and holy word love, bringing it down to the level of illicit sex so that, when the word is used in its proper context, it is misunderstood.

Our Lord Jesus plainly told us that these fair weather Christians were like seed planted in stony places, which have no root in themselves but endure for a while; but when tribulation and persecution arise from the word, by and by they are offended. Matt. 13:21. Again they are likened unto men who received seed among the thorns, for, though they hear the word, yet the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. From Matt. 13:21, which I have quoted, our Lord has made it very clear that tribulation is a fiery trial sent by God to test true discipleship, that the professor who has no root in Christ will under trial be revealed for what he really is, but the saint who is genuinely grounded in Christ will be greatly established by trial and, being thereby purified, will shine forth in the image of Christ.

I cannot speak too forcefully concerning the necessity of a genuine, good and steadfast experience in Christ Jesus by which the believer is completely separated from the world by the new birth. The sinner, coming to Christ, must repent of all his former sins and completely turn away from them. He must receive Jesus Christ into his life as his Lord and Saviour and he must willingly and eternally commit the keeping of his soul and his future into the faithful care of Christ. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." **John 1:12,13.** A man who has so thoroughly received Christ as is here indicated will discover that his old life has passed away and his entire outlook has become new. He will discover that he himself has become a new creature in Christ, yea, a new creation. He will find that the sins he once loved he now hates and the things he once hated he now loves.

First believe is the message of the New Testament. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The word saved is a correct New Testament expression and to be saved is a positive New Testament experience. We find the term saved repeated over and over again both by Christ and by His apostles as they preached a salvation that can be experienced by all who believe. Compare Acts 2:47; 4:12; 16:30,31.

One of the greatest mistakes a young Christian can make is to imagine that, after he has repented of his sin and given his life to Christ, from that time forward all will be pleasant sailing, fair weather and calm seas. A Christian can make no greater mistake than this. All will not be easy nor will all be fair weather. He must remember at least two important precepts, first, that the new life he has entered upon is a spiritual walk in a spiritual realm, and second, that the world in which he dwells is a natural world in a completely corrupt and carnal realm. He will soon discover how incredibly true are the words of scripture. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." **Gal. 5:17**. He will discover to his consternation that the people who once were his friends and buddies are now no longer friends, but tend to avoid him, hoping that he will avoid them also. His life is now being lived on an entirely different plane. He will soon begin to understand what Jesus meant when He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

Secondly a young Christian must learn — and the sooner the better — that the new and beautiful life he has now embraced has not yet reached the fullness that the Lord intends it to be. The promise of God is: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." The Lord will be satisfied with nothing less than this. When one first receives Christ as his Saviour, he is a child of God, but he is an immature baby son like new, born babes in the natural realm. 1 Peter 2:2. He is beautiful and a cause for rejoicing among the angels of heaven, but, my young Christian brother or sister, "It doth not yet appear what you shall be." **1 John 3:2**. God's intention is that you through trial, temptation, suffering affliction and tribulation will grow into the full maturity of God's sons. You will become a son of God even as Jesus Christ, your elder brother, is a Son of God. Adoption in scripture bears the meaning of full mature sonship through being born into the family of God. When the voice of God spoke from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'," **Matt. 3:17**, that was adoption. Before that time Jesus was known as Jesus of Nazareth, but after this divine pronouncement He is Jesus the Christ, the anointed Son of God. It is true He was the Son of God from the manger of Bethlehem, but not the mature anointed Christ, not the Son by the rite of adoption. Henceforth the command of God is, "Hear Him! I am well pleased in Him. Whatever He says is right. Do it." Whatever He speaks is the mind of God. Whatever He says He has already received of the Father.

Wonderful as is this fact in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, I say without hesitation that this same adoption is God's highest intention for all who repent and believe on His name. It is His divine will that His newborn baby sons should progress from spiritual infancy to maturity and adoption as sons. The mind of God the Father dwelt in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why all His judgments and all His works were right and well pleasing to the Father. For this reason Jesus our Lord was never found in error or fault. That is why at the end of His life He could fearlessly demand, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" But, saint of God, here is good news for you. The great apostle Paul wrote to the saints, saying, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that was in Christ was the Father's mind, and this is the mind He exhorts us to have dwelling in us.

The unspeakable importance of the mind of Christ dwelling in His sons will be better understood when we realize that in His kingdom, when the sons of God reign, none of them will need to ask the opinion of another or even confer with others, for all will have one mind and that one mind will be the mind of Christ. Therefore the judgment of the sons of God will be the judgment of Christ. My hand and my foot are governed by one mind. Neither does the foot need to ask the opinion of the nose or ear, because the foot also is governed by one mind even as they. So likewise in the body of sons, which is the true body of Christ. Each son will have the mind of Christ dwelling in Him and no man need ever say, "Know the Lord" for all will know Him from the least to the greatest. All will have His mind, His perfect wisdom and understanding.

With such glories as these in store for God's elect dare any man in any way deny our God freedom of purpose in bringing about such blessedness? Since our Lord Jesus Christ was made perfect through suffering, should it be deemed a thing incredible, unusual or unlikely that our kind heavenly Father should use the same proven

method to produce perfection in all His sons? Should it seem strange that inspiration should proclaim, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us"? **2 Tim. 2:12.** I may err in my understanding of this statement, "If we deny Him, He will deny us," but it seems clear that if we deny or refuse to suffer with Christ, then we will be denied the right to reign with Him. Thus, if we deny Him, He will deny us.

Saints who are enduring suffering, affliction and tribulation must learn to lift up their heads and their hearts in worship and begin to glory in their tribulations as evident tokens of the love of God toward them. Instead of moaning and complaining about our pains, our rejection and the betrayals we have endured, and the friends and relatives who have turned aside and spoken evil of us and persecuted us, we should find occasion to rejoice that at least some of the sufferings of Christ are manifest in us. Saints must learn that through patience and longsuffering they will see God's plan accomplished in them. It was after the Lord had revealed to Paul that Christ's strength was made perfect in Paul's weakness that he was able to say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." **2 Cor. 12:9,10.** "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." **1 Pet. 4:14.**

Spiritual maturity brought Paul to the place where he was able to say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18,19.** These verses deserve hours of meditation. Would to God that all the Lord's people had such spiritual understanding that they might see clearly how those wretched, uncomfortable tribulations that seem to be spoiling their lives are in reality producing the glory. The glory of God is the image of Christ. Yea, further, it is the mind of Christ and the likeness of Christ.

In the land of Uz there dwelt a man whose name was Job. He was no baby saint, for one no less than God Himself had given testimony that Job was a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. God had blessed this man with great wealth and a large family. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses. His household was very great with many hired servants so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Though Job was wealthy in temporal things, rich in spiritual things and proclaimed perfect by the Lord Himself, he was perfect only on the level or plane where he stood. A tiny baby is often proclaimed perfect by the adoring parents and friends who stand and admire him, but, though he is a perfect baby, he is not a perfect man. There must follow years of growth and tedious years of learning before manhood comes. The child must learn to read and write and to be subjected to all manner of discipline. He must learn obedience, often by the rod of correction. He must learn kindness, patience, longsuffering, gentleness, and thoughtfulness. He must be instructed in manners and good morals. Life is an endless education even in the natural realm. That maturity can come only by the bitter, chilling experiences of life.

Job was a perfect man on the plane where he was, but the place where he was, was not the realm the Lord had in mind for him. His admiring God intended to bring him to the perfection of maturity. His heavenly Father had more in mind for him than plenty of sheep and camels and asses, a fine home and a devoted family. He had sonship in mind. Well the Lord knew that His sons were produced, not by luxury and ease, but by suffering and affliction. Has He not said, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth"? **Heb. 12:6.** Has He not said, "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then you are bastards, and not sons"? **Heb. 12:7,8.** Good and upright as Job was and prosperous in all the things of a natural world, this man had not yet been tried by fire as sons of God must be. Hitherto the Lord had prospered him and all had gone his way. Even Satan spoke the truth when he said, "Doth Job fear God for nought? . . . Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." This was actually true. There are, to be sure, many thousands of Christians who will serve God when the weather is fair and the going is good, but when tribulation or affliction strike them, immediately they are offended and imagine

the Lord is being unmerciful and unkind. Well do I remember speaking to a disconsolate man who was undergoing great trial. His heart had become very bitter in his experience and he had been churlish and ill-tempered toward God. After pouring his griefs and sorrows into my ears with grouchiness and self-pity, half sobbing he blurted out these words: "I may be a very bad man, but I don't deserve all this!" Well, my friend, if we take the unlearned and poverty-stricken attitude that God is punishing us, then maybe we don't deserve it, but if in the wisdom of God we see that He is perfecting and maturing us as sons, then we will take pleasure in His loving kindness and tender mercy toward us. Which would seem to be preferable — that one should be the richest man in all the east as Job was or that he should become a mature son of God? Make no mistake in this, for had it not been for the sufferings of Job, we would not have heard of him at all. All his wealth would long ago have vanished and his body left to moulder in the dust, but because of his sufferings his sonship was magnified and in his flesh he shall see God. Job 19:25. His name has entered the annals of history with Noah and Daniel as one of the three most righteous men who ever lived. Ezek. 14:14,20. Furthermore, his example of suffering and patience is one of the greatest inspirations in the history of saints.

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" Satan asked, and his challenge was a legitimate one. Therefore the Lord, though He knew all things, decided to put His beloved saint to the fiery test, not for Satan's sake nor to prove aught to him, but for Job's sake. "Put forth thy hand and touch all that he hath," said Satan, "and he will curse Thee to Thy face." So the Lord let down the barriers, the gates and the fences and allowed his beloved servant to be tried in a furnace of sevenfold heat. No one knows by what pathway tribulation may come or through what door temptation may enter, but since all things are in God's hands, He is able to move the world with ease if it be in His interest and the welfare of His people that he should do so.

With lightning swiftness the misfortunes fell as tribulation and affliction sorely smote this man of God. The first messenger came, shouting, "The Sabeans fell upon them (the oxen and asses), and took them away." In a moment of time his thousand oxen and five hundred asses were lost to him. While the first messenger was yet speaking, the second came running and crying, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them." And while the second was yet speaking, the third messenger came crying, "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." But, woe of all woes, while he was yet speaking, the fourth messenger came running in terror, shouting. "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their elder brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped to tell thee." **Job 1:15-19.** Thus in one tragic day all Job's earthly wealth and glory had vanished as a mist before the rising sun. But did Job curse God for all this calamity? Was he a fair weather saint without spiritual understanding? No, indeed! He rent his mantle, shaved his head and, falling upon the ground, he worshipped God with the unmistakable words of piety, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." **Job. 1:21, 22.**

Casually reading the story of such dire calamity, we may miss entirely the incredible devastation of it all. It is no light thing for a man to find the efforts of a life time brutally swept away in a moment. A man remarked to me recently after his house had been burned to the ground, "It is a strange feeling to awake in the morning to find that you do not have even a toothbrush." One would surely think that the loss of camels, sheep, oxen and asses, together with servants, houses and children would have been sufficient calamity, affliction and suffering to prove a man's fidelity and manifest his relationship to his Lord, but such was not to be the case.

"Skin for skin," scoffed the unrelenting Satan; "All that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." **Job 2:4,5.** The first part of his statement is true enough. A man will give all for his life. But the other part was not yet proven. Though the Lord is not interested in proving anything to the devil, he is intensely interested in trying with fire all those sons He is bringing to perfection. The torture test must be given to them all that there shall be no feeble one among their tribes. So Satan, the minister of evil, went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote the man of God with sore boils from head to foot till in the desperation of his illness he lay among the ashes and scraped himself for relief with a broken potsherd.

The story of Job's altercations with his comforters, who came to convince him of his disfavor with God, is well known and need not be repeated here. Let it be known to all of us that Job's afflictions were not of Satan, as so many are ready to declare, but they were of God. Oh that the Lord's faithful people would learn that important lesson! Don't blame your trouble on the devil. He is powerless to touch you except by divine permission. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. It is God who is making good men better. It is God who is perfecting His saints in the furnace of fiery trials. The great Potter above is applying fire to His vessels to make them fit for the Master's use.

Recently I stood in a factory where pottery was made. There I saw shelf after shelf of beautiful pottery ready to be sold. But in a back room I found an equal number of beautiful vessels that had just been molded. They were green, scarcely dry and not nearly ready for sale. Girls and men were painting them and preparing them for the oven where they would be tempered in great heat and fire, without which they were completely unfit for sale or for use. So it is with you, my brother. To all outward appearance you may be a most beautiful vessel, as Job also appeared, but it is not until after the fire has been applied and the terrific heat endured that the vessel is tempered, tried by fire and proven fit for God's use in the government of the world.

Man because of his ignorance is always involved in stupidity. How often young men and women who appear to be smart and promising Christians are taken and thrust into the public ministry! But they, poor things, are untried mortar. They have never been proven by fire. They have plenty of zest and 4.'— zeal, but of the refining power of trial and affliction they know nothing at all. So often they go forth to teach people twice their age and with ten times their spiritual experience. It is a sad and pitiful thing!

When the kingdom of God is finally set up on the earth, there will be no untried mortar in its government. There will be no green potter's vessels. There will be no juveniles. Those who enter into His glory will be tried vessels, broken, melted, molded and tested in the fire of affliction. "O fools and slow of heart to believe," spoke Jesus to His disconsolate companions on the dusty road to Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered and entered into His glory?" Is not that the right way? Is it not scriptural that all should be tried by fire? Is it not the way the Lord has promised? Is not suffering the way of faith? Of course it is! Did not Abel, Enoch, Noah and Abraham, Sara and Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses all suffer fiery afflictions? And are not these well-tempered saints now exalted to view by God Himself as the great and shining examples of faith? Most certainly they are! "And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths' of lions, quenched the violence of the fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." **Heb. 11:32-40.**

Dare we imagine that these so sorely tried were not suffering? The next time we talk about faith, let us remember that those who are undergoing such fiery trials in the present evil world are admired by God as men and women of faith much more than those who are always glorying in signs and wonders and miracles of healing. Not only must God's people learn to live by faith, but it is very possible that before long they may be called upon to die by faith also.

Thus it was with poor brother Job. All hell had broken loose upon this righteous and faithful man. His possessions were gone. His servants were gone. His cattle, his family, and his dwelling place were as though they had never been. And now he was desperately ill, tormented with pain, and without even a bed to sleep on he lies down in the dust and ashes of what once was his beautiful home to listen to the disquieting arguments

of his friends, monotonously attempting by lengthy speeches to stultify him and prove that his present despair was the result of his own sin and disfavor with God. Desperate, disquieting and disturbing were their irritating speeches, calculated to add greater fire to his almost unendurable affliction.

I do not know how many days their debate continued. Perhaps that does not matter now, but such miserable comforters as these are always at hand, ready to attest that those who have entered the furnace of affliction have been bad examples as Christians or that they harbor secret sins and so are deserving of punishment. Unless the Lord Himself has convicted them of sin by His Spirit, sufferers should pay no attention whatever to them. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God." **1 John 3:21**. I suppose, that, if Job was in error at all, it was that he sought to justify himself and took time to prove his miserable comforters wrong. One of the most difficult lessons to be learned in life is to let people think and say what they please while we commit all things to God and leave them in His hands. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was evil spoken of, so we may be certain it will be no great wonder if our sincerest intentions and our best labors are subject to misrepresentation and evil surmisings by men of corrupt minds.

After Job's friends had all been silenced and Job himself had no more that he could say, then at long last it was time for the all wise God to speak. You are going to discover, my brethren that the Spirit of the Lord will never argue with you. Never! Neither will He utter a word while you are making good and setting forth all your arguments of righteousness. It is after you have finished airing all your woes, complaining of your griefs, and setting forth your protestations about the injustices you are suffering that He speaks; and when He begins to speak, your spirit, soul and body cry out as did Job. "I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." **Job 42:3**. So it was with Job that, when he had finished speaking, the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind. The first words divine wisdom uttered were enough to shrivel the soul of any man and stultify all his arguments and protestations into insignificance and oblivion. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge!" demanded the Lord. "Gird up thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me." **Job 38:2,3**.

If the reader at this point will take time to read the next four chapters of the book of Job, chapters 38 through 41, he will find a series of some forty questions, which the Lord posed to Job. All of these were far beyond his understanding and for none of them could he find an answer. Only two or three of these can be answered by the science of our day. These questions were asked of Job to convince him of the faultless greatness of God's wisdom on the one hand and thus the insignificance and lack of man's understanding on the other. Thus it was that, after the Lord ceased from His questioning, Job saw both himself and God in an entirely new light. He saw himself as ignorant, unworthy, vile, unclean and full of repentance. Job 42:6. Now he knew the Lord to be the possessor of all the wisdom of the universe. Now Job knew that all his former life without this intimate knowledge was nothing but vanity. His riches were worthless. His possessions were as the grass in the field. Even his family, his home and his servants were little more than status symbols in a world of vanity. All these temporal things he had seen day after day. His eye was familiar with them all, but God in His glory he had not seen. With the ear he had heard of Him as a deity afar off, but his eye had never beheld His supernal glory nor had any vision transformed him. It is when we see God as He is, in whatsoever way He chooses to reveal Himself, that our lives are transformed by repentance and our minds are renewed by His Spirit.

When at last the enquiring voice of the Lord has fallen silent, Job, breathless and astonished but transformed by the experience, asks of himself the burning question, "Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." Then, lifting his soul to God, he prays, "Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." **Job 42:3-6**.

"Now mine eye seeth Thee!" Oh, what a tremendous advance in spiritual experience it is when our eyes turn from things earthly and temporal to begin to see the Lord! I do not speak of seeing Him with mortal eyes, but God in peculiar and wonderful ways reveals Himself to His saints by His Holy Spirit until even the deep things of God are revealed to our hearts. A man cannot truly love God until he has begun to see by the Spirit at least some of His infinite greatness. Many years I served the Lord, yea, and loved Him, too, but it was not until He

began to open to my searching heart some of the secrets of His infinite mind and the marvels of His eternal purpose that I truly began to love and appreciate Him more than human mind can imagine. As long as my spirit was bound by earthly ways of looking at things and blinded by the human philosophies of the church system, there was always an unreality, if not an ungodlikeness about spiritual things, but when the Lord revealed to my searching heart His infinite purpose in creation, His purpose in the fall of man, His wisdom in permitting human suffering, and the universal extent of His redemption in Christ our Lord, then in wonder and amazement as never before my innermost being was saying, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee!" Then I began to abhor my own human way of looking at things and the uncleanness of the philosophies of many other men. Then I saw how the whole world and the entire church system are full of the vanity of human notions. Truly spoke the great apostle when he said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9, 10**

Now I know for certain that, had it not been for the betrayal, the envy, and misrepresentation of brethren who for years had been my closest friends, the Lord could not have brought me to this place of understanding where He could reveal to my heart such eternal purposes. And now that so many years have passed since those sad days of suffering and betrayal and I can see the glories that have accrued through those adversities, I rejoice in God's great wisdom and freely forgive those pitiful men who thought they were doing God a service by throwing their stones and propagating their evil surmisings. Let God be praised, my brother, my sister, in whatsoever sufferings God calls upon you to endure whether it be sickness, betrayal, or loss of temporal things or whether you severely suffer at the hands of those from whom you should be receiving the utmost love, appreciation and kindness. No one can cause you more suffering than those you dearly love and who should dearly love you.

The magnificent end of Job's fierce temptation and the fiery trial of suffering he endured was manifest in that his eye now saw the Lord. It was after God's blessing, disguised as tragedies, fell upon him that he uttered those immortal words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. . . ." **Job 19:25-27**. Little did he realize as he made that statement that the fierce sufferings he was enduring were already bringing about that unspeakably wonderful revelation his heart so earnestly craved.

How good it would be, dear saint of God, if you and I could see at this moment that God's Redeemer, who in the latter days shall stand upon the earth, is in truth Christ in His bodily fullness! For this is the fullness of Christ — not the blessed Nazarene Himself alone, but Christ the Head together with that many-membered body, which is the manifested sons of God. The vision John saw, recorded in Rev. 1:10-18, is the vision of the fullness of the Redeemer, who shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, Christ the blessed Head and Christ the body made one. This is the fullness of Christ. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." **1 Cor. 12:27; 12, 13.**

Oh that saints might grasp the blessedness of this sublime truth as Job in his misery and desolation was permitted to see it! Then our heaviest affliction would be a light affliction. Then our most devastating tribulation would become a cause for rejoicing and the debilitating weakness of our worst infirmity would become a pleasure. Mourn no more because of your grief, O child of God. Do not seek the arm of flesh to gain relief from your sorrow, but look rather to the glory of the work that is being done in you. "O fools and slow of heart to believe ... ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" O fools and slow of heart to believe, ought not we likewise to suffer to enter into our glory? It is not our suffering that saves our souls. Jesus Christ did that on the accursed tree. Our suffering is a refining fire to bring our gold to perfection since tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope makes not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy ghost, which is given unto us.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. (Consider what a wonderful thing is here revealed.) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." **1 Pet. 4:12-19.**

"The trial of your faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth." **1 Pet. 1:7.** Surely this is the lesson learned by Job, and this is the lesson being learned by us as we see our earthly dependencies passing away and withering as grass before our eyes. The real reason for the refining of our faith as gold is refined is seen in this: "That it might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," **verse 7**, and that we might receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. Verse 9. All flesh is as grass, so what matters if it suffers and dies? "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." **1 Pet. 4:1.** All flesh is as grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is cast into the burning oven. All the glory of man, no matter how great it may be, is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof fadeth away, but the word of the Lord is eternal and cannot perish. Let us therefore put our prerogatives where they truly belong, setting not our hearts on the fleeting things of a natural world, but on abiding things which are eternal and cannot pass away, for "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

In his translation of 1 John 2:15-17 J. B. Phillips gives this most beautiful rendering: "Never give your hearts to this world nor to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time. For the whole world-system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die."

CHAPTER FOUR SUFFERING PERSECUTION

The mystery of the suffering of the righteous has its own mysterious way of filling the pages of Holy Scripture. Its bloody path, like a scarlet thread, weaves its way from cover to cover of God's book. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" demanded Stephen of his adversaries; "And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." **Acts 7:52, 53.** And even while Stephen charged them and their forefathers with such unrelenting tyranny against all that was righteous, good and true, his own persecutors were gathering up stones to cast at him and kill him. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." But they, whose fathers had killed the prophets before them, now enraged by the truth they heard, "stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." **Acts 7:54-60.**

Thus another saintly son of God in the long and honorable list of martyrs graduated from this realm of tears where carnal minds and corrupt hearts are unable to receive the things of the Spirit of God. Thus, leaving this realm of death behind, he joined those immortal ones who in the face of death by fire and sword gained the crown of life above. In his final moments in this realm of death the saintly Stephen, looking into heaven, saw an

indescribable scene of glory, for Jesus Christ had arisen from His seat at God's right hand to welcome this brother and companion in tribulation into the eternal rest of his everlasting home.

It is much easier, I am sure, to speak about martyrdom and persecution than it is to endure it. Nevertheless, He giveth more grace, more patience and faith in all our persecutions and tribulations that we endure and unto the feeble He increaseth strength. Because we are coming very close to the end of the age, and because both Jesus Christ and His apostles warned us of perilous times that were to come at the end of the age, when brother would expose brother to magistrates, parents would deliver their godly children to death and children would betray their parents, I feel it is right to add this fourth chapter dealing with the subject of persecution that, when these things begin to come our way to cleanse a people as grossly involved in the world as Lot was involved in Sodom, a people, careless and at ease in Zion, whom the scripture describes as lukewarm and ready to be spewed out of the mouth of God, we may not be amazed, but ready to face our tribulations and overcome them, being found victorious in the field.

Many things that concern the end of the age the Spirit of the Lord has purposely hidden in darkness. I am of the opinion that no man alive knows the exact sequence of events as they will follow each other as this age draws to a close. For many years the church has accepted the rapture theory, which teaches the sudden departure of all Christians by way of translation out of the world, thus to escape all tribulation and persecution that is coming upon the earth in the last days. This is, indeed, a very comfortable, placid kind of teaching, but it rather reminds me of the words of Paul when he said, "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Christians in the western world who put their confidence in this theory should take time to contemplate the fiendish persecutions that have taken place in the U.S.S.R. during the last fifty years. Let us not forget that it is estimated that as many saints have been destroyed in our day in the land of darkness and unbelief as were destroyed in the Roman Inquisition of the middle ages. Let us remember the fierce trials of Christians in China and North Korea and the bloody nightmare that is overtaking Christians at the present moment in Africa as Communist hordes press toward these last two bastions of freedom, Rhodesia and South Africa, aided and abetted by the gifts and swords of the western world. Shall all these saints bear the cruel nightmare of pain and torture and we alone escape? Though we may well hope that thus it would be, the possibility that we may escape is remote indeed.

As Jesus drew nearer the day of the cross, He began to reveal to His disciples what great suffering lay before Him, It is significant to note the time when He began to do this. Our Lord often interrogated His disciples and His questions were prepared in such a way that the answer might be impressed more indelibly upon their minds. Thus on this occasion Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremiahs, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." **Matt. 16:13-16.**

Notice that immediately following this remarkable declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," it is stated in **verse 21**, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The marvelous declaration of sonship does not seem to be compatible with the awesome thought of persecution and the declaration that He is the Son of the living God would not appear to be in good harmony with cruel suffering at the hands of weak and wicked men, finally to be killed by them; but always remember and never forget that suffering and sonship walk hand in hand. The words of Jesus were foreign to the ears of Peter, and very distasteful, too. He was unable to harmonize these seeming contradictions of thought, so he took Jesus and began to rebuke Him for His words, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." **Verse 22.**

It should not be difficult in the least for us to understand Peter's attitude and the amazement he must have felt upon hearing this strange announcement, and I fear that Christians who have their hearts set on a rapture, by whose doors they will escape all tribulation, persecution and death, will be the first to take issue with me or with anyone else who would dare to warn them that dreadful, purging fires of persecution may soon come upon a

church at ease in Zion, a church that is lukewarm, increased in goods, having need of nothing in the natural realm and believing they have need of nothing in the spiritual realm, a system that, while talking about sonship and rulership in the kingdom of God, knows not that it is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Yea, they will take issue with me as Peter took issue with Jesus. Is this lukewarm church going to be raptured that she may never see sorrow? Is this corrupt thing going to suddenly find itself carried away to heaven out of all tribulation while others fight to gain the prize and sail through bloody seas? While some resist unto blood, striving against sin, shall this lame, lukewarm, self-centered and self-satisfied child of Laodicea escape the cleansing fires of persecution? Nay! "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent."

Peter could not conceive that suffering could be on the agenda for a son of God, much less THE Son of God. John the Baptist could not understand why he should be called upon to baptize Jesus in water, but Jesus answered him, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he suffered Him. Many strange things cross our path in the process of fulfilling all righteousness, and certainly suffering and persecution are foremost among them. Therefore we should arm ourselves with understanding that we be not alarmed or amazed when afflictions crush the soul and waves of trouble roll, for these things must surely be.

I am not a prophet, and at the present time I know of no true prophet in all the world, the claims made by some notwithstanding. But Christians should not need any special brand of understanding to be able to see that even at this moment dreadful storm clouds hang in threatening array over all the world. Because of the curse of the so-called Women's Liberation Movement the homes of the nation are falling apart. Children -motherless, fatherless, and often homeless - become disobedient, ungovernable, lawless and criminal. Because authority has vanished from the homes, the law of the land becomes an unworkable impossibility. Therefore robbery, violence, rape, kidnapping and murder abound in the open. The police are helpless because the law will not stand behind them. Governments are falling apart because they are run by godless, grafting men. Government no longer governs, but interferes with every business of its citizens. Drugs are in common usage. Morals are almost non-existent. Schools are fast becoming mad houses of revolution rather than institutions of learning. The foundation of any nation is the family, and when that unit is destroyed, the nation will fall into decay. Though that which I have mentioned is but an infinitesimal drop in the huge bucket of corruption, let it be known that none of these calamities have come upon us by accident. They were all planned and schemed by those evil men who control the wealth of the world that they, after having brought mankind to poverty and corruption, might take over the government of all nations in the desolating completeness of an antichrist reign.

Have you not noticed that the Rockefellers, the Kissingers, the Kennedys, the Morgans and the Rothschilds are all one worlders? The time is at hand when one will arise whom the scripture calls a Beast and an Antichrist;, speaking great things and blasphemies against God. Power will be given to him to continue forty and two months. He will open his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle (that is, the body of Christ, or the saints) and them that dwell in heaven. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." **Rev. 13:5-10.** "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." **Rev. 13:13-17.**

All these things are now in preparation. Evil men and seducers in the governments of the world favor criminals, aid, abet and assist communism, import into the land heathen cultures whose non-Christian people become teachers of our children, often instructing them in the way of a people who know not God. All these things are

intentionally done by one worlders, whose avowed ambition is to destroy Christianity and with it the Anglo-Saxon races of the world. I wonder in passing how many people have noticed that it is the Anglo-Saxon nations of the world who are the Protestant nations. Against these great Anglo-Saxon Protestant nations in particular the Antichrist spirit is rising all over the earth.

The things foretold by Jesus regarding His own suffering, persecution and death all came to pass just as He had stated. He was betrayed by the Judas kiss and seized by the mob sent to take Him as though He was a common criminal. His trial before Herod, Caiaphas and Pilate was a mockery, just as many trials in our day are becoming a mockery in which the just are condemned and punished and the criminals often go free. He was subjected to ridicule, cruel mockings and scourging, and finally to Roman capital punishment on the accursed tree. Well spoke the prophet Isaiah, saying, "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." **Isa. 53:9** Good men and women are not persecuted because they are bad or evil or violent, but rather because they are not bad, not evil and not violent, for the devil hates all that God is and all that God appears in His people. "The servant is not above his lord," said Jesus. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." **John 15:20.** "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" **Matt. 10:25.**

Tied closely to the predictions of His own sufferings and death were His predictions of suffering and persecution of those believers who would follow Him and be His disciples. As early as the occasion of the sermon on the mount Jesus began to warn His disciples of persecutions that would arise in days to come in words such as these: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." **Matt. 5:10-12.**

The saints of God are sure to wonder why the saying is always true, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Why are good men always persecuted for their righteousness while evil men are honored? The answer lies in the long established fact that the realm of the flesh and the realm of the Spirit are diametrically opposed to each other. The flesh and they who dwell therein hate the Spirit and all who make their home in the spiritual realm. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, because these are contrary the one to the other. The flesh loves the corrupt and beggarly things of this passing world while the Spirit rejoices in the things that are eternal. Cain, who was of that wicked one, hated Abel because his own deeds were evil and his brother's deeds were righteous.

There does not have to be a reason behind persecution. That which we have stated above is reason enough. One man hates another because his own deeds are evil and his brother's deeds are righteous. Righteousness has to do with that which is right; evil has to do with that which is wrong. People who are wrong always hate to believe they are wrong even though they know they are, for what evil man can justify his evil? Does not even nature itself teach, "Thou shall not steal"? Does conscience not rebuke the man who takes the name of God in vain? If the adulterer feels no guilt for his adultery, why then does he seek to hide his deed? The drunkard knows only too well that he is held captive by a cruel and devilish taskmaster; therefore his corrupt nature despises those that are free. For this reason he often seeks to bring others into his own dire bondage and captivity to evil. The freedom and purity of the saints is a continual rebuke to the ungodly. It is a rebuke that they hate, because it contradicts all that they are. It is like a mirror held before their eyes, revealing their sin - a mirror they would gladly destroy that they would no longer see their evil reflection therein. They are not unlike the very ugly African tribesman who, never before having seen his face in a mirror, seized it and smashed it to pieces.

Thus did Cain hate Abel because his own deeds were evil and his brother's deeds were righteous. He could not have known how evil his deeds were had he not seen them in the light of his brother's goodness. Therefore, not unlike the ugly tribesman, he lifted up his weapon and murdered his brother that he might continue in his evil with none to convict him. But guilt cannot be destroyed by effacing the light that reveals it. In murdering his brother, Cain extinguished the light of a tiny candle only to find himself face to face with the sun, for in his distress he found himself listening to the voice of his own creator, and the terrible words he

heard were these: "Where is Abel, thy brother?" "I know not," he lied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" But we cannot lie to God; neither can we hedge for long. "His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men." **Psa. 11:4**. Then the Lord in awesome voice demanded, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood (life) crieth unto Me from the ground, and now thou art cursed from the earth, which has opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood." See **Genesis 4:1-15**.

The slaying of Abel because his deeds were righteous was the beginning of that awful persecution against the godly which would continue from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar. Our Lord Jesus Christ, remarking upon this very thing, declared, "Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." **Matt. 23:34-36**.

Persecution did not end, however, with the shedding of the blood of Zacharias. It was to continue right down to the end of this present age until Jesus should come to reign in righteousness as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Apostle Paul vividly described the persecution complex of the Jews against all that is righteous when he said to the saints at Thessalonica, "For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved." **1 Thess. 2:14-16**.

It is always an amazement to God's people to find that their good is evil spoken of and to discover that their righteous deeds are misinterpreted and maligned. One would certainly have thought that men would rejoice when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but the truth is they hated Him for it. Listen to their wicked reasonings as the chief priests and Pharisees were gathered together after this mighty miracle. "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe in Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation." **John 11:47,48**. And from that moment on they never ceased in their design to take Him and put Him to death. These were the same evil men who persecuted Jesus for loosing a woman from her infirmity on the Sabbath day and for opening the eyes of a man who was born blind. These are they who hated Him without a cause.

So through all the ages it is clear that Cain hated Abel because his deeds were righteous. Joseph's brothers hated him because his father loved him. Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing. Saul hated David because he knew God had chosen him to be king. And thus through the march of time the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things we should. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. They never have pleased Him and they never will. Therefore it must be concluded that persecution and affliction are bound to come, but woe to him by whom they come.

Persecutions, according to the accounts of scripture together with the records of church history, range all the way from verbal abuse, tauntings and contradictions to physical abuse, imprisonment, violence and death. The verbal abuse endured by our Lord is evident in many passages of the New Testament. They rebuked Him for the miracles He performed, oftentimes on the Sabbath day. They accused Him of having a devil and declared that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The prominence given these tauntings and abuses in the gospels would indicate that they must have been an almost daily occurrence that continued to the dreadful hours of the cross, where they taunted, "If Thou be the Christ, come down from the cross," and "He saved others; Himself He cannot save."

How easy it is for men to rest assured in their awful ignorance! "Search and look," they snorted in confidence, "for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." But those foolish men did not trouble themselves to discover that Jesus had not come from Galilee at all, but from Bethlehem of Judea. "Now we know that Thou hast a devil," they jeered, and when they found they could not substantiate their evil claim, they took up stones to cast at Him.

This verbal abuse of God's saints has continued in all ages. It was only shortly after Pentecost that the disciples were arrested and threatened, Acts 4:17, and commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus Christ. But Peter and John answered them, saying, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go .. ." **Acts 4:19-21**. The life of the apostle Paul was continually beset by the contradicting and blaspheming of the Jews. One only has to read the Acts of the Apostles to become aware of their constant persecution of the truth. Nor did this verbal abuse cease with the end of the apostolic age. It has continued all down through the church age and will continue until the days of man's labor and confusion are ended.

If tauntings and sneerings and threatenings were the only kinds of persecution suffered by righteous men, it would be a small matter indeed, but the enemies of righteousness do not cease their persecutions with harsh and bitter words, but continue with physical suffering which is often times much more horrible than death itself. "The time cometh," said Jesus, "when he that killeth you will think he doeth God a service." When wicked men imagine they are doing God a service by murdering His saints, then this would seem to be the cruelest and worst element of persecution. It is terrible enough when persecution arises from the wickedness of the wicked, but when persecution proceeds from those who are supposed to know the way of righteousness, then nothing can be more evil or devastating than this. But it is true that persecution comes from Pharisees, priests, high priests, doctors of the law and scribes. It comes from popes and cardinals and inquisitors as often as from heathen emperors and Communist dictators.

When the disciples were first called before the council of the Jews, they were threatened, but the next time they were called, they were beaten, Acts 5:40, and their enemies, thinking this physical torture would end the matter, let them go. But their threats and violence took on an even uglier form when the disciples continued to preach Christ and the resurrection. The signs and wonders wrought by the disciples were so manifest that they brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities around about unto Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one. Acts 5; 15,16. These marvelous works of God were by no means pleasing to the jealous and envious religious leaders, nor did they repent and turn to God, but instead, being filled with indignation (verse 17) at what had happened, they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. Verse 18. But, praise be to God, the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them forth, commanding them to go and speak in the temple the words of "this life." Verse 20.

Beatings and imprisonment did not stop these men of God from carrying out their anointed work, but, alas, their persecutions did not stop with beatings and imprisonment. They grew instead to greater violence in the murder of Stephen, that mighty deacon, whose eloquent sermon and subsequent martyrdom are recorded in Acts, chapter 7. The sermon preached by Stephen on the day of his martyrdom is in my opinion one of the masterpieces of the ages. In it he shows the dealings of God with His chosen people, forcefully demonstrating how both God and His prophets have been rejected by them in all ages, and, having proved his case against them, he cried, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." **Acts 7:51-53**. When they heard these truths, they were cut to the heart and, instead of repenting, they "gnashed on him with their teeth," But Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of the Father. "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" and Stephen, calling upon God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:54-60.

How well it has been said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." The words of Stephen fell not in idleness upon the ears of the young man, Saul. Though in rage and hate he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the saints of God, Acts chapter 9, and persecuted them unto strange cities, the Holy Ghost

had begun his dealings with this cock-sure, overly confident zealot. As he journeyed to Damascus on his dreadful mission of destruction, armed with letters of arrest from the high priest, at midday a light brighter than the sun shone upon him and he, falling to the ground, heard a voice speaking to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" To this in wonder and amazement he replied, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Lord in mercy answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." **Acts 9:4-5.** Saul's conscience had been pricking and goading him ever since he heard that remarkable sermon of truth preached by Stephen, but now the Spirit of the Lord was bringing the truth home by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is true that no man comes to Christ except the Father draw him, but it is also true that "all that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Paul, being a vessel chosen from the foundation of the world and having now met with Jesus Christ, heard the call to repentance and was saved by the life blood of the Christ he had hated and despised.

It is a thing of wonder that the Lord had said to Ananias, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." **Acts 9:15.** Thus Saul the persecutor became Paul the saint and Paul the persecuted. I know of no man in the history of the church who suffered greater affliction for the cause of Christ than he. By his own testimony he said, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern mine infirmities." **2 Cor. 11:34-39.**

What shall we say of the saints of the Old Testament, "who stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ... And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy). They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." **Heb. 11:33-39.**

In His message to the angel of the church of Smyrna, Jesus Christ said, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." **Rev. 2:9, 10.**

There can be no doubt that the Lord was warning the church and forearming them with the knowledge that great persecution was about to burst upon them. It is evident from the clear statement of Christ — "Thou shall have tribulation ten days" — that this was a prophecy concerning the ten dreadful persecutions that would be suffered by the Christians under the pagan Roman Empire. As emperor after emperor succeeded to the Roman throne, the persecution against the Christians grew ever more fierce until at one time in the city of Alexandria alone it was estimated that as many as eighty Christians a day suffered martyrdom. In the midst of these sorrowful conditions, the persecution under the Roman emperor Diocletian began. This savage and wanton tyrant had already occupied the throne for nineteen years and during that time had associated three others with him in government, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the Great.

Galerius, who hated the Christians, was the emperor's son-in-law and exercised a fatal influence over him. He persuaded the emperor Diocletian that Christianity was opposed to the best interests of the people and that the way to revive the former glories of the empire was to strike at the roots of that obnoxious religion and destroy it utterly. The better to attain his ends he procured the assistance of heathen priests and teachers of philosophy, who by their word and influence quickly converted the emperor to their views.

Four edicts against the church were issued. The first required the destruction of all churches and sacred writings; the second, that those belonging to the clerical order should be apprehended and imprisoned; third, that none should be liberated unless they consented to sacrifice; and fourth, that Christians of every condition in all quarters of the empire should either sacrifice and return to the worship of the gods or die. When this edict appeared in Nicomedia, it was torn down by an indignant Christian — an act of zeal for which he had to pay dearly though he bore the tortures inflicted upon him with Christian fortitude. He was roasted alive over a slow fire.

Shortly after this a conflagration broke out at the emperor's palace and the Christians were blamed for the act. Thus violence and persecution increased against them. The officers of the household, inmates of the palace, were exposed to the most cruel tortures in the presence of Diocletian. Many were executed. Many were burned alive. Others were bound in boats with stones about their necks, rowed into the lake and thrown into the water. Diocletian at last grew weary of the awful work and resigned the reins of the empire to Maximian, who immediately followed the evil example of his predecessor. It would be impossible here to speak of more than a few of the martyrs whose names are associated with this persecution, for their ranks must have swelled by thousands during those miserable years. The Christians of Egypt suffered martyrdom by multitudes, as many as from sixty to eighty a day, but still the work of Christ grew and multiplied. Martyrs being led away to die often left several new converts to take their place. Romanus, a deacon of Antioch, when threatened with torture, exclaimed, "Thy sentence, O emperor, I joyfully embrace. I refuse not to be sacrificed for my brethren, and that by as cruel a means as thou canst invent." When the executioner hesitated in his awful work because the victim was of noble parentage, Romanus said, "Not the blood of my progenitors, but Christian profession, makes me noble," and when he had received many wounds in his face, he exclaimed, "I thank thee, O captain, that thou hast opened unto me many mouths with which I may preach my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Another, a maid of thirteen, the daughter of a nobleman of Emerita, praised God in the midst of torture, saying, "Behold, O Lord, I will not forget Thee. What a pleasant thing it is for those, O Christ, that remember Thy triumphs and attain to these high dignities!" Another, as the flames were wrapping around her, exclaimed, "Grow weary, my sisters, of your lives led in darkness and be in love with Christ, my God, my Redeemer, and my Comforter, who is the true light of the world. May the Spirit of God persuade you that there is a world to come in which worshippers of idols and devils shall be tormented perpetually and the servants of the most high God shall be eternally crowned." This was the faithful testimony of a lady of wealth, Julietta by name.

Contrast such glorious victories of the martyrs with the miserable ends of the great persecutors of Christianity. Nero, Diocletian, Commodus, Maximian, and Aurelian were assassinated. Hadrian died in agony, crying, "How miserable to seek death and not to find it!" Decius, cut off from retreat during an ambush, perished miserably and his flesh became the prey of vultures and wild beasts. Valerian, being taken prisoner by Sapor, king of Persia, was used as a stool by that monarch to assist in mounting his horse, and after seven years of this insult his eyes were put out and he was flayed alive. The body of Maximian the second was slowly consumed by an eternal fire and Galerius, that demon prince of persecutors, was smitten with a loathsome disease which kept him in continual torment for the space of a year, and, like his prototypes, Herod and Antiochus Epiphanes, he was eaten of worms and died.

It will not be possible here to speak of the dire and terrible persecutions of the true church during the dark ages. No longer was the persecution the work of pagan Rome but of the tradition ridden popes of the Roman Church. As pope after pope of Rome sat in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, showing himself that he is God, 2 Thess. 2:4, fierce persecutions were carried out against the saints, persecutions even more terrible and far reaching than those endured under the pagan Roman empire. I am writing these things to show that violent persecution always has been a very large and terrible part of Christian suffering and worst of all is the knowledge that most persecutions have arisen from men who are bound by church systems instead of Christ and are zealous for church traditions rather than the purity of truth.

In my opinion it is wrong to attempt to bring from scripture any interpretation that would seem to exempt the church from tribulation or persecution in the last days. Many Chinese Christians were ill prepared for the grievous persecutions that have befallen them in recent years simply because missionaries from the west had

promised them that they would be raptured before any tribulation or persecution broke out. But the evil days of persecution came in spite of their promises and the church in China has gone through the furnace of affliction, suffering and death. The same dreadful thing is happening even today in ever increasing fury in Russia, Roumania, Bulgaria and many other countries. These suffering saints know full well that they will not be raptured before tribulation comes. Persecution in ever increasing fury is raising its ugly head in Africa as country after country falls beneath the heel of communist dictators. It is extremely unfortunate that the majority of preachers in North America emphatically affirm that the church here will never face persecution. They, too, promise a rapture as a means of escape from all tribulation, but let us open our eyes to the indisputable fact that all about us evil men and seducers, both in the church system and outside it, are waxing and worse, both deceiving others and being deceived themselves.

Our present government in Canada is in my opinion the greatest calamity that has overtaken our country. The prime minister himself has stated that a ship needs only be turned three degrees off course to destroy it, and this has been craftily done without the people's understanding what is happening. Are we so foolish as to think that the leaders of Great Britain and the United States of America do not know that Communism is taking over Africa and that Cuban troops, armed with Russian weapons, are in many strategic countries? Certainly they know these things, and to hide from the public their approval of them they waste their time condemning the few last strongholds of Christianity on the African continent — South Africa and Rhodesia.

The church system, too, abounds with false teachers, false pastors, false evangelists, false prophets, and false doctrines. All these systems are putting forth great efforts to unite with one another and with Rome. Have we forgotten that in the end of the age all the world will wonder after the Beast (the antichrist)? Are we unaware that to the Beast will be given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, as saith the scripture, **"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear."** **Rev. 15:5-9.**

When the scripture says that a false prophet shall arise, doing great wonders insomuch that he causes fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men, and causes all both small and great to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark of the Beast or the number of his name (verses 13, 16, 17), does this not indicate great deception that is coming upon the earth and great persecution against all that is righteous and all that clings to truth? Let us then not be content to sit at ease in Zion, assuring ourselves that none of these things will come upon us and that we will never know sorrow, for this vain attitude may lead us into the most unpleasant surprise of our lives. Tragically such incredible, indescribable persecution is taking place all the time in communist countries. Christian leaders are arrested and their rights are totally disregarded. They are then shut up in prison and subjected to all kinds of physical, psychological, and medical tortures. It is not my intention to try to frighten the people of God, but rather to warn us all that the denial of civil rights is already appearing in the western world and the time may very well come when they who resist the world system will be imprisoned without appeal to suffer any indignity that evil and godless men may choose to inflict upon them.

It would seem to be an exercise in futility to write at such length of persecution if we could not see the purpose of God in it. Like all else in the plan of God eternal blessings and heavenly rewards lie beyond its perilous wave. The apostle Paul knew what it was to be a persecutor, but after his conversion to Christ he knew what it was to be sorely tried and in the end persecuted unto death. He was beaten, stoned, lashed, imprisoned, and finally executed, but he had as much to say of the benefits accrued through persecution and tribulation as about any other subject. Writing to the Philippians saints, he urged this precious instruction upon them: **"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. Phil. 1:29.** "He that is faithful unto death shall be given a crown of life," said Jesus, and Paul comforted the Thessalonians with these words: **"To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the**

gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." **2 Thess. 1:7,8.** Thus persecution becomes an enormous reward to the saint of God as well as a pronouncement of doom upon the wicked who trouble us.

To the Thessalonians Paul wrote, "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." **2 Thess. 1:4,5.** As heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts, and here in this passage Paul declares that suffering and persecution prove the saints to be worthy of the kingdom for which they suffer.

The Hebrew Christians of the first century were undergoing great persecution and tribulation, perhaps more than many others, because of the opposition of that Jewish synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not. Rev. 2:9. To the Hebrews in their trials the apostle wrote, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." **Heb. 10:32-34.** In every case persecution sharpens the vision and whets the appetite for things eternal, while at the same time it slackens desire for all that is earthly and all that pertains to this present evil system. Surely Peter was teaching us this very thing when he said, "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his life in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." **1 Pet. 4:1,2.** It was this same Peter who told us, "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." **1 Pet. 1:7.**

Notice further how persecution fills the spirit with a sense of blessedness, for said Peter, "If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye (or, blessed are ye): and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." **1 Pet. 3:14,15.** Then, continuing his exhortation to the suffering, Peter wrote these words, every one of which demand our fervent attention, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." **1 Pet. 4:12-14.** Peter here teaches two great lessons concerning suffering and persecution, first, that our faith is made perfect through suffering and, second, that those who suffer are filled with a sense of heavenly blessedness in that they are accounted worthy to suffer for His name.

The study of Christian suffering opens an entirely new realm in the life of every saint. I do not believe it is right for Christians to develop a persecution complex and be forever mulling over their woes and tribulations. People who are inclined to be forever airing their griefs are certain to lose the blessedness that should be theirs. They should not think it strange that such fiery trial has come upon them, but rather count it all joy when they fall into diverse temptations (trials), knowing that their tribulations are a trial of faith that in the end will prove much more valuable than precious gold, though it be tried with fire, that it might be found unto honor and glory at the appearing of Christ. Persecution can never separate us from the love of God, but rather will serve to bind us closer to Him, for said Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." **Rom. 8:35-37.**

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure." **James 5:10,11.** Amen.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 30
OUR SO GREAT SALVATION
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-8

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INTRODUCTION

This little book is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but only an attempt to glean some of the fathomless truth contained in four of its chapters: Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 11. An exhaustive study of that which is totally inexhaustible is an impossibility. Could we put the ocean into a teacup, then might we hope to exhaust God's word. If we can but unlock the door to this vast treasure house of our Father's illimitable supply, we will not have entirely failed.

When the apostle states that the Lord Jesus Christ is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, how may mortal man, whose eyes have never beheld such brightness or such express image, describe or comprehend Him? The noble and inspired attempts of Ezekiel to portray the vision he saw in chapter one of his book, or of Isaiah in chapter six of his book, or of Daniel in chapter seven of his, leave them as well as ourselves awe struck and amazed, despairing the inability of earthly similarities to explain the majesty of celestial revelation. Simon Peter, with his friends James and John, did not attempt to relate the story of the transfiguration, that left them as dead men. The story is told by Matthew, a man who was not actually on the scene when it happened. Nor could John explain the effulgent glory of the revelation of the fullness of Christ, which he saw in his Patmos vision, except by the use of earthly similarities. In the light of these sublime and heavenly revelations we may for the present find it necessary to follow the example of Paul, who, after being caught up into the third heaven, declared, "I saw unspeakable things that are unlawful for a man to utter." Surely the dullest mind should be able to understand that that which is indescribable cannot be described and that which is unspeakable cannot be spoken.

The author of the book of Hebrews draws telling contrasts between the prophets, by whom God in times past spoke to our fathers, and His Son, by whom He is speaking in these last days. He demonstrates the inferiority of the earthly priesthood of Aaron as compared to that celestial priesthood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. In like manner, by revealing the glory and holiness and power of the angels, he makes them seem almost insignificant in the light of the glory and majesty of the Son of God, He being the creator and they the created, they the ministering servants and He the Lord of all. These comparisons, however, are not made merely for the sake of comparing, but to demonstrate the glory God has prepared for man, in that he, who was made a little lower than the angels, will be crowned with honor and glory and set over the works of God's hands, including the angels. Such is God's mind for man, and unto such glory He will bring him.

In studying the word of God, it is best to read the entire book through as one would read a story book. In this way the seeking heart becomes acquainted with the divine intention. The book of Genesis, which begins with man in the garden of Eden, ends with a man in a coffin in Egypt; but that book which is the Bible begins with man in the garden of Eden, and ends with man glorified and in God's likeness, reigning with Christ in the New Jerusalem, angels and authorities and powers made subject to him as is foreshadowed in Genesis 1:26-27. A spotty, intermittent, here and there scanning of the Bible distorts the truth, as also do the traditions of the church system. Those who read the last chapter of a book before reading the first cannot hope to know what mysteries lie between.

He who plants an acorn in the good earth today will have to wait many years to see the towering oak of tomorrow, and I think the book of Hebrews sows all the seed that mortals can grasp of that magnificent glory laid up for man in Christ in that wonderful, glad tomorrow He has so faithfully promised to those who love Him.

The Author

CHAPTER ONE OUR SO GREAT SALVATION

The book of Hebrews in its relationship to man is without doubt one of the most awe-inspiring, marvelous and concerted revelations of God's eternal plan, His aim, intent and objective; His design, purpose and goal; His resolution, target and determination that has ever been entrusted to mankind. To the carnal mind and the unspiritual this astonishing revelation of divine intention has very little meaning at all. The carnal mind is an earthbound, unspiritual enemy of God. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. The dead, uninspired natural mind finds it impossible to grasp or discern anything at all beyond those paltry earth-bound things which belong to the realm of the natural. But he that is spiritual, into whose heart the light of the Spirit has shined, judges all things and is not subject to nor shackled by the bondages of corruption or the outer darkness of a debased and sinful carnal mind. To him the heavens begin to open. The eyes of the spirit, once fast closed, now begin to see the invisible things of the eternal realm. His dull, lowland ears, which hitherto were accustomed only to the confused noises and inharmonious sounds of earth, are now unstopped to hear the sweet harmonies of the eternal realm. To his spiritual ear is added an understanding heart that the heavenly things once clouded in the foggy mists of the natural mind are now clearly understood and radiantly seen.

Jacob, the son of Isaac, at the end of a long, weary day fleeing from his father's home to the far away land of his uncle Laban, lay down on the earth to sleep, his head on a pillow of stone. Jacob, the son of peace-loving Isaac, was a man who regarded spiritual things. He was not totally a man of the earth as was his brother, Esau. To Jacob there were things far more important than hunting deer, enjoying the chase and eating the savory meat at the end of the day. His soul even in youth was instinctively reaching out for the promises of God. Like his grandfather, Abraham, his eyes betimes caught glimpses of that eternal city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. In the deep recesses of his heart he knew that, if the birthright belonged to him instead of his brother Esau, it would be his seed whose names would eventually adorn the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem. Nor would they merely adorn those gates, but they would be the gates by which nations hitherto not called would bring their glory and honor into that holy and radiant city.

As he thought on these things, all the treasures of earth became dross and every earthly glory faded into insignificance as the gentle rays of heavenly light broke betimes through the misty shrouds of the natural mind. The birthright his elder brother neglected and even despised was to Jacob a pearl of great price. With all his heart he desired it - yea, coveted it - and, when at a time appointed by God his brother Esau arrived home from his hunting tired, weary and empty-handed, his belly ravenous for food, Jacob offered to trade him a good, hot stew for the birthright he craved and his brother despised. "I am at the point of death," said Esau, "and what good will this birthright do me when I am dead?" Thus without further consideration he lightly traded that which is eternal for a momentary thing, a fleshly appetite that would receive a momentary reprieve but which on each tomorrow would lust again to be satisfied.

In all fairness to Esau I must say that it may have been that he was at the point of death. The historian, Jasher, twice mentioned in scripture, states that Esau had that very day endured a wrathful and bloody confrontation

with his hated rival, the great hunter Nimrod, with several of his men, whom he had defeated in a furious combat. Thus there may have been much more truth in his words, "I am at the point to die", than at first meets the eye. But Esau knew not the truth, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the world and lose his own soul?" The maintenance of the natural life was to him all that mattered. In this he is far from alone. The world is full and running over with men and women who never see beyond the temporal joys of this present life. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." That which is natural and passing is to her the only thing that is real. "This is my life," she boasts, "and I am going to live it." Alas, the blindness of the carnal mind does not let them see that this is not life at all, but a state, which the word of truth calls death. It is a mist, which the wind driveth away, a dream in the night that by morning is forgotten, a shaft flying swiftly through the air, leaving no trace that it ever passed by. So are the pleasures and lusts of this present world. How truly has inspiration said, "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them."

Thus with all the sorrows of earth clinging like dust to the care-laden mind of the young man, Jacob, hoping he had put some distance between himself and his angry brother Esau, he lay down beneath the stars to rest. There comes, however, a time in the life of all the elect of God when that inward something, the voice of the Holy Spirit, whispers, "You're a stranger here", and an altar of heavenly experience arises that will forever stand between the past and that which is to be. From the unhewed altar of sacrifice there arises a ladder reaching from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies, even to the throne of God - a ladder whereupon ministering angels ascend and descend upon the sons of God, a stairway of mediation between God and man, which stairway is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of the Blessed. He it was who said to the adoring Nathaniel, whose bursting heart had just confessed, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel", "Henceforth thou shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

The ladder Jacob saw was the ladder Jesus is. Can we wonder then that the careworn and fearful Jacob, awakening from his restless dreaming, cried out in utter amazement, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." **Gen. 28:17-18** Here he made his covenant with God and here his life was forever changed - a change ever increasing from glory to glory until it attains the image and likeness of Christ, our Lord.

No man can see God and live; neither can any man see God and die, but henceforth that man of vision lives not the life of the world with its momentary lusts and pleasures, but a new life in Christ, a life that has no end, a walk that becomes the path of the just that shineth more and more until the day is full. It is a life that will blossom into the radiance of the kingdom day and bloom forevermore in that garden of immortality, the dispensation of the fullness of times. Its gladsome morning will dawn with visions of that which eye hath not seen. Its heavenly harmonies awaken the spirit to that which ear hath not heard, and its exalted wisdom whispers that which hath not hitherto entered into the heart of man.

My ransomed soul thrills with the harmonies of heaven that charm the spiritual ear and in my dim mind truth leaps for joy as the babe once leaped within the womb of Elizabeth when the voice of the mother of Jesus fell on her ear. "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters." **Psa. 114:5-8** Thus to him whose eyes are anointed with heavenly eyesalve, whose heart is possessed of the Spirit of understanding, this wonderful epistle to the Hebrews becomes a wine of revelation that "goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." **S. of S. 7:9**

We need enter into no fruitless debate as to who the writer of the book of Hebrews may be. If for some reason our all wise heavenly Father should have hidden the identity of His servant, what would that matter? The knowledge that the Holy Spirit inspired this sacred book is sufficient and, because He did, it is a river of living water flowing from the very heart of the eternal throne. It has always been a heaviness of spirit to me to find so many of that breed who call themselves ministers and doctors of divinity who are willing to waste endless years trying to settle minor details that have no bearing whatsoever on the truth while the truth itself is left hidden in the mine. Let us then leave the rudimentary first principles, as this book in chapter six instructs us, to set our hearts on discovering the pearls of great price that lie buried in this splendid mine of truth.

No other book in the Bible begins with the word God. The Hebrews needed no elementary teaching concerning His existence. The introduction immediately lifts us from the bondage of earth's turmoil and the fruitless strivings of men to a realm of revelation and acquaintance with the design and intention of God for man. Should anyone imagine that God has no purpose for man, he needs only to grasp the revelation contained in this book and he will soon understand that everything in this whole age is a gracious manifestation of our heavenly Father's merciful purpose - that He might lift man into Himself and prepare him for the greatest and most glorious task that eternity affords.

It is true that the theme of the book of Hebrews is better things. But I fear that many of us have never discovered why the wisdom of God designed to show that Jesus Christ was a greater prophet than the prophets before Him, a greater messenger than the angels of heaven, a greater priest than the priests of Aaron, a greater builder than Moses and a more perfect tabernacle than his and that His grace would bring a better rest than that of the law, that the new covenant was better than the old, and the blood of Christ was better blood than the blood of Old Testament sacrifices.

Thus the epistle begins: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." These august, stately and dignified words manifest magnificently the love of God toward mankind in that the Holy Spirit through millenniums of time and a great diversity of channels has been speaking to man, giving him a revelation of His will and the vastness of the Father's purpose for him. The revelation of God's plan for man does not in fact begin with the New Testament, though it is greatly expanded there. That revelation begins to unfold in the first chapters of Genesis. Throughout the entire Old Testament era at sundry times and in divers manners God has been steadily unfolding the secret locked up in His mind when the fiat sounded forth in the beginning: "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, and let Us give him dominion." The New Testament becomes an unfolding of the Old Testament, as any diligent student of scripture must surely notice.

The builder of a house has more honor than the house and it is certainly true that the author of a book has much more honor than his amanuensis. So also He that speaks from heaven has more honor than he who is spoken to on earth. The prophets spoke the word that was spoken to them, but Christ is Himself the Word, bearing greater authority and power to confirm than prophets or angels, types or prefigures or any other thing. Therefore the word, or the epistle, begins, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (or, planned the ages)." An awe-inspiring sense of reverence steals over our spirits as we consider the greatness of God's Son and the boundless love of God toward mankind that in the end of an age He sent the greatest authority in the universe to enlighten man and confirm to them all that the prophets have spoken and throw ever increasing light on the purpose of the ages and man's involvement in it.

What a regret it is that we today, like those Jews of old, reject the messengers who come from God with tidings and slay the truth as they slew Him, whose very name is Truth! Those who were bidden to come to the wedding, Luke 14:18-21, found many excuses why they should not come. One pled the business excuse, for said he, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and must go to prove them." Another had the pleasure excuse, for he had bought land and must go to see it. Another had the family excuse, that we so often hear, for he had married a wife and therefore he could not come. Oh, where has our reverence for God taken its soulless flight in all these things? Let us take heed and be warned, for all such earth-minded people go immediately into outer darkness, there to grovel away their earthly pilgrimage playing church and playing religion, doing their business and enjoying their pleasure and to appear at last before the judgment seat of Christ with naught but wood, hay and stubble in their hands, while those who have heard the joyful sound and have heeded the voice of the Son of God declare plainly that they seek a country, and if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned, but now they seek a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city. Heb. 11:14. The moment Abraham caught a glimpse of the city that has foundations, he cared not a straw for the riches of earth God had bestowed upon him, but willingly he spent the rest of his life in tents and tabernacles that unhampered and unhindered he might steadfastly advance toward that New Jerusalem city,

which alone among cities has foundations and whose builder and maker is God. That holy city stands on twelve foundations and through its twelve pearly gates all nations of earth will pass on their way to the crystal river of the water of life.

Christ is the appointed heir of all things. Heb. 1:2 I am entirely incapable of unfolding the extent of such an all encompassing, all embracing, heavenly inheritance, but, as these thoughts unfold in the pages to come, we will understand it more fully. We will see, I trust, why it is so important that mankind, who is now in such low estate, should be able to grasp what it means to us all that Christ, God's perfect man, Christ, the Head of the body, the house not made with hands, should be heir of all things. It is true, dear saint, it is true that "as He is, so are we in this world." What He is we through Him are becoming. If ever a mystery was entrusted to man's understanding that is it. He is the first born of many brethren. He is the captain of our salvation, and He is bringing many sons to glory. Heb. 2:10 Had Esau known that such an inheritance was part of his birthright, it is difficult to believe that even he, earthly minded as he was, could have despised it. Let Christians therefore search their hearts lest, a promise being left us of entering in, any of us should come short of it.

Is it any wonder that Hosea lamented, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge". The prophets prophesy falsely and the people love to have it so. Jer. 5:30-31 No man in all the Anglo-Saxon world need be destroyed for lack of knowledge, but, if we would have the knowledge of God, there is one thing first and foremost that we must do and that is obey God and forsake that Babylon which is the present church system. Then the Holy Spirit will be our teacher and we will learn more of Him in days than we would learn of man in years. What a blessed inheritance for the saints lies in the exhortation of Paul, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty". Obey that precept first; then in meekness ask the Holy Spirit to unfold the word of God to your heart and you will be amazed by two things: First, how much truth will flood into your soul and, second, how much of the truth He reveals to you will be opposite to that which the Babylon system has taught you. Next the writer tells us that Christ, who is heir of all things, is also the author and designer of the ages. Verse 2. He is not speaking here of the world, but rather of the aions or ages. Every age and every dispensation has its own distinctive purpose and is in itself a definite unfolding of the eternal purpose of God. (See Treasures of Truth, Volume 22, Chapter 2.) The dispensations of the past were never failures, as the preachers are so fond of saying, They were the unfolding of God's merciful purpose, a mighty heavenly illumination of what innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace and the kingdom of God will be when innocence is not ignorance, but wisdom from experience; when conscience is not defiled, but pure; human government is not of the carnal mind, but of the mind of Christ; law is not written on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart; when grace is not straightened, but abounding. The truths of these dispensations will be seen in their fullness in that kingdom of God that shall never be destroyed. It was the Son of God who formed the ages and it will be the Son of God with His younger brothers who will fill the world with His wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and reverence.

THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY

The Son of God is here said to be the brightness of God's glory. He is the effulgence of God's glory, the light, the beam, the gleam, the noontide, the light of day, the dazzling splendor, the radiance. Were we to exhaust the thousands of adjectives that beautify and embellish the English language, we would still find ourselves groping for words to express what brilliant fullness the brightness of God's glory would envision. Those few blessed saints who, being caught away in spirit, have caught a glimpse of God's glory always found themselves fumbling for word;, to express what their eyes beheld. The brightness of God's glory is so far beyond what tongue can tell or words can frame that it becomes "unlawful to utter" what the vision has disclosed of the inheritance of the saints in lights, for words can do naught but minimize the more excellent glory of that which our vision has seen.

Moses spoke face to face with God and, though after the encounter his face shone with the brightness of God's glory, he made no effort to explain or describe what he saw. Here now the words of Ezekiel as he struggles to describe the likeness of the glory of the Lord. He grasps at such terms as a whirlwind, a great cloud, a fire enfolding itself, a brightness as the color of amber, burning coals of fire, (verse 13), the appearance of lamps, the appearance of a flash of lightning, (verse 14), the color of terrible crystal, (verse 22),

the appearance of a sapphire stone, (verse 26). Then in **verse 28** he says, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." **Ezek. 1** It certainly is a most magnificent description, but the brightness of God's glory surpassed his imagination and power of expression. It is no wonder that the apostle Paul left out any description of what he saw by simply stating, "I heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

The first chapter of Ezekiel is far beyond my power to explain, yet for many years I have had an inner conviction that Ezekiel was actually seeing the Father bringing forth His Son, or should we say His sons, out of the glory of Himself. If we meditate in reverence and awe on the second verse of chapter one, we will see that out of the whirlwind of Himself, out of the enfolding fire, out of the brightness that was about it all, out of the amber and the midst of the fire a "likeness" is appearing — "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."

I need scarcely remind you that the four faces that developed as they came forth — the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox and the face of an eagle, verse 10 — represent the exact manner in which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is presented to the world in the four Gospels. Matthew presents Jesus Christ as the Lion, the King, yea, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The first positive sentence of his gospel leaves no doubt of that; "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham". **Matt. 1:1**. He was the Son of David because the promise of kingship was given to Him, 2 Sam. 7:12-18, and the son of Abraham because in his seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Gen. 15:18. The Gospel of Mark is the gospel of the ox, the servant and the sacrifice. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." **Mark 10:45**. The Gospel of Luke is the gospel of the man, the Son of man, the perfect man. Luke in chapter three passes through the long line of human ancestry right back to the first Adam. In true accord with the wonders of inspiration the genealogy given in the Gospel of Luke is not that of Joseph, but of Mary, his wife, who was the daughter of Heli. Joseph in our terms was not the son, but the son-in-law, of Heli, but the genealogy is that of Mary. The Father of Jesus was not Joseph, but God. For this reason Luke states the fact in these words: Jesus being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph. Luke 3:23

The Gospel of John presents Christ as the eagle, the Son of God. His sublime and holy words of introduction are these: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." What mysteries are hidden in these words! What unbroken secrets locked in their depths! What treasures of truth passed over so lightly by mankind for centuries!

The first glorious being that came forth in Ezekiel's vision was that "firstborn of every creature", the Son of God Himself. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Let us therefore refuse to make any attempt to analyze such holy things with the natural mind, for it is an enemy of God, but let us approach in reverent stillness before our Maker that the truth and the brightness of His glory may through His matchless goodness seep into the inner recesses of our spirit. Searching hearts will resolutely turn aside from human tradition and carnal reasoning and in the fear of the Lord let the Holy Spirit be their teacher. Then light and understanding will be theirs and the knowledge of the Holy will be their portion.

We would, however, deprive ourselves of infinite treasure should we refrain from investigating the vision Ezekiel saw. Out of the radiant brightness of God's glory, out of the effulgence and enfolding fire, there came forth that fourfold representation of the Son of God, the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God. **Ezek. 1:28** It is a thing of surpassing wonder that the lion, the man, the ox and the eagle were the camp emblems of the twelve tribes of Israel. The camp to the east of the tabernacle in the wilderness was the camp of Judah, **Num. 2:3**, consisting of the tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. The emblem of the camp of Judah was appropriately the lion. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come (He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah) and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be. **Gen. 49:10**

To the south of the tabernacle was the camp of Reuben, composed of the three tribes Reuben, Simeon and Gad. Their emblem was a man. **Num. 2:10** To the west was the camp of Ephraim, consisting of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. Their emblem was the ox. To the north was the camp of Dan, consisting of Dan, Asher and Naphtali. Their emblem was the eagle. Surely the searching heart can see that the same beautiful emblems that in Ezekiel's vision portrayed that first begotten Son of God, as seen in the four gospels, are used

also to designate the four camps of the children of Israel, from which twelve tribes the multitude of the sons of God are to come. Rom. 9:4-5

I am well aware that any statement which even hints that the sons of God, the members of the body of Christ, are to come from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel immediately stirs up fierce resistance in the hearts of Christians, because they have been led to believe that God discarded the covenant people, Israel, and substituted what they call spiritual Israel, a term that is not found in the word of God. We are being asked to believe that all the journeys, the callings, the covenants and the promises given to the seed of Abraham, that were to endure as long as the sun and moon, summer and winter, seed time and harvest endure, were to be lightly thrown aside. Are we to believe that the only purpose in God's calling this vast host, these armies of the living God, 1 Sam. 17:27, was that He might bring His only begotten Son into the world? If you are of that persuasion, then I would implore you to open your heart and read the forceful statement of the apostle Paul concerning this chosen nation which he made in his epistle to the Romans in these words: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption (that is, the sonship), and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the services of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." **Rom. 9:2-5** This is a potent message and, if you look at it carefully with an open heart, you will see that adoption, which means full sonship, belongs to Israel. This I say, however. God is God. He is both almighty and all wise and can, when He chooses, call anyone to sonship if it is His predetermined purpose, but the promise of sonship is to the seed of Abraham through Isaac, through whom came Jacob, the man who obtained both the birthright and the blessing from God. We may try all we wish to bring in our substitutes and pray with tears as Abraham did, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee!" But the Lord replied, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him." **Gen. 17:18-19** It would be difficult for any of us to believe that the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were sealed were without reasonable doubt sons of God, and certainly no one on earth can deny that the one hundred and forty-four thousand were Israelites, twelve thousand from each tribe.

It is a source of amazement to me to discover that millions of Christians try their best to emphasize the unimportance of the ten tribes of the house of Israel, who as nations accept Christ as the Saviour of the world, yet these same people defend the Jew as God's chosen people and try to tell the world that these people, whom Paul correctly describes as "having killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost", **1 Thess. 2:14-16**, are indeed God's chosen people. This is a very vital and apt description of what the Jews were in the days of Christ and what they still are today. There has been no change in their attitude, no repentance and no conversion. For Christians to imagine that the people who have glorified Christ for two thousand years and have proclaimed His gospel to the four corners of the earth will suddenly become subject to and ruled over by a people who have killed the prophets of the Old Testament and killed the Christ of the New Testament, who please not God and are contrary to all men, is foolhardy madness. They who are faithful in the age of grace are they who will reign with Christ in the kingdom age. This is truth taught by our blessed Lord. As time passes and evidence accumulates on every hand, I am more and more convinced that the Jew is neither what he professes to be nor what the church system imagines him to be.

Our blessed Lord taught us, saying, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." He taught us that those who suffer with Him would reign with Him, and he who by his faithfulness gained ten talents in the age of grace would reign over ten cities in the kingdom of God. If Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said that the adoption (that is, sonship), the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God and the promises belong to the twelve tribes of Israel, who am I and who are you to say that it is not so? If Paul says the fathers (that is, all the patriarchs) and all the prophets were from Israel and that even Jesus Christ as concerning the flesh came from Israel, how dare anyone affirm that it is not so or try to substitute some man-conceived spiritual Israel to take its place? Furthermore, I affirm that it is true that not only does the adoption belong to Israel and the sons of God, like Jesus Christ the first Son, come from the seed of Abraham, but the bride of Christ, who is the New Jerusalem, also comes from this same seed of Abraham. He it is who in his

wandering saw the New Jerusalem; the only city in the universe that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He saw that the twelve apostles, who also came from the seed of Abraham, would be its glorious foundation and that the twelve tribes who would eventually spring from his loins would become the twelve gates to that magnificent and heavenly city into which eventually every nation on earth will come to bring their glory and honor and enter its pearly gates to drink of the crystal pure water of life and eat of the eternal food of the tree of life, which is flourishing on either side of its crystal river. It is a glorious and wonderful picture, a hope beyond compare, if we refrain from spoiling it by our human tradition. Why should it be thought impossible that God should raise the dead or why should it be thought incredible that God would choose the seed of Abraham that in his seed after him all the other families of the earth should be blessed? It is His plan. He made it and He will carry it out to its fullness.

Having said that Christ is the brightness of God's glory, the Holy Spirit now asserts that He is the express image of His person. "Let Us make man in Our image," the great Elohim said in the beginning; and out of the enfolding fire, the whirlwind, the terrible crystal - words which struggle to describe the ineffable One - there came forth a living creature having the face of an eagle, the face of a lion, the face of a man and the face of an ox: The face of an eagle because He is the Son of God; the face of a lion because He is the King of kings and Lord of lords; the face of a man because He is the Son of man, an inherent constituent of the human race, the firstborn of every creature; the face of an ox because He is the sacrifice for sin and the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world, one who came as the heavenly servant of all mankind. Thou grand ineffable mystery, Thy wonderful majesty overwhelms my soul! Well do we know, Thou blessed One, that it is Thine unalterable intention that at last Thine eternal decree - let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness - is being fulfilled. Open our eyes that we may know how far the words so simply stated in this epistle reach beyond all human understanding. Grant that we might see the purpose unfold in its fullness rather than in the indistinct fragments that appear to the natural mind. May our failing eyes behold a better country, that is, an heavenly, that Elohim Himself may be our God and Jesus Christ unashamed to call us His brethren.

The things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, must be revealed to us by His Spirit. I have no wisdom to describe how the Son of God can be the image of the Father, but I know that I shall be like Him when I see Him as He is; and, though now for a time we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice in the knowledge that the little we do see is working an unspeakable transformation as we, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3:18

The Son of God, who made the world and all things therein, is further said to uphold all things by the word of His power. Heb. 1:3 This sublime statement of power can do no less than leave us with the understanding that God Almighty is in control of all things. Not only does He rule in the heavens, but even now in this dark hour of the world's midnight He is in control of the earth. What could better say that His mighty arm upholds all things than the fathomless wisdom by which He declares the end of all things from their beginning? We are so inclined to be unsettled and greatly troubled about the way the world is drifting. God's people betimes work themselves into a frenzy of unbelief in their efforts to turn things around and make them go the way the natural man thinks they ought to go. Preachers try to "turn the tide". They fight against the antichrist system, which even a blind man should see is rising in awesome power as men and nations "wonder after the beast" - that same beast who received the deadly wound in the days of Martin Luther, but whose deadly wound has since been healed. Amid all the vain striving to make a better world even God's people forget that these present calamities were foretold long ago. By His infinite wisdom He sees the end from the beginning. He described with intricate accuracy the wars, the pests, the famines and diseases that now fill the world with increasing catastrophe and woe. God's word is much more up to date than tonight's newspaper. Vividly does it describe the tribulations that signify the end of this age and herald the dawn of the kingdom of God, and if we will look in faith and understanding, we will see what good these fiery trials are working for those who are suffering from them while they learn the fullness of the knowledge of both good and evil.

God is in control of the world and He is in control of the people in it. He raises up whom He will and debases whom He will. He upholds His word, His covenants, His servants, His glory, His promises and His people so that no weapon that is formed against them can ever hope to prosper. Which of all the wicked devices of evil men has ever been successful in obliterating the word of God? The Bible, which by government and papal

decree was prohibited, burned and destroyed, flourishes today in millions of homes and in numberless hearts and is sold on the counter of the dime store. The martyrs, who in time past were burned, tormented, tortured and slain, now look down from the skies to see untold millions standing in triumph where once they stood and died. When the last effort has been made to destroy God and to wipe out the name of Christ from the earth, He will be seen standing in multiplied millions of His saints of earth and coming in power and glory upon the clouds of heaven. He upholds all things by the word of His power. Nations, however mighty in their day, can no longer stand once the Almighty has decreed their fall. All the armaments on earth will fail to save them. No purpose can stand when he is not with it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. God, and He alone, upholds all things by the omnipotent word of His power.

The Holy Spirit, having manifested the glory of Christ in creation in that by Him all things were made and without Him was nothing made, and that He is the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His person, upholding the universe by the word of His power, now in verse three assures us that, having purged us from our sins, He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, awaiting the triumphant day when all things will be subdued unto Himself.

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lord upon His throne.
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Arise, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee,
And crown Him as thy matchless King
For all eternity.

CHAPTER TWO THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD

The glory of the Son of God exceeds that of angels. The writer of the book of Hebrews in demonstrating that the glory of the Son was greater than the glory of angels is by no means attempting to belittle the ministry of angels, but, having spoken of the power and wisdom of the angels, he then shows how great must be the glory of the Son if His glory and power so far exceeds that of angels. Angels, which are great in glory and might, are created beings. 2 Pet. 2:11 "For in Him were all things created in heaven and upon earth, things visible and things invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created through Him and unto Him." Col. 1:16 Revised Version. The revealing fact that angels, glorious in power and wisdom, were themselves created both by and for the Son of God manifests as little else can how great and glorious He, the Creator, must be. The reverent soul, standing with awe and fear before such majesty, finds himself speaking with bated breath as he bows in homage and adoring contemplation before the divine majesty of the Son of God, who is seated at the right hand of the majesty on High.

Angels, shining and resplendent as they are, are ministering spirits created and sent forth to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation. The blessed and powerful ministry of angels is abundantly manifest throughout the Holy Scriptures. They excel in wisdom and strength. 2 Pet. 2:11 They are celestial beings beyond the power of human description as may be seen by studying such revealing passages as Matt. 28:2,3; Rev. 10:1; Dan. 10:6; and many, many others. Angels appeared to Abraham in the lonesomeness of his wilderness wandering. It was they who brought the message of the birth of Isaac to the aged man and his wife. Angels appeared to just Lot to deliver him from the sordid wickedness of Sodom. Angels appeared to Elijah and fed him when he fled from the face of the wicked Jezebel. A mighty host of angels appeared at Dothan to protect Elisha when the Syrians sent an army to take him. 2 Kings 6 These heavenly beings were with Daniel in the den of lions. It was a mighty angel who brought tidings to Zacharias in the temple, to the Virgin Mary and again to Joseph. At the time of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness angels came to strengthen Him. Angels delivered Peter from the prison and appeared to Paul during the fearful storm on the voyage to Rome. And in the twentieth century, too, as in all other times men and women and children have on occasion been visited by the angels of the Lord.

The scripture states clearly that angels are glorious in power and might and the word of God bears witness to their wisdom, their power and their might. The vast all-conquering Assyrian army was encamped before the walls of Jerusalem and the people reduced to utter starvation until Hezekiah, the king, called upon the Lord and the prophet Isaiah prophesied the deliverance of the city. That very night the angel of the Lord passed over the Assyrian hosts and those who were spared until the morning found 185,000 men and their horses slain. How eloquently the poet described the scene when he wrote:

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold,
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea
Where the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like leaves of the forest when summer is green
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strewn;

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and forever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride.
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail;
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Our purpose here in emphasizing the power and glory of angels, as was also the purpose of the author of Hebrews, is that we might show that the Son is much greater than they. This the apostle goes about to prove in the following manner: In saying that the Son of God is greater than the angels, the writer points up four distinct ways in which the Son of God is greater than they. First, by inheritance He hath a more excellent name than they. Second, unto which of the angels hath He ever said, "Thou art My Son?" Third, He has never said to them, "This day have I begotten thee." Fourth, when he bringeth His first begotten into the world, He saith, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." These four statements emphasize as nothing else can the indisputable wisdom of divine reasoning. They leave no room for debate as to the superiority of the Son of God over angels, who were created both by Him and for Him, and, with the exception of the Almighty Himself, are the most powerful, glorious and radiant of all His creatures.

Now as to the statement, "He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they," the understanding is not easily grasped, for, while as God's only begotten Son He became heir of all things, it appears from Phil. 2:9, ("wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father) that the Son of God by His devotion actually attained His most marvelous inheritance. Because He, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation and took upon

Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Phil. 2:5-8, therefore, or for this reason, the Father exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high in everlasting glory to be associated with the supreme Majesty of the universe. In eastern countries the throne was reserved for the king himself. Next to him at his right hand was the second ruler and at his left the third. How wonderfully in accord is this with Paul's statement, "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." 1. **Cor. 15:25-28** What a glorious inheritance He has attained in that He has purged the sins of the universe, will put all enemies under His feet, including the last enemy death - the first death and the second death - and, having restored and reconciled the whole universe, will Himself become willingly subject to the Father, that God may be all in all! Oh what a sublime and heavenly wonder it all is! Let those who will, despairing souls that they are, preach the doom and gloom of a lost creation, but I am sure that He who picked up the fragments that were discarded after the multitude had been fed with the loaves and fishes. He who sought the one last sheep until He found it and nestled it down with the ninety and nine, He who swept the house until He found the lost coin, will never, you may assuredly and safely believe, lose anything in all His universe; but He will subdue it and purge it and present it faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. That, O child of God, is His inheritance.

Unto which of the angels said He at any time, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee"? I would not want to take upon myself to say what is meant by "this day have I begotten thee," as no scripture is of private interpretation. It may refer to the coming of the Saviour through the Virgin Mary, for that which was begotten of her was by the Holy Ghost. Then in His resurrection He is called the first begotten from the dead. This all is divinely and sublimely true, yet I am moved to believe, as we pointed out in chapter one, that the awe-inspiring sight which Ezekiel saw was nothing less than God the Father begetting a Son from the glory of Himself. Furthermore, from the four faces - the eagle, the lion, the man and the ox - we are led to believe that another representation is of necessity here - that of the chosen people through whom the great family of sons were to come in the image and likeness of the first begotten Son. As the die leaves its image and likeness impressed upon the wax, so Christ leaves the image and likeness of Himself upon His sons, as the Father has left His image upon Christ. It is all too wonderful for me! It is high; I cannot attain unto it. O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." **Rom. 11:34-36**

To which of the angels said He at any time, "I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to Me a Son?" This is a direct quotation from **Psa. 2:7**. "I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." But unto the Son He saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hath laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: Thy shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." **Heb. 1:8-12** What a wonder of inspiration this really is - that the Father should prove the superiority of His Son above all beings created or made in such a manner as this, that, while exalting the Son to the throne of God, He never in the least belittles, disparages, minimizes or underrates the greatness of angels nor the power of their ministry.

The first part of this passage is taken from **Psalm 45:6-7** This beautiful Psalm of King David is given to the exaltation of the illustrious King of the kingdom, which is to come. "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured forever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou

lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." **Verses 6-7**

"Thy throne, O God!" These exalted words were spoken of the Son of God. He is of the family of God in the same way that Gabriel and Michael are of the order of angels. Whatever our understanding of Christ may be, or in whatsoever manner we picture Him, He is God. It is valueless for man to attempt to describe what God is like, because He is really not like anything we know. Those who have seen God in vision find themselves, even with the help of inspiration, completely unable to explain what they saw. It was good that Ezekiel attempted to describe what he saw in his vision, for it is most enlightening as we have seen. Yet he, being bewildered by the sight, is forced to use expressions that leave the reader dazedly wondering. "As the color of amber"; **Ezek. 1:4** "They had the likeness of a man"; **verse 5** "They sparkled like burnished brass"; **verse 7** "Like the appearance of coals of fire"; **verse 13** "Like the appearance of lamps"; **verse 13** "As the appearance of a flash of lightning"; **verse 14** "As it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel"; **verse 16** The whole chapter is given to describing that which is indescribable, that which in reality is not completely like anything we know. Our Lord Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, appeared in different forms and even before His crucifixion He appeared in different ways. The woman of Samaria took Him to be a Jew. When the veil was removed at the transfiguration, it is stated that His face did shine "as the sun" and His garment was "white as the light". These comparative similarities were the best descriptions the seers could give. Daniel also attempts to give expression to what he saw in his vision of the Son of God. "His body was like the beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, His eyes as lamps of fire, His arms and His feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude." **Dan. 10:6**

One would be led to believe that in all such passages as these even inspiration finds no suitable words, at least in any human tongue, to describe these indescribables. His body was like the beryl. Funk and Wagnal's English Dictionary describe the beryl as being a "vitreous green, light blue, yellow, pink or white silicate of aluminum and beryllium crystallizing in a hexagonal system. The aquamarine and emerald are varieties of beryl used as gems." Would you not say that one would need to see the beryl shining and flashing in all these colors to have any idea what the prophet actually saw? Vitreous pertains to glass and the light green, light blue, yellow, pink or white was the prophet's description of the body of the heavenly being he saw. His face appeared as lightning, His eyes as lamps of fire, His feet like polished brass and His words like the voice of a multitude.

The similarity of the vision of Daniel to that of the apostle John is so remarkable that it must be assumed that they were actually beholding the same glorious person, the Son of God Himself; but from the words of John especially we conclude that both Daniel and John were seeing, not the Christ of Galilee, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but the fullness of Christ as He shall appear in His mystical body at the end of this present age, united with the great family of glorified sons all prepared through grace and suffering and ready to take the throne of the kingdom of God to reign in ineffable glory for the age. Marvelous as are the likenesses given by revelation, they are couched in such magnificent terms that divine revelation can proceed for ages revealing just what those likenesses describe. What Daniel describes as the voice of a multitude, John describes as the sound of many waters. Waters in scripture signify peoples and tongues and nations. Rev. 17:15

Daniel spoke of a multitude and John adds in his revelation, "A multitude that no man can number". I have mentioned in previous writings that my wife and I once attended the Warrior's Day Parade in Toronto. In the one grandstand alone were thirty thousand people. As they waited for the parade to begin, they chatted together, and, as we listened to the hum, the distant thunder, the rising and falling, the rumble and the indistinguishable mumble of their voices, we could best describe the sound as the voice of many waters. The sound was like Niagara Falls. No sound is more quieting to the spirit than the sound of running water. Nothing is more healing to the troubled or weary mind. That wondrous voice of the fullness of Christ will one day quiet the troubled universe and bring God's cosmos out of the dreadful chaos into which six thousand years of man's laborious government has brought us all.

CHAPTER THREE THE GLORY OF THE THRONE

The throne of David was intended to be an eternal throne from the beginning. The Almighty never reneges on His intentions nor His purposes. They are all yea and amen and will stand forever. Poor, feeble man is always having to alter courses and change his plans because he has no power to bring them to pass, but the Almighty never changes His purposes. He is all wise in their conception and all powerful to carry them to the fullness of conclusion. To David the Lord promised, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." **Jeremiah 33:17** Nor will a man ever be lacking to occupy that throne until that day when the King of kings and Lord of lords takes the kingdom to reign. Thus saith the prophet Isaiah, "Upon the throne of David to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." **Isa. 9:7** Every reader would do well to notice these words: "Then Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord ..." **1 Chron. 29:23**

The things our Lord initiates in smallness and weakness grow from glory to glory and from strength to strength. The insignificant throne of David in the petty city of Jerusalem, set to rule over a small people, will be at last the greatest throne on earth, for it is the throne of the Lord. It will swallow up all others. It will rule a more excellent realm than David's with wisdom far exceeding that of Solomon. It will rule a converted and regenerated Israel. It will bring all nations of earth under its happy dominion. Nothing of evil known throughout the past six thousand years will hold power or sway in that realm of light. That enduring throne, which is forever, or unto the ages of the ages, will rise yet one step higher when the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, is joined in marriage to the glorified body of Christ, the sons of God. Then the throne of God will be in it. Thus Isaiah prophesied in these words: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." **Isa. 9:6-7** The same promise was given at the annunciation of the birth of Jesus. Luke 1:32-33 He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." The wonder of such a statement literally staggers, astonishes and dumbfounds the mind! Then Christ, the Son of David, will sit upon the throne of the Lord throughout the kingdom age and on through the dispensation of the fullness of times when everything in heaven and earth will be gathered into Christ, Eph. 1:9-10; when at last all nations have brought their glory and honor into the New Jerusalem and everything in the universe kneels at the feet of this blessed King of kings and Lord of lords; when all things everywhere shall be subdued unto Him. Then shall the Son in all His supernal greatness, together with the sons He calls His brothers, members of the Christ body, become subject to the unspeakable, ineffable majesty of the throne of the Father that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15:24-25. The Father's throne is high above every throne and every name that can be named in this world or in worlds to come, far above all principality or might, dominion or power.

"All and in all" is a blessed statement that far surpasses human comprehension. It would seem that the heavenly Father is telling us of a day that is coming when God will be in everything and everything everywhere will be in Him. We will have to admit that even in this hour of sin and darkness all created life, whether things alive or things dead, things animate or things inanimate, all things, absolutely all things, live and move and have their being in Him. "From Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends." **Rom. 11:36** (Goodspeed). If He takes away their breath, they die. If He breathes upon them, they live. If He commands, they obey. If He calls, they respond. But what an unspeakable wonder it will be when the mountains and the hills, once thought inanimate, break forth into singing and the trees of the field clap their hands! **Isa. 55:12**

The next phase of David's throne is the coming of Shiloh. Gen. 49:10 As Joseph was made known to his brethren on the second occasion he met them, Acts 7:13, so will the now exalted Christ, who has been given a name which is above every name, at His second coming make Himself known, not only to His brethren, the seed of Abraham, but to every nation far and wide. Zechariah saw the triumphant day when "one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thy hands? Then shall He answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends." **Zech. 13:6** He saw the day come when "His feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem", **Zech. 14:4**, and proclaimed, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." **Zech. 14:9** Zechariah saw the punishment of those

nations who refused to accept Him as King and Lord. He saw that amid all the glory of the kingdom reign with all its unspeakable blessings there would be a ruling sceptre, a rod of iron, for those who refused to accept His majesty and authority. Then said the prophet, "And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." **Zech. 14:16-19** We may assure our hearts, therefore, that the sublime calmness, peace and glory of the kingdom age will never be shattered by disobedient or unruly nations; neither will it ever be marred by the ungodly or profane, the unbridled or intractable, the fractious or perverse. In that kingdom of love all will be peace.

In that day of glory and majesty, upon the King who sits on the throne shall rest the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord... With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. See Isaiah, chapters 11 and 35

The prophets of old, Isaiah in particular, so magnify the kingdom and the glory of its King upon His throne that one is completely carried away and left speechless, beholding the wonder and the happy estate of all who rest beneath the sheltering shekinah that overshadows His exalted throne. In that day every valley shall be exalted. Every mountain and hill shall be made low. The crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Amid all the bluster, the threatening and the judgment repeated over and over in the book of Isaiah, the reader cannot fail to be carried off into the realm of the celestial as the mighty prophet interrupts his pronouncements of woe against the disobedient to speak of a better day when all sorrow and all carnality, all inborn perverseness of spirit, all wars and rumors of wars, all plagues, frosts, dearth and floods, and every disease known to mankind will be wiped out for ever; when "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." **Isa. 55:13** Therefore "sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." **Isa. 54:1** "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shall be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." **Isa. 62:12**

Thus through a glass darkly do the prophets and seers depict the more excellent glory of His throne - the throne of which the writer of Hebrews exulted, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Thus for the one thousand year reign of the kingdom of God it shall be; but this, dearly beloved reader, is only the beginning of that throne and the majesty of that wonderful Shiloh, who is to be revealed when He comes the second time. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians gently but boldly drew aside the veil of secrecy that for ages had covered God's purpose that we who live in this, the end of the age of grace, might catch at least one glorious glimpse of an age supernal that lies beyond the millennial kingdom - an age that will supersede the kingdom age as the kingdom age exceeds the age in which we live. That wonderful age is called the dispensation of the fullness of times - an age of exceeding glory, of which it is said, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." **Eph. 1:9-10** This dispensation of the fullness of times is the fullness also of that time to which Peter referred when speaking of the resurrected Christ: "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." **Acts 3:21**

In that age of the ages the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, will be glorified in all the earth. Her twelve pearly gates will be opened wide and never, ever closed, for there is no night there. The throne of God will be in it. It was of this throne our writer spoke when he exulted, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever", or, to the ages of the ages. Forth from that throne of blessing will flow the river of the water of life as John saw it flowing. On either side of the crystal river blooms the eternal tree of life, bearing the twelve manner of fruits, of which we cannot now speak in particular. Then shall the nations of earth, whosoever they be, come flooding to bring their glory and honor into the city, wonder that will never, never cease until that day when everything in heaven and in earth has tasted the glory of redemption and God, the everlasting Father, is all and in all. See the marvelous truth in Rev. 21 and 22.

"Thy throne, O God!" **Heb. 1:8** I am sure it would be no great task to fill this whole book with truth concerning that exalted throne, but let us take heed to this: The King who reigns on that throne is here said to be God. Our heavenly Father does not use titles lightly. One word falling from His lips of truth fills the world with understanding. The Jews of long ago might have cried, "Blasphemy," at the slightest suggestion from Christ that He was in any sense God, but here the Father Himself, exalted far above heaven and earth, the Father, who once spoke with thunder voice from heaven, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased", now speaks for all creation to hear, saying of Christ, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Please do not present to me your humanistic arguments about trinities and unities. Cast aside the traditions of men who know not their right hand from their left, who imagine they understand the mystery of godliness, who divide the saints and organize new denominations on what they believe, or, rather, imagine. Let the Holy Spirit still the troubled waves of human imagination. Listen only to the words He speaks. Then, and only then, will you find the knowledge of the Holy and a divine understanding will fill your soul with peace. We will never be able to explain the mystery of God. The prophets could not do it. The apostles could not do it. And our Lord Jesus Christ never tried to do it. It was He who said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

But then that only begotten Son, sending the Holy Spirit into the heart of the apostle, spoke of this same Jesus, saying, "Thy throne, O God." He is God, beloved friend! The Father has said it is so. One could compose pages of facts to prove that He is God, but I am inclined to believe that attempts on the part of the created to prove that his creator exists is a subtle form of unbelief bordering on blasphemy and idolatry. The idolater fashions a god for himself whether that god be of wood or stone or some other fruit of his imagination, but he who makes an idol always fashions his god in the likeness of himself. If he be cruel, the god he fashions is cruel. If he is grotesque, the idol he makes will be grotesque. "Thou thoughtest that I was such an one as thyself is the Lord's rebuke to the wicked man. **Psa. 50:21** "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Whatsoever they fancied, in that image their god was formed.

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." **Heb. 1:8** The throne is a symbol of sovereign power and dignity. The throne of Christ, which was entrusted to the house of David, Jer. 33:17, was to be held by David and his royal seed as tenants until Shiloh comes, or, as it is so beautifully stated by Jacob in his prophecy to Judah, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." **Gen. 49:10**

We have a beautiful account of the throne of the Lord in Psalm 89. Read it with diligence and prayer and you will see many promises and pictures of what the throne of the Lord will be. If we insist on ignoring the truth that the eventual kingdom throne of Christ springs from the throne of David, we will find ourselves in all manner of misunderstanding, but if we see that the throne of David is in reality the throne of Christ, not in corruption as it existed for centuries under blind and ignorant tenants in the days of the kings of Israel, but in the incorruption, the immortality and the glory of the ages to come, then we will be reading prophecy rather than history.

Notice these marvelous words of instruction: "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations, for I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with My chosen. I have sworn

unto David, My servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah." **Psa. 89:1-4** May I remark here that the word selah, which is a call for meditation, loosely translated into English means approximately, "Just think of that!" Selah is really intended to be a sort of adoring exclamation as though one was awed almost to unbelief at the glory of what was spoken - the expression one might use upon hearing or perceiving the incredible. Then the Psalmist continues his exultation of the throne in these words: The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord: Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints." The statements made in Psalm 89 certainly call forth from our astonished hearts that adoring word of contemplation, Selah. Give heed to the outburst of revelation that runs all through this kingdom Psalm, revealing what that throne will be. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders: Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" **Verses 5-6.** "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them." **Verse 9.** Now apply the word sea to the nations of the world, for that is what is meant. Zechariah proclaimed that the Lord will be King over all the earth. Zech. 14:9 The Lord's reign, however, is not restricted to the earth only, but "the heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, Thou hast founded them." **Verse 11**

After outlining the vast extent and dominion of His throne, David next proceeds to describe the government that will flow forth like a healing river of life from that throne. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted." **Verses 14-16** Then, after stating the many other blessings of the throne from verses 17 to 33, the exaltation of it, the glory of it, the defense of it, the holy anointing oil for the King, the subjugation of all foes of the kingdom - the Psalmist declares the certainty that the throne and the covenant are for ever in the words, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah." **Verses 34-37**

In the light of these things can we wonder that the writer of Hebrews, filled with glory and inspiration, breathed forth in his writing these magnificent words: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; they shall perish; but Thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." **Heb. 1:8-12**

Every clause in that superlative statement requires our earnest consideration. The throne of David that began in smallness and rejection has now become the throne of Christ and of the world. Jesus Christ is the Shiloh who was to come. All the kings of the house of Judah from David to the present day held it as tenants or regents until "He should come whose right it is to reign, and I will give it to Him." **Ezek. 21:27** The sure mercies of David, Isa. 55:3, were the promises given to David - that his throne would abide for ever and that his seed, which is Christ, would eventually take the throne which was rightfully His.

Joseph was the second ruler in Egypt because he was in reality occupying the throne for Pharaoh. For many years scholars thought there was no such king as Belshazzar, since he is not listed among the kings of Babylon, until it was later discovered that Belshazzar ruled as regent for his father, Nabonidus. For this reason Daniel was called the third ruler, Nabonidus being first ruler, Belshazzar the second and Daniel the third. Thus all rulers occupying the throne of the Lord, which springs from the throne of David, occupy it as tenants and regents until Shiloh come, whose right it is to reign. Should there be any doubt in the mind of the reader concerning this fact, let us take notice of the words of Isaiah, who, speaking of the throne, made this extraordinary statement: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." **Isa. 9:6-7** Then the prophet ends the statement with these remarkable words: "The Lord sent a word unto Jacob, and it lighted upon Israel." **Verse 8 SELAH!**

Concerning this statement, Isa. 9:6-8, I must remark that, until the devout, searching soul is able to see that every great thing begins with something very small, that oaks begin with acorns, worlds begin with atoms, the things which are seen are made of things which do not appear, nations spring from individuals like you and me - as the scripture says of Abraham, "Therefore sprang there of one, and him as good as dead, as many as the stars of heaven for multitude and the sand which is by the seashore innumerable - until we are able to see this fact and accept it, we will not be able to grasp the ineffable truth that the throne of Christ had its beginning in the insignificant throne of David, which in turn sprang from the covenant given to Abraham. Until our minds grasp the meaning of those words, "The Lord sent a word unto Jacob, and it lighted upon Israel", the significance of these facts and even of the throne of Christ will remain a mystery beyond our comprehension. Would you not say that our Lord made a most significant statement when He said, "**Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel**"? **Matt. 19:28** To me it is unutterably sad that the vast multitude of Christians have lost sight of the covenants and the promises and the glory abounding in the scripture until we have lost all direction and do not even know who we are or where we are going.

Among the words of the mighty archangel Gabriel, spoken to the Virgin Mary, we find this enlightening statement: "**And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God will give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.**" **Luke 1:30-33** Let us believe, then, that the throne, spoken of as Thy throne, is indeed the throne of David. Just as corruptible man advances from glory to glory, from mortality to incorruption to immortality, so also does the throne of David advance in glory until it becomes the throne of Christ. The wonderful law of progressive continuity runs like a silver cord of revelation through scripture. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. 1 Cor. 15:42-44 Thus it is with the throne.

The throne of the Lord is here said to be forever and ever. I do not think this passage was intended to mean that the throne is eternal, but, as some translations say, "unto the age of the age" and others, "the eon of the eon". The Emphatic Diaglott has it "the age of the ages", which means the same thing, while others use the expression, "to the consummation of the age." We need not take time to quibble about such things. Their secrets will unfold at the proper time. The throne of Christ will undoubtedly continue until that day of days when the last enemy of Christ has been subdued. "**Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His (that is, Christ) feet. But when he saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He (the Father) is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father) that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.**" **1 Cor. 15:24-28.**

Whether the throne continues until the end of the kingdom age or to the end of the dispensation of the fullness of times will be revealed in its time. My personal thought is that it will of necessity continue until the end of that marvelous age of the ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times, simply because at the end of the millennial kingdom there are still enemies, Rev. 20:7-10, and again because of the secret Paul discloses that God has made "**known unto us the mystery (secret) of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.**" **Eph. 1:9-10**

At this present moment and all through the ages the Lord has been raising up and preparing a people, baptizing them into the Christ body, 1 Cor. 12:13, "**that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.**" **Eph. 2:7** It is plain to see from this statement that it will be those who in this age have been made partakers of His grace who will be called upon to demonstrate the marvelous grace of God in the dispensation of the fullness of times. This manifestation of the grace of God is to include principalities and powers in heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose

He purposed in Christ. This is the mystery that has been kept secret, "that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Eph. 3:10-11**

It is no vain or idle imagination that all must be subdued unto Him, everything in heaven and in earth and under the earth. ALL! Everything! Everybody! Every principality and power that Christ may be all and in all - everything in Him and He in everything. Nothing less than this could satisfy grace that is infinite and power that is omnipotent.

The truth concerning the throne of His glory fills the reverent soul with awe. May God pardon my lack of understanding, for I must confess that such things are too great for me. They are high; I cannot attain unto them. But in closing this all too brief perusal of "Thy throne", I stagger for words or adjectives that could remotely describe the awesome magnificence of it all. Daniel, a man dearly beloved, having caught a glimpse of the throne, said, "I was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me." Dan. 7:15. This is how the beloved prophet described what he saw. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down (that is, the thrones of earth) and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: The judgment was set, and the books were opened." **Dan. 7:9-10** Undoubtedly Daniel was seeing the great white throne even as John beheld it in the Revelation. Rev. 20:11-15 "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him." Compare **Rev. 1:13** This one like the Son of man must indeed be the Christ body in fullness. "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed". **Dan. 7:13-14** Then, that we might see the connection between one like the Son of man and the saints, the vision goes on to say, "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." With these passages the devout reader should study **Rev. 1:1-18 and Rev. 20:11-15**

O that the saints of the Lord might see what is meant by being "in Christ", a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones! If God's people would but take time to wait on the Lord with fasting, confession and meditation, the paltry flesh pots of earth would soon begin to fade out of existence in the light of the eternal throne and the eternal City. Then those who are called would become those who are chosen, and those who are chosen would become those who are faithful, as it is said, "Those who are with Him are called and chosen and faithful."

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus: who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man (Christ) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. The house referred to here is the "house not made with hands", John 14:2, which is the household of faith, Gal. 6:10, which in turn is the mystical body of Christ, one like the Son of man.

CHAPTER FOUR THE SCEPTRE

After speaking of the throne, the message continues. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." **Heb. 1:8**. The sceptre is the wand carried by kings as the badge of sovereignty or command, spoken of in Rev. 19:15 as the rod of iron. You will notice the use of Aaron's rod in the miracles of Egypt during the great contest between Moses and Pharaoh. This rod, or sceptre, was the mark of authority, the authority given to Moses and Aaron by the Lord Himself. When this sceptre of authority was used at the command of God, there was no power in either Egypt or nature itself that could stand before it. It was the sceptre of authority that divided the Red Sea when Moses held it over the waters and the waters divided. In Israel's battle with Amalek, Moses held the rod of God, which was Aaron's rod, in his hand, and needless to say, the battle was won. Exod. 17:9

There is a most enlightening story concerning the rod (sceptre) of Aaron recorded in Numbers 16 and 17. All Israel had rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron; therefore Moses took a rod from each of the twelve tribes and laid them up before the ark of the testimony. The following morning the rod of Aaron had blossomed and brought forth almonds in a single night. Thus did the Lord signify who in Israel had divine authority. The rod of Aaron, that had budded, was laid up before the Ark of the Covenant as a testimony against all future rebels who would dare to speak against the authority of God. The sudden consuming plague was so terrible that in a few moments fourteen thousand, seven hundred of the rebellious people perished before Aaron was able to make atonement for them. The dead rod that budded and bloomed and bore fruit in one night is a superb type of Christ in His resurrection. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the greatest single proof ever given by God of the authority of His Son. Christ Himself is the Rod of God. He is the firstfruit of the resurrection, the firstfruit of all who slept, the firstborn of every creature and the mighty sceptre of authority. In the glory of the kingdom age our Lord will rule with a rod of iron - a rod authority. A wonderful example of that authority in action may be seen by reading Zech. 14:9-21. There will be no rebellion in the kingdom and none will be tolerated. Why should there be rebellion when all is righteous government with the perfection of peace and equity - a thing never known on the earth since man in his sorrow departed from Eden?

The sceptre of His throne is the sceptre of righteousness. Some of the translators prefer the word uprightness and others, rectitude. Righteousness is the quality of being right. All will be right in that wonderful day. The kingdom of God is the time of setting things right. Things have always been wrong since the dark hour of the fall. What is there really right in the present governments of the world? Can you imagine anything so wrong as to see great nations mint money at their own expense, hand the money to a private banking concern like the federal Reserve or the Bank of England and then borrow their money back again with interest? Yet this has been the system, the Babylon system, ever since Israel rejected the Lord and asked for a king that they might be like the other nations about them. Samuel warned them that, if they had any king but the Lord, he would take their sons for his army, take their daughters for confectionaries and cooks, take their fields, their vineyards and olive trees. He would take the tenth of their seed and vineyards for his officers. He would take their menservants and their maidservants. He would take their goodliest young men. He would take their asses, take the tenth of their sheep, and they would be his servants. And they would cry out in that day because of their king which they had chosen, and the Lord would not hear them. 1 Sam. 8:11-18

If we will compare these words with the present methods of governments everywhere on earth, it will be clear that Samuel was right. Personal bankruptcies are piling up at an alarming rate and national debts are bringing the nations to utter ruin, while idiotic leaders put the nations in ever increasing bondage by imagining they can borrow themselves out of their problems. The hour is at hand when the rich men of the earth will howl and weep when their vast riches are totally corrupted, their luxurious garments moth eaten, their gold and silver cankered, and the rust and dust of their ill-gotten gain is a witness against them. James 5:1-6. Isaiah spoke of a day of reckoning when the idols of silver and gold, idols that represent earth's fading flower of wealth, will be so worthless that they will cast them to the moles and the bats and flee to the mountains for refuge. Isa. 2:19-21. Every reader of these lines must know how the value of money has shrunk compared to its original value. In the late nineteenth century Canada built a transcontinental railway for \$63,000,000, but today it takes that much to build a bridge or a hockey arena. The day is fast coming when the prophecy of James will be a reality and the rich, who have grown fat by robbing the poor through their usury, will weep and howl for the miseries that have come upon them. Lord haste the day!

The sceptre of the Lord will be a right sceptre. It will be all righteousness, uprightness and rectitude. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." **Isa. 11:5** "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and He will smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." **Isa. 11:2-4** In that day nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

These are but a very few of the evidences of the uprightness, the rectitude, the righteousness, the honesty and fair play, the justice, impartiality and trustworthiness, the veracity and singleness of heart of the wonderful sceptre of His reign. "The sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." How the populace will rejoice in that day when the armies of earth beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, never to learn the arts of war and oppression any more; when the weak shall be strong, the lame shall leap, the bear will be gentle and the lion will be tame, and the wolf will lie down with the lamb; when the beast from the wild will be led by the child, and I shall be changed from the creature that I am!

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." "Thou hast loved righteousness hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

The world has seen six thousand years of such unrighteous government, so much unscrupulous underhandedness and double talk, so many broken promises, so much disregard for truth, so much cunning conniving, so much corrupt upholding of wickedness by a law, so much money spent to protect the imagined rights of criminals in the name of justice, until people have lost faith in governments and the largess so freely offered at election time. The righteous man droops and fades in the earth. A member of the American CIA was recently quoted as saying that, if people knew what was going on behind the scenes, many of them would commit suicide. We mention these ever increasing evils, not because we enjoy the putrid odors of earth's sewer of corruption, but rather that we might see the contrast of the kingdom that is soon to be when righteousness will be the royal sceptre and righteousness and truth the girdle of His loins. "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness: His countenance doth behold the upright." **Psa. 11:7** "The word of the Lord is truth; and all His works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." **Psa. 33:4-5** "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call upon Him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord." **Psa. 4:3-5**

In **Psa. 15** the Psalmist questions the Lord, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" Then in answer to his own question he replies, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." **Verses 1-2** "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world." **Psa. 97:2-4** "The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people shall see His glory." **Psa. 97:6** "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod (sceptre) of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead them." **Isa. 11:4-6** "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." **Psa. 23:3** "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law. I the Lord have called Thee in righteousness and will hold Thine hand..." **Isa. 42:1-6** In the light of all these blessed kingdom promises, shining as the rays of dawn and scattering and dispelling the gloomy darkness of the earth, what can be better spoken than that which the Holy Spirit has said, "A sceptre of righteousness (the sceptre of right) is the sceptre of Thy kingdom?"

In the days when our blessed Lord, clothed in humanity, walked as the Son of man among us, He entered into a synagogue and stood up to read. Finding a place in Isaiah the prophet, He hushed the awed congregation with these magnificent words of exaltation: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." **Luke 4:18-19**, (From Isaiah 61:1-2) When the great Redeemer came, He daily demonstrated the righteousness and power of the kingdom of God in every act of His life. The healing of the withered, the

halt, the lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the maimed; the casting out of devils, the judgment of the unbelieving and ungodly, the manifestation of His mercy and kindness toward publicans and harlots and other sinners and even the repentant thief upon the cross are every one demonstrations in miniature form of what His sceptre of righteousness will be in the wonderful kingdom day. In that age there will be no halt, there will be no dumb, neither will there be any blind. Then the lame man will leap as the hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, and He will lead the blind by a way they knew not, for the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Let us meditate further on the symbolic and spiritual implication of all these healings. It is not the purpose of Christ to heal all the sick and infirm in this age. This greater fullness is for the age to come. But in that kingdom day he who is dumb in understanding will have his mind opened to the glory of truth. He who is withered in experience will live in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. The blind, whose minds have long been closed to spiritual truth and whose souls have never thrilled to the revelation of the Lord, will in that day with open face behold the glory of the Lord and proclaim the way of truth.

Is it not significant that Babylon has become an habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird? I am sure it is most significant that the second miracle Jesus performed was the casting out of a devil that possessed a man in the synagogue. If God's people could see how that harlot thing that everywhere is thought to be the church has become a hold of devils and a haven for every unclean and hateful bird, they would understand why the Holy Spirit in our day is calling to the elect, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins nor receive of her plagues." Jesus, at the beginning of His kingdom ministry, entered into the synagogue and cast forth a devil from one possessed, and for aught we know that one possessed may have been the leader of the synagogue and perhaps the rabbi himself. It is the leaders of the church system who are causing the people to err and they shall receive the greater condemnation. They lead the people in the paths of error. Thinking gain is godliness, they grasp for money instead of dispensing truth, robbing widow's houses and for a pretense making long prayers and pretending to speak the word of faith for all manner of miracles that never happen. These things are not confined to the steeple houses alone. They also thrive daily on radio and television, and, even though it is manifestly a fake and a fraud, the people love to have it so. But Jesus cast the devil out of the synagogue, possibly the last place he was thought to be, and in the kingdom day Satan will be bound a thousand years and shall not go forth to deceive and tempt the nations of earth.

The withered in spiritual experience will be made whole as will the lame, who cannot walk with God. Those bound and unable to see the light of truth will understand. Those deaf to the voice of the Spirit will hear, and a world, whom Satan has bound, will be delivered. The horse upon which the King of righteousness rides is a white horse. The throne upon which He sits is a white throne. The garments He wears are fine linen, white and clean, for fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. The hair of His head is white like wool. His throne is white and all His government is right and righteousness. The throne of iniquity establishes wickedness by a law. They make acceptable that which God abhors, such as sodomy, drunkenness, abortion and evolution. All these evils God has cursed, yet the evil governments of the world established them by law.

The City has no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; and there is no night there. There the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. The tree is the Lord. The leaves are the saints. As He said in another place, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." And there will be no more curse, for the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. His servants shall serve Him. Thousand thousands ministered unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. And they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads.

The message is far too telling, glorious and overwhelming for us to continue further. No wonder the master of the feast at Cana said to the governor, "Thou hast saved the best wine until now!" How my glad heart leaps for joy in contemplation of this reign of glory! In the light of it the paltry treasures of earth fizzle into nothingness. I exhort you, Christian brethren, "Lay hold on life." Fall in love with the eternal. Loosen your grip on the passing things of time and sense. "Wherefore," cried the prophet, "do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your

soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live..." **Isa. 55:2-3** Why do God's people strive so for a better standard of earthly living, pushing themselves into all manner of distressing circumstances, worry and debt, when they could pass their lives enjoying the blessing of heaven, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord? It is good that we be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. It is also right that we be not slothful in spirit nor dilatory in our quest for spiritual things. Let us not leave this world empty of the knowledge of God. May we instead be able to say as Paul once did, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

A crown of righteousness, Paul said. The throne of Christ is the throne of righteousness. The saints who wear the crown of righteousness will reign with Him in the righteousness of His throne. The Lord is not waiting until some far off day to prepare us to reign. We are being crowned with righteousness now. The crown is not a golden tiara placed upon the head. The crown is what we really are. Just as virtue is said to be a woman's crown, so the crown of righteousness and glory that fadeth not away is in reality what we are. So also the crown of life that fadeth not away is the life of the resurrected Christ we are given here. It may not, however, be seen until that blessed day to come. But Paul said, "Lay hold on eternal life", and then added later, "**That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.**" **1 Tim. 6:12, 19**

The law of Moses, which is in reality the law of God, speaks righteousness in every word. Examine it thoroughly from Exodus, chapter 20, and see if you can find anything in it that does not savor of absolute righteousness. The Lord our God was not content that such a law as this should be confined to a table of stone. He has transferred it from the hard face of a rock to the tables of the redeemed heart. Here the spirit of man answers to the law of God as face reflects face in a mirror. The law need tell me no more, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart", because I do love the Lord with all my heart. I love Him in the day. I love Him in the night. I love Him in trial. I love Him in times of great joy and in the hour when sorrows like sea billows roll over me. And, if you, my brother or sister, are walking in His Spirit, you may search the law of Moses and your glad heart will leap for joy in response to all it says. The man who insists that God has abolished His law is merely looking for it in the wrong place. Look no more on cold tables of stone, but to the tables of the redeemed heart and you will find it written there by the finger of God. The law that God first wrote upon an unhewn stone is the same law that will be administered from His righteous throne and it will judge the world in uprightness in the dispensations yet unborn.

CHAPTER FIVE THE OIL OF GLADNESS

A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom. He has loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. The anointing oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. It is the oil that makes the face to shine with the light of God. The fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance - grows from its evergreen tree. When the high priest, Aaron, was anointed, a specially prepared anointing oil was poured upon his head. It was poured upon him in the profusion David describes in **Psa. 133:2** "**It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.**" The ointment spoken of here was anointing oil and is translated oil in other manuscripts. The word ointment comes from the word anoint. "He anointeth my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Moses was given the prescription for the anointing oil. **Exod. 30:23-33** "**Take thou unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin. And thou shall make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.**" This precious anointing oil, which is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, was used to consecrate all the furniture and vessels of the sanctuary, which holy vessels represent ourselves who are the vessels of that more perfect tabernacle, the mystical body of Christ. (For reference see Acts 9:15; 2 Tim. 2:21; Rom. 9:23.) The precious oil was also poured upon the head of Aaron, the high priest, verse 30,

but was forbidden to be used upon strangers or for any common use. Verses 32-33. A beautiful reference to the anointing of Christ is made by David in **Psa. 45:8**. "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad." From the symbolic anointing of kings and priests comes the anointing of Christ. "Wherefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Christ, being a better priest than Aaron and a better king than David, was anointed with a better anointing than they. He was both anointed and filled with the oil of gladness - the Holy Spirit, of whom He said, "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me...**" **Luke 4:18**

The anointing of Aaron, precious as it was, was only typical. We have already noted that Christ was greater than Moses or Aaron. He is High Priest of an order far superior to that of Aaron. He is made after the order of Melchisedec, who was a priest, not after the order of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life - a vast difference, knowing as we do that the letter of the law can only kill, while the Spirit of the law gives life. The order of Aaron is earthly and carnal; the order of Melchisedec is heavenly and spiritual. As heaven is higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways. For this reason Jesus of Nazareth, the only begotten son of God, was anointed with the better anointing of the Holy Spirit in a greater house and a greater ministry.

The holy anointing oil with which Jesus was anointed was the oil of the Holy Spirit. The description of that holy anointing is given for our edification by Matthew in these revealing words: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, **Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.** Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **Matt. 3:13-17** The anointing of Aaron or David may have changed them very little, but the anointing of the Holy Spirit is a transforming reality, making the anointed one with the anointing.

I shall not be dogmatic in my statements here, but in my opinion it was the anointing of the Holy Spirit that designated Jesus as the Christ. The title Christ means anointed one, and how beautifully that sacred title Christ is in accord with Peter's words following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when one hundred and twenty were anointed with the oil of gladness above their fellows - "thy fellows" evidently referring to the priests of Aaron's order. Thus Peter spoke: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him." **Acts. 10:38** Jesus Himself referred to the baptism of the Holy Spirit which He received as the anointing when He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth and read the words of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Then, having closed the book and given it back to the minister, He began to say unto them, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The anointing Jesus received was the anointing of God. All the works that followed the anointing of Jesus were the works of God. Our Lord Himself proclaimed that His works were the works of the Father. It is unnecessary for us to fill pages with detailed accounts of His wonderful works. We can read them better in the four Gospels. But we must never neglect our Lord's promise that we also should receive power from on high after the Holy Spirit, the anointing, should come upon us. This verily was true in the lives of the apostles, for there were few mighty works performed by Jesus that were not also done by those who had received the precious anointing of His Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Christ, though at present He does give the Spirit by measure unto us. Well might one ask why we do not today see the mighty out-pouring of the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit as they did at Pentecost. It is because the early rain spoken of by Joel the prophet is over and gone. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." **Song of S. 2:11-12** Summer time has come; the fruit is ripening on the tree. "Arise, my love, and come away." **Verse 13** But a latter rain, the harvest rain, is yet to come, and it will come when the body of Christ is complete and the many sons of God are ready for their manifestation and the fullness of the Lord's anointing without

measure. Then will come the day of which our Lord spoke, saying, "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father." **John 14:12** It is coming at the time appointed as sure as the promise of God is true. The anointing oil of the Holy Spirit that fell like a dove upon Jesus of Nazareth wrought the greatest change the world has ever known, but the day is at hand for the anointing to be poured forth without measure upon the sons of God. The latter will far exceed the former, for it will be poured upon a vast family of begotten sons God.

Our divine and wonderful Christ stood at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." **John 7:37-39** Should I try further to speak of the wonder of that glorious, heavenly anointing which is soon to be poured upon the sons of God, I would, I fear, do more to detract from its magnificent glory that I would add to it. This is the anointing oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed above His fellows.

During the long centuries of the past two millenniums, the world has seen some mighty outpourings of the Holy Spirit as the almighty Father has anointed some human vessel through whom He has poured "the oil of gladness" upon the people, yet, mighty as some of these visitations have been, they were but showers upon the earth. My personal opinion is that there will not be another great outpouring in this present age. The next great outpouring of the oil of gladness will come when the fully redeemed and glorified sons of God are anointed to launch the glory of the millennial age. Surely this was the burden of Paul's message in Romans, chapter 8, when he said, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan with ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." **Rom. 8:22-23** All the mighty works and teachings of Jesus concerned the kingdom age. The entire age of grace is a period of time set aside for the preparation of the sons of God, not for the conversion of the world as is generally imagined. During this time those who are predestined to adoption (sonship) are being called "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." **Eph. 1:5-6** The beloved, of course, is Jesus Christ, and those who are called, chosen and faithful are the accepted. They are the "in Christ" people and the true body of Christ. They are members in particular of His great spiritual body, the sons of God. During this age He begins to make known to them the mystery of His will. Therefore we should "give the more earnest heed" to the truth we are now considering lest we, like our forefathers in the wilderness, should "let them slip". **Heb. 2:1** These are sacred and eternal truths and, if we approach them lightly or glibly, we will be blinded and receive nothing from the Lord. "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground", and the truth we are faced with is high, exalted and holy. Israel long ago was instructed that they should not go up to the altar of the Lord by steps, lest they should display their nakedness. **Exod. 20:26** The proper approach to God is by humility - not by climbing. He who approaches the Father in repentance and humility will find himself being lifted by His everlasting arms into the realm of His choice. There can be no bargaining in where angels fear to tread.

"Be still; just now be still.
There comes a presence very calm and sweet.
White are the sandals on His noiseless feet.
It is the Comforter whom Jesus sent
To teach thee what the words He uttered meant.
The longing, searching spirit He doth fill
If you would hear His message, "Dear soul, be still."

Moses, standing in the glory of God's presence, in reverence removed the shoes from off his feet. Elijah wrapped his mantle about his face and stood with bowed head to listen while the Almighty spoke. Job abhorred himself when he saw the glory of the Lord, and angels, greater in power and might, covered their faces and feet with their wings, crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory." Daniel was so moved by the glory he saw that he was sick certain days, and even blustering Peter cried out upon seeing the miraculous drought of fishes, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Likewise the elders on high and the four living creatures about the throne fell down before Him, casting their crowns at His

feet and crying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever." **Rev. 4:11-14**

When our Lord Jesus Christ began His ministry, one of His first acts was to drive the money changers out of the house of the Lord. And, should He come today, one of His first acts would be to drive out all these money grabbing preachers who clutter His air waves with their atrocious garbage. They claim to preach the gospel, but their gospel is money, money, and more money, while any attempt to preach a sermon becomes a sort of diving board from which they plunge into the real message - the need of more money. The wicked Tetzal, who sold indulgences in the middle ages and by which he raised endless millions for the Roman Catholic treasury, a feather from the wing of Gabriel, a piece of wood from the cross, and on one occasion the chemise of the virgin Mary, wicked as he was and proficient in deceiving the people as he was, could not hold a candle to some of the modern Protestant money mongers, who rob widow's houses and for a pretense make long prayers to accomplish every imaginable self-gratifying project. But they will receive the greater condemnation of which Paul so aptly spoke.

Dear saint of God, if we are to attain the prize of sonship, we will not be able to ride the church merry-go-round or go joy riding with the multitudes. Few cases in history ever show that it is safe or right to follow the multitudes. They are swayed by every clever talker and every wind of doctrine. They are an easy target for the sleight of men and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. If we are going to walk with Christ, hear His voice and follow Him, we will need to walk with Him alone. The giddy throng, which today cries, "Hosanna! Blessed is the Son of David that cometh in the name of the Lord", tomorrow will cry, "Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! It is not fit for such a fellow to live." To a greater or lesser degree I have discovered that this is an accurate picture of the capricious instability of the vacillating throng; but we are made partakers of Christ only if we hold the beginning of our faith steadfast unto the end.

The beloved apostle John wrote much concerning the anointing of the Holy Spirit both in his gospel and in his epistles. In his gospel he recorded the Saviour's words, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. **It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."** **John 16:7-14** Then later he wrote in his epistle these wonderful words of instruction: "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in Him." **1 John 2:27**

With great reverence and respect I shall say that it is the anointing that makes Jesus to be God's Christ, the anointed one, and with just as great respect I say it is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that makes you and me members in particular of the body of Christ, for the Spirit has said, "By (or in) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (the body of Christ)." **1 Cor. 12:13** "As many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ." **Gal. 3:27**

CHAPTER SIX THE DIVINE INTENTION IN SONSHIP

As our hearts have been absorbed in reverent meditation concerning the greatness, the majesty, the glory and power of the Son of God, we may have found ourselves wondering just what purpose the Holy Spirit had in mind in revealing these wonders to the saints. Our kind heavenly Father never indulges in unnecessary revelation. Only in cases of vital necessity does the Lord enter into or give details. He is truth, and faith

believes and accepts all that He says without question and without prying into things too great for our understanding. The Genesis record begins with this statement of fact: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." No word is offered to explain who God is, where He came from or when He came. No effort is made to show how He created the heavens and the earth or from what He created them. Faith accepts His statement without question. As it is written, they that believe do enter into rest. All the stupidity of evolution and the ridiculous theories concerning the age of the universe emanates from man's gross unbelief in the veracity of what God has said. Sad but true, the world has now come to the place where the incredible theory of evolution, which at its best is a totally unproved theory, is taught as fact in our schools and universities to gullible students who know not the word of God. The evolution of the earth, the evolution of man, the evolution of birds, the evolution of planets and the evolution of everything is so drummed into the minds of students that the big lie is accepted as truth. Even Darwin himself and such men as Einstein had to admit that the wonder of the human eye makes evolution absolutely impossible. Only creation can explain such a marvel of design. While man passes his time with his idle theories, the Lord makes no self defense or explanation, knowing as He does that blind unbelief is sure to err, but faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. One scientist has remarked that, if a tornado could pass over a junk yard and a 747 aircraft come out of the wreckage, then might evolution and the Big Bang theory be true.

During the many hours of meditation and study in the book of Hebrews, I have become convinced that, as important as all Bible writings are, this book written to the Hebrews, the descendants of Abraham, is a special revelation right from the mind of our Father in heaven that is intended above all else to reveal the place the sons of God have in the great eternal plan of the ages to come. The question, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him", becomes the predominating theme of this wonderful unfolding of the wisdom of God. Blessed saints, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, upon grasping in their inspired minds the unfolding truth here revealed to them, begin to count all earth's vanities but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, their Lord. To them, like Abraham, earth's fleeting moments are as well lived in a tent as in a palace, because of the heavenly city toward which they press.

Millenniums ago Sarah by faith received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age. "Therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky for multitude and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." **Heb. 11:11-16** Here four great principles of faith are vividly laid before us: first, having seen the promises afar off; second, they were persuaded of them; third, they embraced them; and fourth, they confessed them. Verily we can say in truth that all who see the promises and are persuaded of them, embrace and confess them, willingly testify to God and all mankind that they are in reality strangers and pilgrims in the earth. I love the words of the poet who wrote:

For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast made us here on earth
And withheld the recollection
Of our former place and birth.
But at times that inward something
Whispers, "You're a stranger here",
And I feel that I have wandered

From a more exalted sphere.

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him; but when He begins to reveal those wonders by His Spirit, then, as the poet said,

My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

And again,

All the vain things that charmed me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

The moment Abraham beheld afar off the glory of the New Jerusalem, the city of foundations, never again could he become interested or involved in any vanity of earth. When Lot's herdsmen argued about the pasture, Abraham said, "The land is before you. If you choose the right, I will go to the left. If you choose the left, I will go to the right." He cared no more for the rich plains of Jordan than Jesus cared when Satan offered Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Once the eye has caught a glimpse of the unspeakable glories God has prepared for those who love Him, nothing matters but the hope of entering into them.

Now the second chapter of Hebrews and all that follows in the entire book is based upon the mighty truth stated in chapter I. We must not miss the pertinent point if we are going to understand the wonderful message of the book. Let us notice then how this is brought to our attention in verses 1-4 "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" **Heb. 2:1-4** Notice in particular these words: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" It is extremely unfortunate that this vital verse has been used almost exclusively as a text for evangelistic meetings, as though the message was directed to sinners. The "we" referred to here has really nothing to do with sinners. The mighty man of God, whoever he may have been who wrote the book of Hebrews, included himself in the pronoun we. Furthermore he included every other saint who is part of God's highest calling. The whole book of Hebrews from beginning to end is written to believers, not sinners. Furthermore, all the references to the priesthood, to Melchisedec, to Moses, the tabernacle and the laws and ordinances prove that it was written, as the title of the book clearly shows, to God's chosen people, because for the present at least it concerns them above all others.

This so great salvation of which the apostle speaks in chapter two is a direct reference to all the high and holy statements in chapter I. Now I shall tell you a sacred, almost frightening thing that must be received with humility and reverence if we are going to understand the book. It is this. "You are the body of Christ and members in particular." Christ Jesus, God's first born Son, is the glorious Head and you are the glorious body. Such things are too wonderful for me. They are high. I cannot attain to them, but I believe them, because the Spirit and the word declare them to be true. Now with head bowed in reverence we must confess that, if Christ is in us and we are in Christ, and He is the Head and we are the body, then the Head and the body together are the fullness of Christ. This is God's Christ. Thus it is then, beloved of the Lord, that all the marvelous, ineffable wonders spoken of Christ in the first chapter of Hebrews refer not only to the glorious Head, but to the glorious body, the saints of the Most High, as well.

I know these things are hard to believe and I am very glad they are. Well do we know that some will call them blasphemy. Such truths are not for the ears of the light and frivolous. They are not for the pompous and proud, not for the careless and indifferent, not for the humanist who wants to make himself God, not for the arrogant, who seek to rule over men like a tyrant; but blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 8:3-10 He will not walk with the proud or the scornful. Humble thyself to walk with God.

Back to their tasks the crowd had gone
And He was left alone
Save for a little company
Whom He could call his own.

What use was there for restless crowds?
That worldly, giddy throng
Could listen to the music,
But never hear the song.

Can you grasp the fact that the Holy Spirit, when speaking of the Son, made this incredible statement, "Who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person"? Can you see that this is part of that "so great salvation" which we have been neglecting for centuries and did not even know was ours. Yes, it is true. Unquestionably true. That is why the apostle asks, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" This is the salvation of which he spoke. The childish idea that all there is to salvation is for a sinner to believe and be saved from sin and eventually, when life is past, to go to heaven and play a harp is not even fit for a baby to learn. Many years ago when I was a very young man, a rather amusing incident occurred that afterward left a deep impression upon me. My brother Philip and I attended a prayer meeting in which the presence of Christ was wonderfully real. As we sat with others afterward to fellowship, my brother jubilantly remarked, "It is great to have salvation." Sitting in the group was an elderly Russian gentleman who, upon hearing the remark, smiled and in very broken English replied, "Saved, brudder, but not salvation." The remark amused us at the time because in our immaturity we saw justification and salvation as one and the same thing. But as the years went by, I began to see the truth of what the old gentleman had said, for, while to be saved is indeed a part of salvation, it is by no means complete salvation. In fact, it is nothing more than the entrance to the vast realm of the heavenlies. To be justified by faith is the first essential to entering into the "so great salvation." "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate... Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29-30** So we see why it is that Paul said to the saved, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Salvation advances from God's foreknowledge through predestination, calling, justification, sanctification, adoption, membership of the sons in the body of Christ, glorification, and eventually the throne of His glory.

Let no Christian imagine that the careless and neglectful will ever be granted a place in His throne. Hear rather the solemn words of our blessed Saviour: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." **Luke 22:28-30** All this blessedness is included in our salvation, and with fervent hope I pray that we may now see the utmost gravity of the inspired words: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Since the message of the body of Christ came into prominence after 1948, a few people with understanding and reverence and a mixed multitude with neither understanding nor reverence have been talking about being "in the body". The prosperity of this present world system is not the prosperity spoken of by the apostle John, who wrote, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The Lord has no objection to one's being wealthy, if his wealth came without his setting his heart upon it. But the moment God's people begin to love the world, the love of the Father is not in them. The idolatrous notion that Christians should have the best of everything the world has to offer is not the teaching of the prophets, the apostles or of Christ. Paul through the wisdom given to him made these potent and beautiful observations: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." **1 Tim. 6:6-12**

The "so great salvation" we are discussing is much too sacred to be proclaimed by the proud and scornful, the careless, the flippant or the profane, nor is it a theme for the unholy. My soul burns with the anger of God when sodomites and adulterers, the unholy and profane, dare to imagine that they have part or lot in the body of Christ or the inheritance of the Lord. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Their reprobate minds never learn that they bear the curse of the Almighty, and, if God's law was now enforced in our land, they would be put to death even as would the murderers and man slayers. 1 Tim.

1:9,10 I write this warning word lest any should be inclined to think it possible that they could partake of this so great salvation without "laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset" them. Let us then make sure we "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

These solemn words, immediately following the conclusion of chapter I, prove beyond a doubt that the "so great salvation" here proclaimed includes the sacred statements spoken in chapter I. If we can see the oneness of the saints, the sons of God, with their Lord, and if we can understand that the sons of God are the true body of Christ, partakers of the divine nature and members of the God family, then it may be easier for us all to reverently understand how the following words apply to the saints, the brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Upon hearing such sublime truth as this, can we wonder at the joyous outburst from the lips of Paul, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 2:9-10** Without revelation we can never see this secret, spoken by Jesus, It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Unto which of the angels did the Father ever say, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee"? Such blessed words were never spoken to angels. Or again, when did He ever say to angels, "I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to Me a Son"? **Heb. 1:6** Or again, when did He ever say to angels, "Sit on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy foot stool"? **Verse 13** Or yet again, "Let all the angels of God worship Him"? **Verse 6** It is with a feeling of utmost awe that I make bold to say that these glories are included in our "so great salvation", that great salvation "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." The mighty display of the power of God in Christ and through Christ shows that they were partakers of the Holy Spirit and were immersed by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ and into the family of God.

We put far too little emphasis upon the fact that our Lord, upon coming into the world, was the only begotten Son of God, but still less do we stress the wonderful fact that we, too, are begotten of God unto a living hope. With awe and godly fear I feel it is right to proclaim the truth that our heavenly Father now has more than one begotten son. Since the triumph of Calvary God has a great family of begotten sons, of whom our Lord Jesus Christ was the first begotten, the Head and the oldest Son of the family, as it is written, "Behold, I and the children which God has given Me." He is the first born of many brethren, many brothers, many begotten and many born. We who were enemies of God became servants, then friends, then brethren. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

May the Holy Spirit remove the darkling shadows from our eyes that we may see what is the hope of His calling and what the glory of the riches of His inheritance in the saints. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." **1 John 3:2-3**. What an ineffable, unspeakable wonder it all is!

The beloved apostle John wrote of Christ, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." **John 1:10-13** Hundreds of years before John spoke these words of blessing and hope, the prophet Obadiah spoke of a day when "saviours" would come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (the flesh) and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. Obadiah 21 "Saviours," the prophet said. "Saviours", for there shall be many sons in the great Christ body. Oh the magnitude of this "sogreat salvation!"

Father in heaven, may the eyes of our understanding be enlightened that we may behold what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

If God's people will fast and pray that God will unfold the secrets of His kingdom to our searching hearts, He will certainly do it.

If thou wouldst have the dear Saviour from heaven
Walk by thy side from the morn till the even,
There is a rule that each day you must follow;
Humble thyself to walk with God.
Just as a stream finds a bed that is lowly,
So Jesus walks with the pure and the holy.
Cast out thy pride and in heartfelt contrition
Humble thyself to walk with God.
Humble thyself and the Lord will draw near thee;
Humble thyself and His presence shall cheer thee.
He will not walk with the proud and the scornful;
Humble thyself to walk with God.

It is good that the Spirit of God should rebuke and warn us, lest we should neglect so great salvation or be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. But "today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." **Heb. 3:7-12** It is very necessary that we lay hold on all these glorious realities with utmost humility and awe, lest by any means through some carnal familiarity with them an even more carnal contempt should arise, or lest we, like Esau, were to despise our birthright for some mess of pottage and rise to go our way, not knowing that we had thrown away the pearl of greatest price, and lose it for ever.

Having said these things, let us now further pursue the greatness of the salvation taught us here that we may firmly lay hold on the prize our God has set before us.

CHAPTER SEVEN THE DIVINE INTENTION FOR MAN

"Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, but one in a certain place (Psa. 8:4) testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of Him? Or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet..." **Heb. 2:5-8**

Every diligent searcher for truth must become aware as quickly as possible of his utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit for revelation and understanding of all truth. The secrets of the Lord cannot be learned without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible. Truth learned under the Spirit's anointing and inspiration becomes an integral part of the one to whom the secret is revealed. "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." A simple, honest prayer for guidance will bear great fruit in understanding. The world is overloaded with dead, dry theologians in whose hearts the light of revelation never shines. Theirs is the realm of musty old volumes of head knowledge - wisdom that is foolishness with God. They have never learned the difference between the oldness of the letter and the newness of the Spirit. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 Tim 2:6 "There is (also) a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." **Job 32:8**

We are inclined to say that one can learn more truth in a minute with the anointing of the Spirit than in a year without it, but the truth is that we can learn nothing at all that is spiritual without the Holy Spirit. No! Not in ten thousand years. The apostle John wrote, saying, "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." The Holy Spirit quickens the understanding. No longer do we judge by the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears, but in righteousness do we judge the poor and reprove with equity the meek of the earth.

In chapter one we have seen that our Lord, being the Son of God, is superior to angels. He, who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels, became man in the truest sense of the word. He who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:5-11 Our Lord wonderfully demonstrated here that the way up is down. The way to exaltation is the way of humility and the cross. It is inherent in the Adamic nature that man should exalt self, but him who chooses the path of humility God will exalt. The words spoken by Isaiah and addressed to Lucifer, son of the morning, are usually thought to be addressed to Satan, and indeed they may well be, but in my opinion they are addressed to man. I know of no good reason for believing that Lucifer is Satan or that Satan is Lucifer. Neither know I of any reason for thinking that Satan was the son of the morning, seeing he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth. But in reading the passage, you will notice that everything spoken to Lucifer can be properly applied to man. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" **Isa. 14:12** Are not these statements true of man? Is man not fallen? Did he not fall from the heavenly realm? Did his fall not weaken the nations? We can see from **verse 13** that man is contemplating everything mentioned in the verse. "Thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven." Is that not what the multi-million dollar space program is all about - the moon rockets, the Mars rockets, the Saturn rockets and the anticipated space stations and colonies on the moon? "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." The atheistic idea that man is his own God, the evolutionist's crude notion that man evolved and was not created, the communist hope of abolishing the idea of God from the earth are all man's evil thoughts. "I will ascend above the height of the clouds." Is not man doing this every day? "I will be like the Most High." I have read in science journals statements that foresee the day when man will be able to create living cells, and when he can, they say, man will truly be God.

The wickedness of man is great in the earth and his fallen nature is just as wicked as that attributed to Lucifer. Whether Lucifer refers to man or Satan may not be certain, but to accept that these solemn words apply to fallen man is of far greater value to you and me than to vaguely apply them to the devil and thus escape a true picture of what the Adamic man really is at heart.

Our Lord Jesus took seven giant steps in descending from the throne of God to the death of the cross. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. Because of such unspeakable humility, the Father was so delighted with His son that He highly exalted Him, giving Him a name that is above every name that at His name every creature in heaven, in earth, or under the earth should bow in worship before Him. Phil. 2:5-11 Let us keep this truth clearly in mind, as it has great bearing upon our next consideration.

"For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus..." **Heb. 2:5-9** The meaning of this text is made even more vivid in this translation by the learned Richard Weymouth: "It is not to angels that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of

which we speak. But, as you know, a psalmist has exclaimed, "How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him, and has set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put everything in subjection under his feet." (Psa. 8:4-6) "For this subjecting of the universe to man implies the leaving of nothing not subject to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels - even Jesus - because of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace He might taste death for every man." Heb. 2:5-9 (Weymouth)

Surely, dear reader, if we have the mind of Christ at all, we should be able to see that these verses reveal more about our "so great salvation" than perhaps all others. The wording here is in the most definite and striking terms imaginable. They show in the most unmistakable, emphatic manner the purpose and calling of the Adamic man. Here the greatness of God's eternal purpose for man is wonderfully revealed. How unutterably sad it is that generation after generation has passed with these marvelous truths staring us in the face, yet going unnoticed by man, to whom they were written. We have been like jungle savages treading upon precious gems without even noticing that they were pretty. While priests have been swinging their incense and chanting their hail Marys and preachers have been eloquently condemning ninety-nine percent of the world to eternal flames and damnation, these marvelous revelations have lain like treasures hid in a field or buried in graves for none to see.

At long last the time of unveiling has come. It is time for the elect to grasp the eternal purposes and lay hold on those promises that had their beginning in Genesis and will culminate with the sons of God seated with our wonderful Christ and elder brother to control the spheres and govern the universe of our God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding, and I must say that I know of nothing anywhere that produces such sincere, reverential fear of God as does the revelation of God's purpose for man. Brother or sister, if these things are inclined to make you strut and throw out your chest in pride, then you have the wrong spirit. Yours is the pride of life rather than godly fear. Rather, the very thought of such glories should make both man and angels and heaven fall in adoration before Him. It is a delight to know that the synonyms of the word reverence are these: deep respect, esteem, regard, honor, deference, veneration, admiration, adoration, devotion, worship; awe, fear, devoutness, piety, observance, genuflection and prostration. These blessed attributes are entirely contrary to the Luciferian spirit, "I will ascend; I will exalt; I will sit upon the mount; I will ascend above the heights; I will be like the Most High." Cf. Isa. 14:13

Let us remember that the proud shall be made low, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted. To the poor in spirit belongs the kingdom of God, and the meek shall inherit the earth. It was only today that the Spirit brought to my attention that the passage, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father", Phil. 2:10-11, is immediately followed by "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Verse 12 These words should be enough to induce reverence and godly fear in any of us. The understanding that the saints are members of the Christ is even more cause for fear, also that this "so great salvation" is to be worked out in fear and trembling. Surely those of the spirit of pride and arrogance will be cast down and narrowly looked upon in the judgment. Isa. 14:15-16

The entire Bible is the story of man, not only the history of the past, but the unfolding of the future. That wonderful unfolding begins like a tiny seed that grows into a tree and fills the universe, or, as Paul says, "fillet all in all." Eph. 1:23 In that long gone day God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1:26 Here the seed of the great tree that was one day to fill the universe is being planted in a remote garden, even the Garden of Eden. Man was not to be given dominion over everything everywhere all at once. Like a child playing with building blocks, he was first given dominion over very little things - the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts and the creeping things and over the earth. Yet this was the beginning, and when man has learned to be faithful in these things and learns to accomplish them in the wisdom of God, he will be given higher things and greater responsibility. Though mankind in general has not been faithful in any of these things, amid the turmoil and confusion of his misgovernment the all-seeing eye of the Lord has been choosing out men and women who are

faithful in these things. And, if we will study the course of history, we will find people who have been faithful in much and in little in government over cities and over realms. We will find people who have been faithful in watching over the fish of the sea to preserve them and over the cattle of the field and even reptiles. Others have been faithful over the birds of the air and the plants and trees and forests. In all these things they may have fought a losing battle, but the loss they suffer only proves their faithfulness. In every imaginable walk of life we will find some elect people who have been faithful. It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful.

When the Lord said, "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth", He was uttering a sort of parabolic prophecy. First He tells us what kind of man is going to be given this government and authority. It is the man who has come into God's image - not the carnal and corrupt who have for so many centuries cursed the world with greed, thirst for power, and incredible corruption. Week after week reports seep through of the millions and often billions of dollars unscrupulous leaders have snatched from an ignorant and gullible public. We hear of golden Cadillacs in Asia Minor, five million dollar golden bathtubs in Nigeria, and like corruption by pompous leaders on a most incredible scale world wide. Almost every war in history has been started to satisfy the greed and lust for power of some despot, king or dictator. The fascination with evil throws good into the shade and the whirlwind of desire corrupts the simple heart. But it is not to men who lust for worldly glory that the government of the earth will be given. It will be to those who have come into the image and likeness of God, as He said: "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness; and let Us give him dominion." The making of man in the image of God was never intended to be a one-week project. That task was to be spread over a long period of seven thousand years or more, during which time the Lord would be choosing and calling men and women in whose hearts He had placed the great desire to come into His image and to have the mind of Christ and His name in their foreheads. Throughout the ages He has been preparing those elect amid the corruption of the earth, setting them aside unto Himself and permitting them to die in faith, not having received the promises, but, having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

Joseph was probably the most outstanding ruler in the history of the world. He was a man who foresaw the future and who sought the mind of the Lord in all his government. Wisdom was with this virtuous man when he was sold into Egypt, and he was kept from sin. The mind of the Lord was with him in the dungeon and was with him in his chains. Wisdom procured for him a kingdom and authority over his despotic rulers, exposing the liars that traduced him and giving him everlasting honor. Daniel, too, was a man beloved of the Lord and a ruler who ruled in wisdom, foretelling accurately the events of his day and predicting with exactitude the course of millenniums yet to come. David was a man after God's own heart, and though he was beset with bloodshed and wars on every hand, yet he ruled faithfully and well and gave his kingdom to a wise son, who reigned in peace after him. All through the ages the Lord has been electing and calling saints and setting them aside to await the day of resurrection, when as one great body of Christ, with God's first begotten Son as their Head, they will take the government, first, of the world and then of the universe and reign for ever and ever.

In this prophetic verse, Gen. 1:26, we are told that man in God's image was to be given authority over the fowls of the air, the beasts and cattle, and the fish in the sea. The significance is that the beasts and cattle represent things on earth. The fish represent things beneath and in the deeps. The birds represent the things in the heavenlies. John in his revelation at Patmos heard "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, Blessing and honor, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." **Rev. 5:13** This triumphant portraiture of universal victory and glory must certainly be the fulfillment of that which had its seed thought in Gen. 1:26 Such a triumph for the universality of Christ's redemption boggles the mind and staggers even our faith.

David continues the glad refrain in his beautiful Psalm of worship and praises. "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast

ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" **Psa. 8**

One can easily grasp the connection between the statement in Gen. 1:26 and the inspired statement of David in this Psalm. In both passages the thought is crystal clear that it is the Lord's intention to bring man into God's image and then to give him dominion over all the earth. But then, too, it is very evident that David in spirit was beginning to wonder about the heavenly realms as well, the sun and the moon and the stars and what is man's connection with them. What, he wonders, has God in mind for man in this exalted heavenly realm? "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" he asks. "What hast Thou in mind for him?" The moment we become aware of the Lord's intention for man, we find it no great puzzle as to why He made man and exerted such effort to perfect him. I believe I am right in saying that what David was really asking was not "what is man that Thou art mindful of him", as though man was scarcely worthy of a second thought from God, but "what have you in mind for man", the creature who is the main subject of the entire Genesis story. The soul-stirring truth is that God has much in mind for man - very, very much - and David in this eighth Psalm is just beginning to grasp the enormity of the Father's intention for His sons - which intention involves not only the earth, but the heavens as well. That man was made from the dust of the earth does not mean that the Lord has only second or third thoughts concerning him. Far be that from the truth. The truth is that in all the past six thousand years man has been the very apple of God's eye and the chief object of His creation, and he is now in the schooling of the Most High, learning and coming to the full knowledge of all that is good and all that is evil, and that experientially, that he might govern the spheres in absolute righteousness in the ages to come.

"Listen, then, king, and understand;
Rulers of remotest lands take warning.
Hear this, ye who have thousands under your rule,
Who boast of your hordes of subjects,
For power is a gift to you from the Lord;
Sovereignty is from the Most High.
He Himself will probe your acts
And scrutinize your intentions
If as administrators of His kingdom
You have not governed justly,
Nor obeyed the law,
Nor behaved as God would have you behave.

He will fall on you swiftly and terribly.
Ruthless judgment is reserved for the high and mighty.
The lowly will be compassionately pardoned;
The mighty will be mightily punished,
For the Lord of all does not cower before personages.
He does not stand in awe of greatness
Since He Himself made small and great
And provides for all alike.

Yes, despots, my words are for you.
That you may learn what wisdom is and not transgress;
For they who observe holy things holily
Will be adjudged holy,
And, accepting instruction from them,
Will find their defense in them.
Look forward, therefore, to my words;
Yearn for them and they will instruct you."

Wisdom of Solomon.

Now as David in Psalm 8 takes Genesis 1:26 as a text for his Psalm, so Paul, writing in Heb. 2:5-8, uses Psalm 8 as a basis for his yet larger understanding of the question, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Earlier in this chapter we quoted this passage from Weymouth's translation, but we may all be edified by the words of Edgar Goodspeed's translation also, which to my mind emphasizes the true meaning of the sentence, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him." Goodspeed puts it this way: "What is man? for you to think of him; or any man? for you to care for him." Then he continues: "You made him for a little while inferior to the angels; yet you have crowned him with glory and honor, and you have put him in charge of the works of your hands! You have put everything under his feet! In thus making everything subject to man, God left nothing that is not subject to him. But we do not as yet see everything made subject to him, but we do see Jesus, who was made for a little while inferior to angels, crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the favor of God He might taste the bitterness of death on behalf of every human being." **Heb. 2:6-9** (Goodspeed)

The infinite truth here staggers the imagination and leaves one dumbfounded. That God should have had such a purpose and intention in mind from before ever the world began would without the faith of God be beyond belief. Divine inspiration has a remarkable way of putting the ocean into a teacup. I know of no words, sentences, paragraphs or even books that could tell us better what God has in mind for man than the simple, illuminating, all-inclusive statement, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." And again: "For in that He put all things under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." This is where faith really operates, because these superlative statements are far beyond the comprehension and almost beyond the belief of man. There will probably be many people who read these lines who will readily reject them, but that is not in the least surprising, for if faith fails from the heart, how else are we to grasp these things? Has not the word of God already told us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen!" Let us never cast a truth aside because we cannot understand it or because it is too high for us. Only today a young man wrote me to say, "I cannot understand all you write, but it feeds my soul and witnesses to my spirit." Well, that is really all we need. If we can believe what is incredible to the natural mind, then we join that company who saw the promises afar off, were persuaded of them, embraced them, confessed them and will eventually attain them.

That the Father has chosen to put all things under the feet of man who has come into God's image cannot be questioned. God has declared it to be so and has sent the message to us for faith to accept at face value. A reader of the book of Hebrews would need to be extremely casual and careless could he read the book without noticing the author's tremendous appeals to faith in the veracity of all God has spoken and his constant warnings against unbelief. If 1 Cor. 13 is the great love chapter of the Bible, then certainly Hebrews 11 is the great faith chapter. Easy as it would be to launch into an examination of the faith taught in the book of Hebrews, we will leave that blessing for a following chapter, but for the present, suffice it to say that, when God declares as truth that which to man is incredible and impossible, it is for man to believe what divine wisdom says and absolutely refuse to doubt the almighty power and wisdom of God no matter how much his faith would tremble. Woe to us all, the church system has presented to the world an imbecilic God without purpose, without plan, without wisdom and without power.

Man, desolate, sinful and fallen as he is, even now to a limited degree can be seen as ruler over the things of earth. Even now the fear of man and the dread of him is upon every creature on earth. Being raised on a farm in the long ago, I have never lost interest in the wonderful things we enjoyed there. It was therefore not surprising that I recently found myself watching a show of draft horses, beautiful great beasts, some of them weighing almost a ton, matching their pulling power against each other. The thing that impressed me even more than their strength was how these powerful creatures, capable of pulling a man about as though he were a wisp of hay, or picking him up with their teeth or trampling him under foot, instead obeyed man's every whim and desire. Well may we wonder why a great, five ton elephant will allow itself to be tamed and trained and commanded by man. Is it not that God has put the fear of man upon all creatures? Is it not that even here and now, while man is still fallen and still sinful, the Almighty has left with him dominion and authority over the beasts and the things in the sea, causing even the great killer whales to obey man's command? Many tales are readily available of injured animals and birds that have come seeking the superior help and knowledge of man, bowing down to them for help and deliverance from their pain and distress.

In saying "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet", the author further enforces the truth by these words: "For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." "He left nothing" is a very inclusive statement, to be sure. Nothing means not anything; not something; no part, piece or element: nonexistent and non-existent; no thing; the cipher zero. The divine answer to the problem, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him", is answered in this: "Thou hast left nothing not put under him."

If this, then, is God's intention, why, we ask, do we see almost the exact opposite at the present time - man at the mercy of the elements, swallowed by disease, crushed by wars, impoverished by frosts, hail and tornadoes, oppressed by evil spirits, wearied and pained by numberless diseases of the body, the soul and the mind? Why do we see him going down to utter defeat and passing away in sorrow as a fleeting shadow in the night or as something that never has been? Why is man so soon cut down and his life said to be as a mist that the wind driveth away? Why is he condemned to slave for his very existence and to earn his bread by the sweat of his face? Why does his every effort to rid himself of toil only serve to bring him more burden and more labor? Man's labor saving devices, good as they may be, have served to bring him other labor. He spends a lifetime as a slave to finance companies and banks, paying for automobiles, deep freezes, washing machines, electric stoves, beautiful homes and a thousand other gadgets that are supposed to save him labor and hardship and make life much more pleasant; but in the end he finds himself a bond slave for life to the money lenders until first he and then his wife are forced to go to work to make more money to pay for the things they have bought to make life happier and easier. The result of this greed for things and wealth is broken homes by the multiplied millions and a rash of thankless, delinquent children, because the women have forsaken their God-given calling to run after the will-o-the-wisp of possessing more and more things - things to be left behind when life is over.

So the great apostle says, "But now we see not yet all things put under him." And indeed we do not. Instead we see quite the opposite - careworn man, struggling and laboring with weary face and a huge, unbearable burden of debt on his back. No, indeed! We do not yet see all things put under him.

In God's dear book mankind is like the sea,
A moving, restless mass of weary men.
Accomplishments are but the fantasies of time.
Empires, like waves, rise but to fall again.
And through the passing of bygone years
'Mid idle boastings of a man-made calm,
The braggart's words, like nature's thunder voice,
Have only been the heralds of the storm.

Lest we faint beneath our oppressing burden, lest our eyes behold only the dreary, treeless, windswept wastes before us and we cry in our weariness,

So faint am I, these tottering feet
No more my feeble frame can bear.
My sinking heart forgets to beat
And drifting snows my tomb prepare,

Look up, O man! Look up, O saint! Look up and you will see something and someone. Yea, you will see Jesus, the mighty forerunner, the glorious apostle and high priest of our profession. You will see Him - God's first manifested Son, the One who was tempted in all points as we are, the One who bowed His back to the smiting, the One who as a man of sorrows was acquainted with grief, the One who was despised and rejected of men, the One who, like us, was a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of all the people; yes, He who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death: the One who tasted death for every man. Look up! Look up and you will see Him seated in the heavenlies. You will see Jesus, who once was made "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." **Heb. 2:9-11**

If we are going to see the triumph of God's purpose for man, it is essential that we lift our eyes away from the bondage, sorrow and night of these present ages and look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Look up, dear friend, look up! He has taken His seat far above all principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in the ages which are to come. Christ Jesus is the first Son to attain that exalted glory and now from His throne on high He beckons His many younger brothers. He bids them bear the pain and travail of their cross. He bids them be made perfect through the things they suffer, whatever those sufferings may be.

This whole death realm is a realm of suffering from the cradle to the grave, yet by it the Lord works a sanctifying purpose that only He can understand. Ask no more, "Why me?" or "Why this and why that?" Or "Why me instead of someone else?" Commit the keeping of your soul unto God in well doing as unto a faithful Creator and you will find in the end that the rugged, rock strewn way of the cross is the path that leads to your crowning day.

Almost two thousand years ago the mighty Stephen stood up to proclaim the word of the Lord. He, together with other ministers of his day, had suffered great tribulation and fierce persecution, but now, filled with the Holy Ghost, he wrought mighty signs and wonders among the people. But those perennial haters of Christ arose from the synagogues with their endless disputes, and, when they could neither resist his word nor the power of his works, they suborned (bribed) men to charge that they had heard him speak blasphemy against Moses and against God. "And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law: for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us." And amid all their wicked accusations they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. **Acts 6:11-15**

Then, after Stephen had preached one of the mightiest sermons ever recorded, his adversaries were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth; but he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and beheld the glory of God, and Jesus, his elder brother, standing on the right hand of God the Father, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him... and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." **Acts 7:54-58, 60**

Thus Stephen, when his trials and sufferings were over, saw the heavens opened and the Son of God standing on the right hand of the Father's throne. He saw Jesus, who once was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." **Heb. 2:9** Thus did Stephen see Him crowned with glory and honor, not sitting, but standing to receive another brother, another son, to the Father's right hand. Tears of joy dampen my eyes and fill my heart with praise as the comforting words of Paul come whispering through the centuries - a brother in Christ who had suffered more than most of us can imagine - saying, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." **2 Cor. 4:17** And again: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." **Rom. 8:18** What a mighty triumph it all is! O saint of God, do not whine and moan because of your afflictions and sufferings. Do you not know that "he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he should no longer spend his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God?"

The saintly Paul, nearing his journey's end, had occasion to say to the Corinthians, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." **2 Cor. 11:24-28** These are tribulations, if ever tribulation was suffered by any man; but these dreadful afflictions which he endured are the fulfillment of the prophetic word to the young Saul

of Tarsus, for Jesus had said to Ananias, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." **Acts 9:11-18** It was a marvelous conversion and a transforming experience for a man who had caused so much suffering and affliction among the disciples of the Lord, but the words that we want to notice here are these: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." **Verse 16** Suffer he did with terrible and incredible sufferings, of which he later said, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." **2 Cor. 4:16-18** The things, which are seen at present are the afflictions, but the thing which is not seen is the eternal weight of glory our afflictions are laying up for us. It is written, "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven." Tribulation separates the men from the boys, the grain from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, and the sons of God from armchair philosophers and all pretenders, for "if thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." **Prov. 24:10** No man is going to be carried to God's throne on "flowery beds of ease, while others fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas." If the captain was made perfect through suffering, Heb. 2:10, then those He is bringing into His image and glory will certainly be perfected in the same way. Why else would Paul have said to Timothy, "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." **2 Tim. 2:3**

In the light of the truth we are now studying so many things take on new meaning. Notice, for instance, **2 Tim. 4:1** "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." Here it is clear that the sons of God are to judge the living and the dead, and judge angels as well. Is it unreasonable, then, that we should now be called upon to prove ourselves before God by reproof, rebuking, and exhorting with all long suffering and doctrine, verse 2, to watch in all things, endure affliction and make full proof of our ministry, whatever it may be? Verse 3 For Paul said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." **Verse 6-8**

"I am now ready to be offered," he said. He did not call his demise dying, but being offered. Thus, according to church history, this son of God, after all his refining in the fires of affliction, was led out of a Roman jail to be offered. Laying his aged and noble head upon the block, there was a swish of a Roman sword and his spirit, being released from its prison of clay, was received by Christ into everlasting habitations.

(Note: Time will not permit us to further pursue the purpose of suffering, but much help will be received by reading *The Mystery of Suffering*, Volume 29 of *Treasures of Truth*, available by request.)

The apostle now continues with these words: "For both He who sanctifies and those whom He is sanctifying have all one Father; and for this reason He is not ashamed to speak of them as His brothers; as when He says: I will proclaim Thy name to My brothers: in the midst of the congregation will I hymn Thy praises. (**Psa. 22:22**). And again, I will be one whose trust reposes in God. (**Psa. 18:2**) And again, Here am I, and here are the children God has given Me. (**Isa. 8:18**) Heb. 2:11-13 (Weymouth). The actual wonder of these scriptures can only be received if the reader will quietly meditate upon them before God, requesting illumination from heaven to unlock the mighty secret contained in these words. What does it mean to you that God should say that Christ, who sanctifies, and the sons He is sanctifying through suffering all have the same Father? Brethren, that is an incredible statement, but it is true. Have faith to believe its staggering portent, for the

Father has declared it to be so. I have no power to enlarge upon it. I have only God-given faith to believe it is so. Having disclosed this wonderful truth that we all (Christ and ourselves) have one Father, which certainly constitutes us as the brothers of Christ, the apostle continues: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto Thee." (Quoted from **Psa. 22:22**) And again, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:13** In all these scriptures our Father in heaven testifies that we are His sons, and he who has the Spirit of sonship responds, "Abba, Father."

Abba Father, the Spirit of sonship cries;
Tis deep calling unto deep.
Far, far beyond the scope of natural man lies
The sons' great eternal prize.

Naught but the Spirit of sonship
Can take the veil away;
Naught but deep calling to deep
Will bring in God's new day.

Night and day must the cry go forth
From deep down within,
Cleansing, purifying, changing till
I am fashioned just like Him.

Then in all His glorious fulness
I shall come.
Deep will call to deep, Abba Father,
I am Your son! Father, I am Your son!

Frances Quantz.

CHAPTER EIGHT THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

"Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things
that stare us in the face until the hour arrives
that the mind is ripened. Then we behold them,
and the time when we saw them not is like a dream."

Emerson.

We will find ourselves concluding that such a supernal wonder as sonship, the majesty of our calling, and the power and glory of our "so great salvation" as it is presented in the book of Hebrews could be believed, accepted and attained only by faith. For this reason the author of the book continually holds before our eyes the necessity and the wonder of a God-given faith in the veracity of all that God has spoken. It should matter naught to any of us whether or not we can understand what has been presented to us by the word and by the Spirit. The thing of supreme and utmost importance is that we believe what God has said. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and there is nothing that so delights the heart of the Father as to see faith arise in His people; but nothing is so displeasing to Him as blind unbelief. Should I write forever, I could not say more about faith than that taught us in chapter eleven of this remarkable book; therefore with few comments we will take time and space to quote it all. The more one studies it, the deeper its depths appear and the more remarkable its statements become.

We will notice, as we read these things together, that each and every person mentioned in the chapter believed God regarding something which the Holy Spirit had placed within his heart, but whether these saints appeared to believe for much or little matters nothing. The only thing any of us need do in life is have faith to be or do whatsoever the Holy Spirit leads us to do, for "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The apostle begins the chapter with these words: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." That faith IS substance and that faith IS evidence is truth beyond the power of mortal man to describe or explain. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God; therefore, all scripture must of necessity be revealed and explained to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Things that draw an absolute blank to the dark, untutored, natural mind and are quite beyond the power of explanation or understanding begin to unfold as the mind begins to take its refuge in God and look to Him to explain the unexplainable. The natural man never has been able to receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. The glittering gem of truth, that all our lives lay hidden to the darkened, natural mind as dead and unfeeling as a stone, becomes a "living stone", radiant with color and fire when the glory of His sunlight gleams upon it. Then what once was all darkness shines with rays of celestial light and spiritual understanding. As man is spirit, soul, and body, so also is truth. The body is easily seen and felt and touched by natural man, because it is natural. The soul is not so easily discerned or described. Because it has a vital connection with the visible blood and the invisible mind, it evades all attempts to be truly understood. The spirit, however, is completely invisible and a mystery to the natural mind. That man is spirit is beyond question. The spirit is the life of the body while man lives and the death of the body when it departs. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. Even an atheist speaks of a corpse from which the spirit has departed as "the remains". Thus, though the spirit cannot be seen, touched, or analyzed, the fact of its existence is indubitable and absolutely beyond question. Faith is, indeed, substance.

So also it is with truth. There is that outward parable that any school boy or even a heathen can understand. Then there comes a second and deeper meaning that man somehow sees with his head, but does not grasp with his heart. Finally there comes that deeper meaning that only the spirit can comprehend. First the shell; then the kernel; then the germ of life. Truth is like the tabernacle in the wilderness. First, the outer court, where all may enter, known as the court of the Gentiles, or the nations; second, an inner chamber, a holy place, where only priests who deal with holy things may enter while others stand without.

Then there is the innermost chamber, the holiest of all, into which the high priest alone may enter. It is a place alight with the shekinah, the light of God, a realm of spiritual mystery and divine understanding. It is the realm of the heavenlies where only citizens of that celestial realm speak its language and hear its rapturous voices. Well meaning critics often write to me, hoping to acquaint me with my errors, but, sadly, there is no answer one can give them, because their eye hath not yet seen, nor their ear heard, neither has it entered their hearts, the thing that God has spoken to my heart. Thus it seems wisest not to reply at all. It is as Paul once said, "[After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.](#)" **Acts 24:14** There are three realms of mystery contained in the following sentence of truth. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels... received up into glory." So it is with all truth - I repeat, all truth.

So, faith IS the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things the natural eye cannot see. By it the elders - that is, the patriarchs - received a good report. Through faith we understand the worlds were formed - yea, and the ages were framed - by the word of God, so that things, which are seen were made from things unseen. A glorious mystery, is it not? Yet men of science have proved beyond question that all the visible worlds and the visible celestial bodies were formed of invisible atoms, so that things that are seen were made of things, which are not seen. It is where the eye of the natural man ends that the eye of faith begins. Thus, having given to faith the most precise elucidation possible for mortal man to receive, the apostle then proceeds to name a long series of faithful persons who were brought to the gateway of perfection through faith. In like manner we ourselves, though not mentioned in Holy Writ, are coming to perfection even as they, that they without us should not be made perfect.

ABEL

Verse 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts (offerings), and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Have you ever wondered how Abel knew his offering was accepted and Cain knew his was rejected? The answer is this: Whenever the Lord accepts an offering, He always consumes it with fire from heaven. We can see this truth manifested in the offerings of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Lev. 9:24. All the offerings were consumed with

heavenly fire. We can see it in the offering of Manoah, Judges 13:1-20, the offering of Elijah, 1 Kings 18:25-38, and the offering of Solomon. 2 Chron. 7:1-3 When we read that Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, Num. 3:4, the strange fire they offered was natural fire such as one would light with a match. It may be clearly seen from this that the worship of the natural man is not acceptable to God. Thus when Abel offered the lamb to God as the Lord had instructed him, the fire of the Lord consumed it. But, when Cain offered an offering contrary to the instruction of the Lord, it remained on the altar, but not consumed. Cain was so enraged that his brother's offering was received and his was not that he slew his brother, an outrage which evil men have practiced against the saints for millenniums of time. They slew the prophets and the apostles. They slew Jesus Christ and hanged Him on a tree; and they have slain martyrs in every age, not because these saints had done any wickedness, but because God had accepted them and the rage of Satan against them knew no end. In a greater and more wonderful manner the living sacrifice of the one hundred and twenty saints who offered themselves to God at Pentecost was consumed by the fire that fell from heaven on that glorious Pentecostal morning. From the moment the fire touched them, they were transformed into spiritual men and women such as the world had never known. In the light of this fire that fell upon them we see as never before the heavenly significance of the words of Paul, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. 12:1 We may be well assured that such living sacrifice of ourselves will be accepted and consumed by the fire, which God is.

ENOCH

Verse 5. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." Abel had faith and was martyred. Enoch was given faith that he should not see death at all. He was not seen again, for God had translated him, "for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God". And without faith it is impossible to please Him. It is necessary that we see that true faith consists wholly in following the will of God. Carry out, therefore, that which God places in your heart. Regard neither the ideas of mortal men nor the deception of the devil. Turn your life over to the will of God and He will consume your sacrifice. That faith may lead you to death as it did with Abel or it may lead you to translation as it did with Enoch, but it is said of the one as it was said of the other that what they did was by faith. Your ear will hear well-meaning people say, "With your talents you should be doing this for God", or "With your experience you should be doing that". Turn a deaf ear to all the protestations of well-meaning people and listen rather to the voice of the Holy Spirit, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

NOAH

Verse 7. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Noah was given neither faith to die nor faith to be translated, but to be saved when others were lost, to be preserved through the most unimaginable tribulation through faith, while a whole world of unbelieving men were drowned. We feel dismay when some modern flood or tidal wave snatches away a few people, but in Noah's day the world was drowned and life buried beneath the flood's unrelenting wave. Noah in that day of calamity was told to do something, which never before had been done. Foolish? Stupid? Silly? Insane? Fanatical? Use whatever demeaning adjective you wish, but he did what he did because what he did he was instructed by the wisdom of God to do. That is what is meant by the phrase, "Noah, moved with fear". Noah feared God, respected what He said, and acted upon His instruction. We need not be reminded that he probably had more than his share of critics, wise old men who stroked their beards in disbelief and young men who poked fun at his stupidity. Give not your ear to the voices of unbelief. Learn rather to hear only the voice of the Holy Spirit, who abideth in you, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

Many warnings could be written here, but we need never worry about where the journey is going to end. All we need to do is start walking down the path He has put us on. Recognize first of all that you are in God's will right now. Many times, as you journey, you will think you have reached your goal only to find later that you have been led far, far beyond your fondest hopes and dreams. So it came to pass that Noah, who had faith simply to build an ark to save his household, discovered that the faith he manifested made him an heir of the

righteousness, which is by faith. Heb. 11:7 Once we place our feet on the pathway of God, eternity alone will reveal its consummation.

ABRAHAM

Verse 8. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." There are some remarkable statements here. "Not knowing whither he went", he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, and he looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Abraham was not being led in the way of Abel, Enoch or Noah. He was being led in the way of Abraham. He was not led to do what they had done. He was being led to do as God had ordained for him to do. He was told to go out, but he was not shown where his journey would take him. He saw the start of the road, but not the finish. Each step and each day he must be directed by the Lord. If we start from where we are and here raise our altar to God, and place ourselves on that altar as living sacrifices, the Lord will receive our living sacrifice as an offering holy and acceptable unto Himself. Then walk in Him, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith", and throughout the journey of life we will be led of His Spirit. It must have been wonderful to walk with God as Abraham did, but what we are never told is how often he must have wondered where all this long, long journey was taking him. Well did this man of faith know the bitterness of disappointment and discouragement, just as we have done. Even he was a man of like passions as we are, but faith is a walk and the Lord told him, "**Walk before Me and be perfect.**" **Gen. 17:1** And that, my friend, is really what perfection is. Be less concerned about what you are and look ahead to what you are becoming. We see the scaffolding and the clutter of the building. He sees the shining temple in all the glory of its completeness.

The promised land to him was a strange country, but in his believing heart he knew there was another country, even an heavenly, far beyond that earthly Canaan to which he was now going. He was a man of wealth in sheep and cattle, for the Lord had mightily prospered him, but in the farness of his vision he saw there was an eternal city, a city not made with hands, a city that had foundations, a city the like of which no man on earth could ever possibly imagine. In the remoteness of his time he was seeing the New Jerusalem, the same city of glory John saw in his Patmos vision hundreds of years later. By faith he knew, though yet he was childless, that the seed that would come from his own body would actually be that holy city. He knew in spirit that the twelve tribes who would spring from his loins would be the gates of the New Jerusalem and he saw that of his seed the twelve foundations would be laid. He must have thought that he would reach it in his life time and in hope of this he refused to build himself any permanent dwelling place on earth, but spent his whole pilgrimage dwelling in tents or tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. I, too, am an heir of that same promise, and millions more besides, for not to Abraham alone was the promise made, but to his seed as well. Therefore keep small things small, dear friend of God. Never set your heart on mansions of earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in the heavenlies where moth and rust do not corrupt and thieves do not break through or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

SARAH

Verse 11. In the midst of the exhilarating talk about the faith of Abraham, the thought turns quickly to his wife, Sarah. "By faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." Just think of that! The Lord had not told Sarah to do some spectacular thing, to build an ark as Noah, or to go on a journey as Abraham, but He had told her that in her old age she was to bear a baby, a child of promise. She did no great and marvelous work, but she "judged Him faithful who had promised." There was nothing spectacular or unusual about giving birth to a baby. Thousands of women had done that before she did, but this was to be a child of promise, a proper child, a child through whom all the promises of God to Abraham would be brought to pass in ages yet unborn. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." So from the womb of this barren woman sprang a multitude that could no more be numbered than can the sand that swarms the

sea shore or the stars that throng the heavens. Of the hosts of her descendants it is written, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city." **Heb. 11:13-16**

These five great elements of faith mentioned in the passage quoted were manifest in the lives of her descendants: (1) not having received the promises; (2) having seen them afar off; (3) they were persuaded of them; (4) they embraced them; and (5) they confessed that they, like Abraham, were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. O what a glorious walk! O what a magnificent vision - to see, to be persuaded, to embrace the promise, and confess to God, to man, and especially to ourselves that we are strangers and pilgrims seeking a city whose builder and maker is God!

I am a stranger here within a foreign land;
My home is faraway upon a golden strand.
Ambassador to be in realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King.

"By faith Abraham (**verse 17**), when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." The act of offering up Isaac was perhaps the crowning act of faith in the life of Abraham, the friend of God. I shall not dwell at any length here except to say that long experience has taught me that it is usual to find that the moment we hold the long awaited promise in our arms, we will be required to offer that dearly loved promise unto the Lord. When at last the long looked for prize is in our possession and we feel that the end to which we have pressed for a life time is now ours, we will hear the Lord asking us to place that also on the altar of sacrifice. More than once, yes, more than twice has this happened in my own life. The accomplishments of faith must be offered up, ascending like incense as a sweet savor to God.

If you have a thing, release it.
If it comes back to you, it is yours.
If it does not, it never was.

Dag Hammarskjöld

A song's not a song till you sing it;
A bell's not a bell till you ring it.
The love in your heart was not put there to stay;
Love isn't love till you give it away.

Thus did Abraham offer up Isaac, his only begotten son, and in offering him up, he received in return, not only Isaac back again, but so many descendants as the stars for multitude and the sand by the sea shore innumerable.

ISAAC

Verse 20. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." That is all the apostle said of Isaac. It does not seem to be much, but if you read the blessing Isaac pronounced that day, you will see that its mercies reach even to you. "And his (Jacob's) father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." **Gen. 27:26-29**

The Patriarch Isaac lived a very quiet and peaceful life as compared to that of either Abraham, his father, or Jacob, his son; but the blessing he gave by faith that day endures unto this day, giving oil and wine in abundance, blessing those who bless and cursing those who curse. If during the course of a life lived for God all that is required of a man is that he pronounced some blessing on another that is sufficient in God's sight. It is neither how much we do nor say nor accomplish that counts for anything. It is doing that which is the mind and will of God for us, for such things were ordained before the foundation of the world.

JACOB

Verse 21. "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph: and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." In my mind's eye I visualize this ancient patriarch, bowed down through the toil and hardship of many weary years. Gen. 47:9 Long ago he had abandoned all hope of ever seeing Joseph again, but now he rejoiced that he had seen both Joseph and his children. Now, laying his hands upon the heads of his little grandchildren, he adopted them as his own sons and placed them among the tribes of Israel, Gen. 48:5-22, pronouncing the blessing upon them - the blessings recorded in verses 5-22.

We may wonder why Jacob at the end of his blessing bowed his ancient head as he leaned upon his staff and broke forth in worship to God. Perhaps the words of his own wonderful prophecy overwhelmed him, for the glorious future laid up in store for these two little boys was revealed in the prophetic blessing he gave. Ephraim was to become a company of nations, a commonwealth as revealed by Paul in Eph. 2:12, and his brother, Manasseh, was to become a great nation, while both of them together were to be a blessing to the whole world. Thus Jacob, being overcome by the sheer glory of the prophecy and its wonderful revelation of the future, leaned upon his staff in praise and worship to God. Great are God's marvels in the earth - that He should preserve Joseph from all his enemies, raise him up to sit in a throne, and give him two sons, who were to become the chiefest of all the tribes of Israel. Well has the Holy Spirit spoken, "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff."

In all the history of the world there has been only one Commonwealth of Nations. That commonwealth is the British Commonwealth. It is indeed a company of independent nations, each with its own government, but all having one common throne. Such was the prophecy given to Ephraim. To Manasseh the prophetic word was spoken that he should become a great people. Gen. 48:19 We know of no individual nation that has ever attained the greatness of the United States of America. These two - the commonwealth and the great nation - are blood brothers with the same color of skin, both speaking the same language, both democracies and both a blessing to the world. These prophecies were given to be fulfilled in the last days. Gen. 49:1 Every word spoken concerning these two boys in Gen. 49 has been and is being fulfilled to the last letter. And Jacob, seeing the teeming multitudes that would spring from these two sons of Joseph and remembering that he had never expected to see Joseph alive nor any of his seed, bowed himself upon his staff and worshipped the God of such marvels and miracles. (For further understanding on this subject please request our book, 'The Abrahamic Covenant.')

I beseech you not to be as those unbelievers who are willing to defend their traditions, even if it be at the expense of truth. Has any truth been gladly accepted in the face of tradition? Paul once said of the tradition-ridden Jews, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us. They please not God and are contrary to all men." **1 Thess. 2:15** "We can easily forgive a child for being afraid of the dark. The tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

When it was first reported that a man had transmitted his voice over a wire, the reporter was arrested and one newspaper carried this editorial: "Well informed people know that it is impossible to transmit the human voice over wires as may be done with dots and dashes of the Morse Code and, were it possible to do so, the thing would have no practical value. The authorities who apprehended this criminal are to be congratulated, and it is hoped his punishment will be prompt and fitting that it may serve as an example to other conscienceless schemers who enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow creatures." Again, the reporter who reported that the Wright brothers had flown a heavier than air craft was fired without investigation. Galileo was condemned to lifelong house arrest for saying the earth was not the center of the universe. Refuse to be like

these people who reject truth without investigation. Be rather like the Bereans, who searched the scripture daily to see if these things were so. Acts. 17:11 A clear understanding of the truth concerning Israel throws tremendous light on the entire Bible, because every book from Genesis, chapter 12, to Revelation concerns itself with the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Israel. This, I think, cannot be denied. And Jacob, seeing the vast extent of his blessing, worshipped God, leaning on the top of his staff.

JOSEPH

Verse 22. "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." Joseph, the saint of God, foresaw the day when the seventy souls who had come to Egypt years before would march in triumph out of that land of bondage, a mighty host of more than two million people; and he commanded that, when they went forth, they should take his bones ahead of them to be buried in the promised land. Whether or not Joseph foresaw Israel's coming bondage and slavery in Egypt the word of God does not disclose, but he did know that deliverance from Egypt was coming in the end. He well knew the promises God had given to his fathers and he did not intend that even his decaying bones would be left behind in that land of sin, but commanded that they be carried out when the hosts of Israel left the country, thence to be buried in the land of Canaan. May God give us all a heart like that. We are citizens of an heavenly realm. We are strangers in this foreign land. I for one do not want even my bones to remain in this realm of curse and travail, but, please God, may they arise in the resurrection of the just, changed and immortal and filled with the life that raised Jesus from the dead that this promise may be fulfilled: "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15:53-54**

Such is the glorious promise we embrace. Let us therefore, even as they, lay hold upon it, that it may be our joy and crown eternally; for the promise is "to thee and to thy children and to those who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

MOSES

Verse 23. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Here in this verse we have a bold act of faith by a commonplace pair of very ordinary people of the tribe of Levi. Their act was a bold one and is not to be taken lightly. They lived in a day when disobedience to the command of a king could have meant any kind of punishment his royal willfulness might have devised.

Refusing to cast their child into the river, they hid him, because they saw he was a "proper child". Some Bible translators use the word beautiful instead of proper, but the word leaves much to be desired. He probably was a beautiful child. What mother does not think her baby beautiful? My opinion is they saw this child was a child of destiny. As the parents of John the Baptist had witness borne to them that the son God was about to give them was a child of destiny, so also the parents of Moses knew that their child was not born to be thrown in the river, but under God's hand to be the emancipator of the whole Israelite nation. Because of this knowledge they knew that God would protect both themselves and the child, and their faith made them unafraid of the king's commandment.

Thus it came to pass, as recorded in Exodus, chapter 2, that, when the child was too old to be longer hidden, they put him in a basket among the reeds of the river. He was rescued by no less a person than the daughter of Pharaoh, who took him home and unwittingly hired the child's mother to nurse him. Thus by the wisdom of God Pharaoh himself nurtured in his own palace him who was to deliver Israel from Pharaoh's bondage. Exod. 2:1-10 Who can read such a story as this without knowing that God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform?

According to the Book of Jasher Moses, who was carefully trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, became a very worthy general in Pharaoh's armies. Hence through the grace of God he was well trained in the art of commanding large crowds of people and well prepared, even in the natural, to be the shepherd of the hosts of

Israel. Seldom do we think, when we are responsible for some insignificant act of faith, that we are making history that will abide forever - simple acts like that of Mary Magdalene, who poured the precious ointment upon the head of Christ. Though rebuked by the unbelieving, she was told by the Saviour that her beautiful act of faith would be told throughout the ages. She anointed Christ for His burial, without which there would be no resurrection either for Him or for us.

In addition to these things I am moved to make this solemn statement. Five times now in the history of Israel has Satan moved to perpetrate genocide against the people of God. Pharaoh in the days of Moses ordered first the midwives and then the people themselves to destroy all the male children by casting them into the river. Exod. 1:15, 22 Then again in the days of the wicked Haman it was ordered that all Jews should be killed. Esther 3:8-15 This wicked design was also averted by the hand of the Lord. Then king Herod, at the time of the birth of Jesus, gave command to destroy all male babies from two years old and under, a decree which was carried out, but failed in its purpose. Once again Adolph Hitler sought to destroy the Jews by his "final solution". Now once again in our day the most devilish device of all has gripped the people. In the last few years alone literally millions of white babies have been destroyed by abortion. Concerning this modern evil I shall not comment except to say that each time such an evil persists, we may look for the hand of the enemy in his effort to prevent the birth of some "proper child" or child of destiny. So it was in the days of Moses and so it was in the days of Jesus, and who can tell what son of God he is hoping to destroy at the present time?

Of this Moses, who grew up in the house of Pharaoh, it is next written: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." **Heb. 11:24-26.** Such drastic and faithful decisions God's people are often called upon to make, decisions that are to affect us for time and eternity. The rich, young ruler, who came to Jesus desiring to know the way of eternal life, was no doubt desirous of knowing the way, but when our Lord told him to go and sell all that he had and give it to the poor, and to come, take up his cross and follow Him, he went away sad because he had great possessions. How thankful we all should be that Moses took the opposite course, counting the sufferings of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt! If God's people today are willing to lay down their dearest treasures because their cross and their walk with Christ demands it, be assured of this: the Lord will never be your debtor. You will ever find our Saviour's promise to be true.

"There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." **Mark 10:29-30** This promise I have proved to be true. May every reader of these lines have the grace and courage of faith to esteem the sufferings of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The reward is very great. Let us therefore have respect unto it lest it be lost.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Those who have taken upon themselves to esteem the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt will also find that they are called upon to forsake Egypt in its entirety. By Egypt we mean the world and the realm of sin, the flesh and the devil. The king was wrath indeed, but Moses feared him not, because he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Decisions of this kind can never be understood by people of the earthly realm, because their eyes are blind to eternal things. Their eyes cannot see the invisible. Their ears are not tuned to the celestial realm. Their souls cannot feel the moving and the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Blessed is the man whose eyes behold "unspeakable things," whose ears have heard the joyful sound, and whose spirit has heard the words of the Spirit of God, "This is the way; walk ye in it." It was Emerson who said, "Our eyes are holden that we cannot see the things that stare us in the face until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened. Then we behold them, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream." I like these strange words, written by Harvey Shanon: "Only a fool walks on the edge of a cliff; only the man who has walked there knows what is behind. Only the man who has walked there can see where no man has been. And where no man has been is where some men must go." Had not Moses had respect unto the recompense of reward and endured as seeing Him who is invisible, we would never have read of that celestial day when he stood with the Son of God on the mount of transfiguration, discussing with Christ the death which "He should

accomplish at Jerusalem," a death that was to be the very life of the world. He had respect unto the recompense of reward, and what a reward it turned out to be; and the half has never yet been told.

Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Those Israelites dwelling in Egypt were just as much in danger of the angel of death that was to pass over Egypt that night as any of the Egyptians were, but the blood of the Passover lamb, which was a foreshadowing of the blood of the Lamb of God, was to be sprinkled upon the two door posts and upon the lintel above the door. The promise to them was, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Ridiculous, I suppose, to the natural mind, but an act of faith to those who believe, the result being that, when morning broke, not one person was dead in all the houses of Israel, but in the house of every Egyptian the firstborn had been slain. Let those laugh the laugh of unbelief who will, but by faith and faith alone in the blood of Christ are we delivered from death. His is the blood of eternal life and no death can come nigh unto it.

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."

JOSHUA

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." The falling down of the walls of Jericho was by no means the only act of faith attributed to Joshua. His certainty of victory was assured because the captain of the hosts of the Lord had instructed him as to what he must do. Thus the account reads: "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." **Josh. 5:13-15**

Faith cannot operate until God is involved. I have come to believe that faith can never function independently of the command and will of the Lord. Any man among us can do the works of Moses, of Joshua, or of Elijah if the Lord first reveals His will to us as He did to them. How great is our need, therefore, to walk and be led by the Spirit of God!

RAHAB

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not," We know little more of her other than that she was an harlot. She comes unexpectedly upon the scene, but salvation does not run in human blood; neither is man justified except by faith. He that believeth is justified from all things. Only by grace through faith are we saved. To assure us of this Paul wrote, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." **Rom. 4:3-5.** We should observe that Rahab was not believing for salvation, but she believed God and knew for certain that it was the Lord's intention to take the city. Therefore she chose to take her stand in faith toward God rather than to cast her lot with the unbelieving. Thus was she reckoned righteous. The scarlet thread, which in obedience to instructions she hung in her window, must without doubt foreshadow the blood of Christ. Heb. 9:19,20 would indicate this. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament (covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you." That scarlet thread of blood runs from the Garden of Eden to the exalted throne, where the redeemed sing the hymn, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor, and power, and glory, and blessing."

Through faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not. Not only did she not perish; she became one of the progenitors of the Lord Jesus Christ and is one of only five women mentioned in His human genealogy - Rahab, Ruth, Tamar, Bathsheba and Mary.

OTHER HEROES OF FAITH

The apostle, having now enumerated these many who were triumphant through simple faith and realizing that there is far too great a cloud of witnesses to consider them individually, takes time only to name a few more, asking, "What shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon (the man who with three hundred chosen men put to flight the innumerable armies of the Midianites), and of Barak (who defeated Sisera with his nine hundred chariots of iron), and of Samson (whose exploits of faith are too numerous to mention), and of Jephthae (who smote the hosts of the children of Ammon); of David also (who slew Goliath, the enemy of the hosts of the Lord), and Samuel and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, (as David did), wrought righteousness (as Abraham), obtained promises (as Hannah did), stopped the mouths of lions (as Daniel), quenched the violence of the sword (as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), escaped the edge of the sword (as David and many others), out of weakness were made strong (as Deborah), waxed valiant in fight (as David's mighty men), turned to flight the armies of the aliens (as did Jonathon). Women received their dead raised to life again (as did the widow of Serepta), others were tortured, not accepting deliverance (as was Jeremiah), that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments; They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having reserved some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." **Heb. 11:32-40**

Considering all the glorious, divine and august things written in this book concerning our "so great salvation", we ask ourselves afresh, "How shall we escape if we neglect it?" In these tremendous days when Almighty God is shaping the governors of the world to come, preparing them as sons of God to reign with Him, since "we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And should we be wearied and faint in our minds, let us consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, who is now at the right hand of God exalted, angels, principalities and powers made subject to Him.

The work is solemn; therefore do no trifle.
The task is difficult; therefore do not relax.
The opportunity is brief; therefore do not delay.
The path is narrow; therefore do not wander.
The prize is glorious; therefore do not faint.

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**TREASURES OF TRUTH
FROM GLORY TO GLORY**

BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

CHAPTERS 1-5

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**CHAPTER ONE
WHERE DWELLEST THOU?**

"Again the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples; and, looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, **What seek ye?** And they said unto Him, Rabbi, where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, **Come and see.** They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day; for it was about the tenth hour. One of the disciples who heard John speak was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." **John 1:35-40**

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings to search out a matter." **Prov. 25:2** It has always pleased the Lord to shroud the deep things of God in mystery and to cover them as with a cloud of glory. The worthless things and base are usually the most evident. The lewd and sordid things lie about us on every hand seeking like promiscuous women the attention of every passerby, but the rich and deep treasures God has hidden. Never are they accidentally found by the careless or indifferent, but by those who diligently search for them. "If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God." **Prov. 2:4-5**

For years the simple story recorded above has intrigued my mind with its mystery. "Master, where dwellest Thou?" they asked, and He replied, "Come and see." They followed Him and abode with Him that day. But the story ends there. No hint was given of where they went or where they stayed. Some glad day perhaps the story will be told, and, when it is, may God grant that we shall be among the happy throng who hears it that we may learn where He dwells who said, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." He had neither house or cave, nest or hole in this world, yet He took these humble men to show them where He dwelt.

There is a place where sons of God may ever dwell all the while they tread this vale of tears below. It is the secret place of the Most High where saints abide beneath the shadow of the Almighty. Psa. 91:1

Centuries ago Moses sought in prayer that he might see God's glory. "And he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory. And He said, I will make My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while My glory pas-seth by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and I will cover thee with My hand while I pass by." **Exod. 33:18-22** Was it such a place as this that Jesus dwelt? Was it here that Andrew, with the other disciple, stood? This we may not know for sure, but it was here that Jesus lived, ever abiding beneath the shadow of the Almighty where earthly moorings have been slipped and men commune face to face with God. "There is a place by Me,"

said God to Moses. "There is a secret place of the Most High," said the Psalmist David. "I go to prepare a place for you," said Jesus. Paul added his faithful testimony in these words: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," and John declared, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." **1 John 4:16**

Now the Lord dwelleth not in temples made with hands. No building was ever more carefully prepared than Solomon's temple. No house was more elegantly beautiful, no temple more costly, and none so filled with the glory of God. Yet "the Lord dwelleth not in temples made with hands." He who inhabits heaven as His throne and makes earth a footstool for His feet has said, "What house will ye build Me or what is the place of My rest?" **Acts 7:48-50** God has never delighted Himself in extravagant buildings of brick and stone. Silver and gold and precious stones are never a satisfaction to Him.

They gladden the hearts of men and are a source of pride and satisfaction to them, for men know not the truth, neither do they remember that all such things soon pass away. Frail, blind man with his little trowel and wheelbarrow, his brick and mortar and stone, erects a lofty edifice and calls it the house of the Lord, but he hears not the voice of the Lord, saying, "The Lord dwelleth not in temples made of stone", nor does he know that man himself is ordained to be the habitation of God through the Spirit.

We have come to the most sublime of all truths. It has been necessary to write about many subjects in the past, all of which have been but a preparation for the things that are yet before us. It is only normal that our hearts should rejoice that the heavens are to be opened or that the mind of Christ should dwell in men. It is right to be glad that the glory of the kingdom of God is soon to shed its healing rays upon the earth, dispelling the mists, dividing the light from the darkness, that a whole world of benighted men may walk in the light of the Lord until under all the great eternal heavens there is order, interdependence, and unity. I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord on that day than to dwell forever in the tents of wickedness and worldly satisfaction.

Have we in our desire to reign with Him forgotten that "if we suffer, we shall reign, and if we deny Him, He will deny us"? Have we forgotten the words of Jesus which He spoke, saying, "Ye that have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel?" Do we know what it means to follow Jesus? Do we know what it means to drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism? Or are we just proselytes who adhere to certain doctrines and dogmas, but are not disciples at all?

The deeper things of God are reserved for those who follow Him through Gethsemane, stand with Him in Pilate's hall, bear His cross all along the Via Dolorosa of their lives, die with Him at Calvary, rise with Him from among the dead, ascend with Him into heavenly places, and live with Him far above all principality and power and dominion, not only in this age but in the age to come. These, verily, are the ones who will reign with Him on Mount Zion, bearing in their foreheads the fiery name of the eternal Father.

In my heart I believe that, when those two disciples left Jesus on that memorable day, they knew as few men have ever known where Christ dwelleth both now and in the ages to come. Full well they then knew that the dwelling place of Christ was in the Father, and the dwelling place of the Father was in the Son, but the truth that sealed their lips was this: the Father who dwelt in the Son and the Son who dwelt in the Father were together to make their abode with men, dwelling with them and dwelling in them that God should be their God and they should be His people. It was three years later that Jesus prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." **John 17:24**. Where I am! Not where I will be, but where I am. He was referring neither to heaven nor to earth, but to the abiding place of sons of God. That is where He was, that is where He is, and that is where we are quickly to come.

It has been a joy to many hearts to read this scripture, given with divine inspiration by St. Paul, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: ...We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." **2 Cor. 5:6-7** The generally accepted interpretation of this scripture is that, as long as we live here on earth in the body, we are absent from the Lord, but, when we die and go to heaven, we will be absent from the body and present with the Lord. There is usually a surface meaning to every scripture, but always beneath the surface crust a

deeper, richer layer of precious truth will be found. Prospectors find the evidence of gold on the surface of the ground, but the gold itself usually lies buried deep in the mine. The interpretation of this beautiful scripture that suggests that we are to look forward to death that we might go to be with the Lord is certainly a most juvenile interpretation. It is the grade one of spiritual understanding.

Well did the apostle Paul know that the vast mass of humanity was "at home" only in the realm of the body. They belonged entirely to an earthly realm where things are visible, audible, and touchable. Their minds seldom mounted higher than things physical, and, when for a few moments they did rise to walk upon a spiritual plane, they were not really at home there, but waited for the moment when they could lapse back to the natural and normal, for that is where they were at home. So, while men are at home in the body, they are always absent from the Lord, absent from the spiritual world of true reality. Heaven is closed to them. Their minds dwell in the realm where men buy and sell, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage. They dwell in a realm of eating and drinking, of finding pleasure for the body, amusing their minds with the silly things of the world, absorbing, listening to, or looking at some fictitious thing that serves only to amuse the natural man, keeping his heart away from the realm of eternal reality.

Paul knew that there was another and better realm entirely opposite to the one we have described. It is the realm where men have gained the victory over the body (the flesh) and its passing world of imagination and delusion. It is the realm where we dwell with the Lord and have our home with Him. We no longer find ourselves at home with the trivial things that amuse ordinary Christians, things, which belong to this life, this earthly realm, this plane of the fleshly body, but we find ourselves at home with Him. Being thus absent from the body, we are present with the Lord, and, being at home with the Lord, we are no longer at home with the body and the passing things that concern its realm.

These are the days of the appearing of the Son of man, and, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. In those days they were only at home in the things that concerned the physical realm. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they married and gave in marriage until the godly Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them, and the whole realm in which they were at home. Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot, the people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and builded, but, the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, fire and brimstone fell upon them and took them all away. They were occupied only with the business and the affairs of this world. They were at home in this realm and desired none other. The exact parallel is in the earth today in these, the days of the coming of the Son of man. The craze for building, planting, reaping, marrying, and making money goes on apace both in the world at large and in the professing church. The church system has built more buildings in the last twenty years than in previous centuries, and all the while they do these things, devilish apostasy creeps like a plague over the earth, and the Spirit of the Lord has departed from the threshold of the temple they build.

Amidst the milling masses who are at home in the body God always maintains a witness who is at home with the Lord. Always somewhere he has His Enoch who walks with God, His Noah who is righteous in his generation, His Abraham who is a friend of God, His Moses who speaks face to face with God, His Elijah who defies the prophets of Baal, His Hebrew children who bow not the knee to the Babylonian image, His Daniel who never ceases to pray, His Paul who knows the glories of the third heaven, and His John who was in the Spirit on the day of the Lord. The men of Noah's day were busying themselves with the passing things that belong to the realm of the body. They knew where to go for fun. They knew how to make money. They knew where to go to see violence. They knew where to seek corruption, and I doubt not that they were as full of religion as the people of our day. But there was one lonely man who was never found partaking of their passing show, for he was not at home in a physical world. In spirit his feet roamed the elysian fields of the heavenly realm. While others listened to the lingo jingo of earth, his ear was tuned to a melody sweeter than psalm. As the harsh noises of earth faded from his ear, the eternal voice that calls men from the dead and speaks worlds into being fell with the harmony of heaven upon him, enlightening his soul in things to come. We may well suppose he was looked upon as a mystical old fool. His preaching and his warnings fell upon deaf ears and were not believed. He was not at home among them. He was at home with the Lord. When therefore judgment fell and tribulation poured its floods upon the earth, because he had walked in the instruction of the Lord, he was delivered while others were overthrown. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man."

There is a bewildering paradox in the world today. Never have we seen better times on the one hand, and never have we seen worse times on the other. While there is more wealth to buy everything the body can crave, there is more unhappiness, quarrels, broken homes, broken hearts, broken bodies, half-orphaned children, violence and discontent than the world has ever known. It is infallibly true that, while men are at home in the body, they are absent from the Lord.

When we speak of the days of Noah, we usually think of the wickedness of the earth, but let us not forget that amid all the ungodliness of that day there was also a righteous man. So also in the days of the coming of the Son of man there will be found a righteous company, a manchild, who will be caught up to God's throne, one who like Noah will be at home with the Lord. It is from such that earth's deliverance will come. Every dispensation is of great importance, and men and women should always hold the things of God in reverence, but it should be evident to us all that there never was a more important hour than now. If runners fall out of the race at the beginning, that is bad enough, but if they fall out after they have borne the burden and heat of the day only a few yards from the finish line and glorious prize, that is indeed a tragedy. Paul, the wise and good apostle, once said, "They that run in a race run all (all run), but one receiveth the prize; so run that ye may attain." Millions have started in the race; thousands are still running, but there are few who are running to win. It was the same Paul who said, "I keep my body under and bring it into subjection, lest, after I have preached to others. I myself should be a castaway." He knew only too well how easy it was to be at home in the body, and thus be out of fellowship with the Lord or absent from the Lord. Therefore he took steps to bring the body into subjection to the Spirit so that the Spirit always had the mastery. "I run the race with determination," he said. "I am no shadow boxer, I really fight! I am my body's sternest master, for fear that when I have preached to others, I should myself be disqualified." **1 Cor. 9:27** (Phillips translation)

The corruptible body is the sternest enemy of the Spirit and it must be brought into complete subjection to the Spirit before we will ever find ourselves at home with the Lord. The physical, corruptible body of flesh fills us with passions and desires and all manner of fears, and leads us into much foolishness. It is truth that with the body as our master we can never concentrate on any spiritual thing for long, for it will crowd into our thoughts, filling us with passions and desires. All wars come directly or indirectly from the pursuit of wealth, and as wealth can only be bestowed upon the body, the body therefore is the cause of all the wars of history, even as the apostle James so aptly stated. "From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not from your lusts which war in your members? Ye lust and have not; ye kill and desire to have and cannot obtain." Jas. 4:1-2 The carnal mind is the mind motivated by the carnal, which is the flesh or the body. The spiritual mind is the mind that is motivated by the Spirit of God. That is the truth, pure and simple. For centuries preachers have preached sermons on the carnal mind, always failing to see just what it was or to identify it. The carnal mind is the mind that seeks only to satisfy the whims and fancies of the physical body of corruptible flesh. It is therefore the eternal enemy of the Spirit, for the flesh seeks the corruptible and passing things, but the Spirit longs for the incorruptible and the eternal. From this it is plain for any man to see that, if we live after the flesh, we will die, but, if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body (the flesh), we shall live.

It is not possible to have pure wisdom or pure knowledge as long as we are at home in the body, for it will always drag our minds away into the realm of the unreal, filling us with some physical lust, some desire for food, or perhaps clouding our minds with sleepiness. It was the flesh that caused the disciples to fall asleep in that most trying of all hours in Gethsemane. Even though the Lord had exhorted them to watch and pray, He came back from His lonely vigil of agony to find them sleeping. And, when He woke them, He asked, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." How many million times has this same tragic scene been repeated? The Spirit has called us to watching, but the flesh has dragged our souls away to some fruitless and barren field for the sake of its own physical comfort.

We come nearest to Christ and all eternal things in those hours when we can leave the body behind and have it in complete subjection to the Spirit. If we are ever to gain the mind of Christ and all the pure wisdom that belongs to Him, we must cease from intercourse with the corruptible body of flesh that we be no longer defiled by its nature. Must we of necessity die to accomplish this? By no means, for when at last the worthlessness of the flesh and the entire physical realm is revealed to us, we will then be able to follow the instruction of the Holy Spirit as He said through Paul, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present

your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind." **Rom. 21:1-2** It is right here that one passes from the carnal mind to the mind of Christ. Never allow anyone to deceive you into thinking that the mind of Christ can be attained by going to a church altar or by asking someone to lay hands on you for prayer. There must come a time of personal revelation, a time of crucifixion, a time of reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. Until we can see by the Holy Spirit the worthlessness of all things corruptible, we cannot hope to attain to a true life in the Spirit, for, if we live after the flesh (the body), we shall die; but, if we through the Spirit do mortify (kill, crucify) the deeds of the body, we shall live.

It would do us all a world of good to take an inventory to see how many unnecessary pursuits fill our lives every day. If our thought life could be flashed upon a screen at the end of a twenty-four hour day, I fear we would be both surprised and disturbed to see how much time we wasted in thinking of the things that concern a physical, passing realm, but how little time we spent in the glory realm of the mind of Christ. Many of those who make great claims of power and sonship would see how readily, easily, and happily they forsook the place of prayer to spend idle hours watching scenes of earth's vanity and fiction, filling their minds with corruption and violence and things that belong to the lower nature. Yes, indeed, many would be ashamed, if they could watch a film of their day, to see how Christ and all eternal things were shoved quickly and unceremoniously into the scullery while the corrupt and earthly graced the parlor of their homes and the sanctuary of their lives. Where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. Being at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. It is not the hours we spend in a church building that count, though we go there thrice every day. The question is, how often are the doors of the inner sanctuary of our heart opened to the gentle knocking of the Son of God as with whispered voice He says, "If you will open the door, I will come in and sup with you and fellowship with you and reveal Myself unto you, and ye shall be the sons and daughters of the Most High." That is what counts, and that is where victory and sonship is found. That gentle knocking may come at midnight or midday. It may come at two or three o'clock in the morning, but if we will cast off the laziness and sleepiness of the body and rise and open the door, He will come in, bringing the fragrance of heaven into the inner sanctuary of our heart, and after that sweet presence there is no room to spare for the base, the worldly, and the profane. But if our mind has become so preoccupied with the silly things and nonsense of the world that we cannot hear the sweet cadence of His voice, let us not deceive ourselves with claims of spirituality, much less claims of sonship and of the mind of Christ. Let us compare the time we spend in His presence opening our hearts to the realities of the eternal realm with the fruitless hours that are spent indulging in things that add neither jot nor tittle to our communion with God, and we will then see the reason for our stalemate in spiritual growth and manifestation. While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and when perchance for a moment such an one enters into God's presence, because he is not really at home there, he immediately lapses back into the foolish things that belong to an unregenerate world, because that is where he is at home.

The dwelling place of a son of God is in the Father and the dwelling place of the Father is in the sons. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, for it has become so bogged down with its human ways of looking at things that it discards everything that is beyond the realm of its petty comprehension. How the Father can dwell in the Son and the Son can dwell in the Father the wisest man on earth cannot explain, but to an understanding born of revelation from above it is not only possible, but that true sonship could be anything else is impossible.

The night of the last supper was one of the most momentous hours of all history. The washing of the disciples' feet, the foretelling of the betrayal, and the forewarning of Peter's denial had caused such consternation within the hearts of the disciples that even the strengthening words, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me", could scarce allay their fears. Perhaps our minds have been so occupied with the events, which filled that night that we have forgotten the things that Jesus said. At the moment Judas Iscariot departed from their midst, Jesus uttered this most significant statement: **"Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him (the Son) in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."** **John 13:31-32** I never enjoy trying to see pictures where no picture exists, but it is plain for us all to see that, as long as the Judas nature is present, the glory of God's purpose is never revealed. Judas is not only the son of perdition, but he is also a son of the flesh. His true nature was portrayed one night in the house of Simon the leper when the woman poured the precious ointment upon the head of Christ. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and the money given to the poor," he asked, but he was

not thinking of the poor. He was thinking of himself, for the story says, "Not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the bag." The money he stole from the bag was squirreled away for the satisfaction of his own flesh at a later day. How often have we seen carnal men use these seemingly lofty ideals for their own ends, not that they really care for the orphans, the widows, the heathen or the poor, but because they have found a gold mine in the bag. When the Judas nature goes out the door of our lives and our spirits are purged from the things that belong to the carnal mind, then God is glorified in Christ and Christ is glorified in us and He will straightway glorify us. As long as the heart is more concerned with the earth and the fleeting pleasures of the bag than with the riches of God in Christ, we can never hope to dwell in Him. But when all earth's voices become foreign to our ears, when all her harmonies become a discord, all her riches, poverty, and her sweet perfumes, a stench, then it is that we find ourselves at home with the Lord and He is glorified in us.

"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him (the Son), He shall glorify Him (the Son) in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." The greatest truths of God are always simply stated and easily understood by those who love to walk the fields of God and who are at home with the Lord. But do not be deceived, for, though God's truths are clearly seen by all who, like Abraham, walk in friendship with God, sitting with Him in heavenly places, they are veiled to those Christians who, like righteous Lot, walk after the flesh, sitting in the very gates of Sodom. It is not where we dwell in the natural that counts, but where our spirit dwells.

Two men looked through prison bars.
One saw mud; the other saw stars.

Many a sermon has been preached on glorification, and I suppose most of them have missed the mark, but in the above text the Lord Jesus Christ gave us the eternal truth about our glorification: "If God be glorified in Him, God shall glorify Him in Himself." The moment God is given the throne of our life and is glorified in His sons, at that very moment, straightway, we begin to dwell in God and glorification begins its work within us. The world of believers is far too willing to proclaim with the lips, "I surrender all." How readily Christians raise their hands in seeming consecration to loudly sing, "All to Jesus I surrender," or "Take my silver and my gold. Not a mite do I withhold." But even while they sing, they are hiding some Babylonish garment in the tent of their lives, together with the silver and gold of the Lord's tithes, calming their consciences meanwhile by persuading themselves that tithing belongs to a past age. I do not know how people who by faith are the children of Abraham can refuse to do what Abraham did.

There is a vast need of bitter and heartfelt repentance among the people who name the name of the Lord. But it will never come while we are here and there, listening to the sermons of preachers who have themselves forsaken the right way of the Lord, running greedily in the error of Balaam for gain. They have lost all sense of true values, thinking that gain is godliness. "From such turn away." We will not find our dwelling place in God amid the excitement and noise of a big meeting or listening to all manner of fantastic oratory, stock sermons, stock subjects and stock jokes, for those who seek Him thus are depending not on God to reveal Himself to them, but they are leaning on the arm of human flesh and human wisdom, hoping that by some chance they will miraculously receive a crumb from the Lord's table.

In solemn truth we may search the Bible through or the world over and we will not find a man who has ever attained any great glory in God unless he attained it in the secret of God's presence where the world with all her distracting influence was shut away. Those who walk with God as Enoch did know no man after the flesh. They are not concerned with the pedigree of men. They care not who they are, what their title is, where they came from, or what their standing is. They have one desire. They must see Christ, and they want no part in anything or with anybody who dims the glory of that vision.

Not Athen's blooms, but those of Calvary
And Gethsemane bring the victory
That causes prodigals for home to pine,
And turn their backs for aye on husks of swine.

It is not polished sermons, shining pews and beautiful choirs we need, but if God is glorified in a man, He will straightway glorify that man in Himself.

Have you ever wondered why it is that the Lord will send Elijah before the great and notable day of the Lord? It is because the conditions of Elijah's day will re-exist in our day, and verily they do exist already, for many who speak in the name of the Lord have never heard from the Lord, and those who prophesy in the name of the Lord prophesy out of their own heads. Seldom, indeed, it is that aught they say ever comes to pass. There is in existence today a national and international form of worship more sordid than the worship of Baal in that, though it draws nigh to Christ with its lips, its heart is far from Him. It prophesies, but God has not spoken. It prays, but God does not hear. It leaps on the altar, but the fire of God is not present. But Elijah, the man who dwelt in God, is coming and before the dreadful fire of his God the system of Babylon will fall. See Rev. 11:3-5. At the last gathering of Christ with His disciples before His crucifixion, He told them many things they did not understand. "Whither I go," He said, "thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." **John 13:36** Peter replied, "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." One of the saddest mistakes a Christian can make is to overestimate his consecration to God only to find in a time of testing that he did not nearly measure up to what he hoped and professed. I for one thoroughly believe that Peter meant exactly what he said. He was perfectly willing to lay down his life for Christ. Death would not have daunted him in the least if the occasion had arisen. Indeed, in great love and daring he drew his sword when his Lord was in danger, ready, single-handedly to defend Him against a multitude with swords and staves. Strangely enough he was willing to let the world know at that moment that he was a disciple and follower of Christ. There is, however, a difference between the natural daring that inspires men to lay down their lives for a cause and the depths of a spiritual experience of the love of God that causes them to follow Him where other men cannot go. "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now." Jesus knew only too well that the zeal and fire that would cause Peter to draw his sword to fight to his last drop of blood was also the zeal that would droop and faint in the furnace of simple confession, causing him to curse and swear, saying, "I tell you I know not the man", and later still in the wilderness of patient endurance his zeal again faltered till he said, "I go a-fishing".

"Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now," said Jesus. He was going into God, back to the realm from which He came. Even three years of being with Him night and day had not prepared the disciples to follow Him into that sacred realm. Seeing miracles could not suffice for spiritual experience. Performing miracles themselves had not prepared them to follow Him there. Even the mount of transfiguration had not wrought the change in them, for they were still not ready to follow Him where He was going.

Now he that dwells in love dwells in God and God dwells in him. It was not for lack of zeal that the disciples could not follow Christ in this last step into God, for they had zeal and to spare, but what they lacked was the love of God. I have come to hate the expression we so often hear among Christians as they exhort one another thus: "Show love, brother!" Or "manifest love!" and a dozen other such expressions. We might as well try to take blood out of a stone as to try to manifest the love of God out of a heart where He does not dwell. It is impossible to manifest love where love is not, and it is impossible to fail to manifest love where love is. Love is not something like ill-will or a pleasant nature that we can manifest or not manifest. Love is God. He that dwells in God dwells in love and he who dwells in love dwells in God. The love of God is not something we try to show as we would a diamond ring. Love is not even what we are. Love is what God is, and as He dwells in us, that is what we are. It is as impossible to have God without love as it is to have fire without heat. It cannot be. As heat and light are the manifestations of fire, so the light of love is the manifestation of the indwelling Christ.

Long centuries ago three broken-hearted widows stood weeping in the land of Moab. To Ruth, Naomi, and Oprah it seemed the sun of hope had set forever behind the dark horizon of despair. To Naomi there was naught to do but leave her two daughters-in-law in Moab where they belonged while she sadly retraced her steps to the land of Israel. So "she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? And they lifted up their voice and wept again, and Oprah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge; Thy people shall be my people, thy God, my God; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried: The Lord do so to me and more also if aught but death part thee and me. So they went until they came to

Bethlehem." Ruth 1:10-19. I do not see much difference between the words of Ruth and the words of Peter, but Ruth was ready to follow from the love of God that burned within. Peter was not yet ready to follow, but Jesus said, "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards."

The true church is the habitation of God. Eph. 2:22 It is God's holy temple, built of living stones. Every stone is an individual person in whom God dwells, and every stone an individual person who dwells in God. This and this alone is the true church, the true body of Christ. The visible systems, everywhere misnamed the church, are not the true church at all. Man sees a visible system and calls it the church, but God dwells in the peaceful habitation of the human heart that has crowned Him King. His love is shed abroad in them because He dwells in them and they dwell in Him.

The words of Christ to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now," could be re-said to millions of zealous believers today who in their zeal for a cause are as zealous for the cause of Christ as politicians are zealous for the cause of a state. But it is not zeal for the cause of Christ that is needed, for, though the zeal of His house has eaten us up, Christ may still be but an infant in the manager of our hearts. Zeal neither brings Christ to dwell in us nor causes us to dwell in Him. When will men stop seeking things and start seeking the Lord? What good is a spiritual gift if the Giver is absent? What value is wisdom apart from the Giver of all wisdom? Adam and Eve sought to know good and evil by wisdom apart from God, but had they sought to have their lives filled with Him, wisdom would have dwelt in them, and no knowledge would have been withheld from them. If the people of God today would cease from their fruitless search for the spectacular and miraculous in religion, turning a deaf ear to the advertising of unscrupulous men who love to promote themselves, if they would forget about physical healings, spiritual gifts and revivals and begin to turn the knob of their prayer closet door, seeking not that God would do this or that, but seeking to enter into harmony with the mind of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, then all the world would know that God dwelt in them and they in Him. God does not do what we ask Him to do. He does what we ask Him according to His will. Let us cease then from seeking things. Let us seek God that He might fashion our lives according to His eternal wisdom.

Well did the Saviour know that more than zeal was needed in Peter. He needed the indwelling Christ and the love that flowed like a river from His presence. Peter's glittering human zeal would fade before morning, leaving him to thrice deny that he even knew who Jesus was. It was not zeal that Jesus required when by the shore of the lake He thrice repeated the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" And Peter, calling to mind his thrice repeated denial, was grieved that Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" "Lord," he replied, "Thou knowest all things. Thou knottiest that I love Thee." We cannot hope for much more than zeal in Simon, son of Jonas. The indwelling Christ alone can make him Simon, the son of God, for the love of God is made perfect in all in whom He dwells.

King David of Israel was one of the most remarkable characters the world has ever known. Deep beneath the rugged exterior of his life was a saintly man after God's own heart. He had found it necessary to leave behind the shallow emptiness of the Jewish worship of his day while other men by the thousands offered their many sacrifices and performed their daily rituals with little or no growth in God. David could no longer enter into their forms and ceremonies. His spirit had reached far beyond the dispensation of law in which he lived to lay hold of an experience in God reserved for an age yet unborn. Perhaps it was as he watched the endless procession of people on the way to the sacrifice or saw the smoke of their offerings ascend from within the tabernacle walls that he looked up to God with tear-stained face and said, "**Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.**" **Psa. 51:16-17**

It was David who sang of the secret place of the Most High where men should abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psa. 91 There is no value in trying to imagine that we dwell there. We cannot get there by imagination or resolve. We come there by continually seeking to Hue in His presence, listen to His voice, and love His will. Our heart no longer cries for the spectacular things that amuse the multitude in religious realms, but it forever breathes out the secret longing of the Holy Spirit within, "Whither Thou goest, I will go; where Thou lodgest, I will lodge: Thy people shall be my people and Thy God, my God." The attitude of heart of all who would dwell in His presence is magnificently stated in the meditation of Solomon; "**By night upon my bed I**

sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will arise now and go through the city in the streets, and in the broad ways will I seek him whom my soul loveth. I sought Him and I found Him not. The watchman that goeth about the city found me: to whom I said, 'Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?' It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth." **S.O.S. 3:1-4** Those who thus seek God must seek Him for themselves, for no one is going to know whom we seek or tell us where we will find Him - not even the watchman, for we must pass beyond them also. But all who seek shall surely find, and to those who knock the door shall be opened.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit because we seek peace instead of seeking the Prince of Peace! What poverty we often endure because we seek riches instead of seeking Him! What pain and sickness men suffer because they seek healing instead of seeking the fountain of life! When will we ever learn the secret of these words: "For of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, whom God hath made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." Everything, my friend, is in Jesus, and Jesus is everything.

Every need His hand supplying, Every good in Him I see; On His strength divine relying He is all in all to me.

Dwelling in God was the theme of Christ's teaching the night of His betrayal. John chapters 13 to 17 "**If I wash thee not thou hast no part in Me.**" **John 13:8** The breaking of bread taught them to partake of Him. In His conversation with Philip He asked, "**Believest thou that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.**" **John 14:10** He taught them of the coming of Holy Spirit, of whom He said, "**I will pray the Father and He will give you another comforter that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you.**" **Verse 17** Then He taught them of the vine and the branches, saying, "**Abide in Me and I in you; As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me.**" **John 15:4** The whole of chapter 16 was spoken to teach the mighty illumination that comes by the indwelling Holy Ghost, who will guide us into all truth, taking the things of God and showing them unto us and revealing things to come. But the grand climax came in His closing prayer. **Chapter 17** "**That they may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**"

It is not enough for us to know about these truths and to make them part of our theology. The "D Day" and the "H Hour" has come when they must become our experience, and we must possess them. The blessed Christ who has been viewed historically must be formed within us. We poor mortals can never live the life He lived, so the grace of God has decreed that He should dwell within us and we should dwell in Him. We are to become here and now the habitation of God through the Spirit. For thus saith the Lord, "**I will dwell in them and walk in them and I shall be their God and they shall be My people.**" **2 Cor. 6:16** That is where God dwells. The habitation of Almighty God is in His people, dwelling in them and walking in them, being their God and they being His people. As the dwelling place of God is in His people, so the dwelling place of His people is in their God. It was of this that David sang in the words of this Psalm: "**Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.**" **Psa. 91:9-10**

Of a certainty I know that the dead theology of yesteryear can become living and real today. You say, "I always knew that God dwelt in His people." Yes, of course you did. But did you live as though you knew it? Did you talk as though you knew it? Did you act as though you knew it? Did you commune with Him as though you knew it? Or do you rise each morning to rush about your daily tasks neglectful of prayer, devoid of meditation, heedless of His word, without seeking guidance, intent only on business and the affairs of this passing age? God cannot abide in us while we are thus.

Of a truth I know that men and women in any walk of life can begin to practice the very presence of Christ. By this I mean that we can live as Jesus lived, who did always those things that pleased the Father. He did not do the things He thought would be pleasing to God. He pleased the Father by doing only the things, which the Spirit of the Father instructed Him to do. In like manner we also can follow His steps, doing only those things, which are given us of the Father, that sonship may begin to manifest itself within us. If we will cease trying to puzzle our way out of our problems by trusting in human wisdom, and instead ask God for His wisdom, He will

give us His wisdom, and thus shall the mind of Christ begin to dwell in us and operate in us. If God dwells in His people, then we must begin to live with that knowledge foremost in our hearts, depending no more on our old selves. Where grace is needed for any trial, we must steadfastly draw upon His grace. Where patience is needed, it must flow forth from Him, for patience and longsuffering are the fruits of His Spirit within. Where life and health are needed, we must draw upon the life and power of the resurrection, which He is, and which through Him dwells within us, that the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead should quicken our mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. We must know that Christ Himself from His riches in glory is the supplier of all our need. Apart from Him we are worthy of nothing. With Him we are the possessor of all things. Seek His will while crucifying your own. Let His mind dwell in you while casting out your own. Recognize His hand in all the affairs of your life. It is in all such who practice His presence that Christ lives and moves and has His being, and all such live and move and have their being in Him.

Centuries ago King Solomon in his search for God sighed out these plaintive words: "Tell me, Oh thou whom my soul lovest, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." **S.O.S. 1:7** Then like echoes from the distant mountains the answer falls. "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people."

"And I heard a voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." Rev. 21:3

CHAPTER TWO THE PASSING AND THE PERMANENT

In our journey from the natural to the spiritual realm we are continually beset with dangers and pitfalls. For every gain we make it seems there can be many losses, and every triumph can bring its defeats. It is for these reasons that it may be very profitable for us to consider things as they are, and to solicit God's help that we might see ourselves as He sees us. We cannot repeat too often the great fundamental fact that every fresh degree of light, which shines upon our pathway must of necessity, bring a corresponding repentance. If you will pause long enough to meditate on the following statement, you will likely decide it is true: "Things that seemed spiritual in our yesterdays seem to be only natural in our today's and will seem carnal in our tomorrows." If that is not our testimony, then we may well begin to fear whether we are making any real progress in God at all. But if our testimony should prove opposite to this, so that things which were carnal in our yesterdays are accepted as part of our spiritual life today, then we are in a bad way indeed, for, if I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

It would be profitable here to go over a few of the warnings that are constantly repeated in the word of the Lord. Always remember that the Bible is God's word. Every word of it was given by revelation. Not only thoughts were inspired of God, but the words as well. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. 3:16 The scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. Verse 15

Notice the testimony of the scripture to "word" inspiration. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue." **2 Sam. 23:2**. "Hear, oh heavens, and give ear, oh earth, for the Lord hath spoken." **Isa. 1:3**

"Behold I have put my words in thy mouth." **Jer. 1:9**

"Thou shalt speak my words unto them". **Eze. 2:7 and 3:4**

"David himself said by the Holy Ghost" **Mark 12:36**

While I could multiply such passages as these, it is perhaps unnecessary, yet for your study you might refer to such other passages as follows: **John 19:24, Matt. 2:5, Matt. 5:18, John 10:35, Luke 24:25, 44**. The references of Jesus to the scriptures were always calculated to give the utmost confidence and trust, saying, "Ye search the scriptures because in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me."

And again, that heaven and earth should pass away but the word of the Lord would not pass away, neither would a jot or tittle fail until all was fulfilled.

The Bible abounds on every hand with useful and practical instructions for our guidance in every day life. It covers every phase of life from birth to immortality. It uncovers every sin and work of the flesh. It shows in detail the purpose of God for all time. It unfolds the paths of righteousness and truth to all who will walk in them. By taking heed to it young men cleanse their ways. It displays the glories that await those who walk in righteousness and the dire peril of those who walk in evil. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible containing one hundred seventy-six verses. Only three of these verses (121, 122 and 132) fail to mention the word of God by calling it judgments, statutes, precepts, testimonies, word, or some kindred name. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb, moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them is great reward." **Psa. 119:9-11**

Now to come back to our original thought - to go over the oft repeated warnings contained in the word of God. "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it". **Heb. 4:1** There is always a tendency for God's people to grow weary with the journey and fail to enter into the rest God has promised us. We sometimes console ourselves and excuse our apathy by saying we should not get over anxious about ourselves and get ahead of God. Of course, we should not get ahead of God. We will have a difficult time doing that, for we cannot enter into anything He has not revealed to us. The moment, however, He reveals a truth, an experience, or a height to us, it is time to strip for the race and get moving. Paul did not calm the people by telling them not to get overanxious. He told them to fear lest they miss it.

I have been amazed of late at the number of instructions given in the word of God about this very thing. Let us listen to a few of them. "Let us there fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." **Heb. 4:1** "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." **Heb. 4:11** "They that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may attain." **Cor. 9:24-26** "Run with patience the race that is set before us." **Heb. 12:1** "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God." **Phil. 3:12, 16** "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" **Gal. 5:7** "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

None of these warnings give us any reason to rest on our oars. Labor is labor wherever you find it, and there is always toil and hard work connected with it, often disappointment and work that has to be done several times over. There are always those who would like to "sit at ease in Zion," but the path of the will of God lies by the way of Gethsemane and Golgotha, both being places of awful travail that will cost us all far more than we possess. I know of a truth that there will be no reward for those who do not labor to enter in. The spirit of ease that has settled over us will have to be dispelled or the losses will be great and irretrievable. Jesus taught us to "strive to enter in at the gate," for, He said, the gate is straight and the way narrow and only few would find it. I was thinking of the words of the Greek poet who wrote:

Vice there is in abundance,
And easy to find,
For the way to it is smooth,
And lies very near.
But before the Temple of Virtue,
The immortal gods have placed Labor.
And the way to it is long and steep
And at the commencement rough,
But once the traveler has reached the summit, it is easy,
However difficult it was at first.

Everything that is worthy and valuable is filled with labor, and the road to it always lies through the mountains of difficulty and never through the plains of ease. We may wish we could rest, and indeed we shall at last, but before rest comes work and travail, for we must labor to enter into His rest.

The apostle Paul on one momentous occasion was carried by the Spirit into the third heaven. God in sovereignty reached down and picked him up (whether in the body or out of it he did not know) and carried him into the celestial realm, the third heaven. He never did repeat any of the things he saw there, but so great and glorious were the visions of that holy hour that he found it unlawful to utter its secrets to ordinary men, and he died without disclosing them to anyone. His vision in the Spirit must have at least equaled the glories of the mount of transfiguration, which Peter briefly describes as the power and coming of Christ, which they saw when they were with Him in the holy mount. But because Paul had gone into that holy of holies through the sovereignty of God, he was not allowed to remain there, but was brought back to his former condition. He never could forget the glories he had seen. Therefore, to attain them as an eternal prize, he spent the rest of his earthly life pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; running that he might attain; fighting not as those that beat the air; keeping his body (flesh) under and bringing it into subjection, wrestling flesh and blood and principalities and powers; and finally, having fought a good fight, there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, and not for him only, but for all those who love the appearing of Christ.

It seems to me that our journey to the celestial could be more accurately described as a run rather than a walk. "So run that ye may attain," Paul says, and again, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Running is never an easy matter. It takes every ounce of energy that we possess. Those who engage in this sport strip off every possible article of clothing, and carry nothing with them. There is no idleness or sitting at ease. They are out to win. Runners in this life obtain only a corruptible crown, but runners of the race we speak of obtain an incorruptible crown. Here, only one receives the prize, but there many may receive it.

Many years ago, when I was a child, a number of long distance runners ran a race from San Francisco to New York. They were running thirty and forty miles a day. I still remember following the newspapers every day for the report on their progress. They encountered many difficulties along the way. Some dropped out almost every day. Some could not stand the pace; others developed sore feet. The runners were constantly bothered by motorists who pulled alongside and tried to question them as they ran. About the half way mark one runner was standing out above all the others. He was a Finlander, whose name was Gavuzzi. By the time they had reached the three-quarter mark, it seemed there was no chance of anyone's overtaking him. I can still remember the pictures of his unshaven face and the appearance of his sinewy body. But just about here trouble began to overtake him. He developed severe toothache and after several more days he was forced to drop out, and another who was not so swift but had more endurance took the prize. Running, you see, is not just a matter of walking up to the grandstand to get your prize. It is a thing that requires stripping, patience, endurance, as well as speed.

Paul spoke of the Galatians who did run well for a time but were hindered. That is ever our trouble. We do very well for a time, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things enter in and choke us, and we become unfruitful and drop out of the race altogether. Let us labor to enter into rest. Let us strive to enter the straight gate. Let us run that we may receive the prize. Let us fight, not as those who beat the air. Let us wrestle, not merely as those who wrestle flesh and blood. Let us press toward the mark, straining every nerve. Let us keep our body under and bring it into subjection, lest, after having preached and believed wonderful things, we should ourselves be discarded. Let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let us add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, and godliness, for he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off. But he that possesses them shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

One day a lawyer came to Jesus asking him, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind; this is the first and greatest commandment." One of the scribes, having heard this same answer on another occasion, said, "Well, master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but He, and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offering and sacrifices." And Jesus, perceiving that he had answered discreetly, said unto him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

The point I want to make is just this: To love God with all the heart and soul and mind is the fulfilling of all the law and will of God. This is better than burnt offerings or any sacrifice. This is indeed the fulfilling of all the law and the prophets. It is the foundation of the kingdom, the beginning of all righteousness, and the end of all good judgment and equity. It is the thing that God requires above all else. But there is another god that men love. That god is money, the god of this present age. To love him is not the foundation of the kingdom, but rather the root of all evil. Money is the thing that rules this age. We cannot buy the necessities of life without it, and there is no lust of the flesh nor desire of the eyes, ears, or taste, that cannot be obtained by those who possess it. It is connected with every war in history and with every dive and brothel in the world. For the love of this god men miss the kingdom. The rich young ruler wanted to be perfect, but went away sadly when he saw it would require the sale of his earthly possessions. And Jesus, feeling just as sad, saw him go, and said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom." Of course it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, because rich men and poor alike become worshippers of the god of this age, and we cannot serve God and Mammon. It is impossible to serve two masters. We are bound to love one more than the other. We are bound to cling to one and despise the other. Mammon was the Syrian god of riches. He is not only the Syrian god of riches but he has become the god of the whole world, the god of this whole age, and to love him is the root of all evil.

You do not have to be a rich man to love money. Poor men can love it, too. They often love it and strive for it even more than rich men. We do not have to be sinners to love money. Christians love it as much as others. An elder, a deacon, or a minister can be a lover of money and perform his ministry for filthy lucre's sake. He becomes a worshipper of the god of this age. They that love him finally err from the truth and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

Jesus said that riches were deceitful. "The deceitfulness of riches chokes the word." He told us to "beware of covetous-ness". He said it was hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom. Paul warned Timothy not to trust in uncertain riches. Indeed, they are uncertain, for, as Solomon said, they make themselves wings and fly away. He told us that to covet money caused us to err from the truth, and to love money was the very root of all the evil in the age.

Why is the love of money the root of all evil? This is a very good question and it should be answered. Let me ask another question. What can you buy with money? Am I not right in saying that money can buy only temporal things for the body and can buy nothing for the soul or the spirit? Can you think of any eternal thing that can be purchased with money? Or on the other hand can you think of any temporal thing that money cannot buy? All things that can be lavished on the flesh can be purchased with money, but not one thing that belongs to the spirit can be obtained by money. When the sorcerer offered Peter money for a spiritual gift, Peter replied, "Your money perish with you, for you have thought the gift of God could be purchased with money." We must conclude then that spiritual things such as love, wisdom, knowledge, kindness, and a thousand other eternal things are obtained for the soul and spirit without any help from the god of this world. Anything that the flesh can use for any comfort or ease, to delight the eyes or ears or taste or any other sense, can be obtained with money. Anything to eat or drink or put on, any luxury or comfort or mode of travel can be bought with money. Furthermore, anything that can be bought for the body or anything that can be purchased with money is a transient thing that will soon perish and disappear.

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

fleshly mind is an enemy of God and an enemy of all things spiritual. It follows, then, that because the soul is burdened down with the earthly and visible, it is impossible for it to be spiritual, and when the time comes to depart out of this world by death and enter the realm of the Spirit, it will fear to die and want to remain in the body, because it is a stranger to the realm of the Spirit and has come to believe that the realm of the body is the only realm that is real, when in truth it is the only realm that is unreal.

Did you ever notice how the legion of spirits that possessed the man at Gadara were filled with dread at the thought of leaving the body of the maniac? When they found they must go out into the deep where there was no body, they begged to be permitted to enter the bodies of the swine. They would sooner inhabit the flesh of a pig than no flesh at all. I could be wrong, but I am inclined to believe it was Jesus rather than the demons who caused the pigs to run down the hill into the sea. You see, when we become fleshly minded and think the transient things are real, then every time our soul would fly to the spiritual and eternal it is dragged back again by the physical and visible, thinking that corporal things are real, when, indeed, there is no reality in them, for they are passing away.

Will you agree with me that everything everywhere is made up of things, which are visible and things which are invisible? And is it not true that visible things never remain the same but are always changing, and that invisible things always remain the same and never change? And to which of these two things is the body most like? And to which is the spirit most like? Is not the bodily like the visible and changing and the spirit like the invisible and unchanging? When then the soul and spirit become lovers of the body, they are dragged away by it into things that are always changing and never remain the same. They become as unlike God as it is possible to be and are completely bound up and imprisoned by the body (flesh). When we try to discover any spiritual thing by the use of any of our bodily senses, we are taken into the realm of unreality and change; for everything connected with the body is changing while everything that belongs to the spirit is unchanging. It is small wonder then that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for all things connected with the natural belong to time and change, while all the things belonging to the spiritual are eternal and changeless. So then all who would come to know the wisdom of God, and the revelation of the Lord, must turn their spirits from the realm of the physical and changing, the corrupt and mortal, and fly away into the realm of the pure, eternal, unchanging, and immortal. It is only there that rest and truth are found, and, abiding there in the Spirit, even the body itself begins to be lifted from corruption to incorruption and from mortality to immortality. We said a moment ago that when the soul comes into the realm of the flesh, it becomes carnal and fleshly-minded because it is dragged into the realm of the body. Inversely then, when the soul and spirit dwell in the secret place with God, they lift the body till it also becomes incorruptible, immortal, and eternal.

When anyone first comes to Christ from the world of sin, his spirit is fast bound up and imprisoned by his flesh, and, while he may live the rest of his life in this same condition, the Spirit of God immediately seeks to deliver him and change him from walking after the flesh to walking after the Spirit. A strife between the flesh and the Spirit begins, the flesh on the one hand endeavoring to bring the soul into bondage and death, the Spirit on the other hand seeking to bring both soul and body into the liberty of life and peace. This is the greatest reason imaginable why we should live in temperance, and hold aloof as far as possible from the unreality of physical desire, earthly pleasure, fear or pain, and instead have great desire for spiritual pleasure, wisdom, knowledge, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Can you not see that when your spirit is associated with the earthly, it becomes earthly, and when it is associated only with the heavenly, it becomes eternal and spiritual? If your soul becomes associated with the pleasures and pains of the body, it is bound to think that these sensations are true and real when there is no reality in them, but they are only fleeting, passing things that appear like mists and are gone. Every physical pleasure has a way of fastening the soul more securely to the body and giving it a fleshly nature. Thus the soul or mind comes to think that the pleasures of the body are real and true, and because of this it comes to have the same fancies and desires as the body and becomes defiled by the flesh and cannot enter into the holiest of all. The soul has become a slave to the flesh and has lost all intercourse with the divine.

While the spirit and the body are united and dwell together, one must always be in subjection to the other. Either the body will be servant to the spirit or the spirit will be servant to the body. One will be the servant and be ruled. The other will be the master and rule. We cannot avoid this conclusion. Either the flesh will rule the spirit, or the spirit will rule the flesh. Since, however, the flesh is like the mortal and changing, and the spirit is

like the immortal and unchanging, then the spirit is the one who should be the master. If the spirit is the master, it will save the flesh by lifting it to the realm of God and immortality, but if the body is master, it will ruin the soul by dragging it to the realm of the carnal, the mortal, and changing.

You may well wonder why I am taking so much time to describe the flesh and the carnal mind, but what is the value of talking about things we have never understood? Is there any use in talking about the carnal mind if we do not know what makes the mind carnal? Can we ever be delivered from it by ignorance? Why do Christians like to talk about the flesh and remain in ignorance as to what the flesh is and how it operates? Why do they continue to talk about the carnal mind and get angry when the revelation reveals what the carnal mind really is? We claim to love and desire the life in the Spirit, yet we make more and more provision for the flesh, so that we can enjoy more fully the fleeting sensations that belong to the body. We make provision to gratify every physical sense, yet every one of them perishes as it is used. Col. 2:21, 22. The more we see, the weaker our eyes become. The more we hear or feel the weaker the sense of hearing and feeling becomes, until, when a man has reached seventy years, he has lost seventy per cent of his physical senses.

Oh that men would awaken to the truth that they might see where reality dwells; that their eyes might be opened to see that their search for satisfaction in the realm of the body is but to chase rainbows and grasp the emptiness of bubbles in their hands. A mist may appear for a moment and then disappear. A dream of the night might terrify us, but its phantom figures disappear with our awaking. So also the fleeting fantasies of the flesh are dissipated with our awaking to the realities of the Spirit. The things that are seen are only temporal. The things that are not seen are eternal.

We squander health in search of wealth,
We scheme and toil and save,
We squander wealth in search of health
And all we get's a grave.
We live and boast of what we own,
We die and only get a stone.

That is about all the reality there is in the physical realm. I think you will agree with me that it is not reality at all. It is a ghostly phantom, a mist that appears for a little time and is gone. We can see, however, that those who set their hearts on obtaining as much as possible of these passing sensations of time are dragged into the realm of the unreal, and their minds become absorbed with physical things, bodily, fleshly, carnal things, until the realm of the carnal mind is the only realm that is real to them when in reality it is the only realm that is unreal. The wind will soon pass over it and it will be gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the things of the Spirit are from everlasting to everlasting, and the righteousness of God to children's children.

For centuries and millenniums past men have always thought that the things of the Spirit were misty, ghostly, and unreal but that the things bodily and physical were the things that were tangible and real. The truth is exactly opposite to this; it is the spiritual and eternal things that are real and changeless, and it is the bodily and physical things that are always changing and never remain the same. They soon disappear - ashes to ashes and dust to dust.

I do not think there is need for more instruction as to how we are going to enter the realm of the Spirit and live and walk there. Our greatest necessity is to see the unreality of the realm in which we have lived so long. When we see its uselessness and fruitlessness, our love will turn away from the changing to the unchanging and from the passing to the permanent.

It is hard to imagine how anyone can truly love a thing that is always changing and never remains the same. Yet it is our ignorance of the realm in which we live that makes us love it. If a woman should love and marry a man because of his wealth, what cause do you think she would have to love him should he lose his wealth and become poor? And if a man should love a woman only because of her beauty of form and face, can she expect to retain his admiration when she has lost that beauty? But if he loves her for some spiritual quality such as kindness or patience or some other virtue, he will never cease in his love for her, for these are things that do not change. They always remain the same. This is the very thought the apostle had in mind when he wrote,

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world... for the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." We have loved the world because we did not know its changeable character and we did not know that all things that belong to it pass quickly away and God has no permanent purpose for any of it.

We have come to the place in our experience where we are to pass the inner veil and enter the Holy of Holies where God lives and no flesh can abide. How many will attain to that glory I cannot say. God alone knows that. But this I do know: it is just as impossible for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom as it is for corruption to inherit incorruption. God seems to be standing before the veil saying of our flesh, "You cannot bring that in here." The time has come to lay aside every weight, put off anger, malice, wrath, put away lying, mortify the deeds of the flesh, put on charity, crucify the flesh, cast off the works of darkness, flee youthful lusts, abstain from all appearance of evil, purge ourselves of the leaven of malice and wickedness, and add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, and every other spiritual virtue, for these things are unchanging and always remain the same. They abide in the realm of the Spirit of God and are unknown elsewhere.

I hope we have all become aware that we are entering a new era, a higher plane, and a new age. All the old things belonging to a natural realm are passing away because they belong to the realm of the passing, but all things of the Spirit are becoming new. These latter will abide forever because they belong to the realm of the permanent. Let the old things go! Do not set your heart on them nor weep at their passing! Set your heart on the realm of the Spirit. Make that your life and your very existence. I fear that in the past and even until now we have treated the realm of the Spirit with unbelievable casualness. Too often we look upon the realm of the Spirit as something to be entered into for an hour or two on Sunday morning while the rest of the time is spent making as much progress as possible in the natural realm, and in laying up goods in store for the body. Perhaps we have forgotten that all progress we make in the natural realm is only loss eventually, for, should we gain the whole world and yet be cast away, it has profited us nothing and is only loss to us.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth and He shall stand in the latter days upon the earth, and if after my skin worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another."

As we read these pages of truth, surely we must realize that for many months past there has grown an ever increasing knowledge within that the order we have known all our lives and which has existed for the past two thousand years is now rapidly passing away. The things that we have seen and heard and known and loved are waxing old and are ready to vanish away. The kingdoms of this world are preparing themselves for their own destruction. The systems of the church are decaying before our eyes and nothing can save them. Even while we read these lines many men and women filled with human zeal are putting forth frantic efforts to turn the tables, stem the tide, reverse the decadence, stop the advance of Communism, revive the church, reach the heathen. Every imaginable device is being used to accomplish this end; radio, television, literature crusades, missionary programs, city-wide organized revival meetings, and a multitude of other ideas. It is not within my right to condemn such zeal or effort nor speak a word against those who are so involved, but it is within my right to say that we are at the hour when all these human efforts are passing swiftly away. The imperfect things that have been used of God in an imperfect age are vanishing away with the age itself, for "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part (imperfect) shall be done away."

Man has always had a reluctance to give up the good things of the past and lay hold of the better things of the future. Even in the natural realm some men scorned the thought that the automobile could ever replace the horse and buggy, but it did, and, if time were to prevail long enough, the automobile itself would be replaced with something far superior. But it is in the spiritual realm that the new is always resisted. Christians are like homing pigeons who are no sooner moved than they fly back to where they were before. God's people always hate and resist the coming of a new order. They are loath to change the visible for the invisible, but their rage and fury against spiritual progress and revelation do not hinder the program of the Lord, for He moves irresistibly on from the things of time to the things of eternity, from the realm of the imperfect to the realm of the perfect, from the passing to the permanent.

There was a little period of twilight between the ages of law and grace when God raised up a mighty prophet of whom it was said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." As his thundering voice echoed among the Judean hills, whole towns and cities went out into the wilderness to

hear his message of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. Four hundred years had gone by without the voice of a prophet and never had any person then living heard such things as John spoke. His message was new and vital and the priests, the common people, and the soldiers alike came to humble themselves and repent in preparation for the kingdom and the King that were soon to appear. We can safely affirm that no revival in history was ever greater, and probably none was ever of shorter duration, for this prophet was pointing the eyes of the people to the Lamb of God and, when Jesus Christ suddenly appeared on the scene with even greater power and glory, all men and women soon forgot John and turned to Him. It was a sad day for the disciples of John when they came to him, saying, "He to whom thou bearest witness beyond Jordan, the same baptizeth and all men follow Him." But it was not a sad day for John. Well he knew that the glory and wonder of his own ministry of preparation was but a passing thing. It was given to endure but for a moment that that which is permanent might come.

Now, can you not see that the message of John, which for a few months blazed and shone with its scintillating glory and power and truth, had waxed old and was ready to vanish away the very moment he cried aloud to the people, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world?" Once Christ had come there was no more need of John's ministry of preparation. It was one of the passing things and it was ready to vanish away. Can you believe even for a moment that you would be willing to sit and listen to one of John the Baptist's sermons after Christ had come as John's ministry predicted? Do you not think those sermons would seem strangely dead and out of date if we were to hear them now, for who would want to hear him tell of a Christ that was soon to come after He was daily seen among them?

There is an interesting story in the Acts of the Apostles concerning a mighty preacher by the name of Apollos who, knowing not that Christ had come or that Pentecost was twenty years past, preached only the baptism of John. Thus it reads, "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and, being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." **Acts 18:25** A Christian man, Aquila, and his wife Priscilla heard him preach these things and immediately took him aside and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Verse 26 I am certain that the fiery zealous sermon of Apollos as he preached the baptism of John twenty years after Calvary and Pentecost were history must have sounded pitifully out of date to the enlightened Aquila and Priscilla. For this reason they took the great preacher aside and showed him the way of God more perfectly. It is a precious testimony in his favor that thereafter he "mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly, showing from the scripture that Jesus was the Christ." **Acts 18:27-28**

Once again we are at the place where the old is passing away and the new is coming in. The glory and wonder of an age we have loved is fading out and the heralds of God are proclaiming the transcending wonder of a better though still imperfect age. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The man-child who will shepherd the nations with an iron hand will soon be caught up to the throne, for it is from the throne that the sons of God shall rule. Rev. 12:1-6 Is it any wonder, then, that the things that have been the order of an imperfect church for the past two thousand years should now be waxing old and be ready to vanish away? Just as Aquila and Priscilla were struck with the obsolescence and oldness of the message of Apollos as he boldly proclaimed the baptism of John, I am compelled to testify that I feel the same way concerning the present preaching of the gospel in our day. It has been God's order and truth for the past two thousand years, but a better and more enduring age is upon us, for that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. The age of grace must give way to the kingdom and Paul's gospel must give way to the everlasting gospel of Rev. 14:6 which is to be proclaimed immediately following the birth of the manchild. Rev. 14:1-6

The struggling missionary programs that have been used of God to bring the elect few from the masses of the earth are about to vanish away, for the hour is upon us when all who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death will see a great light. Isa. 9:2 The hour is at hand when no one will have to say, "Know the Lord", for all will know Him from the least to the greatest. Heb. 8:11 All the frantic efforts devised by human zeal to revive the missionary programs will fall into the dust of decay. They are passing and not permanent. They have waxed old and are ready to vanish away. The hour is at hand when "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run", and all men shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

The message of healing, which has had such a wonderful day in revivals through the ages, cannot again be revived. The healing campaign has run its course in spite of all claims to the contrary. God is taking away the first that He might establish the second. Certainly there have been many healings and certainly there are still

healings, though in no such abundance as is claimed. It is passing away that the more permanent order may come, for the hour is at hand when the lame man shall leap as an hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and there shall be no sickness in all the land. Isa. 35:5-7

As I write these things and meditate upon them, there is a tremendous sense within that the sun is setting on this dispensation of the grace of God. But the same sun that is setting on Europe is rising on America and the sun that is setting on America is rising on the Orient. So also it is that the sun which set on the age of the law was at the same moment rising on the age of grace, and now that it is setting on the age of grace, its gladsome rays are heralding the kingdom morning and the age-lasting joy that shall be upon us. It is the crowning day.

How totally inadequate do our words become at such a time as this! How futile are our explanations, how faint our exhortations! Only the revelation of the Almighty can teach us the things we ought to know and may God grant that spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Him that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened to see that the millennial dawn with lithesome steps is tripping o'er the kingdom hills.

On this very day and at this very moment all the end time signs spoken of by Jesus, by Daniel, and by Paul are coming to pass before our very eyes. The prophetic words of Jesus Christ come echoing down the corridors of the years, saying to men of our day, "Many shall come in My name, saying 'I am Christ!' Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." "There shall be famines, pestilence, and earth-quakes." "Many false prophets shall arise and deceive many." "There shall be signs in the sun and the moon and on earth distress of nations." "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after the things that are coming upon the earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." See **Matt. 24** Is there yet anything lacking in the prophecy of Paul, which he spoke in these words, "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." **2 Tim. 3:1-5** Each truth of this prophecy abounds in minutest detail in our day. Not only do such things abound on the level of the individual, but they abound in international relations and the world of religion. The great leaders of the earth both of the East and of the West think nothing at all of lying, accusing falsely, truce-breaking, or covetousness, and boastfulness abounds without measure or precedent. Traitors and spies are continually discovered. The love of pleasure is everywhere and forms of godliness abound on every hand, yet they are devoid of the power of God.

Covetousness, boastfulness, and betrayal are found not only among the worldly. These things abound in the religious world as well and go hand in hand with all manner of deceit and trickery, which Paul has aptly described as "the sleight of men and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." **Eph. 4:14**

Daniel was told that in the time of the end "many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase", but it is doubtful whether even he could possibly have envisaged the ease with which moderns run to and fro. He could have had no idea of the swiftness of twentieth century travel or of men in orbit circling the earth in ninety minutes. He could have had no thought of trips to the moon or of sending rockets to Venus. Such a vast increase in knowledge was hidden even from this man, who is renowned for his wisdom beyond almost all men who have dwelt on the earth, but his prophecy is a sobering testimony that we are in the very last hours of this passing age. See Dan. chapter 12, especially verse 4.

I feel so deeply within about this truth, so positive that we are at the very end of the dispensation, so sure that the manifestation of the sons of God is even at the doors, that I have a burning desire to exhort all sober-minded men and women to set themselves aside more completely unto God. Give yourselves to watching, to fasting and prayer. Do not even try to "go along" with the existing church system. Seek to make Christ your head. Seek to be possessed with His mind. Seek to have Him daily reveal His will to you. Relax your hold on things that belong to time and lay hold on the things that are eternal. Let us turn our eyes from the realm of the passing and lift them up to the celestial hills of the permanent, for, when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

CHAPTER THREE EVER UP AND ONWARD

"The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

In my thirty-five or more years of writing it has never been my purpose nor aim to establish believers in tradition and doctrine, but rather to help all men see what is the hope of their calling and what the riches of the glory of their inheritance in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is when the saints of the Most High begin to see His predestined and immutable purpose for themselves, for the limitless hosts of mankind and for the whole world with all its multiplicity and diversity of beings, that we truly begin to love our wonderful Lord and fervently desire to draw near to Him that we may enter with holy zeal into His eternal purpose for us as individuals.

When our blessed Christ walked among us, He always dealt with men and women as individuals and not as faceless crowds. He practiced no mass psychology on the vast throngs that crowded about Him. He did not seek to sway them with superb oratory, nor charm them with music, nor any other kind of human manipulation that follows as a matter of course in today's gatherings. When He met with sinners, He met them as their Saviour. When the crowds thronged about Him so that they trod upon one another, He was not unaware of the touch of one solitary woman that needed Him, and, turning, He asked, "Who touched Me?" When she told Him the truth of her trouble, He sent her away rejoicing, every whit whole. By the side of the pool of Bethesda a poor man lay. For many years he had languished in bitter disappointment because, when the waters were troubled, there was no man to put him in the pool, but another, not so infirm as he, would step into the water before him. As Jesus passed by, He paused to ask, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And after listening with compassion to the man's sorrowful plight, His heavenly message was spoken to him as an individual, "Rise and take up thy bed and walk." At once the man arose and took up his bed and walked.

Two blind men sat begging by the highway and, being told that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, they began to cry to Him for help and mercy. He, turning aside from the multitude that thronged Him, called the men to Himself and sent them away with the blessing of sight they so sorely needed. This same wonderful Christ, walking among the crowds, paused to call to Zacchaeus to come down from the tree where he perched, hoping to see Jesus, and in his house that day this sinner met his Saviour as his Lord.

One sat alone beside the highway begging;
His eyes were blind, the light he could not see.
He sat in rags and shivered in the shadows;
Then Jesus came and set the captive free.

So also it is today. Our Lord and Christ, ruling the universe and guiding the spheres, always has time to deal with us as individuals, but we, alas, seldom take time from our fruitless schedules to listen to what He has to say, and so we go blundering on through life - going, going, but not knowing where, spending a lifetime doing and doing, but accomplishing nothing.

Why do we imagine it is so important to be always up and doing, rushing here and there from one activity to another until we have no time at all to listen to the voice of the Master who once said, "Let there be light," and there was light, only to come to the end of life's road, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works", and to hear those words of despair, "Depart from Me; I never knew you."

You do not have to shout your faith.
Thrice eloquent are the quiet trees
And the green listening sod.
Hushed are the stars Whose power is never spent;
The hills are mute,
Yet how they speak of God!

Today we live in momentous times. We are living in a period between ages. As John the Baptist ministered between the ages of law and grace, so we now live and minister between the ages of grace and the long awaited kingdom of God. This is not wishful thinking. All creation in the bondage of its night and decay has cried and sighed for the hour when the sons of God, who have been in preparation for millenniums of time, should come to their "adoption." The whole creation is in painful waiting for the hour of their emancipation, the day when the sons of God will deliver them from the thralldom of decay into the glorious freedom of the kingdom of God. Those wonderful days of transition are with us now. The things belonging to the old order of the dispensation of grace have waxed old and are ready to vanish away. But sadly and with deep regret we find that everywhere men and women are clinging to those old things that are passing away as drowning men cling to a straw. To them these precious antiques must be kept at all costs. They love their sects, their crowds, their endless and wearisome meetings, their sermons, song services and special numbers, their revival meetings and their missionary programs and all the other paraphernalia that has belonged to an age now passing away. We have become like the priests of the Old Testament whose greatest fear of Christ and His apostles was that they would change their beloved laws and customs. Acts 6:14 They cared not about God's purpose for the world and the universe. That was not important in the least. The important thing to them was that the old system be maintained and that there be no change. Tradition has it that, when the great veil in the temple was rent in twain at the death of Christ, opening the way into the holiest of all, the priests had it sewn together again that all things might remain as they had always been. When Jesus was buried, they took every imaginable precaution to make sure He did not rise, but He arose in spite of their care and ever lives on high and in the hearts of His people.

It is just the same today as it was in that far off day of blindness and unbelief. Why is it that men who preach of a kingdom to come continue to build their own kingdoms, their own establishments, their own congregations? Why is it that the name of Babylon is on all lips, while people still wade deep in its muddy waters? Why do Christians receive the message of a Babylon church system and leave one part of it, only to quickly ally themselves with another? Why are God's people so in love with crowds that they fail to see that the little group they are building is in itself the embryo of another sect?

It is time, beloved children of God that every man come to know Christ personally with spiritual knowledge far beyond that which can be taught by men. I have spent fifty years in my calling as a teacher - a ministry that I never dreamed of nor desired in any way, but one nonetheless that was given to me in Christ before the world began. If I have learned one lesson above all others through those long years, it is this: Of myself I can teach men no spiritual truth at all, unless the blessed Holy Spirit opens their understanding. Then He and He alone becomes their teacher to guide them into truth. Furthermore I have found that the things I myself have come to know have not come through poring over the books of learned men, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who receives of the Father and reveals the truth to our hearts. One hour in His presence is worth more than a lifetime of study without Him, for when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, and He will receive of the Father and reveal the truth unto us.

O, beloved children of God, how easy it is to rest on our oars and drift carelessly with the tide! How easy it is to rejoice in what we believe, but never go on to the experience of it! If Christ be in us, then we are spiritual persons and from that moment forward we live in the Spirit. But, if we live in the Spirit, let us take heed that we walk in the Spirit. Let that selfsame Holy Spirit change our spirit, soul and body from glory to glory. Be satisfied with nothing less than this, for this is the will of the Father in heaven. It is the path to sonship and manifestation. Let us spend our time in prayer and meditation on the word of God. That is how we partake of Christ, who is the bread of life. Never waste precious moments watching television programs. They savor of the world. They are full of the flesh and the devil. An hour spent listening to its worldly, idle trash with its cursing and swearing, its vulgarity, suggestiveness and corruption is as a sword thrust into the spirit. Such a wound retards your walk in the Spirit for many days. It deals an unconscious wound to the Christ life that takes months to heal. It causes the face of Christ and the reality of truth to grow strangely dim. It causes the heavenly vision to falter and fail and entices the pilgrims to fall out by the way. Continue with it if you will, but be warned that such things are too wide for the door of the kingdom or of the Holy City, where nothing defiling will ever enter in. Our association with these evils leads to ever increasing ungodliness, and that increasing ungodliness expands rapidly, defiling the whole course of nature.

We are at the end of this dispensation. That which we must do must be done now, and what we are to be we must become now. Therefore "let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high."

The chapter that now follows is the principal message of this book. I ask you, the saints of God, to read its pages with diligence and care. The truth written in this message is glorious beyond compare, because it contains the truth concerning the fullness of our salvation for this present age - the redemption of the body. It was the hope of the transformation of the body from corruptible to incorruptible that lay upon the heart of Paul when he wrote, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus... if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Phil. 3:13-14,11 This putting off of the corruptible and putting on of incorruption is the final hallowed and sacred experience of this age. It will come, not to all who name the name of Christ, but unto those who look for Him shall He appear the second time - not to deal with sin, but to make our salvation complete.

I trust that, before you read this article, you will pray. Pray that the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of your understanding, that you may grasp that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, but which is only revealed by the Holy Spirit.

There are yet many, I am sad to say, who are still hiding the garment of Babylon in the tent of their hearts. Like most all of us you, too, have picked up a garment which bore the label Made in Canada, or Made in Japan, or Taiwan, or some other place. Achan, during the capture of Jericho, saw a beautiful garment among the spoils of war, and when he saw the label on it, it evidently must have read Made in Babylon, so he took it with the silver and gold it represented and hid it. And so the battle of Ai was lost with the loss of much life as well.

We say we have left the Babylon system, we have left the big organizations; but have we left them only to turn to little Babylons? Do we still cling to our weekly meetings, our little groups and our forms of worship? Have we forgotten that we are now in the end of the age when the command of God has gone forth, "Come out from among them and be separate!" This is indeed the hour when the blessed Holy Spirit is calling His elect, saying, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be over-past. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." **Isa. 26:20-21**

It is with hope and joy that I present the final chapter of this book for your prayerful meditation. It will take all your consecration to attain the goal it presents. Please read it again and yet again until your spirit, soul and body yearns for this glory of the transformation so certainly promised for this, the end of the dispensation.

CHAPTER FOUR THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY

Careless seems the great Avenger;
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the Word.
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch upon His own.
Then to side with truth is noble,
When we share her wretched crust,

Ere her cause brings fame and profit
 And 'tis prosperous to be just.
 Then it is the brave man chooses
 While the coward stands aside,
 Doubting in his abject spirit
 Till his Lord is crucified
 And the multitude makes virtue
 Of the faith they have denied.
 New occasions bring new duties;
 Time makes ancient good uncouth.
 We must upward still and onward
 Who would keep abreast of truth.
 Lo, before us gleams her campfires;
 We ourselves must pilgrims be,
 Launch our Mayflower and steer boldly
 Through the desperate winter sea,
 Nor attempt the future's portal
 With the past's blood-rusted key.
 Once to every man and nation
 Comes the moment to decide
 In the strife with truth and falsehood
 For the good or evil side.
 At the dawn of each new era,
 With a recognizing start,
 Nations wildly look as nation,
 Standing with mute lips apart,
 And glad truth, yet mightier manchild,
 Leaps beneath the future's heart.

James R. Lovell

The gifts and callings of God have always been a source of joy and amazement to me. Whether they be natural gifts among natural men or spiritual gifts among spiritual, they all exhibit the incomparable wisdom of the divine mind. Among the abilities the Most High has given to bless mankind is the charming gift of the poet, who has the ability to express the most difficult truth in a simple, vivid and understandable way, as expressed, for instance, in verse four above, "Nations wildly look as nation, standing with mute lips apart". What an expressive phrase that is! Paul, speaking to the Greeks at Athens, quoted the words of one of their poets, "**Ye are also His offspring**", **Acts 17:28**, as confirmation of the spiritual truth he was endeavoring to teach them - that "in Him we live and move and have our being".

As the poem above has stated, there is always a "death grapple" between the darkness of this age and the ever advancing, ever progressing truth of the word of God as it is progressively revealed through the ages. The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness cannot comprehend the light. The darkened benighted heart of man cannot comprehend - that is, he cannot understand - the light. Therefore he vainly tries to extinguish it. Men love darkness and hate light because their deeds are evil and the light is sent to manifest that evil. I am loath to have to say that tradition-bound Christians find themselves so bound by custom, habit and convention that they have lost all ability to open their hearts to ever expanding truth and ever increasing light even as had the Pharisees, the Sadducees and doctors of the law of God in those heaven-sent days when truth dwelt among men in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Because they were bound by their tradition and refused to be moved from it, they found it more convenient to slay Him who is truth that they might continue undisturbed in the bondage of their tradition rather than follow the light, which He Himself was then and still is today.

It is noble to side with truth when the first rays of its glory shine upon us. It is noble to share "her wretched crust ere her cause brings fame and profit and 'tis prosperous to be just." The spiritual coward with abject spirit

is always cowering beneath his tradition and hiding himself from light; but, when truth at last is triumphant and "'tis prosperous to be just", he is ready to make virtue and profit of the faith he once denied.

Have you ever considered how "time makes ancient good uncouth"? Not untrue, but out of date. It becomes not present truth, but past truth. We have no controversy today with the man who first invented the wheel. It was probably a very clumsy, uncouth affair compared with the rubber-tired beauties they make today, yet that uncouth wheel was the forerunner of that which the whole world travels on today. The airplane made by the Wright brothers, that boasted a flight record of 150 feet, was clumsy indeed compared with the sleek behemoths of today. The news man who reported the flight was fired from his job for reporting untruth. When Alexander Graham Bell used his pasture fence at Brantford, Ont., to speak the first sentence by telephone, it was indeed an uncouth affair. People joked about it and one newspaper stated that "even if it did work, it would be of no practical value". But it was truth and the forerunner of the miraculous instrument of world-wide communication today.

I find it difficult to read many of the writings of the distant past. They were relevant in their day. They were "present truth" then, but established truth today. Since the day of Madam Guyon and William Law faith has been restored and holiness is found to be through personal identification with the cross of Christ and not a "do-it-yourself effort. Some time ago a brother wrote me saying he found it difficult to relate to the writings of a notable man who lived several centuries ago. The brother seemed a bit worried about this inability. In my reply I told him that, when he was baptized with the Holy Spirit, lying prostrate for hours under the power of God, he was taken so far beyond the experience of the writer in question that there was no possibility he would ever be able to see things as that ancient writer saw them. This is what the poet means when he says, "Time makes ancient good uncouth. We must ever up and onward who would keep abreast of truth."

The pilgrims who came to America on the Mayflower were pilgrims in the truest sense of the word, but their pilgrimage was not more important than yours. You, too, are pilgrims dwelling in earthly tabernacles, seeking the transformations that lead you forward to the day when under all the great eternal heavens and in the measureless universe itself there will be order, interdependence and unity, and the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole of God's universal kingdom as the waters now fill the seas. Let no man foolishly say that God will rule in heaven and the devil will rule in hell. God will rule everywhere until both death and hell - and the devil as well - will be no more.

Long centuries ago a pilgrim named Abraham was called of God to leave his native Ur of the Chaldees and go to a land which he had never seen, unto a place which the Lord would afterward show him. The beautiful story says that "he went out, not knowing whither he went". Ah, how true that was of him then, and how true it is of us today! When Abram left Ur of the Chaldees down by ancient Babylon, he knew not that some glad day his seed would inherit the earth nor that he would be called the "heir of the world", Rom. 4:13 By faith he caught a glimpse of the blessed Redeemer who would be born of his seed and a vast family of manifested sons of God that would spring from the Christ root - the root of Him who said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." His eye of faith beheld not only these sons of God, but the glorious bride as well, who at the end of the kingdom age will descend from the heavenlies to be joined in marriage to that magnificent, supernal Christ in His fullness - Christ, the Head, and Christ, the body, united in one corporate Christ - the "fullness of Him who everywhere will fill the universe with Himself. O that I could help God's people to see that the fullness of Christ was not the glorious Head alone, but the blessed Head united with the complete body of sons at the end of this age of grace! This is the fullness of Christ - until that morning comes at the end of the kingdom age when the bride also is prepared for the heavenly union.

We are wrong when we teach that we are the bride of Christ. We are not the bride of Christ. We are the sons of God, and members in particular of the Bridegroom. All during this age of grace the Lord has been preparing the man child, the "in Christ" company, the sons of God. During the millennial age, the entire age will be for the preparation of that heavenly company, the bride of Christ. When the thousand years (six times mentioned in Rev. 20:1-7) was complete, John was taken to a great and high mountain to behold in heavenly vision the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. The sons of God are the holy Temple of the Lord. The bride of Christ is the holy city of the Lord, the New Jerusalem. As the temple of the Lord is made of living stones, 1 Peter 2:4-5, so the holy city, the New Jerusalem, the bride of

Christ, is made of living stones. There will be no rocks nor bricks nor mortar in it. The gates are twelve pearls and those pearls are pearls of great price. Their names are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Rev. 21:12. When our lovely Lord was here on earth, He said, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." In that New Jerusalem there is no longer one door, but twelve gates open to the north, east, west and south, Rev. 21:13, by which all mankind will enter the eternal city, twelve gates that are never closed at all by day, and there is no night there. Nothing defiling nor impure will ever enter it, but those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. Within that city flows - not a springing well - but a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing, not by, but out of the throne of God. Rev. 22:1 On either side of that beautiful river stands the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of all nations. Through those magnificent gates of life will enter every creature who is athirst to drink freely of its eternal, life-giving waters and be healed by the leaves of that tree, of which you and I by the grace of God have become a part.

O happy day, happy day
When Jesus washed my sins away!

Little did we know in that blessed hour of sorrow and rejoicing that such an eternal inheritance was ours. Jesus paid it all. All to Him we owe. All the past with its sorrow and tears, all the future with its raptures and glory.

I walked one day along a country road
And there a stranger journeyed too,
Bent low beneath the burden of His load;
It was a cross, a cross I knew.
"Take up thy cross and follow Me,"
I hear the blessed Saviour call.
How can I make a lesser sacrifice
When Jesus gave His all?

How little we knew in that wonderful hour of redemption what glories He had prepared for those who love Him! We sang our songs of triumph then, but little did we realize that we had joined the triumphant march that leads at last to the reconciliation of the universe. We did not know on that happy day that the angels on high, who rejoiced over our repentance, would one day make the heavens with all their vast luminaries echo and re-echo with the praise of Him who was slain, that every knee should bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God that He is Lord of all. Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10, 11. The river of the water of life will not run dry as the thirst of the universe is slaked at its fountain; neither shall the bountiful tree of life fail of its inexhaustible supply as its leaves heal the wounds and pardon the sins of every nation on earth.

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

Far away in the depths of my spirit the perfumed breezes of the holy city sweep over my being until my very soul weeps for joy and laughs for gladness. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." **Psa. 46:4, 5.**

There's a holy and beautiful city
Whose builder and maker is God.
John saw it descending from heaven
As Patmos in exile he trod.
Its high massive walls are of jasper;
The city itself is pure gold,
And when my frail tent here is folded,
My eyes shall its glories behold.

It gives me joy to think of Sarah, that patient, long-suffering wife of Abraham, of whom it is written, "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: For He hath prepared for them a city." **Heb. 11:11-16.** That city is the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ. See then in this how the old Jerusalem, upon which much earthly glory was bestowed, becomes old and uncouth in the light of that New Jerusalem bride, the magnificence of which finds no suitable description, no, not even in scripture.

In the previous pages we sought to catch a fleeting glimpse, at least in part, of the hope our heavenly Father has set before us. It was for the hope that was set before him that Jesus "endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high". It will be for the same hope that we, too, will endure the cross in days to come and despise the shame that we with Him in a kindlier age may take our place by His side in His blessed kingdom of peace.

As the months roll by, conviction is added to conviction that we are now seeing the culmination of this age of grace and the end of man's six days of evil rule. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work" was the edict of the Lord for man. Each of these six days represents one thousand years and each thousand years is one day. For six thousand years man has tested every imaginable kind of government, all of which have been a dismal failure, until in our day we see world wide turmoil such as is almost beyond imagination. What nation on earth shows any sign of stability? Not one! All from the least to the greatest are headed for inevitable collapse. Law has seen a universal breakdown. Order of any true sort is collapsing on every hand. Morals have decayed until our state is as Sodom and Gomorrah. The wickedness of man is great in the earth, while the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are only evil continually. The pulpits are filled with false prophets, salving consciences with what men want to hear. The air waves are filled with the voices of religious racketeers. Pure and undefiled Christianity in all but a few has fallen to the ground and vanished from the earth. The church system is ruled by the harlot system, and the church so-called and the world have become amorous bed-mates. The religious whore of Babylon sits astride the political beast of Babylon. The days of Sodom are with us on every hand. The evil spirit that gripped the heart of Pharaoh to murder the babies in the days of Moses and the antichrist spirit in Herod, who slaughtered the infants in the days of Jesus, now stalks the earth again, murdering millions of helpless, unborn infants who could have become useful citizens while the ungodly crew who slays them goes to every imaginable length to keep alive those infirm and pain-wracked souls who long to die. Nations great and small, who now have sufficient weapons to destroy the whole world ten times over, are frantically raising taxes to make yet more until one staggers at the confusion and disorder that bewilders our minds.

Dreadful as all this is, let us never forget that in the midst of man's disconcerting confusion the Lord of the universe is progressing unhindered with His eternal purpose to govern the universe by that blessed Son whom He has chosen. The nations are far advanced in their progress toward destruction, but God is well advanced in His preparation to take the reins of government and set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. Throughout the ever, deepening night of man's rule the eternal purpose of the Most High has been moving steadily and completely unhindered forward. His purpose has been, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, and, during the centuries when man has been misgoverning and systematically destroying the earth and himself with it, the Lord has been preparing a people from those blessed ones whom the world has despised and crucified that through the grief and pain of their suffering they might be brought to the perfection He requires, a perfection wherein there remains neither evil nor any form of sin. They have been brought to such a complete abandonment to God that no thought for self or selfishness, greed or corruption remains in their spotless soul. They are entering the realm of the born again where it is impossible for them to sin either in thought or word or deed. 1 John 3:9. The filthy robes of unrighteousness that were once theirs have been replaced by the pure white linen of the righteousness of the saints. Rev. 19:8. Righteousness, justice and equity are their crown. The Spirit of the Lord rests upon them and abides within them, and that same Holy

Spirit is transforming them into the likeness of Christ, their elder brother. His mind He is putting within them and a new heart He has given them whereon the law of God is inscribed. There will be no need ever to remind them of the commandments of the Lord, for His law has been written in letters of gold within their hearts and in their minds the Spirit of God has inscribed them. The self-same finger of God that once engraved the Ten Commandments upon two tables of stone on Mt. Sinai has now inscribed the law of the kingdom of God in their hearts and in their minds. It is the law of the "spirit of life in Christ Jesus",

Like their perfect elder brother these saints strive not, nor do they lift their voices in the street, but they bring deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind. They will set at liberty all that are bruised, heal the broken-hearted and preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not preach "the day of vengeance of our God", but the time is now at hand when that message will be preached by His younger brothers, and all nations who have refused Him will be brought into judgment and justice before His throne.

The blessed sons of God have been in preparation since Jesus, the first born of many brethren, was manifested in the long ago. All through this weary dispensation our heavenly Father has been perfecting them and laying them aside to await the resurrection of the inchrised. They are waiting for the moment soon to come when the "dead in Christ shall rise first" to join the living in Christ, and together we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trump of Revelation has sounded.

It is no embarrassment to me to admit that I know nothing yet as I ought to know, but many things are becoming clearer as time hastens by and we come ever nearer to the grand climax of the ages. For many centuries past far-sighted men and women have felt assurance in their hearts that a blessed hour will surely come in the world's future when some saints will attain the realm of incorruption without ever tasting of death and going to the grave. I confess that this has been my faith and hope in the past and it still remains my faith at this very moment. It is always possible for honest souls to be wrong or misinformed, but the kingdom of God will not fall apart just because some honest soul misunderstands a truth.

It is evident that our Lord is reserving for the end of this age one of the greatest wonders of all time. There is yet to be a "catching away" of the people in Christ. There is to be a people who are caught up in the Spirit of God. The apostle John, while in the Isle of Patmos, was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, which I believe means "the day of the Lord". In his aloneness he heard a voice speaking to him. It was the voice as of a trumpet, saying, "Come up hither", and immediately John was in the Spirit caught up to the throne of God, caught up in spirit indeed while still standing on the Island of Patmos. Revelation, chapter 4. Likewise also the apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven, yet he remained here in body as did John to tell forth the word of God for many years. Both Enoch and Elijah were caught up bodily into heaven, and it should not be cause for surprise if these same two men should appear once again upon the earth before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Of Elijah it is distinctly written, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." **Mal. 4:5, 6.** While it is perfectly true that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, it is equally true that, when the priests came and asked John, "Who art thou", he answered, "I am not the Christ." Then they asked him, "Art thou Elijah." And he said, "I am not." **John 1:20, 21.** So he was neither Christ nor Elijah nor "that prophet". The reference to "that prophet" is not to Elijah, but to the prophet that Moses spoke of when he said the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto him. Deut. 18:15. That reference was evidently to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as stated in Acts 3:22-26 and Acts 7:37,38. Let us not be surprised, then, if the mighty Elijah himself should appear among us before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. A ministry such as his is just the one needed in this hour of sham, abounding false prophets and universal turmoil. Nothing can possibly come before God's time, but all things, regardless of how impossible they may seem, will come to pass in God's appointed hour.

The inspired word speaks first of the "common salvation", Jude 3; secondly of "our so great salvation", Heb. 2:3, and thirdly of the salvation that is reserved for us in heaven. 1 Peter 1:3, 4. If there is a salvation "reserved" in heaven, why then should we find it impossible to believe that our omniscient Father in heaven may have reserved some great part of our salvation to be bestowed upon the sons of God during the troublous times at the end of this age of grace? It is not my intention here to endeavor to prove what the common

salvation is, but personally I believe it to be that common salvation that reaches even the weakest or faintest of believers. Many people are believers whose lives and spiritual experience have been buried in tradition and who have never grasped more than that basic fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Then there is that "so great salvation" of which we wrote in volume 30 of Treasures of Truth. These are they that have grasped the purpose of God and have laid hold upon it in faith. These like millions more have died in faith, not having received the promise, God having reserved some better thing for us. What might that better thing be if not the inscrutable wonder that a chosen company, representative of the whole body, may enter the glory of incorruption without ever seeing death?

The dead indeed shall be raised incorruptible, 1 Cor. 15:52, and we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be changed. But in what way are these living to be changed if it be not from the corruption we now know to the incorruption that He has promised for the last days? There is a blessed part of our salvation reserved for us who are kept by the power of God ready to be revealed or manifested in the last days. Therefore think on these things and, putting aside all else, let us "lay hold" on the prize before us.

THE BODY OF OUR HUMILIATION

In the letter of Paul to the Philippians we have this remarkable statement: "Our conversation (that is, our manner of living) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:20, 21. The word "vile" is indeed a very expressive word, but the margin of my Bible replaces this word by the words "the body of our humiliation." This phrase gives an even clearer understanding of what the apostle means to say. This body of our humiliation is some day to be changed to a body of glory. That is exactly what the passage states. This is the direct reversal of the nightmarish change that overtook Adam's body at the time of the great transgression. Before the transgression in Eden Adam and Eve had bodies of glory. I am firmly convinced that their beautiful, light, ethereal forms were vibrant with the life of the Spirit of God, that they far more resembled the glorious body Jesus manifested at the transfiguration as, recorded in Matt. 16 than they were like the bodies of humiliation in which we now are clothed and in which we painfully dwell. They knew no pain or weariness; no physical distresses nor illnesses alarmed them. They knew nothing of hunger or thirst or the multiplied curses that now beset us on every hand. They were glorious creatures, illustrious in their appearance, magnificent in their bearing, respected and admired by all creatures. About them an aura shone. They ruled not through fear, but through the love of God, who was in them. They knew no fear or terror in themselves and they imposed no dread on others. The light of God's glory filled their countenances, making them distinct from all other creatures. They knew no lusts, nor were they ravished by carnal desires. Their delight was in their Most High creator and maker. They literally walked with Him and communed with Him in the cool of the day. They knew no grievous toil or salty sweat. Every labor was a joy and every task a glory. In the Father they lived and moved and had their being, His joy was their constant strength and His love their everlasting comfort.

Then came the hour of transgression. Through its predestined sorrow the man with his wife and all the creation about him became subject to the nightmarish alarm of the fall. Fear, timidity, anxiety, apprehension and misgiving overshadowed them like a dark cloud, filling their hearts with trepidation, disquietude, despondency and despair. Fear, temerity and remorse hourly beset them. To their dismay the animals and birds, which before had trusted them implicitly, now eyed them with suspicion, fear and mistrust, for all had changed because of the blighting curse that had fallen like a convulsion upon them. The Lord, whose presence they had always loved and anticipated with joy, now was a dread to their very beings, so they hid themselves from His life-giving presence among the trees of the garden.

The greatest tragedy that had befallen them now became most evident, for the glory light that had hitherto clothed them as it clothed our Lord at His transfiguration had suddenly departed from them as it later departed from the temple, Ezek. 9:3; 10:18; 11:23, and looking upon themselves, they saw only their shameful nakedness. Then, to add trepidation to their heart-breaking sorrow, they stood aghast at the sight of their own bodies, for those bodies once radiant with life and glory were now bodies of humiliation, corruption and death, fitted for an existence of death, vanity and futility which was now to be endured by both them and all creation until the blessed Redeemer should come in ages yet unborn to restore all things. Thus to all mankind came the frightful humiliation of the fall. Bodies once fitted for glory were now "fitted for destruction".

The body of glory was changed for the body of humiliation — a condition fitted for the dreary, painful six thousand years of labor, trouble and sorrow to follow, in which mankind would earn his daily bread by the sweat of his face, toiling to eat and eating to toil, each that he might do the other, living in the realm of death to pass off the scene at last as a vapor that appears for a little time and is gone. "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Job 14:1-4. "What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Jas. 4:14. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." 1 Pet. 1:24. Such a body is the body of our humiliation — no part of it free from death, no part of it free from sickness and disease, no part of it free from pain and distress.

Now the meaning of humiliate is this: 1. To lower the pride or self esteem of; to subject to feelings of inferiority, worthlessness; to mortify. Humiliation is the act of humiliating or being humiliated. (Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary). It is as when a soldier is dishonorably discharged. In the case of Adam it is as a general court-martial, convened to try the gravest offenses and empowered to deliver a sentence of death or dishonorable discharge. In the case of Adam the humiliation was nothing less than the death sentence. Notice that one of the synonyms for to humiliate is to mortify. The word mortal derives from the Latin *mortalis*, which means death. All such words as mortuary, mortify and mortal are from the same root.

In the light of this humiliation to mortality, corruption, decay and death is it any wonder that the apostle Paul cried out in his anguish, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Rom. 7:24. Paul not only saw the awful calamity of existing in a body of death, but was mortified and humiliated by the many other calamities that followed in the wake of such an humiliation. Listen as he enumerates them for us in his letter to the Romans. "The Law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold to sin. For I do not recognize what I am doing. I do not act as I would, but I do what I loathe. But if I do what I do not desire, I admit the excellence of the Law; and now it is no longer I that do it, but the sin which has its home within me. For I know that in me, that is, in my lower self, nothing good has its home; for the wish to do right is there, but not the power. What I do is not the good deed I desire, but the evil deed I do not desire. But if I do what I do not desire, it is no longer I who do it, but sin which has its home within me. I find therefore this rule, that when I desire to do what is right, evil is there with me. In my inmost self all my sympathy is with the law of God, but I discover in my faculties a different law, at war with the law of my understanding, and leading me captive to the law, which is in my faculties — the law of sin. Unhappy man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? God! To whom be thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Rom. 7:14-24. (Weymouth) From the blessed words, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord", we may begin to build our hope of a return from this beastly realm of humiliation and death to the realm of glory and life.

Since it is true that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing, then it must also be true that all that derives from the flesh and all the flesh can possibly produce must of necessity be bad. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil (vile) fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit ... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 16-18, 20. This shameful fact adds even greater weight to the sorrow and burden of our humiliation. It leaves us with no way of escape. There is nothing of heaven nor of the kingdom of God in the man who lives after the flesh. "In my flesh there dwelleth no good thing." For this reason Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." He cannot see it, perceive it or understand it. It must be revealed to him by the Spirit. He must be convinced and convicted of it by the Holy Spirit and then he is given repentance by the Spirit and faith by the Spirit to believe. Then he is lifted by the Spirit of God from the dark night of his unregenerate state to the light and blessedness of his regeneration. He has taken his first step back to the heavenly realm from which he fell; for it is written: "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life (that is, the Spirit now lives) because of righteousness." We have been born from above, though the body still remains in its humiliation and death, for it has not yet been born again. Yet the word promises that "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Rom. 8:10, 11. Thus to the spiritually reborn the promise is given that the Spirit that now dwells within and has quickened the soul will in God's hour also quicken the body of our humiliation.

I came to earth one summer night,
In form so very frail.
Forgotten was the realm of light,
My spirit's home, supreme delight;
Now this earth's bondage is my plight.
Its sorrows I bewail.
What came I for? Why am I here?
These questions face us all.
Was there a purpose very clear,
To God the Father oh so dear
That made Him subject us to fear
Of death and sin's dread pall?
Except true light in darkness shine
This life so pointless seems!
Created are our hearts to pine
For something we cannot define,
And so He leads us line by line
As He in wisdom deems.
A precept here! A precept there!
A light along the way!
In answer to our inmost prayer
He'll show us truth beyond compare
Till doubts depart and spirits share
The hope that is our stay.
How great is God! How great His plan
For creatures such as we!
In ages past He planned that man
Through toil and tears in life's short span
Should be prepared to take command
And kings with Christ to be.
Such awesome truth must make us pause
To ponder its import,
Such glorious hope must give us cause
To search our hearts for hindering flaws
And lay aside all weights because
Our time grows ever short.
Then home at last from whence we came,
Forevermore at rest;
Our lessons learned through sin and shame;
Salvation wrought in Christ's dear name;
Perfection ours we now proclaim,
Our beings heaven blest.

Rhoda I. Hawtin

ALL THINGS MUST BE BORN FROM ABOVE

There is working in all creation a divine law that all things must be born from above if they ever hope to rise above their primary state. There are four distinct realms in evidence in all the marvelous creation of God. First, there is the mineral realm; second, the vegetable realm. Then comes the animal kingdom, of which man is the highest type. Then far above all is the realm of the kingdom of God. I need present no argument to prove that things belonging to the mineral kingdom can never by any effort of their own rise to the kingdom that is just

above them. It is an impossibility. We may cut and polish a stone all we wish, but it can never lift itself into the vegetable kingdom just above it. Nevertheless, the wisdom of God has provided a way by which things belonging to the mineral kingdom may be raised to the vegetable kingdom, but that miracle is not accomplished by any effort on its part. It can happen only when the kingdom above it - in this case the vegetable kingdom - reaches down and raises it into itself. A seed belonging to the vegetable kingdom is planted in the earth. The rain from heaven falls upon it and by the miracle of germination it thrusts its tiny roots down into the ground and begins the miraculous process of lifting the earth up into itself. By this miracle the mineral kingdom is absorbed and drawn up into the plant kingdom. It is actually born from above.

In like manner also the plant kingdom can never by any effort of its own lift itself into the animal kingdom just above it. The plant is hermetically sealed in its own realm and no effort or struggle could ever lift it into the kingdom above itself. But then another miracle takes place. The animal kingdom above it reaches down to raise it up. Perhaps a cow eats the grass that grows out of the ground and by the miracle of digestion the plant is lifted up to become flesh and blood and part of the animal kingdom. It is transformed from a plant to flesh by being born from above. Or let us say that man eats of the fruit of the earth, perhaps of wheat or corn, or the fruit of a tree, and again by the miracle of digestion the vegetable kingdom is lifted into the animal kingdom above it. By this phenomenal process, that none but the Most High could devise, the mineral kingdom has now advanced through the plant kingdom to the animal kingdom - in each case by being born from above.

Now comes the greatest miracle of them all, for the kingdom of God is the kingdom immediately above the animal kingdom in which man dwells. There is no way possible by which any man on the face of the earth can lift himself up into the kingdom of God. Could he lift himself by his own bootstraps, then might such a thing happen. It is just as impossible for man by any self effort to raise himself into the kingdom of God or any form of God-likeness as it is impossible for a stone to turn itself into a plant or for a blade of grass to raise itself into the animal kingdom. In all cases this transformation can take place only when the kingdom above reaches down and lifts the kingdom below up into itself. There is no other way. Thus we see more clearly than ever the utter fruitlessness of the hope of man to ever attain the kingdom of God by his self-effort, good works or works of righteousness. It is an impossibility in every way we look at it. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The flesh profiteth nothing. For this reason our Lord Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It can never be anything else. That which is born mineral is mineral. It can never lift itself higher. That which is born vegetable is vegetable. It is forever shut up in that kingdom. That which is born flesh is flesh. It is hermetically sealed into that kingdom. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. This is the realm of the Father forever unshackled. Is it any wonder then that Jesus said to a man born into the realm of flesh and blood, "Ye must be born again"! Marvel not that He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is fundamentally, scientifically and spiritually true. Man that is born of woman must be touched by the kingdom above him and lifted into it by the Holy Spirit. To be born again is to be born from above. The kingdom above touches us by its power and lifts us up into the realm of God.

Let us then consider this great miracle. In the case of man it is the kingdom of God that reaches down to him and by the miracles of repentance, faith and regeneration the Spirit of life from above raises him, spirit, soul and body, and he is born from above into the kingdom of God. Because he is thus reborn, he becomes a citizen of the heavenly realm. He who once was hermetically sealed into the animal kingdom of flesh and blood is now a citizen of the heavenly realm and born into the kingdom of God by the miracle of regeneration. No longer do his interests lie in the realm of carnal men, but henceforth his citizenship is in heaven from whence the Lord Jesus shall later appear to transform these bodies of our humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body - or His body of glory - according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Phil. 3:21

We are all aware that in that far off beginning, after the Lord had made the heaven and the earth, He took of the dust of the earth and formed a man in His likeness and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. With this thought in mind let us consider the following truth. We have illustrated above how that which belongs to the mineral kingdom may enter the vegetable kingdom when it is lifted from above. Then it can be brought into the animal kingdom by being eaten or absorbed by the kingdom of flesh and blood. Should it seem impossible,

then, that man, whose body was made from the dust of the earth, should find himself at last transformed into the very image and likeness of God? To live no more in the body of his humiliation, but in the body of Christ's glory, our house which is from heaven? Well may we gasp at the wonder of this hope! Yet it is true, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Cor. 9, 10**

Now when the prophet Isaiah was speaking of the blessed triumphs of the kingdom age, he said, "And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 25:7-8**. Hear now these enthralling words from Moffatt's translation. "And on this mountain shall He strip away the mourning shroud from all mankind, the veil of sorrow from all nations, displacing death for evermore. So shall He wipe the tears from every face, and free His own folk from taunts everywhere. Tis the Eternal's own decree." It becomes increasingly evident that for ages there has been an impenetrable covering cast over the faces of all people. This has kept their eyes blinded to the greater and more perfect understanding of the truth. Paul once said, "Until this day remain-eth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ." **2 Cor. 3:13**. My heart is often saddened when I perceive that many, many of God's dear people are not only wearing the veil of darkness over the eyes of their understanding, but pulling it closer lest the eyes of their understanding should be enlightened and the light of revelation should pierce the darkness of their tradition. They cannot see this and they cannot see that. It has amazed me beyond words that, though one presents them with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of scriptures that reveal a truth, for all that they still insist it isn't there. Oh, let us turn with open faces. Let the Spirit tear the veil away from our eyes that we may see by the Spirit that which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath entered the heart of man. The more we slam the door against the truth and argue against it the deeper we enter into darkness. No man can progress to greater heights until he accepts the truth the Spirit has set before him. David said it all when he prayed, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." When we have an open heart, the Holy Spirit also opens our eyes that they may be ravished with the sight of wonderful things. There is an invisible world above us that can be seen only by the eye of the spirit. As deep calls to deep, so Spirit calls to spirit. Well might we murmur the prayer of Elisha, "Lord, open his eyes!" And the Lord opened his eyes and he saw the mountains and hills filled with the hosts of the Lord. O Lord! Remove the covering cast upon all faces and the veil that hangs dark and heavy upon all the nations of the earth! That veil is part of the humiliation that fell upon mankind at the hour of our transgression.

There's a big, broad world up yonder;
There are forests where silence has lease.
There's a beauty that fills me with wonder;
There's a stillness that fills me with peace.

When the apostle Paul was preparing to reveal the truth of 2 Cor. Chapter 5, he well knew in his spirit that it would be a revelation difficult for people to believe. Therefore he set about to prepare our hearts for it in chapters 3 and 4. When Moses came down from the mountain, he had received the law, which was the ministration of death, 2 Cor. 3:7, because the law shouts death to men whose hearts are carnal and who cannot cease from sin. How may one who is born in sin and shapen in iniquity love the Lord with all his soul and mind and might? It is impossible. He who offends in one point is guilty of all. Thus the law ministers death - not life - and becomes our pedagogue to lead us to Christ, who will give us a new heart upon which the law of God is written and which is made a blessed and treasured part of our new spiritual nature. The law of God was never "done away" in the sense that it was discarded. It was done away from cold, hard tables of stone, from whence it stared in judgment upon helpless, hopeless sinners, but it was transferred into the heart of the penitent and believing soul, where it has become his new God-like nature and the joy of his very existence. The saints of God need no commandment from without shouting, "Thou shall love the Lord", because the love of God is placed within them by the Spirit which He has given them. They need no commanding voice, urging, "Thou shall not covet", for the love of God is in them, working no ill to their neighbor. They need no command to say, "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain", for that blessed name has become wholly sacred to them. Yea, His lovely name has become their new name, written in their blood-washed hearts, upon

their holy heads and in their transformed minds. Thus it is with all the holy commandments of God. They have become the nature of the saints of the Most High.

Say no more, O foolish man, that the Lord has thrown His law away. The holy, righteous truth is that He has given the lawless man a new heart, which the holy law of God both fills and thrills. There it is written and kept by the power of the indwelling Christ as the commandments long ago were kept in the sacred Ark of the Covenant I exhort you in the name of the Lord to leach and believe these things, for they are truth. The idea that the holy law can be kept by a carnal man is forever wrong and is a dreadful error. Teach the people rather that the law is spiritual and man is carnal with a nature totally opposed to the nature of God and with little more ability to abide by a spiritual law than the devil himself. It is a transformation that is needed. It is to be converted, born again from above, and translated into the kingdom of God. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. Say no more, "I am doing the best I can." All our righteousnesses are but filthy rags. The literal Hebrew meaning of "filthy rags" according to Strong is the menstrual cloth. Certainly, then, we have nothing good to present to Him whose holiness and purity is higher than the heavens. How much more does all this emphasize the body of our humiliation! In time past we all walked according to the course of this wicked age, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of men, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind and were by nature the children of wrath even as others. Eph. 2:2-3. But how our souls exult in the words, which follow! "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved): and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works lest any man should boast." **Eph. 2:4-9**

How true were the marvelous words of the prophet Ezekiel! Thus saith the Lord, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I shall be their God." **Ezek. 11:19-20**. Then again this theme is renewed in **chapter 36:25-27** in these blessed words: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." What marvelous promises these really are and what a magnificent hope our Lord has set before us! How thankful we ought to be that we now live in the day when our heavenly Father, through His grace freely bestowed in Christ Jesus, is indeed taking away our stony hearts to replace them with new hearts like, unto His own, and new minds also that love His law and keep His commandments! I trust we will not lose our blessed thread of thought should we turn aside a moment to say how thankful we should be that, in these evil days of rampaging wickedness when foolish men with hopelessly carnal minds are putting iron and plastic hearts in men and the hearts of baboons in babies to cure their ills, our blessed Lord from heaven is saying, "A new heart will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh." Hallelujah!

Now "if the service that brings death — its code being engraved in writing upon stones — came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily on the face of Moses because of the brightness of his face — a transient luster — will not the service of the Spirit be far more glorious? For if the service, which pronounces doom had glory, far more glorious still is the service, which offers righteousness. For, in fact, that which was so glorious has no glory at all in comparison with the surpassing glory. For if that which was to be abolished (that is, the law written upon a stone) came with glory, much more is that which is permanent arrayed in glory. With such a hope as this, then, we speak without reserve, unlike Moses, who used to throw a veil over his face to hide from the gaze of the children of Israel the passing away of what was but transitory. But indeed their minds had grown dense; for to this day during the reading of the Old Testament the same veil remains unlifted, because it is in Christ that it is to be abolished. Yes, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their hearts. But whenever they return to the Lord, the veil is withdrawn. Now the Lord means the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, freedom is. But all of us, as with unveiled faces we mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same likeness, from glory to glory, even as derived from the Lord the Spirit." **2 Cor. 3:7-18**. (Weymouth)

Transformed by grace divine
The glory shall be Thine;
To Thy most holy will, O Lord,
I now my all resign.
Take every failure, each mistake,
Of our poor human ways,
And, Saviour, for Thy dear name's sake
Let me show forth Thy praise.

O, Christ, what glory Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee! How manifold are Thy blessings and all Thy ways past finding out!

THE ETERNAL HOUSE

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." **2 Cor. 5:1**

The learned Adam Clark has pointed out that the Hebrew word labash, which answers to the apostle's phrase "to be clothed", signifies to be surrounded, covered, or invested with anything, so that, when it is stated that Moses went into the cloud, the inference is that he went into the midst of the cloud as if one put on a garment. Thus he was clothed with the cloud. He further states that the word beith in Hebrew (that is, house) denotes a cover, case or clothing. Thus the house of the face is a veil, the house of the hand signifies gloves and the house of the feet, shoes.

We can see from this that at present our soul and spirit are clothed upon with the body of humiliation, a body - or house - of flesh always in the process of corruption. But there remains for us another and better house - a house not made with hands - reserved for us in heaven. It is eternal and incorruptible. For this reason the apostle says, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this (our present house of humiliation) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." **2 Cor. 5:1-3**. Not only do we groan in this corruptible house, but the whole creation groans in pain with us. They are in painful waiting just as we are. How often on these prairies we hear the lonesome howling of the coyotes, wailing out their woes, perhaps to God Himself, plaintively crying to Him for food and, all unknown to us, pleading for the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. Think not this to be a myth, for the word of inspiration has plainly said, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now", waiting for the adoption (that is, sonship), even the redemption of our bodies. Concerning that redemption of the body this whole chapter is being written.

Not only do the wild beasts seek their food from God, but often we hear the piteous, plaintive cries of some frail creature being torn to pieces by a ravenous beast, or see the dreadful fear of a tiny mouse or bird about to be devoured by an enormous cat. These too, poor helpless creatures, are crying aloud and groaning with anguish and pain for the long awaited day when at long, long last the sons of God will be manifested and with Jesus Christ, their elder brother, as their Head, will deliver the whole creation from the thralldom of decay into the glorious freedom of the liberating reign of the sons of God. Then there will be no fear or dread. The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the lion eat straw like an ox. The child shall play on the hole of the poisonous asp and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

There the bear will be gentle;
The lion will be tame,
And the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.
There the beast from the wild
Will be led by the child,
And I shall be changed from the creature that I am.

O Lord God of the universe, speed the wonderful day when these things shall surely be. Thy kingdom come!
Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.

These things shall be. A loftier race
Than ere the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.
They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
Not to spill human blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.
Nation with nation, hand in hand,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.
There shall be no more sin, no shame,
And wrath and wrong shall fettered lie;
For men shall be at one with God
In bonds of firm necessity.

(Unknown)

Thus in pain the whole creation waits for the sons of God to put on their house which is from heaven that they as well as we may be delivered from the bondage of their corruption and the thralldom of their decay. In this we groan, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." All that is mortal about us must be swallowed up by that which is immortal. Beautiful and expressive as this passage is as rendered by the King James translators, we may derive even deeper meaning by comparing the rich translation of Richard Weymouth, which I am convinced brings the marvelous truth of incorruption even closer to home, as we shall see in the following words: "For we know that if the mere tent, which is our earthly house, is taken down, we have in heaven a building from God, a house not made with human hands, but eternal. In this one, indeed, we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from heaven - sure that, when we have put it on, we shall not be found unclothed. Yes, we who are in this tent do sigh under our burdens, not that we wish to lay aside our tent, but rather to put the other over it, so that our mortality may be absorbed in life. And He who formed us for this very purpose is God, who has given us His Spirit as guarantee." **2 Cor. 5:1-5**

Let us now notice just what truth is stated here. First, we do not wish to lay aside our present tent. Though we know that very glorious things lie before us, to my knowledge I have never met a man or a woman who was actually anxious to die. That is the meaning of the words, "We do not wish to lay aside our tent". In some remarkable way, only understood by the wisdom of the Most High, He has placed in the heart of all creation a secret dread of the thing we call death. We recoil from it as we would from an enemy or any distasteful thing. We do not desire to be unclothed and stripped of this home in which we now dwell. You will notice that this same trait is evident in the heart of every creature God has made, from the least to the greatest. Have you not seen animals scurry away when there was the least danger of death? Have you ever noticed the super strength of a creature who is fearful that death may overcome it? Or watched a tiny insect flee for its life if there is danger that one intends to kill it? Even a mosquito fears death, and that dread is in the heart of all creation and not least in the heart of man.

It is true, therefore, that even the most spiritual among men have a certain inbred reluctance to be stripped of their house of flesh, even though it is a covering of mortality, corruption and humiliation. This trait has been placed there by the Lord. Therefore, though our hearts sigh in painful waiting for the realm of incorruption, we do not desire to be unclothed by death, but rather, as the truth is presented here, "not that we wish to lay aside our tent, but rather to put the other over it, so that our mortality might be absorbed by life". That is the way we long for it to be. Therefore we take great courage and faith in the remarkable statement that now follows. "He

that has formed us for this very purpose is God, who has given us His Spirit as a guarantee." Hence this is not only our wish, but it is also God's intention. He has formed us for this very purpose.

Lest we should lose the thread of our thought, it might be well here to consider other passages that deal closely with this truth, for verily I do believe that in these words there is a promise held out to the people of God in these last days, assuring that this marvelous change may yet take place in the saints who are now living at the end of this age, that they without going to the grave and thus laying aside their earthly tent may indeed put the other (that is, our house from heaven) over it, that mortality might be absorbed by life. As decayed and corrupt plants often become fertility for new plants, so also this body of our humiliation shall be absorbed by the new life of incorruption when our house from heaven is put on over it. For we shall not all sleep, the apostle tells us, but we shall all be changed.

The subject of resurrection, transfiguration and change was opened for us in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 15. The enrapturing mystery proclaimed in this chapter should be perused with meditation and prayer, word by word and verse by verse by each and every one of us. It would take more space than we have in this book to search out all its gilded avenues, even if our ability was equal to the task, because it has to do with one of the most excellent mysteries of the ages - that is, the resurrection of the dead, the change from death to life, from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality, and from glory to glory.

Infallible as is the truth that Jesus died, the resurrection holds such confirmation of its truth that only the most unlearned or the greatest of fools could ever deny the fact of it. That our bodies also shall be quickened, even as Jesus was quickened, by the life of Christ dwelling in us is therefore beyond doubt, whether reasonable or unreasonable. Many of the proofs of resurrection Paul lays down in 1 Cor. 15:1-8 The courts of earth require only two or three witnesses to prove even the gravest offenses. The greatest number of witnesses ever required is for that of an oral will, which in some countries requires the testimony of seven witnesses. But here the witnesses to the resurrection of Christ run into many hundreds of people who saw Him alive after His passion and talked with Him over a period of forty days as He dwelt among them, speaking to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs. The more His enemies attempted to hide the truth, the more the truth was revealed by their contradictions.

In chapter 15, verse 39, Paul confidently affirms that, "all flesh is not the same flesh". There is one flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another flesh of birds, and still another flesh of fish. Not many years ago science declared that there was no difference in flesh. Then they discovered a way by which the flesh of every creature could be identified as separate from all others. Today they can tell the difference between the flesh of a deer and the flesh of a cow, or the difference between the flesh of a crow and that of a chicken. Now they are beginning to discover at long last that there is also a definite difference between the flesh and blood of a white man and the flesh and blood of a black man. Whether we like it or not, the truth will reveal itself sooner or later. The scripture that in the King James Version says that God has made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the earth is misleading. The word blood, as you have probably noticed, is an italicized word and is therefore not in the original. The text actually reads, "God hath made of one (which is Himself) all nations," (yea, and all creatures to dwell upon the earth). This scripture appears thus in most other translations, including The British Revised Version, The American Revised Version, Weymouth, Moffatt, Wuest and The Emphatic Diaglott. Thus we may conclude that the "one" spoken of in this verse, Acts 17:26, refers to the Creator Himself, and not to Adam. If "kind after his kind" is the edict of the Lord, then it is an impossibility that two white parents could give birth to a black child or that two black parents could give birth to a white child. If a white man were to tell you that both his parents were black, would you believe him or laugh at him?

Not only did the apostle state that all flesh is not the same flesh, but he also declared, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one (that is, one thing), and the glory of the terrestrial is another (thing)." **1 Cor. 15:40** Then in **verse 42** he says, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (life-giving) spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."

Verses 42-47. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."
Verse 49

Now follows a great mystery, for we, after having been acquainted with the fact of life and death all our lives, are now told of a day to come when some will put on the incorruptible state and receive the body of resurrection without dying at all. "We shall not all sleep," (that is, we shall not all die), the apostle declares, "but we shall all be changed." **1 Cor. 15:51** The word changed as in 1 Cor. 15:51, transformed as in Rom. 12:2, and transfigured as in Matt. 17:3 all come from the Greek word metamorphoo, from which comes our English word metamorphosis, which refers to the kind of change (or metamorphosis) that takes place when a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly - the first being a lowly creature of the dust, crawling in its humiliation on its belly, and the second a creature of glory, a citizen of the heavenlies and of the air. Thus the apostle is saying that we shall all be changed, transformed or transfigured, for this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. This is the transformation that is promised by God and is certain to take place in its appointed time.

We are aware that the general teaching is that this scripture refers to a rapture that is to take place before a time of tribulation in which all Christians - hot, cold, or lukewarm - will suddenly be transported to heaven. It is not my purpose here to either confirm or refute this teaching, although there are serious errors in it. My purpose at present is rather to show that there is abundant evidence that this marvelous change for which the whole creation groans may well take place in the inChristed saints who are looking for His appearing while we are still in this age and upon this earth. We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed (transformed) at the sounding of the last trumpet. 1 Cor. 15:51-52 The last trumpet of Revelation sounds at the time when the Lord is about to take over the kingdoms of the world and set up His own government through the ministry of the sons of God. This will be a great time of trouble and upheaval, which is no doubt a necessary prelude to such a radical transformation as the coming of the kingdom will be.

This transfiguration of the inChristed saints will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The twinkling of an eye takes about one-fortieth of a second. It will be as a flash of lightning as described by the Lord in Matt. 24:27. The Greek word "astrapto" means a flash of lightning and not a gradual lightening as at the dawn of a morning. This coming of the Son of man as a flash of lightning, or in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, is when the transformation of the in Christ saints from corruption to incorruption takes place. The great "shining forth", when every eye shall see Him, does not take place until a little time afterward. Matthew states in His gospel, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." **Matt. 24:29-31** First He appears to transform the saints. Afterwards He comes and all shall see Him.

THE APPEARING OF CHRIST

Many accounts are given in God's word that tell in no uncertain terms of blessed occasions when the Lord appeared unto men. On all occasions that appearing heralded some very special event that was soon to take place and always it brought a special unveiling of some immediate purpose of God that evidently had been purposed in His divine mind from the foundation of the world. From the garden of Eden to the book of Revelation we read of instances of the Lord's appearing in person to men and women whom He had chosen, and on all such occasions He brought life and blessed revelation to their hearts. There have been other occasions when a mighty angel such as Gabriel was sent to bring the Lord's message. That angel was sometimes called the angel of the Lord and was in all probability the Son of God Himself.

Millenniums ago the Lord appeared unto our father Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees. More than three hundred years had passed into history since the waters of the great flood of Noah's day had wiped the earth clean of its wicked inhabitants, but now, alas, man, always prone to degeneration, was once again descending into the very abyss of sin, rebellion and idolatry and, lest the Lord should send another flood to destroy him, he was now attempting to build a gigantic tower that would reach to heaven where men might take refuge. Carnal man will go to any extremity rather than turn to God in repentance. It was in the midst of these human schemes of

rebellion against the Most High that the Lord appeared to Abraham, saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I shall show thee." **Gen. 12:1**. Then in verse 7 we are told that "the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." **Gen. 12:7-8**

The prime root of the Hebrew word ra-ah, translated appear, means to see or to look on one another; to gaze, perceive and show. It also carries with it the thought of advice, provision, etc. These special appearances of the Lord are far beyond the possibility of human description. That is why those prophets like Ezekiel, who tried to describe an appearance of the Lord, always endeavored to compare what they saw to some known thing, but their efforts were always pitifully feeble because the Lord is not really like anything on earth that we have either known or seen. A good example of this difficulty in comparing the unknown with the known is found in Ezekiel, chapter 1, where the prophet tries to describe the appearance of the glory of the Lord. In doing so he uses such terms as a whirlwind, a great cloud, a fire infolding itself, a brightness, the color of amber, the likeness of four living creatures, the appearance as of a flash of lightning. Verse 14 A wheel within a wheel. The likeness of the firmament. Verse 22 A noise like great waters. Thus the prophet struggles with words to describe the indescribable. But these marvelous appearances of the Lord always wrought tremendous change and transformation in the lives of those blessed ones who experienced them.

Again the Lord appeared to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old, saying, "I am the Almighty God." Hebrew El-Shaddai; El Hebrew for God and Shaddai meaning the breasted one, that is, the nourisher and satisfier, the all-sufficient one. Not only was the appearance of El-Shaddai such a transforming event in Abraham's life, but the very name by which He made Himself known was a most significant revelation of Himself as the one who was able to keep all His promises as well as to add to them and be Abraham's everlasting supply and sustenance. What a marvelous revelation of the future this appearing of El was! History records the sustaining provision of the Lord all through the earthly journey of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then to the millions of Israel, his seed, during their forty years of wandering in a dreary, trackless, burning wilderness, devoid of either food, water or shelter. There He was El-Shaddai, their sustainer and their provider; a pillar of fire by night and a covering cloud against the heat of the day; causing rivers of water to flow in the wilderness to supply a host of more than two million people besides innumerable cattle and beasts of burden. Surely the Almighty proved Himself true to His name - El-Shaddai, the breasted one.

Rivers shall flow in the wilderness,
Floods from heaven descend.
The earth shall be filled with His holiness
Forever, world without end.

Again the Lord appeared to Abraham to renew His promise to him that a son would be born to him of his wife Sarah and to forewarn him of the destruction of Sodom. **Gen. 18**

The Lord appeared unto Isaac in the days of the great famine, telling him that he should not go down to Egypt, but to "dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of." **Gen. 26:2** "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee, for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father: and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 26:3-4**

As we read of these appearances of the Lord, we become more and more convinced that every appearance of God to man is of utmost importance, bringing with it revelation, advice, truth and understanding, truth that is to affect the immediate present and also to be of vital importance in the days to follow. We certainly have a right to believe that the Lord, the ruler of heaven and earth, would never reveal Himself nor appear to any man or woman merely in answer to some wishful prayer or because of personal curiosity. Every revelation of Himself is intended to affect the purpose of God in general and His own beloved people in particular.

In like manner the Lord appeared to Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, to confirm His purpose in Him, saying unto him, "Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession." **Gen. 48:4** The beautiful

account of this appearing is recorded for us in Genesis 28:10-22 No words of mine could add to the beauty and importance of this wonderful story of the appearing of "the Lord God" (Hebrew, Jehovah Elohim) - a name used only when the Lord's relationship to man is involved, such as their governor, their redeemer, their creator or their king. Because of the beauty and importance of the appearing of the Lord on this occasion, I quote it here in its entirety. "And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of the place Bethel; but the name of that city was Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth unto Thee." **Gen. 28:10-22**

This blessed appearing of the Lord at Luz, or Bethel, began a transformation in the life of Jacob, which was to be climaxed many years later in his terrible struggle with the angel of the Lord at Peniel. Gen. 32:24-32. The angel in this instance was none other than the Lord Himself. On this climactic occasion Jacob confessed that his name was indeed Jacob, the supplanter, the cheat, the crook, the knave and the swindler; and because of this confession his name was changed to Israel, the prince with God. I do not believe that Jacob received the blessing when he deceived his father and cheated Esau. Gen. 27: 1:33 He received it only when he confessed his sin by confessing his name. That is why he said to the angel of the Lord, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." **Gen. 32:26**

One of the most remarkable appearances of God to man was His appearance to Moses at the burning bush. There "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task masters for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." **Exod. 3:2-8** "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." **Exod. 3:13-14**

I AM or I AM THAT I AM is really a title rather than a name, the import of which is far beyond the possibility of explanation. It reveals God to be much more than God. The Latin Vulgate translates this as "I AM WHO I AM;" The Septuagint, as "I AM HE WHO EXISTS;" The Arabic as "THE ETERNAL WHO PASSES NOT AWAY;" The Tar-gum of Jonathon as "HE WHO SPAKE AND THE WORLD WAS, WHO SPAKE AND ALL THINGS EXISTED". As the original words literally signify "I will be what I will be," some have supposed that God designed to inform Moses that what He had been to his fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the past He would be to him and the Israelites in the future, and that He would perform the promises made to them and the

fathers. This wonderful title, I AM THAT I AM, points up the eternity and self-existence of God. Jesus used this same title when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM," and the Jews, understanding the implication, took up stones to stone Him. John 8:58.

My thought here is not to give an explanation of the meaning of this great revelation when the I AM appeared to Moses, but simply to show how important this appearing really was in that it confirmed all previous promises of God, that it foretold His power for the emancipation of Israel, and a deliverance that dwarfs and overshadows all other liberations the world has ever known. We see, then, how the appearances of God to man have never failed to bring with them a revelation of Himself and an experience of vast importance to the whole plan and purpose of God. Therefore we should consider with the greatest reverence and care this most blessed promise given to us: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." **Heb. 9:28** We pass over these precious promises oftentimes without even pausing to think what their meaning may really be. Certainly the vast majority of Christians see but do not perceive. They hear but do not understand. But, if we would sit in God's presence to consider the precious promises He has made to us, asking the Spirit of the Lord to reveal them to us, then would He open the eyes of our understanding that He might reveal to us that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, of the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, but which He reveals by His Spirit.

There are numerous other accounts in the Old Testament which tell of the Lord's appearances to men, such as His appearance to Solomon, 1 Kings 3:5 and 9:2-9; or to the prophet Elijah at Horeb, 1 Kings 19:8-18; to Hannah and to Samuel, Isaiah and Daniel; but we will leave them for your earnest searching.

The Gospels contain the soul-stirring account of the appearance of the resurrected Christ to Mary to raise again the hopes and joys of all those who had believed on Him throughout the ages, as the poet so beautifully says.

Raised from the dead were Mary's hopes and joys;
Gone were her sorrows, gone her doubts and fears.
She understood then what we now should know;
Eternal life is walking through the years.

By that glorious resurrection appearance He demonstrated to the whole world that He is indeed and in truth the resurrection and the life. Mary had come early, bringing spices, to begin the work of embalming His body, sorrowfully believing that His death on the cross of Calvary was indeed the end of a very sad and painful chapter in the history of the world. But when He spoke her name, "Mary", her wide-eyed cry of astonishment was expressed in her rapturous response, "R A B B O N I !" In my heart I see her look of awe and utter stupefaction as her eyes open wide with incredulity at His appearing, and her lips drop apart, mute to utter another word.

Then there followed the touching and wonderful appearing of Christ to Cleopas and another, probably his beloved wife, for she with her husband had remained at the cross with Mary when He was crucified, John 19:25, as they journeyed in bitter sorrow on their way home to Emmaus. Luke records in the lovely story that, as they talked together of all these things that had happened, it came to pass that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them; but their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. "And he said unto them.

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He, which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher: and when they found not His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them, which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not.

Then He said unto them, **O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?** And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told them what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread.

"And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, **Peace be unto you.** But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, **Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.** And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. And He said unto them, **These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me.** Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." **Luke 24:13-45**

My heart burns within me and my soul is filled with tears of rejoicing as these sacred and wonderful scenes pass in retrospect before my eyes. Beautiful and inspirational as the story is and wonderful beyond words as is the message it brings, yet to us who live in these days of promise the most precious jewel to us all is the knowledge that these were "appearings" of Christ as He appeared, first to Mary, then, it would seem, to Cleopas and his wife, then to Peter and the eleven gathered together. "Thomas, one of the twelve called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.** And Thomas answered, and said unto Him, **MY LORD AND MY GOD!** Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."** **John 20: 24-29** How often have I, together with multitudes of others, longed to see His face, but how we may rejoice that, though we have not yet seen Him, this adds rather than takes away from our blessedness, for blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

But here again we must remind ourselves that these sacred stories we read with tears of joy and awe are indeed accounts of the many appearances of Christ after His resurrection as in His grace He came to confirm eternal truth among His brethren. Brethren, my heart is filled with love and gratitude in the knowledge that, while our blessed Saviour hung upon His cross of rejection and shame, there were those standing by, still loving, still adoring, and sharing with Him in His suffering. "There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." **John 19:25.** It was to these same ones who shared His suffering and stood by His cross that He first appeared after His resurrection, and, though inspiration no doubt wisely omits that He also appeared to His mother, that same inspiration tells us that He did, for she, too, stayed at the cross when He died.

Sadly we must admit with shamefacedness and regret that our Lord Jesus Christ is being crucified afresh in our day both by the world, who knows Him not, and by the church so-called, who has turned His gospel and His truth into lasciviousness and greed that their unscrupulous promoters as kings and priests might build up and reign over their own earthly kingdoms. Well did the ancient prophet Amos say of this generation, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt-offerings

and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." **Amos 5:21-24** How unutterably sad it is that these wretched conditions exist among God's people in our day! The noise, perhaps better described as racket, of their music, the hippy-like songs of those whose hearts have never felt the sacredness and stillness of His presence, the empty sermons, and the sham of what they imagine to be anointing and glory are beyond belief. Everywhere the hateful doctrine of prosperity is being preached. The preachers forget that the people are the same today as Israel was in the wilderness, for always, when they prospered, they forgot God and concentrated on their own flesh to which prosperity so kindly catered. Turn from these vanities, my brethren, for it is those who have stood by His cross, continuing faithfully with Him in His sufferings, who will be there to see Him when He appears, for they are ever looking for Him.

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." **Isa. 1:13-15** "Woe be to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed My people; Ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase." "In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil ways, and from the evil of their doings." **Jer. 23:1-3, 20-22** The false prophets of our day are always imagining that they have had a dream or seen a vision and the people are foolish enough to believe them. It will be noticed that the vision is usually to their benefit or to the buiding up of their kingdom. "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in My name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart." **Jer. 23:25, 26**

Centuries ago the prophet Isaiah wrote a message that I feel certain applies to our day above all other days. This is what he said: "Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O Lord. (Compare Rev. 12:1-2, 5-6) We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body (Christ's) shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." **Isa. 26:17-19** This last statement is a promise of our resurrection. The righteous dead will be cast out of the earth in resurrection as Jonah was cast out or vomited out of the whale's belly, the belly of death.

The final statement of the prophet in this chapter should be of great concern to the elect of God in this hour, for, while the big time preachers are all shouting for your money to help them evangelize the world, a thing the Lord never promised for this age, the Lord is saying in these days before the resurrection, the greatest emancipation of all ages, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation (that is, the tribulation of our day) be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." **Isa. 26:20-21** There was a great upheaval in Egypt as the Almighty was preparing the deliverance of His people. Signs and wonders were evident everywhere. Dreadful, devastating plagues fell upon the land by the word of God through Moses. Plagues of grasshoppers, lice, flies, and frogs devastated the land until it was laid waste. By the word of the Lord there came grievous swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servant's houses and into all the land of Egypt until the whole land was corrupted by them. Then upon the cattle, the horses, and the asses there fell a grievous murrain, a contagious disease similar to Anthrax or Texas fever, that affects cattle and other animals. So terrible was the plague that all the cattle of Egypt died. Exod. 9:6 Then followed the plague of boils, breaking out upon man and beast, smiting even the magicians of the land. Next followed the plague of rain and hail with dreadful thunder and fire sweeping along the ground, verse 23, smiting man and beast, breaking the

trees and destroying the herbs, the wheat, the rye and the flax until the land was devastated. But for all this there was no repentance. Then came locusts that covered the earth so that no one could see the ground and the sun was darkened by their swarming presence; but no change of heart ensued. Then followed the plague of darkness so thick it could be felt and finally the death of the firstborn in all the land of Egypt. Then came the night of the Passover and the command to put blood upon the lintel and door posts of every house in Israel, and then before the final judgment to enter their chambers and remain in their houses until the angel of death had passed through the land. That same night the destroying angel of death passed over all the land and slew the firstborn son in every household where the blood was not found. It was the life blood of the lamb that brought them deliverance from all the bondage of Egypt just as the blood of Christ brings deliverance today. They were not simply "let go". They were thrust out of the land to become the first true Theocracy until their rebellion against God in the days of Samuel the prophet.

These things happened unto them for ensamples and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. 1 Cor. 10:11. Once again desolation is in the land, this time in our lands. Fires are sweeping our forests. Grasshoppers are swarming and devouring our grain. The greater part of the continent of Africa is in famine. Large sections of our own country are parched for rain. Uncontrollable diseases are reaching epidemic proportions world wide. Bankruptcies both of large corporations and of individuals are causing panic over the world. Crime is everywhere rampant. Morals have fled the earth except in the elect. False prophets fill the pulpits where at one time repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ was taught. Wars and rumors of wars are everywhere. Well does the poem attributed to Mother Shipton of the 15th century speak of the end of this age.

Then shall mighty wars be planned, And blood and fire shall sweep the land. For those who live the century through In fear and trembling this will do: Flee to the mountains and the dens; To bogs and forests and wild fens, For storms shall rage and oceans roar When Gabriel stands on sea and shore; And as he blows his wondrous horn, Old worlds shall die and new be born.

UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM

We are undoubtedly at the end of the age. We are seeing the signs spoken of by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:1-5 fulfilled all about us. Perilous times have come because men are lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of them that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. From such turn away. These conditions, so evident on every hand, are definite indications that the full redemption of God's elect people is now at hand when the seventh trumpet begins to sound. Please give special attention to the words of Rev. 10:7: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets." Notice especially the words "when he shall begin to sound". The blast of that trumpet is not a momentary blast. It takes some time - perhaps some years - to be fulfilled, but it is at the beginning of that sounding that the mystery of God is finished. This is the time of the resurrection of the dead in Christ. It is the time when the dead in Christ rise first to join the living in Christ, and we shall all be changed - or transformed - by the appearing of the Lord. At this time it is said there are lightnings and voices and thunders and an earthquake and great hail. Rev. 11:15-19. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Then, immediately after this resurrection of the "in Christ" saints will follow the tribulation of those days when the sun is darkened and the moon does not give her light. The stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Next the sign of the Son of man in heaven will appear, and all the nations of earth will see Christ and the great host of resurrected sons of God coming with power and great glory. Matt. 24:27-31 At that time the angels of the Lord will come with a great sound of trumpets to gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. We conclude from these things that the great change from corruption to incorruption will come at the beginning of the sounding of the seventh angel. It will come with the speed of a flash of lightning, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

No appearing of Christ has ever come, whether in the Old Testament or in the New, without bringing with it some great change in the course of events, but the greatest revelation and the greatest change of all time will

occur when these words are fulfilled: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." **Heb. 9:28** The wording of the American Revised Version is very enlightening. This is what it says: "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him." Christ will at that moment bring our salvation for spirit, soul and body to completion. This, I believe, is in harmony with the words of Paul, who, speaking of adoption (that is, full sonship), made this statement: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Weymouth emphasizes this truth in these words: "For we know that the whole creation is moaning in the pangs of childbirth until this hour, and more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste of bliss, yet we ourselves inwardly moan as we wait for full sonship in the redemption of our bodies." The redemption of the body is the final act of our so great salvation in this present age. With it comes the transformation of our bodies from corruption to incorruption, then the manifestation of the sons of God and shortly afterward the coming of Christ with His manifested sons to reveal Himself openly to all mankind.

When our Lord Jesus Christ made His first appearance on earth, it was a very, very real appearance and presentation of the Son of God, dwelling among men as both the Son of God and the Son of man. We must conclude, however, that His first appearance among men was more real to those who were looking for Him than to those who were not. How real was His appearing to such devout persons as Anna and Simeon, who looked for redemption in Jerusalem! Luke 2:38. See the thrilling story in Luke, chapter 2. What a glorious appearing it was for them! How marvelous was the appearing of Him who never wrote a book, yet has filled the world with books about His life and first appearing among men on earth! With what appetite do we devour His words of wisdom! With what joy do we embrace His promises! With what thankfulness do we behold His deliverances from sickness, disease, and the multiplied works of the devil! With what awe do we behold His miracles! With what reverence do we see Him die for our sins, and with what joy do we see Him risen from the dead to appear with many infallible proofs among men for forty days until with a thousand mixed emotions we see this incorruptible Man rise from the earth to be received up by a waiting cloud of resurrected saints, rising into heaven into the realm of Him who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no mortal man can approach. His first appearing among men was indeed exceedingly real. To this we repeat our amens and shout our hallelujahs.

With what joy and satisfaction do we now entertain His precious promise, "unto them that look for Him will He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." The first time He came, He came to bring salvation, but when He appears the second time, it will be to bring us to that full salvation which includes, not only the salvation of the soul, but the redemption of the body as well. It was to the redemption of the body that Paul referred when he wrote, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." **Rom. 13:11** And this is also the explanation of his statement, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." **Rom. 8:10** But this statement, which reveals our present state so thoroughly, is followed immediately by this further truth: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Verse 11**

That is a glorious promise. The Spirit that raised up Jesus in incorruption will also raise up us in incorruption. That promise is to be literally fulfilled in those who are alive upon the earth at the time of His second appearing, when He appears, not to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation all who are looking for Him when that great appearing takes place. Countless thousands of saints have died in faith, not having received the promise, even as the illustrious Abraham did, but death really makes no difference to the promise, for the dead in Christ as well as the living in Christ will also be raised in incorruption, changed from the corruptible to the incorruptible. 1 Cor. 15:51-53 This the immutable Lord has promised. Those who in millenniums past have gone to the grave in faith will share with those who at the end of the age are alive and remain to receive incorruption when He appears. There will be no difference in their standing, but all will equally share in the same power that raised up Jesus from the dead.

I know of nothing that the Most High has done in the past to manifest His glory as it will be manifested when thousands of saints who are looking for Him are transformed from the realm of corruption to the realm of incorruption with the speed of lightning and in the twinkling of an eye. It was a glorious day when many of the

saints arose and came out of their graves after the resurrection of Christ and were seen in Jerusalem and among men for forty days. What a marvelous witness that must have been! But how much greater witness it will be when thousands are changed to incorruption when He appears the second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring His looking saints to full salvation!

In the gross darkness of this present hour we see through a glass darkly. Our understanding is often, if not always, faulty. We see things afar off and it is difficult to discern their exact form and shape or to understand all the details as we should. Therefore we are sadly subject to error. Even the Old Testament prophets searched diligently to know "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported among you." **1 Pet. 1: 11-12** Therefore I believe we must be aware of our misunderstanding and our lack of knowledge concerning things which are to come, but of which we are nevertheless assured, both by the Word and by the Spirit.

If the appearing of the Son of God when He came the first time was glorious, how shall not His second appearing be far more glorious? When He came two thousand years ago, the full extent of His glory was veiled to the eyes of all mankind. He came in a veil of flesh. Men saw Him then as the priests in the Holy Place saw the veil between themselves and the Most Holy Place. They saw the veil, but not the Shekinah. The veil was of fine linen, blue, purple and scarlet with -interwoven gold. The linen manifested His righteousness.

The blue proclaimed that He was the Lord from heaven, the purple that He was the King of kings, and the gold that He was God. It was a magnificent foreshadow of Himself; but the glory of the Holy of Holies, shining not with the light of candles nor the light of the sun, but with the glory of God, was withheld from the eyes of the ministering priests even as the full glory of Christ was withheld from the world, and even His disciples, as He walked among them from day to day. It was not until His robe of flesh was rent on the cross of Calvary that the veil that hung before the Holiest of all was rent from top to bottom. It was not until after His death that His glory in resurrection appeared; and thus it will be with us when He appears, not to deal with sin, but to bring us full salvation.

In his Epistle to the Philippians, chapter 2, Paul tells us of the manner in which the Lord's glory was veiled when He came among us to appear among men two thousand years ago. "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (corruptible): and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:7,8 Thus was His glory veiled all the time He dwelt among us at His first appearing. Isaiah saw Him as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." **Isa. 53:3** That was because He came to bear the sins of many, to carry away our pains and to purchase full redemption for us. Isaiah saw His face "marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." **Isa. 52:14** But we see all this blessed humility and sacrifice as the price of our full redemption, which we shall share when He appears the second time.

Once the blessed Christ of glory
Was veiled off from human view;
But through suffering death and sorrow
He has rent the veil in two.

The robe of flesh and mortality He wore when He appeared at His first coming will serve to emphasize His supernal and heavenly glory when He appears again to bring His beloved waiting saints to full salvation, for "we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." **1 John 3:2** Not as He was then, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but as He is now, forever immortal, forever glorified. Therefore "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." **Verse 3** Do you have this hope in you? Then, if you do, you will not be able to join the worldly, giddy throng of Christendom with all their light and frivolous ways, their food and fun, empty sermons and unspiritual songs. Your whole life must be spent diligently lending yourself to the purifying power of the Holy Spirit. How well advised we would be to pay diligent heed to the words of Peter, that great pastor apostle, who received from the lips of Christ the ministry to "feed My sheep" I For our eternal spiritual welfare and benefit he wrote, "According as His divine power hath

given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." **2 Pet. 1:3-7** What a lifetime of adding by the Spirit the very nature and being of our Father in heaven! And with all this beautiful addition goes the promise, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:8-11**

There are far too many careless Christians in this distasteful hour of lukewarmness. They are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm and fit to be spewed out of the mouth of God. Too many of God's people, who were once enlightened and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, are falling away to the place where it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. They are more interested in television than they are in prayer. They have become better acquainted with the names and life styles of movie stars and rock singers than with those of the apostles and prophets. We live in an abominable hour of spiritual declension. The prosperity doctrine is deceiving millions of Christians into thinking that the transient, visible things they can now have are more important than the permanent invisible things which God has promised to them that love Him. Well did the apostle write, "Having food and raiment, let us be content."

The apostle John, who knew Christ as few other men ever did, wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." **1 John 15-17** These words from Phillip's translation read as follows: "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and the world at the same time, for the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world with all its passionate desires will one day disappear, but the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die." In the light of these things let us abandon the world with its lusts and greedy ambitions and lay hold on eternal life, for this is permanent and the glory that shall be revealed in all who look for His appearing.

Lay hold on life and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment, but Christ, having been offered to take upon Himself the sins of many, will appear the second time, not to carry the burden of sin or to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon the hearts of all who are looking for Him just how important this looking, watching and expecting His appearing really is, knowing as we do that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. His appearing to the saints and the change that will take place in them will be instantaneous. No man can see God and live, but I am sure that the opposite is also true — that no man can see God and die. Manoah said, "We shall surely die because we have seen God." **Jud. 13:22** But Manoah did not die. Instead it was the beginning of a new life entirely to be manifested in the person of the mighty Samson, and we may be sure it was a high and glorious new beginning in the life of Manoah and his wife also. "No man shall see My face and live," the Lord said to Moses. **Exod. 33:20** Yet Moses spoke to the Lord face to face. **Deut 34:10** It is not the individual that perishes. It is his old self-life lived after the manner of men and the flesh that dies, but the man himself is transformed into the likeness of his Maker. Before the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, Saul was a man of hate and bitterness with a heart full of murder and cruelty. He was the man who had bound the saints and tried to compel them to blaspheme. He accuses himself of being the chief of sinners. **1 Tim. 1:15**. In his zeal he intended to wipe the name of

Jesus Christ from the earth and if necessary to cleanse the world of His people as well. But the Lord had very different plans for him, for our ways are not God's ways and God's ways are not our ways. When the Lord's appointed moment came, a light above the brightness of the sun shone upon Saul and he heard a voice speaking to him and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? ...It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." At that moment the light of Christ shone into his darkened spirit and Paul, knowing that the voice he heard was the voice of the Lord, replied, with shuddering and fear, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." To this the trembling, fainting Saul replied, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Do we not see the marvelous change wrought in this chief of sinners when he comes face to face with his Maker? See how the old man perishes and one in the likeness of Christ appears. And when he was led by the hand to the house of Judas, Ananias was sent to him by the Lord, and, coming to him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared to thee in the way as thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales," and he was filled with the very life and Spirit of the Christ he had so vigorously persecuted. Saul did not die when Jesus appeared to him in the way, but Saul, the hateful persecutor, was transformed to Paul, the mighty apostle of the grace of God and faithful lover of his wonderful Christ.

Christianity today has no need so great as is its need to meet personally with our Lord Jesus Christ, and I am sure that such an appearing is very near at hand, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." **Titus 2:11-13** "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (the body of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (His body of glory) according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." This, beloved, is the blessed hope and the result of His glorious appearing, which is now near at hand. This appearing is the blessed hope of the sons of God and the assurance of their manifestation, which in turn is the hope and earnest longing of all creation. "For the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

Now, we may then be perfectly sure that there will be a second appearing of our Lord just as there was a first appearing when He appeared among men some two thousand years ago to deal with sin and put sin away by the sacrifice of Himself. There will assuredly be a second appearing when He comes a second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation all who are looking for Him, Heb. 9:28 For the earnest consideration of the saints who live in these end times I suggest that it is very probable that we have concerned ourselves far too much with times and seasons and expected dates for His second appearing. As a consequence we have forgotten the work of progression going on in the saints by which devout individuals here and now are being changed from glory to glory while we yet dwell amid all the curse and tribulation of this trouble filled age. Consider what a marvelous promise is presented in the following words: "But we all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **2 Cor. 3:18**

It should be evident to us all from these words of truth that there is a wide open door of opportunity presented to every child of God so that we may here and now enter into the blessedness of the appearing of Christ, even unto that exceeding glory, the transformation of our bodies, while we yet await the day when He comes, not to deal with sin, but to bring us to incorruption in the twinkling of an eye. While this may be the introduction of an entirely new hope to most of us, there is much reason to believe that such a glorious hope exists. If this were not so, then why would Paul have said, when writing to the Philippians that he counted all things but dung that he might win Christ, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, and then to have continued, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended (that is, the resurrection) of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"? **Phil. 3:10-14** This verse, brethren is loaded with truth - ineffable, marvelous, wonderful truth. What is the prize of the high calling of God of which the apostle speaks? Is he not teaching in all these verses about the resurrection"? And he is

speaking, not only of the resurrection, but also of the hope of attaining that mark and sharing in the glory of transformation here and now. What else could the apostle mean when he said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead", if he were not speaking of attaining the prize in this age? Certainly Paul was not afraid he might never be resurrected, either in this age or in the ages to come, for our Lord has declared that there will be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. So the fact of resurrection is beyond question. No! Paul was hoping that he might attain the glory of the resurrection while still in this life. This truth is further emphasized by the wording of the Emphatic Diaglott, which makes **Phil. 3:11** to say, "Being conformed to the death of Himself, if possibly I may attain to the resurrection out of the dead ones." To my understanding this means that Paul's hope was that he might attain the glory of the resurrection even though a vast number of Christians remained ignorant and dead to the possibility. It is true that, if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin. This fact is true of all the saved, but that is not the end of the story. The apostle continues with this blessed truth: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." **Rom. 8:11** The meaning of these two scriptures, when placed together, is definite and emphatic. Paul intended that the saints should know the wonderful possibility of our attaining the resurrection glory here and now, while we walk among the dead of this age.

All of God's people have, I suppose, pondered in disbelief the words of our Lord when in His discourse on the bread of life He said, "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." **John 6:33** And again, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." **Verse 35** And yet again, I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." **John 6:48-51**

I know that these words seem to be incredible, but they are truth. The Jews who stood by thought them to be incredible and refused to believe them. And we may disbelieve them or, worse still, explain them away as unbelievers have done for centuries in their learned, educated, faithless and unbelieving sermons. The words of Christ remain there still true and faithful to those who can believe them. When Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you", the unbelievers asked, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" This I also could not answer, so I said to the Lord in prayer, "What is the meaning of this saying, 'Except ye eat My flesh?'" And He, speaking to my inner spirit, replied, "The Word was made flesh." Then I asked, "How can we drink His blood?" Again the blessed answer came, "Blood is life." Therefore I saw clearly that to partake of His flesh is in truth to partake of Him, for He is the Word that was made flesh and to partake in faith of all the wonderful words of truth He spoke is to eat His flesh (the Word) and to drink His blood (His life). To partake of His life is to partake of Him; and to those who partake the promise is given, first, that they shall never die and, second, that they shall live forever because "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." **John 6:55-58** In **verse 58** Jesus said, "He that eateth this bread shall live forever", and in **verse 50** He said, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." These two statements taken together are very potent and confirming to say the least. Thus the Lord was showing those who look for Him the true way to life, resurrection and transformation, but was veiling that truth from those who could not believe. These will share in a resurrection yet to come.

We must all believe that certain saints of the past have been taken out of this world without dying. We believe that Enoch was translated because of his faith. Therefore we read, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." **Heb. 11:5** Was not Elijah also translated and so escaped the grave? Is it not true that Jesus said of the beloved John, "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee?" **John 21:20** In this remarkable statement our Lord was not merely telling Peter that things concerning John were none of his business. He was really confirming to believing hearts that such a thing as tarrying until Jesus comes was a distinct possibility. It was always a policy of our Lord to veil the truth from the eyes of those who did not believe, but to reveal it to those who did. Do you not think it is a most remarkable thing that church history records the deaths of all the apostles except John? Such things are not accidents, but inspiration, and tell us

plainly that John also may have become a partaker of resurrection life, even as Enoch, and never saw the grave at all.

There is one thing of importance that must be emphasized here. It is this: We must never believe, as so many have foolishly done, that our Lord ever intended that any saint would live on and on forever in a corruptible body. These bodies of death and humiliation were never designed to live forever. If believers are to live forever and not see death, it must be because they have been changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord until they come into His likeness.

The first glory is the ever-fading glory of corruption. The second glory is the glory of incorruption. The third glory is the glory of immortality. Our Lord Jesus did as we must do, passing from glory to glory. He was changed from corruption to incorruption to immortality. He rose from the dead incorruptible. He ascended to heaven into the presence of Him "who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." **1 Tim. 6:16** Many people have taught that we can live forever, but to live on in these bodies of corruption is a thing the Lord never intended. The change to incorruption must come first, and it will come when He appears, whether that appearing be a personal appearing to individuals now or whether it be at the moment of change in the twinkling of an eye when He appears to all His saints. Let us then forget the corruptible things which are behind us and reach forth unto the incorruption that lies before us, while we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, if by any means we might attain the resurrection out from among the dead ones.

THE GLORY THAT EXCELLETH

"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." **1 Cor. 15:39-44** Notice now the difference between the first Adam and the last Adam. "So it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit (that is, a life-giving spirit). Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." **Verses 45-47** In our spiritual progression we pass from the fading glory of the natural through the spiritual to the celestial. Passing from glory to glory we pass from the fading glory of the corruptible realm to the more excellent glory of the incorruptible and on to the glory that excelleth, the immortal; from the glory of the stars, where one star differs from another in glory, to the glory of the moon to the glory of the sun. It is all too wonderful for me. I cannot explain it! It can only be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead"; but, even though the parable of life exists all about us in creation, it is only the Holy Spirit who can receive of the Father and show the truth to you and me.

There is something inherent in the nature of man that makes him very slow to accept change. This is the way it has always been, he thinks, and this is the way it is to be; but he forgets, if indeed he ever knew, that God's plan is ever progressive, leading the faithful from step to step and from glory to glory.

"The path of bad men leads through darkness dim;
They do not know what makes them stumble.
The path of good men is as a ray of dawn,
Ever increasing to the full light of day."

Christians fear change, but the real truth is that it is their lack of progress from one glory to another that makes them stumble and lose their way. Their souls grow weary of "this light bread" they have fed on for so long and so they become willing to change the manna of their wilderness for the flesh-pots of Egypt. Therefore, instead of advancing to the next glory, the Lord gives them the flesh of quails to the full, but even while the food is in

their mouths, His anger is kindled against them, and, instead of receiving glory, they are smitten with a fatal plague, and the name of the place was called Kibrothhattaavah because there they buried the people that lusted. See Num. 11:33-34 So, you see, we either follow on from glory to glory or we are buried beneath the weight of our own backsliding and unbelief. I do not think the Lord is interested in how much we know or even how much we do. He is interested in how well we believe, how we accept, and how well we follow the light that shines brightly until the day of our perfection.

The glory of yesterday and yesteryear is not sufficient for today. "Time makes ancient good uncouth. We must ever up and onward who would keep abreast of truth." Just when we begin to feel we have reached the final goal and compliment ourselves that we have attained that for which we sought, we discover that there is another horizon away out yonder, and the Spirit within tells us that it is another and far greater glory than has yet been reached. It is the promised land of the Spirit. Yes, indeed, there will be giants to bar our progress to the distant peaks sublime. But the Holy Spirit whispers, "You are well able to overcome them by My power." Most of those who once spied out the land with us will turn back, saying as Israel of old, "It is a good land, but we are not able to take it." In their hearts they will turn back to the wilderness to become ever more and more established in the things that were once glorious, but have faded as the glory did from Moses' face. Their ancient doctrines, their dogmas, their crowds and their groups are things they imagine must be preserved at all costs, and there with their tradition they will remain amid the ever increasing shadows of things that once were new, but now have grown old and are ready to vanish away. The cloud that once overshadowed them has moved on, but they have remained behind in the wilderness. The glory that once dwelt among them, filling their lives with hope and making the joy bells ring within them, has now moved on to a greater glory. Some of the faithful have moved on with it - a very small number indeed - but the great majority have remained behind to perish in the wilderness of their yesterdays, talk of the "good old days" when God was among them, and hurl their maledictions at those who have gone on with Him to the more excellent glory that lay before them.

How often we wonder about the twelve men whom Moses sent before Israel to spy out the promised land! Why was it that only two, Caleb and Joshua, believed they were able to take the land and enter into its rest, partake of its new wine, its milk and honey and strong corn? Why was it that, of the twelve who saw the land and testified that it was good, ten returned home to discourage the hosts of the Lord from entering in to the promise of rest? Well, my brother or sister, that is always the way it has been and the way it will always be. We will be fortunate indeed if we can find two out of twelve who will enter in. Oh so often it is "one of a city and two of a family". The path of consecration that lies ahead is too rough for most. It is much easier to sit and dream of the past than to labor up yonder toilsome mountain, so they settle down where they are with the big crowd or the little group and so perish in the wilderness of their own unbelief. Oh, how true are the words of inspiration, "Many are called but few are chosen!" And I regret to say that many who were once chosen, proved not faithful and so, falling into some slough of despond, returned to the glory they once had only to find that even it was no longer there. How sad! How pitiful! Yet how true!

How well I remember the excellent glory of the days of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit that came to us in 1948! I shall never forget those wonderful, moving, heaven-filled days. Men and women upon whom the Spirit had never moved before now opened their mouths to pour out their prophetic utterances that caused a violent shaking among the dry bones. I believe it may have been the very shaking Ezekiel saw. Ezek. 37 An incredible shaking took place among the shriveled denominations. It seemed the great day of final , glory had arrived. But it was not long before the preachers, always steeped in tradition, preached their sermons of denunciation, filling the hearts of the people with unbelief and fear. Ambitious men, who at first sought to enter the glory they saw ahead, were side-tracked, coveting the silver and the gold that the outpouring produced. They got their eyes on the dollars instead of the increasing glory and the ever unfolding light of revelation. How well I remember a relation of mine, as I sought to advance to the greater glory that lay before us, saying in no uncertain tones, "You will rue the day, and it will hurt you financially, too." Perhaps he was right, but the prize before us is far too great to consider such paltry things as finance.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour endured the cross, despising the shame, because of the glorious throne that lay before Him. The day of anguish and sorrow came when His disciples forsook Him and fled, but more terrible still was the hour when His Father's face could not be seen. Our souls will see no rainbows if our eyes have shed no tears. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

There is a beautiful little parable wrapped in the arms of one single verse in the Gospel of **Matthew, Chapter 13**, verse 44. This is what it says: "**The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.**" I want you to notice that the man who found the treasure in the field could not lay claim to it because the field was not his. He did not go to the owner and ask to buy the treasure. If the man had known the treasure was there, no money could have bought it, so this man made the wisest move possible. He decided to buy the field and then the treasure that was hidden in it would also be his. But he did not have the money in the bank to buy it, so he gathered together everything he possessed and sold it all. He sold "all that he had", the verse tells us. With that price in his hand he went and bought the field in which the treasure lay. The price of the field in which the treasure lies, dear friend, is always the same. It never, never varies in value. It will cost you all that you have. All that I am! All that I have! That is the price of the field. If you possess a lot of old relics that you are determined to keep, your denomination, your sects, your groups, then you will not have sufficient to buy the field. Even if you are determined to hold on to the glory of yester-year, you will not be able to buy the field. It costs you everything. Even if you have left your denomination but are still determined to cling at all costs to your little group - and you may do so if you wish - you will not have enough to buy the field in which the hidden treasure lies. Let it go, my brother or sister. Offer it up as a burnt offering unto God and the smoke of it will ascend to Him as a sweet incense. The price will be acceptable in His sight.

Our spiritual experiences are like the manna that fell in the wilderness in the long ago. If any of it was kept on hand till the next day, it bred worms and stank. New manna had to be found every morning. So it will always be with our spiritual experience. The excellent glory was for our yesterday. The more excellent glory is for our tomorrow. Some time ago I went to visit a beloved old friend, whom I had known from infancy, as he lay dying in a hospital. He had been wonderfully saved in our meetings in 1934. As he lay on his bed, knowing that soon the angels would call to carry him triumphantly home, he said to me, "Brother, I would like to tell you something that the Lord gave me. I think it is a word of wisdom." This is it:

Think not of the past;
It is forgotten.
Nor peer into the future;
It will yet unfold.
But live today in the eternal present,
For where the Lord is it is now — today.

And what a word of wisdom that really is! Our Lord is the I AM THAT I AM - not the I AM that I was. If we want to move with Him, we must be where He is now, not years back in the past. Jesus said, "**I will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.**" **John 14:3**. And when Thomas complained, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" His only reply was, "I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me."

Think of passing from a storm and tempest to a quiet harbor,
Of stepping on shore and finding it heaven;
Of taking hold of a hand and finding it God's hand;
Of breathing new atmosphere and finding it celestial air;
Of feeling invigorated and finding it immortality;
Of awaking and finding it home.

Home is where He is - not where He was centuries ago.

Just before our Lord's ascension He commanded His disciples that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait until Pentecost for the promise of the Father, "which," said He, "ye have heard of Me." In faithful obedience to His command they tarried in Jerusalem, for there were yet seven days before the day of Pentecost would come. When that blessed day was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly, as they waited, there was a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind that filled all the place where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, that sat upon each of

them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:1-4 Many have tried to describe the excellent glory of that marvelous outpouring and have reveled in the glory and power that followed it as the apostles gave witness with such mighty power from on high that multitudes both of men and women turned to the Lord. Even of the priests a great company believed. On and on the mighty outpouring swept until by the end of the first century one twentieth of the entire heathen Roman Empire had turned to the Lord, but by the time of the death of the apostles the excellent glory of Pentecost was fading away. Like all other glories this one was growing old and was ready to vanish away. With the exception of John it seems that all the other apostles had left the scene of earth's conflicts and were gone to their reward, and John was on the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Christ. As He walked in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, he heard a voice behind him, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." So he turned to see who had spoken the words, and, being turned, he "saw seven golden candlesticks and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shin-eth in his strength." When John saw Him, he fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon him, saying, "I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." See **Rev. 1:11-18**.

Without doubt the wonderful glories of Pentecost were fading away. No doubt then as now some of the old Christians sadly remembered the good old days and longed to have them back again. But John was not sighing nor crying for the good days of Pentecost. Well he knew they belonged to the yesterdays. His heart was crying for a new revelation of God's glory and what he saw was something so far beyond his imagination and so far beyond the glory of Pentecost that he fell as a dead man before the light of it. This apostle had seen first hand the glory manifested in the life and ministry of Jesus. He had gone to the mount of transfiguration with Him to behold the glory of the transfiguration of Christ. He had been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and had seen signs and wonders follow his own wonderful ministry. But now he saw an incomparable glory far, far beyond anything he had ever seen or imagined. It was the glory of the Christ in His body of sons. It was not the voice of the lonely Galilean that he heard, but the voice of many waters. No longer was it one single Son of God, but many sons, all baptized in one Spirit into one glorious Christ, and the light of such excellent, exceeding glory was more than John's mortality could stand, and he, falling as one dead, had to be raised up by the hand of Christ. Perhaps it was on this occasion of the glorious appearing of Christ that John was transformed into that same image, to put off corruption and put on incorruption. I am not sure that this is so, but in my spirit I feel a witness that this is true; "for unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring full salvation to all who are looking for Him." For such a glorious appearing we may now confidently look, for the signs around in earth and air and painted on the star-lit sky, God's faithful witnesses, declare that the coming of the Master draweth nigh.

CONCLUSION

There seems to be no suitable place to bring the thoughts of this chapter to a close. The more the truth unfolds the more we discover of the wonders of His inexhaustible purpose. No mountain of truth is so high but that another peak, yet still more lofty lifts its glorious head to shine its rays of truth upon us. For us to attempt to exhaust a subject such as this is to attempt the impossible. It is limitless in its riches even as God who planned it is exhaustless. But, that we might better search out and meditate upon the riches of our inheritance and become one with the ever increasing glory, I will attempt a brief recapitulation of the thoughts we have considered that they may be the more firmly fixed in our minds.

It has become the habit of God's people, perhaps for centuries, to think of "glory" as being tantamount to heaven or that they are, so to speak, six of one and half a dozen of the other. This idea is not founded on any scripture of which I am aware. It is true, we may be sure, that heaven will be glory and glory will be heaven, but if we imagine that both terms refer to the same thing, we will find ourselves in error and in much misunderstanding. How we are to explain just what glory is I am at a loss to know. Because it belongs to the

realm of the Father, it is divine and far beyond the realm of our corruption. It is nonetheless a blessedness that our Saviour has revealed when in prayer He said to His Father, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." This inheritance is part of His last will and testament, given as a legacy to all who believe. It is ours; but no man in all this age to our knowledge has ever received the glory He promised in its fullness. There is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory awaiting the sons of God as this dispensation draws to its close; and by all signs and signals it cannot be far off.

The glory of God is a transforming radiance, emanating from the Father of glory. Flesh and corruption can no more abide in its presence than a slip of paper can endure the furnace flame. After our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the stony-hearted Saul of Tarsus, Paul himself recounts the story: "As I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me ... And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus." **Acts 22:6, 11** In Acts 26:13 Paul relates that the radiance of that glory light was above the brightness of the sun. From this we are to see that this more excellent glory was a radiant shekinah, emanating from the light which He Himself is.

Again it is written that, after Moses had been in the presence of the Lord at Sinai, the "children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." **2 Cor. 3:7** In the awesome vision recorded by Daniel, his mortal eyes beheld the transforming vision of the Ancient of days, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like wool. His throne was like the fiery flame and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from Him. Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. Dan. 7:9-10 What an awe-inspiring, transforming display of His magnificent glory! There are many other scriptures manifesting the transforming appearance of God's glory, but these few, I trust, will help us to see that glory is not heaven, but rather a transforming, unspeakable radiance, emanating from the Most High as a perfume issues forth from a prairie rose or the radiance of light and heat flows forth from the sun. Such excellent glory comes forth from the realm of the Spirit and is therefore beyond any words of description that could proceed from the mind or pen of man. Glory is a quality belonging to God. It suggests that aura which radiates from the one who possesses it, leaving its transforming impress behind. Glory, honor and power proceed forth from God the Father most glorious.

The Hebrew word kabod (English, glory) does not refer to God in His essential nature, but bespeaks the luminous manifestation of His person - the glorious manifestation of Himself as shown in the following scriptures: "In the morning, then ye shall see the glory (kabod) of the Lord." Exod. 16:7 "And he (Moses) said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory (kabod). And he said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee." **Exod. 33:18** "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord (the kabod) shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 40:4-5** Why should we fail to see that this very promise has definite reference to our own change from corruption to incorruption by the revelation of the glory of the Lord? "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord (the kabod) is risen upon thee." **Isa. 60:1** "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord (the kabod) appeared in the cloud." Exod. 16:10 Notice also Deut. 5:24 The glory of the Lord is linked to seeing as in Exod. 16:7; Isa. 40:5; to appearing as in Exod. 16:10; Isa. 60:1; and to presence as in **Exod. 40:34**. "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

The Bible clearly teaches that there is to be a full manifestation of the kabod- that is, the glory of the Lord - in the last days. Its purpose is to bring full salvation, which, of course, includes the body of incorruption, to the Israel of God, salvation for spirit, soul, and body. The purpose of the manifestation of God's glory is twofold; first, to bring salvation to Israel, and secondly, through the manifestation of this glory to bring salvation to all nations. Let us notice how Isaiah reveals this purpose of God in the following words:

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." **Isa. 60:1** First this glory must come to us. The nations of the world are not going to be converted until this transforming glory radiates from God's own people who are changed from corruptible to incorruptible. Our Father in heaven never intended that the world would be converted during the darkness and deadness of this age. The only command on behalf of

the heathen was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But those among the heathen who have believed are exceedingly few by comparison with those who have not believed. The light of full salvation will not shine with any degree of brightness until this transforming glory appears, transforming God's people from corruptible to incorruptible in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Note now from verse 2 that this shining forth of God's glory is to begin at the time that "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." **Isa. 60:2** The people referred to here are the Israel people, but at this very moment, when all nations are in utter darkness, "the Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together unto thee, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." **Isa. 60:1-4** How well Isaiah saw this great awakening among the heathen is clearly seen in Isa. 55; and David also in his **96th Psalm**, speaking of the glory of the Lord, said, "Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people." "Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name ... O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." **Verses 3, 7-8** There will be no lasting effect while those who preach the glory of the Lord do not possess that glory themselves, but in that day the glory of the Lord will not only rest upon the people, but will be proceeding forth from them as it now proceeds from God. The saints of the Lord will manifest the excellent glory of incorruption. "I will set My glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgments that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them." It is very apparent that these inspired writers expected a full manifestation of this glory in the last days.

The New Testament equivalent of the Hebrew word kabod (English, glory) is the Greek word doxa, variously translated glory 144 times; dignity 2; honor 6; praise 4; worship 1. The adjective doxazo is used in the New Testament 62 times.

We have already read that, when Moses received the law, which was the ministration of death to the carnal man, his face shone with the glory of God, as Paul described in 2 Cor. 3:7-8; but that glory was a fading glory and eventually faded from his countenance because it was the ministration of death. Though this fading glory could never produce incorruption, it is most significant that, when Moses was one hundred twenty years old, his natural force was unabated and his eye not dim, and, when his ministry was completed before a new order was ushered in, it was necessary for the Lord to tell him to go up the mountain and die - which he did.

Paul, having related these things, went on to explain that if the ministration of death was glorious, how much more glorious will be the ministration of Life and the Spirit, saying, "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." **2 Cor. 3:7-9.** "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." **Verse 11.** Then, to conclude his wonderful reasoning, he says, "But we all, with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." **Verse 18.** These wonderful truths are being made known to us in these last days, "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This glory of which he speaks is the doxa (Greek) and is the same glory as the Hebrew kabod, of which we have written above.

The truth of the subject is that we already "have this treasure (glory) in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." **2 Cor. 4:7** The seed of this treasure - this glory - is already within those who have the Spirit, but its manifestation has been only in a very, very limited way. The glory has been veiled as the Ark of the Covenant was veiled and as Moses' face was veiled; but the moment is at hand for the unveiling and then with face unveiled we are changed from glory to glory into the very image of the resurrected Christ. If we will take time to carefully study the succeeding verses of 2 Cor. Chapter 4, we will see clearly that trouble, persecution, and every affliction that comes upon us, our bearing about in our body this dying, is sent by God, not to curse us, but to bring the true life and manifestation of His glory. 2 Cor. 4:10-11

Following this wonderful revelation of chapters 3 and 4, the apostle proceeds to assure us that, if our earthly house in this tabernacle (the body) were completely dissolved, we have a "house not made with hands, eternal

in the heavens." Rend it with prayerful meditation and you will be given under standing by the Spirit that these promises are for us now more than any other time in history. It is time to "rise mid shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon (us)." Never was there a time of greater darkness than now. It literally covers the earth and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee. Isa. 60:1-3.

The two wonderful attributes praise and honor unwrapped up in and integral parts of God's glory. Thus Peter beautifully states, "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory (the doxa) at the appearing of Jesus Christ." This brings our minds back to the truth of the glorious appearing of Christ and the magnificent truth we have been unfolding that "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This next glory is to come when He appears to us, and when that appearing takes place, the change will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4 By the appearing of Christ death is abolished, because the glory of incorruption has been revealed. Then the glory that excelleth, which is immortality, is brought to light. Incorruption is the end of death. Immortality lies ahead where God "dwells in the light which no man (mortal) can approach unto."

With joy and anticipation we look for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Tit. 2:13, who shall change these bodies of our humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (body of glory). Phil. 3:21 This promise is made unto all them that love His appearing. 2 Tim. 4:8 Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to make our salvation complete.

Therefore, laying aside "every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Can Christians grow by holding firm
To doctrine and to creed?
The Shepherd leads His sheep to where
They in new pastures feed.
Can food of yesteryear suffice
For hunger of today?
Was it not for our daily bread
That He taught us to pray?
A soul can never grow in grace
That is content to stay
In blissful contemplation of
The things of yesterday
And live alone in memory
Of some bright evening star.
His grace was sent to lead us on,
Not keep us where we are.
Unfolding revelation is
God's purpose for this hour.
Why live in flesh? The stratospheres
Are vibrant with His power!
There is a Spirit realm to which
We can triumphant rise,
And blend redemption's melodies
With music from the skies.

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TREASURES OF TRUTH, VOLUME 32
GLORY, HONOR, AND IMMORTALITY, ETERNAL LIFE
 BY: GEORGE R. HAWTIN

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CHAPTER ONE
AN INTRODUCTION

This morning, January 14, 1986, for family devotion my wife and I read the gracious word of God spoken through His faithful servant Hosea. Gomer, the wife of Hosea, had borne a son to him and, at the time when the son was to receive a name, "then God said, Call his name Lo-Ammi; (a word which means not My people); for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." **Hosea 1:9-10** Upon reading these blessed words of infinite grace, I had to pause to choke back my emotions. Can mortal man indeed comprehend such matchless, infinite grace as this, spoken in loving kindness and tender mercy to such a prodigal son as the House of Israel, who continually devoured his inheritance with such avid prodigality among the harlots of Baalism and all manner of false gods, and now, after his lavish squandering, he sits half starved in the swine pen of his earthly corruption, unfaithfulness and unbelief? Who but the Father, full of grace, could ever have uttered such words as these to a sinful, rebellious people? "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

When our wonderful Lord Jesus recited the story of the prodigal son, (Luke 15:11-34), he was in fact re-citing and re-telling the same story found here in the words of Hosea the prophet. Our Lord in the gospel of Luke spoke of a son who was not content with the warmth, love and provision of a kind, caring father, but who no doubt had for many years sullenly harbored the rebellious thought of a day when he could free himself from the wise and kind restraints of his parents and home to have his uninhibited fling, unrestrained and unrestricted, in prodigal living. Like almost every boy, he imagined himself to be much wiser than his father. He resented the cautions of his mother. They were too old-fashioned, he thought. In his immature mind he judged that his parents were out to spoil his fun, and he would enjoy life without them.

Long had he impatiently awaited the day when he would be old enough to receive the inheritance his father had through sacrifice and toil laid up in store for him, and when at long last that day came, he was instant with his request; "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me, and he (the father) divided unto them his living. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance in riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of

thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, / have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." **Luke 15:12-24**

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord!
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt;
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.
Dark is the stain that we cannot hide;
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide.
Whiter than snow you may be today.
Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe.
You who are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?

How our glad hearts rejoice and our eyes drop down their pearls of praise in the sacred knowledge that our heavenly Father has called us prodigals home and introduced us to the assembled throng with the words of pride and joy, "This is my son, who was dead and is alive. He was lost and now is found." Angels of light on starry wings touch their harps of gold and rejoice before the throne of God that one sinner has repented and returned from his prodigal wandering back to the fold from which he strayed.

Coming home! Coming home, never more to roam.
Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home!

Oh, let us always remember that it was the Father who so loved the world that He gave His Son. It was the Father who gave His Son for the ransom of the many. It was the Father who gave His Son to be a propitiation for us — not to propitiate Himself, but to propitiate us and dispose us to kindness and repentance. It was the Father who gave the only Son He had to reconcile us to God. It was the Father who sent us the glorious tidings that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and it was the Father who committed that marvelous universal word of reconciliation to us, and He made us ambassadors for Christ, "as though God did beseech you by us, Be ye reconciled to God" **2 Cor. 5:18-20** The more I read the Bible and the more I come to know Him by personal association with Him the more the evidence abounds that our heavenly Father is hopelessly in love with His creation and is longing for the day when each and every wandering soul returns to Him with the eager words upon his lips, "Father, I have sinned". Then, without waiting for more and without one word of reproach, with joy He calls to His servants, "Bring the robe of righteousness and put it on him. Put the marriage ring on his finger. Bring hither the shoes that he may be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Kill the fatted calf and let us dance and rejoice and sing, for this My son was dead, but now he lives forever, a new creation in Christ Jesus. He was lost and is found." And they began to make merry. It is a merriment and rejoicing that has only begun. The ever increasing joy of our sonship will never end, no, not in all the eons of eternity; for this My son was dead and is alive again - he was lost and is found.

Thus did the Most High Father speak through His prophet Hosea, saying, "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

O the love that sought me!
O the love that bought me!
O the grace that brought me to the fold!
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold!

Oh the wonder of it all! Sonship! Sons of God and joint heirs with Christ! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." **1 John 3:1** Sonship is the hope of all creation. It is the pride of God's own heart. He created the whole race, the Adamic race, and the first father of that race, Adam. He (Adam) is called the son of God. Luke 3:38. If our father Adam was a son of God, then indisputably he belonged to the God family, and we, being his children, are sons of that Adam and are the children of him who was called the son of God. Prodigal sons indeed we have been, without hope, without God in the world, sometimes called the children of wrath even as others, "but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved); and hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" **Eph. 2:4-7**

Our sonship is the hope of all creation. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." **Rom. 8:20-23**

CHAPTER TWO GLORY, HONOR, IMMORTALITY, ETERNAL LIFE

There's a big, wide world away out yonder;
There are forests where silence has lease.
There's a beauty that fills me with wonder;
There's a stillness that fills me with peace.

The story of every Christian life will eventually be the story of a progression from the natural through the spiritual to the celestial, passing from the realm of the corruptible through the incorruptible to the immortal; from the brazen altar of sacrifice in the outer court to the golden altars of communion and prayer in the dim light of the candlestick in the holy place into the holiest of all, where shines undimmed the more excellent glory, the shekinah, the eternal "kabod". Of the New Jerusalem it is written: "And the glory of God did lighten it." **Rev. 21:23** No wonder inspiration has added the words, "There shall be no night there." **Rev. 21:25**

The light of His love shineth brighter
As it falls on paths of woe;
The toil of my work groweth lighter
As I stoop to raise the low.

Amid all the stormy, fiery declarations of condemnation and judgment found in the first two chapters of the book of Romans, the blessed Holy Spirit, as His custom always is, intermingles His fiery judgments with wonderful, marvelous, infinite words of grace and promise. Hear His blessed voice as the inspired Paul writes: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil... but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good." **Rom. 2:5-10** Before judgment our heavenly Father always remembers mercy, and after judgment He remembers it again. The centre verse of the entire Bible is this: "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other." **Psa. 85:10**

In the loving embrace of that one verse, Rom. 2:7, is presented to man a most astonishing and beautiful child of promise. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor and immortality, eternal life." Glory, honor, immortality, eternal life! Saint of God, how is it possible to read such thrilling words of promise, declared and proffered to all who seek and believe? Yet so very few pay the slightest heed to what is

being said. Shall we indeed daily tread among such "pearls of great price" and not even notice that they are there? Can we hold these rubies and diamonds in our hands and gaze upon them, never to notice that they are valuable? Can we look upon these gleaming sapphires of promise and not perceive that they are beautiful? Yet that is exactly what we do. Must we, God's people, through our heedless carelessness be likened unto those swine of which Jesus spoke that heedlessly trample priceless pearls beneath their feet or rip to shreds all things of value that may fall among them? I frankly admit with shamefacedness and regret that I myself have committed many chapters of scripture to memory without being awed by the truth they proffered. Among those glorious chapters was this second chapter of Romans. In fact, it is only now, sixty years later, that I have begun to notice the majesty of what is promised in this blessed seventh verse - glory, honor, immortality, eternal life. What rare and priceless gems these are! What incomparable treasure hid in a field! Let us, then, gather all other of earth's possessions together and sell them that we may buy this field and possess this costly treasure. It will cost us all we have. The price is always the same, but the eternal treasure will be ours. A Christian once said to a saint, "I would give the world to have an experience like yours!" The saint replied, "That is just what it cost me." The poet wrote, "All that I am, all that I have, I surrender to Thee." We shall not, I fear, enter into the glory of these promises unless we heed the advice that precedes them - "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life."

I have never been blessed with great patience. Whatever task lay before me I have wanted to tear into and get it done immediately, if not sooner, but I have found patience to be one of the most important rungs in the ladder by which we rise into the fullness of the love of God. Listen to these words of wisdom as they flow like living waters from the mind of the Holy Spirit: "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost ..." **Rom. 5:3-5** Again it is written: "The trial of your faith worketh patience." **James 1:3** And yet again: "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." **James 1:4** Patience is named among the virtues, even as the beloved Peter exhorted us, saying, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." **2 Pet. 1:5-7** Thus with the virtues of the Spirit is built the ladder by which we rise from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies and we mount its summit round by round.

In like manner the apostle Paul exhorted the saints to seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life by patient continuance in well doing. We will not succeed in attaining such promises if we imagine we can ask for them today and blossom out tomorrow in these priceless robes of heavenly glory. If we are unwilling to patiently continue to seek this treasure, we will fail to find it. With all my heart I believe there must be a hunger and a thirst for this kind of righteousness. Only the hungering and thirsting are filled. It is not difficult to feed a hungry man. How eloquently has the scripture said, "The full soul loatheth the honey comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." **Prov. 27:7** So it is with the things of Christ and of the Spirit. If we seek for righteousness, there must be a hunger and thirst for righteousness - so much so that we are more than willing to lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us that we may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Perfection came to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ through suffering; for it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Heb. 2:10 God is bringing many sons to glory, and this is the same glory we were exhorted to seek when the beloved Paul told us all that with patient continuance in well doing we should seek for glory, honor and immortality, eternal life.

All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. 1 John 2:16. These may be briefly defined by the words appetite, avarice and ambition. The ambitions of earth can often be shameful. Lucifer once expounded his unholy ambition in these fateful words: "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." **Isa. 14:13-14** But what saith the answer of God to him? "Thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." **Verse 15**

There is, however, a holy ambition, which God exhorts us to have. Much as our Lord hates covetousness, He has exhorted us to covet earnestly the best gifts; and as much as he despises the kind of ambition evil men

display, yet at the bottom of all pure religion there must be an overwhelming ambition to earnestly seek all the blessings and promises of the kingdom of God. But we cannot possess the kingdom of God without the King. Those who seek Him must be transformed into His likeness, but we can never ever be like Him until He possesses us and we possess Him. Nobody on earth can quite comprehend the anomalous statement, "Thou in Me and I in Thee, that they may be made perfect in one." Nobody, I say, except the saint to whom it is revealed. To the natural man the Lord is speaking an impossibility when he says, "Thou in Me and I in Thee", but to the saint it is no impossibility but a vast and possible necessity.

Sixty years ago I heard a preacher say, "It is one thing for the Spirit to be in you, but another thing for you to be in the Spirit." In the infancy of my Christian walk I wondered how this could be; but with the passing years it became increasingly clear that many people who had once been filled with the Spirit were not walking in the Spirit nor acting in the Spirit. Rather they were living after the earth-bound dictates of a corrupt carnal nature. Sad indeed have been the times when I discovered that my own life was not always being led in harmony with the Spirit who dwelt within. For this reason Paul said, "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." If we walk in obedience to this principle, then the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will make us free from the law of sin and death. "This I say, then; walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Should one seek for glory, honor and immortality with some thought of self-aggrandizement in mind, this in itself is a great evil. All such seeking will remain unfulfilled, but for one who seeks these promises with holy desire in the knowledge that his attainment of them is both God's purpose and God's will there is guaranteed great reward and the mighty promises of God are placed within his reach. I have known of men who fasted for forty days in the vain hope of attaining a spiritual gift that would make them great and prosperous. All such seeking is worthless and wrong. If we have the right end in view, we will adhere to the right way, and, if the end in view is as high as heaven itself, God will be pleased with our ambition and will see that we come not short of the prize. It is not enough to know well, and profess well, and speak well. There must be a corresponding well doing that we may with well doing seek for glory, honor and immortality, eternal life. Those who spend a lifetime seeking the honor and glory of this present evil world usually end up missing even that, but those who seek that honor and glory, immortality and eternal life which our Father in heaven offers shall be rewarded by receiving them to keep in glory, honor and peace unto life eternal. Rom. 2:10

Patient continuance in well doing cannot possibly be attained except there be a complete cessation of evil doing, and carnality and corruption be banished from our lives. Furthermore, there must be a complete cessation of all evil thinking, scheming and planning. We have observed how Paul, when he wrote this truth, pronounced tribulation and anguish upon all who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness. Weymouth puts it in these words: "To each man He will make an award according to his deeds; to those who, by lives of persistent right-doing, strive for glory, honor and immortality, eternal life; while on the self-willed who yield not to the truth but yield to iniquity there shall fall wrath and affliction and anguish upon every human soul who does wrong." **Rom. 2:6-9** Perhaps some will accuse me of legalism, but I am not stating my own opinion, but rather the sacred and forceful words of the Holy Spirit, clearly stated for searching saints to read and understand.

There are some things we are going to have to do and some things we are going to have to forsake. We are going to have to forsake all gluttony and living after the physical senses and in place of these we must devote ourselves to fasting, meditation and prayer. It is essential that we forsake all evil speakings and carnal judgments, for with what judgment we judge we shall likewise be judged, and with what measure we meet it shall be measured to us again. "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" We must refrain from casting that which is holy to unclean dogs no matter what they profess, and we must cease from the useless practice of casting the pearls of God's truth before the swinish minds of unbelieving professors to be trampled underfoot while they turn to rend us for our faith in God. I shall make no hesitation in saying that he who feeds his mind on filthiness will remain filthy still. The filth that comes over the air waves, if watched or listened to, will thrust the evil sword of death into his spirit, inflicting mortal and spiritual wounds that will never heal until he casts away the very source from which the wounding came. The great evils invented to feed modern day corruption can never be dragged in through the door of the kingdom of God. They are too wide for that holy door, and if we insist on keeping them, as we would keep an idol, we will find ourselves unable to enter the realm of glory, honor and immortality.

There can be no tenacious hanging on to the things of the past. There must be a clean break away from all of Egypt's bondage and every relationship with the drunken harlot of Babylon. Rev. 17:6. We must forsake even the things that seem to be pleasant, good and harmless that we may attain, and for my part nothing short of attaining will satisfy. We must attain without counting any cost. We must sell all that we have that we may buy the pearl of great price. We must buy the truth, but sell it not. It will mean the loss of friends. It will mean misunderstanding among our relatives and often the closest members of our family. That is why Jesus said, "**I am come not to send peace, but a sword.**" **Matt. 10:34**

Some of us have surely noticed how often in scripture the two beautiful words, glory and honor, are placed together, and now that we are beginning to see what glory and honor entail, we can surely see why it was so inspired by the Holy Spirit. As far back as the book of Chronicles we read these sacred words: "**Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: He also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Glory and honor are in His presence; strength and gladness are in His place.**" **1 Chron. 16:25-27** Glory and honor, we are here told, are to be found in His presence. It is in His presence that we find fullness of joy and it is in His presence that we will find glory and honor. Why are we so quick to seek for things where they cannot be found? Why are God's people so foolish - yea, so stupid - that they would imagine that they can attain to heavenly things while they insist upon indulging in the carnal entertainment offered by a corrupt and dying world? "**The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge; but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.**" **Prov. 15:14** These are the words of the Holy Spirit! Let us then be men and women of understanding, that, instead of feeding on the foolishness offered to us upon the platter of a corrupt and untoward generation, we may feast from the wisdom and understanding of God, offered to us by the Holy Spirit in the presence of the Lord that we may attain the glory and honor which is freely offered to those who abide in His presence.

Have you ever felt yourself to be in the beautiful presence of Christ? I am sure you must have done. If you have never waited for His presence, I strongly advise you to wait with Him until all earthly voices are stilled, until the sounds of business and daily life are silent, until you hear Him whisper His message to your heart. There are far, far too many people today talking about experiencing Christ who have never been washed in His blood. We are witnessing today the horribly regrettable sight of men and women imagining they are baptized with the Spirit, though they still smoke and drink and indulge in carnality. Others pretend to speak with tongues of men and angels who are effeminate, fornicators, idolaters, sodomites, covetous and extortioners. Deceive yourself no longer, friend. What you need is to repent and be saved. You do not need some fake charismatic baptism. What you need first is to be washed in the blood of Christ and cleansed and saved from your sin. The washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit is what a sinner needs first of all. Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

I do not intend to revile, but rather to speak the truth in warning when I say that what I have seen and heard of the so-called Charismatic Movement and the like has served to convince me that what Paul spoke of in **2 Thess. 2:9-12** is very true concerning this movement. Speaking of the mystery of iniquity, he said: "**Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned (condemned) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**" It is a fearful thing in my opinion that so many of these so-called charismatic people are the same people or the children of them who earlier rejected the great and mighty power of the Holy Spirit when He manifested Himself with signs and wonders in the Pentecostal outpouring when countless thousands of sinners were soundly converted, washed in the blood of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. But those who then rejected the truth are now being given over to delusion that they might believe a lie. Long ago our Lord made this solemn assertion to all unbelievers: "**I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in His own name, him ye will receive.**" **John 5:43**

When will the eyes of this untoward generation be opened to see the sham, the fake, the intrigue, the mimicry, the pretence and imitation of this present day religious abomination? When will we begin to see the falsehood, the deception, the guile, the bad faith, the purgery, the invention, the hollowness and eye-wash of the vaunted television ministry, conducted by men who can talk for an hour about their need of money to spread the gospel,

yet never preach a word of gospel in their programs? What a scathing word was spoken by Jeremiah when he described the preachers of our Laodicean age in these dire tones of rebuke: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" **Jer. 5:30-31** Surely the people shall know that the virgin of Israel has done a horrible thing. If there is no repentance, no crying for mercy, no kneeling to pray, no transformation in the lives of supposed converts, then there is no new birth either and there is no conversion. Christ did not come to save people in their sins; He came to save them from their sins. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new." **2 Cor. 5:17**. The true believer lives in a new realm, a new life, a new experience; it is a new birth. It is a resurrection from the dead. It is a right about face. It is a new attitude and a new direction. His soul - yea, his spirit - is born from above. He is re-born. He is born again.

Let us now further pursue this blessedness of glory and honor, for we shall soon see that our Most High Father is leading us into deep depths of experience that we may become fit vessels to rule and order such work of God's fingers as the sun and the moon and the stars, as well as the earth upon which we live. Verily man was created and made to govern the works of God's hands from the beginning when first the proclamation was made: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1:26 It was left to the prophet David to disclose in greater detail the meaning and extent of this type laid down in the genesis of the ages. By the Holy Spirit David mused, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon, and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet." **Psa. 8:3-6**

Now, in saying, "Thou hast crowned him (man) with glory and honor", it becomes very, very evident that, whereas the Most High is bestowing such sweeping, all-inclusive honor upon man in that He is preparing him for the supervision and jurisdiction over all these celestials and, indeed, the total rehabilitation of them all, surely to be worthy of such honor he must first be a partaker of the glory of transfiguration and of the resurrection to know the honor of being called a son of God - a partaker of the adoption, that is, a fully matured and responsible son of God like Jesus Christ Himself, who not only knew the glory of transfiguration and the honor of being proclaimed God's beloved Son, but who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach. 1 Tim. 6:16. The scripture has clearly said that we are the completeness or the fullness of Him (Christ) who filleth all in all, or, as Weymouth puts it, "who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph, 1:23** Behold what unspeakable honor this is and consider well what inexpressible, ineffable glory! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!" What honor could exceed this? "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." That the Most High should redeem us with a redemption of such boundless extent that He would call us the sons of God, and again, "joint heirs with Jesus Christ" - this is love all excelling, love of infinite proportion. It is high. The human mind cannot attain unto its unspeakable glory and honor. Our redeemed spirits bow before Him in worship and praise, marveling that His purpose should have embraced such a plan. Surely we cannot wonder that Peter exulted when he said, "Angels desire to look into it."

Incredible as these inspired utterances of David appear, it was to Paul that the blessed Holy Spirit gave the final all-inclusive word concerning the enormity of the honor and glory that the Lord has purposed to bestow upon His sons. Every word of his statement in Hebrews 2:5-10 should be weighed with diligent meditation, thought and prayer. This is what the beloved apostle said: "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." **Heb. 2:5-10** We will notice that

twice in the above quotation the expression glory and honor is used, first in verse 7 where the reference is to mankind, and the second in verse 9 concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, who is already crowned with glory and honor because He tasted death for every man that He might bring them as sons of God to be partakers of the same honor and glory that He Himself has now attained.

Saints of all ages have stood in awe, wondering with great amazement as they beheld the divine mystery of the sufferings of the saints. It is without doubt a very great mystery, but when the Spirit of God rends the deep veil, opening our eyes to behold the glory and honor that lies beyond, then the mystery of our suffering melts away and disappears. Listen to Peter, that great feeder of the sheep, as he makes this beautiful disclosure to all who suffer trials and tribulations in their pilgrimage to the realm of sonship. After reminding the saints of our election according to the foreknowledge of God and recalling to us that we have been brought from the darkness of this world's night into the glorious light of a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, he assures us in chapter one, verse four, that we have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is "reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." **Verse 5**

We might well wish that these verses could be the theme of this book, but let us say in passing that they hold within their embrace an incredible worth of information to all who will investigate and meditate upon them word for word. They reveal much to us of that inheritance of glory and honor, which has so much in common with the realm of incorruption to which we are pressing with all our might. In **verse 7** it becomes very clear in what direction every trial of faith is leading us: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Here once again the words honor and glory appear, and here Peter is forcefully reminding us that it is in this place of glory and honor that Christ expects to find His brother sons when He appears in that wonderful day, not to deal with sin, but to bring us to full salvation.

That this great honor and glory to which Christ is bringing us through many trials, tribulations and sufferings is infinitely related to our putting off of corruption and putting on of incorruption cannot be disputed in the light of what he further states in 2 Pet. 1:16-17. Oh, let us give earnest heed to these tremendous statements! "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." (The mount of transfiguration). I take from these blessed words of truth that the honor and glory which Christ had and which was manifested in the wonder of the transfiguration is the honor and glory that Christ will bestow upon His saints at His coming. When this takes place at the sounding of the last trumpet, it will be with the speed of lightning and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. 1 Cor. 15:51-53 and Matt. 24:27

Now, seeing that the Father was honoring His Son at the transfiguration with the words, "This is My beloved Son", He honored Him in the same way at His baptism, for "Jesus, when He was baptized, went straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," **Matt. 3:16-17** Let us notice as we consider this marvelous event that, while Jesus was being thus honored as the Son of God in whom He was well pleased, the heavens were opened. The realm of the open heavens was an entirely new realm in which He was to walk. It is a realm where no power of earth or heaven or hell or the flesh could ever obscure heaven or its glory and power from Him. This honor have the saints, and we will come gloriously to it, I trust, before the end of the century. Oh what an honor it was that not only should Christ be honored as God's Son, but that in the Father's pleasure with His Son He opened the vaults of heaven to Him with all their eternal resources!

There are yet two remarkable scriptures concerning this honor, which the Father bestowed upon His Son. Jesus, speaking with those ever unbelieving, argumentative Jews, made this significant statement: "I receive not honor from men". And it is most surprising that the word He used to describe honor in this scripture was the Greek word *doxa*, which was described at some length in volume 31, pages 120-122, as the *kabod*. The kind of honor man can bestow upon man is but a fading leaf. Even those who honor men with greatness today may

find themselves at enmity tomorrow, as was so evidently seen at the time of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem - after which fickle honor they crucified Him. One day men honored Paul and Barnabas as gods, Acts 14:11, but later they stoned Paul. This is not the kind of glory with which the Father honors His sons, for here the honor of which Christ speaks is likened unto the glory of the Shekinah that rested on the tabernacle and appeared unto Moses, which is not a fading glory nor can it pass away. This same fact is true when Jesus said, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing: It is My Father that honoreth (Doxazo) Me." **John 8:54**

That the hope of honor and glory may be fastened firmly in our spiritual minds, let it be forever understood that the greatest honor ever bestowed upon our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, was bestowed on that day when the Father in heaven proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And to those who seek for glory and honor let the knowledge of this truth be firmly implanted that, in seeking the glory and honor offered to us by the Father, we are not seeking some fanciful will-o-the-wisp, but we are seeking to live in harmony with the divine will and counsel of the Father that we as His sons may also be honored of Him as was our elder brother Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, for this is truth. The greatest honor that the Father will ever bestow upon any blood-washed child of His will come on that wonderful day when He with thunder voice proclaims to His whole creation, "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Meditate long upon this, my brethren, for this is honor in its highest degree. Princes may rightly consider it an honor to be the son of an earthly king, but such honor is a corruptible, passing, fading leaf that will be gone when the grasping hand of the enemy, death, intervenes. But it shall not be so with those incorruptible sons who will on the appointed day be honored before all creation with the words of the Father: "These are My beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased." Even the thought of such honor divests me of all pride or self-seeking. In the light of it all earthly gain we count but loss, and pour contempt on all our pride. On the hallowed mount, as at His baptism, our Saviour received glory and honor when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **2 Pet. 1:17, 18**. For this blessed honor and glory we now seek, O Lord, according to Thy will and Thy faithful word.

When our blessed Lord and Christ came into this sin-cursed world, few people were able to grasp the meaning of the question asked by the wise men. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him." **Matt. 2:2** Nor could they grasp the significance of the words of the blessed archangel Gabriel, who came from God's presence to Mary, bearing from the Father's throne the heavenly tidings, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." **Luke 1:31-33**

It was beyond the ability of any of them to grasp the significance of the fact that three wise men, (evidently Israelites from the Assyrian or Babylonian captivity) had come from the east following a star by which they were assured that both a Saviour and a King had been born to the down-trodden people under Roman dominion. Ten tribes of these were still scattered to the east from the Black Sea to Persia, and the other two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, were still scattered from each other, some having never returned from Babylon, and those who had were now fretting under the iron yoke of Imperial Rome. Could it be possible that the rumors now spreading like fire around Jerusalem were true? Was it possible that, after so many centuries had passed since the Father in heaven had visited David, saying, "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever," **2 Sam. 7:16**, now indeed a Messiah and King, born of the seed of David, had come to take the throne and reign forever? Could it be that the great emancipator was now born who would deliver them from Roman oppression as thoroughly as Moses delivered them from Egypt? The thought seemed far too great to be true. Yet it was true - indisputably true - that the Messiah of the house of David had come, but none seemed then to know that, before His reign was to be established in all the world, He would first establish His heavenly kingdom, the kingdom of God within His elect and chosen saints. They did not know as we should and must know that no man or woman shall reign with Christ in the kingdom which he will establish in the earth until Christ, the Lord of lords and Kings of kings, reigns supreme within him and in His elect people, who have completely surrendered to His divine mind and His perfect will that His will may be done in all the earth. Let not carnal, self-willed Christians imagine that it will be theirs to reign with Christ without first having shed their carnal minds and having put away from them all that in this kingdom of darkness is now ruled by the mind of man. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the

pride of life are the reigning, governing powers of this present evil age. These are the evil things that continually drain the oil of the Holy Spirit from the virgins' lamps, and sad will be their cry when they find they have missed the kingdom, in which they might have reigned. But the King was promised, and the King had come just as the prophets had spoken. Isa. 53:1-12 They clothed Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger in Bethlehem, the very town the prophet Micah had long before foretold as the place of His birth. Micah. 5:2. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit and in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man until the day of His showing unto Israel.

It is very doubtful that any in those days had the remotest idea that it was the Father's intention to take the next two thousand years to complete the great work of calling out a people for His name, Acts 15:13-18; a people who would reign with Him when His kingdom would be established over all the earth. They knew there was to be a kingdom and that the Messiah would reign on the throne of David, but their human expectation was that He would immediately set up His kingdom and throw off by force the hated Roman yoke and every other yoke as well. Their expectation was well expressed in the words of the disciples after the resurrection: "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Well these men knew that one glorious day the kingdom would be restored to Israel, but in their puny, natural minds they hoped, as some do now, that, when the Messiah would come, He would make them the bosses and lords of the world. If such a carnal thought inhabits your mind today, my friend, I exhort you to start looking to Christ for His understanding, for that is not the way His kingdom will be. In that heaven blessed age no man will say, "Know the Lord", for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. Jer. 31:34

From out of the masses of the redeemed our Father in heaven is even now preparing and calling a "people for His name", a people who have learned during the suffering of this age to let the mind of Christ dwell in them. From the hosts of the redeemed He is raising up a spiritual body, which God's word speaks of as the body of Christ and we as members in particular of that body, 1 Cor. 12:27, yea, a many-membered body in the image and likeness of that one like unto the Son of man, whom John beheld in vision, recorded in Rev. 1:10-18. Our wonderful Jesus, blessed first born Son of God, glorious as He was and is, was not the fullness of God's Christ. He has told us in His word that we are the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. **Eph. 1:23** Or, as Weymouth has so beautifully stated, "The completeness of Him who everywhere filleth the universe with Himself." It is for the elect to know that they are integral parts of Himself, the Himself which includes in one the entire body of Christ - all the sons of God elect according to the foreknowledge of Him from the very foundation of the world. Oh, what long ages this infinite purpose has been in the planning and how patiently our heavenly Father has carried it out, and with what long-suffering, mercy and loving kindness has He molded the vessels of glory for His kingdom! Ah, Christian! Strip for the race! Let nothing impede your progress now. Cast off every weight and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who is both the author and the finisher of our faith.

Christians as a whole have very faulty ideas concerning the body of Christ. Roman Catholics, kneeling before their idols, imagine themselves to be the body of Christ, if, indeed, they have heard that expression. Protestants who never have partaken of the regenerating power of the new birth, never having been born again, talk glibly about their being the body of Christ. Pentecostal people, still walking after the desires of the carnal mind, imagine themselves to be the body of Christ, and the so-called Charismatics, walking in all their looseness, insist that they are the body of Christ. But the body of Christ consists entirely of the in-Christed. These are they who are both living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. Their lives being now fully controlled by the power and direction of the Spirit, they have cast off the carnal mind and are in the truest sense being changed into His image and likeness. This blessedness does not depend on anything we have accomplished for God. It depends entirely upon what we are.

Jesus came to preach and introduce the manner and spirit of His kingdom. It should not, therefore, be difficult to demonstrate that every healing, every miracle, every explanation and every word of wisdom He did or spoke portrayed some vital truth concerning that coming millennium of blessedness and the majesty and power of His reign. In volume 22, chapter 2, of Treasures of Truth I have endeavored to show how the miracle of the waterpots and the wine was in reality a manifestation regarding the kingdom of God under the rule of Christ. When He healed the blind, He demonstrated that in His kingdom all darkness, blindness and blighting shadows will be removed by His power. When He healed the deaf, he was showing that His kingdom will be a day when

every ear shall be unstopped, and all will hear and know and accept the truth. Healing the lame man, He portrayed a kingdom in which all mankind will walk uprightly, both in the body and in the Spirit as well. Examine every one of His miracles and you will understand, as did the prophet Isaiah when he said, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." **Isa. 35:5, 6.** The incurable leprosy, which is symbolic of sin, He healed, and the leprosy of sin will be cleansed from His kingdom. The parables of Matthew, chapter 13, in every case show some mountain peak of kingdom glory. The beautiful Sermon on the Mount, the most remarkable sermon ever written or spoken, concerns in its entirety the laws and government of the kingdom of God. None of those laws can be lived except they be lived by the life and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There was a day, according to **Matt. 16:19**, when Jesus said, not necessarily to Peter only, but to all the apostles, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." For some three glorious years our Lord Himself had freely used these keys to the kingdom. He had used them to loose the blind from their chains of darkness. He had made straight the crippled woman who was bowed together. He had made the trembling body of the palsied man to cease from its convulsive shaking. He had cleansed the leper and sent him away whole. He had healed the bloody issue of a woman who had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse. He had stilled the waves, which are like unto the wicked who, like the troubled sea, cannot rest and whose waves cast up mire and dirt. **Isa. 57:20** He had answered every question and unraveled every mystery, but now He was leaving the world and passing those keys of the kingdom on to those He had ordained to share His image and likeness. And I shall not hesitate to say that the works He did His apostles did also as they went forth opening the gates of the kingdom of heaven to the multitudes who came from every corner to hear the word of God.

Then, having said that he would give them the keys of the kingdom of heaven, He made this precious promise: "There be some standing here who will not taste of death until they shall see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." We shall now see what marvels the mount of transfiguration holds in relation to the kingdom of God. **Matt. 16:28** "For," said Peter, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **2 Pet. 1:16-17**

CHAPTER THREE THE TRANSFIGURATION

The **seventeenth chapter of Matthew** begins with these words: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart." I believe the high mountain was Mt. Hermon, for the Lord was at Caesarea Philippi at the foot of this mountain at the time. **Matt. 16:13** Mt. Hermon is a very high mountain, **Mark 9:2**, 9232 feet in height. The mountain itself represents the kingdom and appears to be the place where the Lord commanded the blessing of glory and honor upon Christ. "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." **Psa. 133:3**

It is stated that their going into the high mountain was after six days. A day is with the Lord a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day. Centuries before this event the Father in heaven had said to man, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh is the reaper overtakes the sower, and where nothing hurts nor destroys in all God's holy mountain; for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. There will be no more hospitals, drug stores, funeral parlors, nor cemeteries, for there will be no more death except for those few who choose to rebel, as Zechariah has stated. **Zech. 14:17-18** Man shall not be of few days, but will live out their lives - yea, live out their thousand year day of rest. Instead of the briar shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the thorn shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an age-lasting sign, which shall not be cut off. **Isa. 58:1-13** Blessed be the fountain of blood! Blessed be the kingdom of God! Blessed be the King of kings and blessed be His name unto the age of the ages! Alleluia!

Thus it was that after six days Jesus took these men to the mount to behold in miniature the glory of the kingdom of God as He had promised. It seems reminiscent of the day when Moses was taken to Mt. Pisgah to view the promised land. After six days these blessed events were to be in effect. Therefore let us take heart as saints of God, for the six thousand years are much nearer completion now than they were then. Nineteen hundred and eighty-six years or more have passed away since that wonderful day of transfiguration. The night is far spent and the day, the kingdom day, is at hand. More than nineteen centuries ago Paul wrote, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The night is far spent; the day is at hand. Let us rejoice that in 1986 we are much closer to the end of the sixth day than our beloved brother Paul was when he wrote those life-giving words. Sooner than we think it will be "after six days", not six typical days as it was then when Jesus gave them a bird's eye view of the kingdom, but six long one thousand year days have almost passed and the kingdom morn with lithesome steps is ushering in the glorious, long awaited kingdom day, for which all creation groans and sighs and prays in pain from Adam's day until now.

So it was that on that never-to-be-forgotten day our Lord led His three disciples to the top of a very high mountain and was transfigured before them. Matt. 17:1-2 The record states that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Only light is truly white. His garments were not white like a snowflake; they were white as the light. It is a whiteness for which there is no description. I suggest that Adam was clothed with light as with a garment, Psa. 104:2, before the transgression divested him of it and left him naked and horribly ashamed. Gen. 2:8-11 Jesus was transfigured before them. He was transformed. He was changed. The Greek word metamorphoo is the word the evangelist Matthew used to describe the change that took place in Him on that wonderful day. As a grovelling worm is transformed to become a butterfly, so our Lord was transformed from corruptible to incorruptible, from natural man to manifested Son of God. The celestial light of the glory of God - the kabod, the doxa, the shekinah - shone from His face brighter than the glory of the sun. It was not a reflected light, but the manifestation of the light which He Himself is. It was the same glory light that lighted the world in the beginning when the Father said, "Let there be light", and there was light. It was the light that lightened the earth with His glory four days before the sun appeared in the heavens. Gen. 1:14-19 Man loses his power of expression when he tries to explain such unspeakable wonders as this. My mind falters for expression and fails for words in the presence of that which we know to be true, but, because it belongs to the celestial, the divine, no words in the tongues of earth exist to explain it.

His face did shine as the sun and His garments were white as the light. Matt. 17:2 Let us not forget that Christ was revealing to His disciples something of the magnificence of the kingdom of God. Above all, I suggest He was revealing the more excellent glory of the King who is to reign in that kingdom when earth is ruled by heaven. This was the shining forth of the incorruptible. Our Lord was revealing the unspeakable, excellent glory of the incorruptible realm. He was showing them, first, what He himself will be, and secondly, He intended that these astonished onlookers should understand what the incorruptible sons of God will be when they reign with Him in that heavenly realm. Paul plainly spoke of this great mystery, saying "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep (die) but *we shall all be changed* (transformed, transfigured) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, and *we shall be changed*. For this corruptible must put on *incorruption*, and this mortal shall have put on *immortality*. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." I Cor. 15:41-54 I will not take space here to speak of the difference between incorruption and immortality, but I will venture to say that the immortality which we must eventually put on is as far beyond incorruption as incorruption is beyond corruption. When Jesus arose from the dead, He arose in incorruption. When He ascended into Heaven, He ascended into immortality, into the light which no man can approach and no man has seen, and as yet, at least, cannot see. Of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Paul wrote: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting." I Tim. 6:16

I do not wish to speculate nor do I take pleasure in sensationalism, but there is cause to wonder if this marvelous transfiguration may have been much more than a mere demonstration of the kingdom. Could it have been an actual "putting on" of incorruption? That which is incorruptible cannot corrupt. That which is immortal cannot die. The Father did not permit His Son to see corruption. Jesus did not die as other men die, neither was He killed as other men are killed. He said, "**No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I**

have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." **John 10:18** It was not the agony of the cross, the terror of the nails, nor the thrust of the spear that took His life. He laid it down. He gave up the Spirit. Mark 15:37 He said, "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Luke 23:46 When Lazarus had lain in the grave four days, his sister begged them not to remove the stone, "because," she said, "by this time he stinketh." **John 11:39** He had gone into corruption; but Jesus was not suffered to see corruption. Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:27 Thus I am given to wonder if, indeed, that marvelous change - yea, metamorphosis - through which He passed during the glory of the transfiguration may in truth have been a permanent putting on of incorruption.

To a very large extent the glory of Christ was hidden through all the days of His earthly life. Only those blessed few to whom the heavens occasionally stood open saw Him as He really was. What was it that suddenly caused Peter to exclaim, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?" And Nathaniel to utter those words of revelation, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel?"

THE VOICE FROM THE CLOUD

Now when our Lord appeared in the glory of His transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with Him. Luke 9:29-30 I take Luke's words to mean that Moses, from the dispensation of the law, and Elijah, representing the prophets, were also clothed with the same incorruptible glory as was Christ. We need not be emphatic, but the scripture does say that they appeared with Him in glory, and I see no reason why they may not have appeared as Christ appeared. Moses did not remain in the grave after his burial, but was raised as Jude clearly indicates. Jude 9. And Elijah, being translated, did not see corruption. However, what we do not know here we will know hereafter, so we will rest the matter here.

Now, when Peter saw this wonderful sight, not knowing either what to say or what to do, he made the bold suggestion, "Let us make here three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." **Matt. 17:4** His words almost remind us of these: "I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. I am of Cephas. I am of Christ." But even while he spoke these words, a bright cloud overshadowed them. It was not a dark cloud of the usual sort, but a glory cloud - the shekinah, the kabod, the light of His presence. Then from out of the cloud there spoke that voice of thunder, the voice that long before had spoken from the flames and smoke of Mount Sinai when the law was given and which spoke again at the Saviour's baptism, and now once more the almighty Father spoke, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." The voice which the disciples heard in the holy mount bore a most important message. There were to be no more tabernacles erected to Moses and the law; no buildings to Elijah of the prophets; not even a tabernacle to Jesus Himself. But the mighty voice from the bright cloud of glory thundered forth the glorious message, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." The days of the law were over forever. The days of the prophets had passed away. From that moment onward the voice of the Son of God alone was to be heard. "Hear Him," said the Father. "He is the truth, the light, the life, and the way. Hear Him! He is the Lord of all the earth. He is the King of the kingdom of God. He is the all in all." What He says is the mind of the eternal Father. What He speaks flows like a river from the lips of God. Hear Him! Too long the world has been confused by many voices; too many trumps giving an uncertain sound; too much teaching without revelation, and too many propagating their own theories and proclaiming their own beliefs. Why must we hear today the five hundred voices of Babylon, each building his own tabernacle of confusion? It is because we have not taken time to listen to the voice divine, who alone speaks the very word of God in truth, who knows no mind but the Father's mind, who says with reverent fervor, "I and My Father are one." But now the kingdom is within the saints and everything old has passed away, and we shall hear no voice speaking but the voice of the Son of God and know no law but His. Prophecy shall fail and tongues will cease and all earthly knowledge shall vanish away that He and He only may speak the message that will govern the world in righteousness. Well did the writer of Hebrews say, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." **Heb. 1:1-3**

Leaving this thought, I must yet remark that these men were seeing Christ as He will appear in His kingdom. A Babel of voices has been heard since He spoke that day and there has been a confusion of voices, all clamoring to be heard, but in that kingdom day there will be but one voice, God speaking in His Christ, God speaking in His Christ body, the sons of God, the completeness of Him who fills the universe with Himself, the fullness of Him who is the all in all. This was the overpowering sight John beheld in the Revelation - one like the Son of man whose voice was as "many waters." This is the fullness of the body of Christ - many yet one, all speaking the same truth. Rev. 1:9-18

Now, when the Father had spoken from the glory cloud, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him," the disciples were sore afraid and fell upon their faces before the voice of Him that spake. But Jesus, lifting them up, bade them to be not afraid, and, when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man but Jesus only. Beloved brethren, to this place of unity let us immediately come, the place of communion with Christ where we see no man but Jesus only. With all my heart and soul I earnestly pray that, when my frail bark is folded and this flickering candle of my mortality ceases to shine, I will leave no disciples or followers of myself, but that those few souls I may have influenced will every one be left following after my wonderful elder brother, Jesus Christ. I often glory in the sad but lovely scene pictured so beautifully in the gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 35-37. The mighty prophet, John, was standing with two of his disciples, possibly the only two he had left, and, pointing to Jesus as He passed, John said with tremendous conviction, "Behold the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples left that blessed, humble, powerful man standing alone and they went to follow Jesus. No wonder our blessed Lord later remarked, **"Among men born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." Matt. 11:11** It is sad, very sad, to see that, after ministries are long dead, disciples are still clinging to them and calling themselves after their names. I always rejoiced that, though the ministry of the late Charles S. Price reached and blessed tens of thousands of people, he left them all following after Jesus and not after himself. When men follow Jesus Christ and learn to hear His voice, they are never found in the wilderness of doubt, confusion and fear, or wondering what they will do now that some great one has departed this feeble life; but they will be found standing steadfast upon that Rock which Christ is, knowing that their anchor is fastened to that mighty Rock within the veil, our steadfast Christ who is High Priest of our faith, the Author and Finisher to us all.

The transcendent glory of the transfiguration was a vision of the future. It concerned a blessed age yet to come. Our Lord did not want His apostles to think that what they saw would immediately come to pass, though it seems evident that they must have thought this by their question, "Why, then, say the scribes that Elias must first come?" In other words they were saying, "If this transfiguring glory of Christ in His kingdom is to be the next thing in order, why are the scribes talking about the coming of Elijah, an event that was to happen before the onset of the kingdom of God?" We make a great mistake when we get truth misplaced. Truth to be active must be present truth. We make a mistake when we take the truths of ages past and try to preach them as though they belonged to our time. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. So many today are trying to make the truth of ages past to be present truth for today. It is a mistake. It is not that the truth of yesterday is untrue today. It is that since then our Lord has added to it some more glorious unfolding of spiritual experience and purpose and we should concern ourselves with this. In Moses' day the law was written on stone. In our day, to all who walk in the Spirit, the law is written in our hearts and has become our spiritual nature. We love God with all our soul, our might and our strength, not because we are told to do so, but because the love of God is in our hearts.

The man Apollos was a man mighty in the scripture, but he knew only the baptism of John, and he preached it fervently and with great convincing conviction. But he did not know that Jesus had already come, nor did he know that the Holy Spirit had been given at Pentecost. Priscilla and Aquilla saw that Apollos was preaching past truth, so they took him to themselves and explained unto him the way of God more perfectly. Acts 18:24-26 They showed him that the Christ he preached had already come, that the water baptism he practiced, called the baptism of John, had given place to a greater baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He was a blessed man of great humility and, when he heard what the present truth was, he went to preaching present truth, by which, we are told, he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing from the scripture that Jesus was Christ. Acts 18:28

So also it is when we try to apply the things of the kingdom to our age of grace. The majesty and the glory of the transfiguration foretold the truth of an age to come, and our Lord did not want His disciples thinking they would immediately enter that age. That is why He told them to tell no man until the Son of man was risen from

the dead. What will be general knowledge and experience in the kingdom age is reserved now only for those who have the kingdom of God within them. The kingdom today "cometh not with observation." It exists only within us, only, I say, in the heart of the elect.

When this wonderful transfiguration scene had faded from their eyes, Jesus bade them tell no man the vision until the Son of man was risen from the dead. Well did they guard the secret and well they might, for those who enter such glory find, as did Paul, that it is unlawful to speak of them to those who are not prepared, 2 Cor. 12:1-4, knowing that no natural mind can possibly comprehend the glories of the heavenly realm or such celestial truth. Peter many years after the resurrection of Christ felt free to speak only a few words of what he had seen when in his second epistle he wrote, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount."

We spoke in another chapter of the two significant words, honor and glory, and here they meaningfully appear with reference to that voice speaking from the excellent glory that over-shadowed them, for Christ received honor and glory when the Father's voice spoke, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." From these words from heaven we are to understand that the greatest honor will be given to the sons of God when with a voice like thunder He will awaken the world with the announcement, "These are My beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased. Hear them!" That mighty edict, proclaimed twice of our elder brother, Jesus Christ, will be spoken of them all. No greater honor nor greater glory can ever be bestowed than will be bestowed upon the sons of God when our great Father in heaven announces, "These are My beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased."

This is our adoption. This is the adoption for which all creation groans. Rom. 8:23. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **Rom. 8:18-19** The Son and the sons will then be one body, the Head and the body together. It will be then as God's word has said. Jesus Christ will be the oldest in "a vast family of brothers" (Weymouth), or "that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29** See also Heb. 2:10 This is he, the body of Christ, the one like the Son of God, whom John beheld as he was carried away in the Spirit on lonely little Patmos in the long ago. Rev. 1:10-18

The kingdom age is now near at hand. The sufferings of Christ and His cross are long past. The suffering of the saints that has been their lot all through this age is nearly at an end. The lightning is soon to flash and the trumpet to sound that the elect who are alive and the elect who are in the graves will hear the voice of God, and will be transfigured, transformed, changed in the twinkling of an eye. The majesty of a new age, even the kingdom of God and of His Christ will have come to shed its transforming rays of light, wisdom and understanding upon a new born earth in a new born age, for which Jesus taught us to pray and for which all creation has groaned.

Then the bear will be gentle
And the lion will be tame.
he wolf will lie down with the lamb.
There the beast from the wild
Shall be led by the child,
And I shall be changed from the
Creature that I am.

Oh, what honor and glory is laid up in store for those who seek! "If we suffer (with Him), we shall also reign with Him."

THE LUNATIC

As the Lord with His three wondering disciples descended from the holy mountain, a strange but very revealing incident was taking place at its foot. A poor, distraught and heart-broken man had brought his lunatic son to the disciples that they might cast the devil from him and deliver him from his awful affliction; but, though all these disciples had been given power over devils to cast them out, they found themselves totally incapable of handling this dreadful case that was now placed before them. As Jesus descended the mountain, the father of the lunatic boy came running to Him for help. The enlightening story is told in detail by Matthew in these vivid words: "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, **O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to Me.** And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour." **Matt. 17:14-18**

This strange story has often given me cause to wonder and I suppose has been a puzzle to many others as well. Why was it, I wondered, that, though Jesus had given these men authority over devils to cast them out - a miracle they had accomplished times without number, Luke 10:17, here in this instance was a situation they could not handle? And why did it appear at this particular moment when the glory of a coming age was being revealed? So for this I enquired of the Lord, and this is the message that unfolded before me.

The lunatic represents the whole world. There is nothing so demon possessed or so demon controlled as the world is at this moment and has been for six thousand years. Satan himself has been the prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit that "now worketh in the children of disobedience." **Eph. 2:2** Long ago, after forty days of fasting and prayer, our Lord Jesus Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, the wilderness of this world with its evil, demon-controlled system. After the fast was over, Satan came to Him, as recorded by Matthew, Chapter 4. After the first and second temptation had failed, Satan took Him to an exceeding high mountain. I cannot help but wonder if that exceeding high mountain may not have been the same mountain, the mount of transfiguration, from which He was now descending. This may or may not be so, but I would suggest that it is worthy of consideration, for we will learn, as we progress through life, that the highest point of our temptation or our struggle will be also the highest point of our blessing. In any case, Jesus was taken to an exceeding high mountain and Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, "and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." **Matt. 4:9** The evangelist Luke, however, adds these significant words: "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." **Luke 4:6** This is a most significant declaration, and we will notice that our Lord did not in the least dispute nor challenge Satan's claim. The world and the things in it have been given into his hand ever since man in the Garden of Eden abdicated to Satan's temptation and gave him the mastery.

Ever since that dreadful day Satan has been in control. I know that back of all things is God and there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. These are very revealing statements, for it is true that there are times when even the vilest of men are permitted to rule and govern in this present evil world. So, though Satan has been given dominion for a period of time, even his dominion is not without restraint. The word of God has made it very clear that Satan, whatever be the extent of his power, cannot go one iota beyond the bounds which the Lord has set for him. Thus when Satan offered our Lord all the kingdoms of the world, he was evidently speaking the truth, because they were given into his hand; but he was also hiding the fact, as he always does, that his power and sway is not universal, neither is it almighty, but he controls only where permission has been given to him. The story of Job's great tribulation is a very revealing insight as to how far Satan has power to go and who it is that sets those confining boundaries. See Job 1:12 and 2:6

The world is the lunatic, governed and controlled by the power of the devil, acting through carnal and corrupt men. They are the rulers of the darkness of this world, controlled by the evil spirit that now "worketh in the children of disobedience." **Eph. 2:2** Paul in this passage, verse 3, goes so far as to say to Christians, "Among whom also we all had our conversation (manner of living) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." By such carnal minds as these the whole world has been governed ever since the Garden of Eden. The only tiny respite was the few years when God's people Israel were governed by God through such men as Moses, Samuel and

Joshua; but these were no sooner coming to the end of their time on earth than evil men like the sons of Eli and Samuel were ready to take the reins of government to turn the hearts of the people once again away from the rule and order of God to the rule and order of the principalities and powers, the spirits that now work in the children of disobedience.

The terrible predicament, not only of this poor, demon possessed boy, but of the world he represented was this: Often the spirit took control of him and often cast him into the fire and often into the water. It is no joke or pun, but a terrible reality, that for all these six thousand years of the rule of principalities and powers working in the children of disobedience the poor world has been either in the fire or in the water. How often we use the expression to indicate someone in great trouble, "He got himself into hot water." Or how often we hear the expression, "He has jumped from the frying pan into the fire." These idioms are understood only by those who use them, but we well know that man is not at home in the water because he is not a creature of the water; neither is he at home in the fire because he is not a creature of the fire. The world today, governed by evil spirits through the medium of very carnal men, is thrown first into the fire and then into the water. Man tries kings and they soon so dominate the lives of the people that they rebel. Dictators rise only to oppress the people. Democracies arise to have their day, but they, too, bind the people with taxation and laws that strangle them. Thus the evil story goes through any and all forms of human government, and man is willing to look to anyone for deliverance but to God.

For six thousand years now well-meaning men have been trying to deliver this world from the demon that possesses it, but all have miserably failed. They cannot cast the devil out nor deliver the maniac from his dementia. So the poor earth continues meanwhile to be cast first into the fire of war, upheaval and bloodshed and into the deep waters of depression, famine, taxation and all other evils, then to be thrown back into the fire in a wearying process that is bringing the whole creation nearer to destruction. "I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him," pleaded the poor father, and, oh, how true the fact is! There is no man in the world today - no, not Moses nor Solomon nor David nor any statesman of any time, nor any Christian with any gift in this age of grace who can "cure him." This is one devil the Lord has not given us power to cast out, and I know we speak the truth when we say that this present evil world, controlled as it is by the powers of darkness, cannot be cured by any man nor any form of human government. It is pitiful to hear the throngs shout and yell their hurrahs when some man with big promises and an even bigger mouth wins an election and gets into office as prime minister or president or dictator; but that poor soul, no matter how good his intentions may have been, is immediately confronted by the prince of the powers that be and is no sooner seated in the saddle than everything begins to fall either into the fire or into the water. When Canadians elected Trudeau as Prime Minister, the shouts could be heard from coast to coast, and when they finally got rid of him, the sighs of relief heaved from a million hearts were louder still. They screamed for Mulroney and already, after a little more than a year, the tide is turning against him. And so it will always be in every age and in every country of the world. The German nation shouted "Heil Hitler" until the rafters rang when he first gained power, but what fire and brimstone awaited both them and the world under his evil rule and into what waters of judgment the demon of lunacy cast them! Thus it must be until He comes whose right it is to reign.

When all else failed and even the disciples found themselves powerless to help the demon possessed lunatic, the father called upon Jesus. Listen to His words of rebuke, not to the father and not to the failure of the disciples, but to a faithless and perverse generation. The word generation does not always have reference to a prescribed or definite period of time. It often refers to an entire age or specified period of activity as in **Numbers 32:13**; "until all the generation that had done evil was consumed". Or **Psa. 22:30**; "a seed shall serve Him; it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation." The generation of the seed that serves Him stretches all the way from Adam to the end of the age in which we live and, indeed, the end of time. This, I think, is what Jesus intended us to know when He said, "O faithless and perverse generation. Since the transgression in Eden the faithless, perverse generation of evil and perversity has continued unabated. It was in full bloom in Jesus' day and it became increasingly evident as the ages passed by. It is at its worst now, for the ruler of the darkness of this world knows that he has but a short time and is come down with great wrath, throwing the world into ever increasing confusion, darkness and disorder - sometimes into the fire and sometimes into the water - and no man alive is able to cast him out or change the circumstances. This perverse and faithless generation is as helpless as all others in the face of the demon possessed, demented, lunatic world we are in. But on that great day One was coming down from the mountain, One whom God had

declared to be His Son. They had caught a glimpse of the kingdom age. Even our Lord Jesus Christ had been lifted to a new and higher realm of sonship, a realm of incorruption into which we shall come, if we are faithful and true. "Hear Him," the Father had said, and even this devil of lunacy must hear and obey.

"Bring him hither to Me" was the command of this transfigured Son, this glorious King of the kingdom age. There is none other who can cure the dire maladies and ills, the devils, the corrupt and carnal minds, none other but our Lord Jesus Christ. All power in heaven and earth is given unto Him. Devils, cowering before Him, shriek for mercy, crying, "I know Thee, who Thou art, the holy One of God." When the holy One of God bids them hold their peace, hold their peace they must. When He bids them come out, they come out, and when He binds them for a thousand years and shuts them up in chains of darkness, no power can possibly deliver or help them. How well it was stated by John, when he saw the fulfillment of the very thing of which we speak, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled..." **Rev. 20:1-3** "Bring him to Me," our Lord commanded, and Jesus rebuked the devil, and "he departed out of him, and the child was cured from that very hour." The blessed hour is now at hand for the curing of the world's ills. The demons of greed, selfishness, lust and every hurtful and painful evil are having great wrath, because they know their time is very short. The sons of God, pressing patiently toward their adoption, are ascending the great and high mountain of transfiguration. It is the mount of the kingdom of God. From the glory of that kingdom mountain, praise God, they will rule in justice and equity for a thousand years of blessedness before the dispensation of the fullness of times, that age of the ages, comes to restore all things and reconcile the universe to God.

The mount of transfiguration is the kingdom mountain. It is the mountain of glory and honor, the glory of incorruption and transfiguration and the honor of adoption and manifestation. Some will certainly ask me how I know the Father will say of all the sons of God, "These are My beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased", even as He said it of Jesus, our elder brother. I know it is truth, because such honor is exactly what adoption is as it is taught in scripture, both at our Lord's baptism and at His transfiguration. Adoption in Israel was a rite in which a father called his friends together and introduced his son as a mature son and a responsible man. That was an honor indeed, but a small honor to be sure compared to that honor which was bestowed upon the Son of God when His Father in heaven announced to the world, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." Because we see that this is adoption, we know this same honor will be accorded to all who become sons of God. John 1:12 "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." **Rom. 8:22-23** And now already, praise be to God, we "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." **Rom. 8:15-17**

This, then, in some small part is the honor and glory for which the sons of God seek - the glory of incorruption and the honor of adoption. We shall not seek such glory and honor with the wicked hope of self-aggrandizement, as some would certainly do, but with patient continuance in well doing we shall seek for glory and honor, immortality and eternal life.

"Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." **1 John 3:2-3** Again let us reflect upon this sacred message, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." **1 John 3:1** How glorious is the race that we with patient continuance in well doing now run, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, angels, principalities and powers being made subject unto Him! Amen and Amen! How marvelous and wonderful it all is! Blessed be the Lord, who loadeth us with benefits!

The hour of glory and honor is now at hand. It is very near. Two thousand years ago Jesus led the disciples up the mount that they might see the glory and power of the coming kingdom. Its honor and glory was then with the Lord two days in the future, but in man's reckoning it was two thousand years in the future. Now the six days of man's labor and travail under the fearful rulers of the darkness of this world are almost over. If our chronology is right, there are only fourteen more years before the six days of man's labor are fulfilled. It may well be earlier than that, because times and seasons have with little doubt been altered, as the scripture said they would be. Two thousand years ago some men came to Jesus to tell Him that Herod sought to kill Him, and the Lord in answer revealed this secret: "Go and tell that fox, Behold, I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I will be glorified." Today and tomorrow represent two thousand years between then and now, and the third day is the kingdom day in which a glorified Christ with His glorious brother sons of incorruption will cast the devil out of the world system, healing the demented demoniac and binding Satan in chains of darkness for a thousand years.

Our Lord was almost quoting the words of the far-seeing Hosea who, writing to Israel of a future day, said, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn and He will heal us; He hath smitten and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." **Hosea 6:1-2** Only a few more short years will our poor, benighted world be forced to writhe in pain under the fearful, demanding sway of principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Jesus is coming with His sons to say, "Bring him unto Me," and He will rebuke every evil power and set the demoniac free.

It will not be necessary for me here to endeavor to convince anyone that the world is now struggling helplessly between the fires of tribulation and the waters of judgment. Listen to the news any day at any hour and what do we hear? More violence, More killings, More break-ins, More robberies, More conspiracy, More defrauding, More wars, More armaments, More uprisings, More rebellions, More air crashes, More earthquakes, More tornadoes, More volcanoes, and mud slides, More drug abuse, More bombing, And an ever, increasing number of children born either crippled in body or retarded in mind, and... worst of all, no good news anywhere. The poor, sad, distraught, demon-possessed world, groaning and travailing in pain, is waiting for the sons of God to reach the glory and honor of adoption, waiting for the transfigured family of sons to say, "Bring him to me." Far away in the depths of my spirit I hear the voice of the prophet Isaiah, saying, "And he will destroy in this mountain (the mountain of the kingdom of God) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 25:7-8** "Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." **Isa. 26:19** Oh what a song of joy there is going to be when the sons of God say, "Bring him unto me." And the poor, drunken, staggering, demon possessed world will as the demoniac of Gadara be devoutly following Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

Oh what a stormy sea the world has sailed from Adam's transgression until now! What indescribable travail the earth has seen during these six days of labor as mankind has toiled in the sweat of his face for enough daily bread to keep body and soul together! We fight and war, yet we have not because we ask not. Poor, benighted man spends a lifetime striving to lay by for an old age he often never reaches, or laying up in store for a son that causes shame. "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." **Job 14:1-2**

CHAPTER FOUR BORN AGAIN OF INCORRUPTIBLE SEED

From my kindergarten class room of some seventy summers ago a pretty childhood poem comes floating back on the wings of memory, telling of two little brown seeds lying in the ground, awaiting the warmth of spring. It goes like this: Little brown brother,

Oh little brown brother,
Are you awake in the dark?

Here we lie cosily
Close to each other;
Hark to the sound of the lark!
Waken, Waken, the lark says.
Waken and dress you;
Put on your green coats and gay:
Blue skies will shine on you,
Sunshine caress you; Waken!
Tis morning, 'tis May.

Little brown brother,
Oh little brown brother,
What kind of flower will you be?
I'll be a poppy
All white like my mother;
Oh do be a poppy like me!
What! You're a sunflower?
How I shall miss you
When you're grown golden and high.
But I will send all
The bees up to kiss you.
Little brown brother, goodbye.

Pretty, you say? Yes, and a little bit sad, but it teaches us all that forever unchangeable truth that whatsoever the seed is that is exactly what the plant will be. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." **Gal. 6:7-8**

This immutable law of God cannot be changed. The seed of a turnip and the seed of a rutabaga look identical. We could mix a pound of each together and not be able to tell which is which, but when they spring forth from the earth, each will come forth according to his own kind. What a frightful mess the world would be if this rigid law were not in effect! A white girl had married a black man, and when they brought her baby to her and she saw it was black, she began to cry. Her Negro mother-in-law, who had come to visit her, seeing her tears, kindly said, "Did yo' think it would be white, honey?" No! Whatsoever we sow, that is what we reap, and this is a conclusion, a divinely appointed result that no power on earth can possibly avoid or change.

In previous chapters we have been considering the words of Paul: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." **Rom. 2:7** This is a very beautiful verse which reveals to us that it is only those who with all their hearts seek after this incorruptible realm, the realm of honor and glory, who will enter at last into its reality, but let us settle it in our minds here and now that, before anyone even begins to seek the incorruptible realm, the incorruptible seed must first be planted in the womb of his spirit by the Holy Ghost. It must be sown there by the miraculous new birth - by being born again. Upon this precious truth the apostle Peter shone the heavenly light of revelation when he said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." **1 Peter 1:22-23** The truth of tremendous importance, which we must see here is that, when one is born again by the miracle of the new birth, an incorruptible seed is planted within him. No amount of seeking or ascetic living will produce incorruption nor any amount of health food or healthful living. These may help to sustain the corruptible body, but never in a million worlds could they produce anything approaching incorruption. Incorruption can be produced only when the incorruptible seed is sown within by the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter here makes the truth very plain by which we understand that the actual planting of the incorruptible seed takes place at the moment one is born again, and, from the moment when the incorruptible seed is planted in us by the Holy Spirit, from that point the tree of incorruption takes root, develops and matures, swallowing up death in victory, yea, swallowing up corruption with incorruption.

This statement - death is swallowed up - is much too important to be passed over without earnest consideration. The apostle Paul, writing about the resurrection and having said, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality", **1 Cor. 15:53**, straightway proceeded to make this revealing observation: **Verse 54** "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Death and corruption are swallowed up. They are devoured by life. Corruption is death. Incorruption is life. Can we not hear the prophetic words of Isaiah speaking from the distant centuries? "He will destroy in this mountain (the kingdom mountain; the mount of transfiguration) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 25:7-8**

THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED WHICH IS CHRIST

From the very heart of events from the morning of creation, which shone from the heavenly light which "no man can approach," there comes to us from the lips of the Creator Himself these words of truth: "In the beginning God." Let the modernist, the evolutionist, the atheist and the skeptic proclaim all the abominable theories they wish concerning the genesis of all things, but when they are finished propagating their crude guesses and all their brash statements of conjecture born of unbelief, we will still be opening our ears of faith to those four great, eternal words, so brief in every tongue, yet so explicit in them all, "In the beginning God". There is no other solution or explanation for the incomparable wonder of things that "are"; "for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." **Rom. 11:36** As Goodspeed has so beautifully stated, "From Him everything comes, through Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends." **Rom. 11:36** Goodspeed Take away from the heart of our understanding those four mighty words of inspiration - in the beginning God - and mankind is left to drift without a compass on the merciless seas of unbelief and to wander in dreary wildernesses of purposelessness and futility. How blessed is the word of faith, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." **Col. 1:16-17** Faith will forever shout aloud that truth and heaven itself re-echo the sacred phrase, "in the beginning God." No statement ever made is more basic to truth and understanding than this, and no statement more fundamental to pure faith and godliness. Subtract those four words from our foundation and every faith, every hope, and every spiritual longing turns to the dust of nothingness and the vagaries of uncertainty and unbelief. "Ye are of God, little children," wrote the beloved John, "and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." **1 John 4:4**

Then from the lips of the Creator, the mighty Yahvah Himself, came forth that irresistible command of creation, "let." "Let there be light." **Gen. 1:3** "Let" there be a firmament. **Verse 6** "Let" the waters be gathered. **Verse 9** "Let" there be lights in the firmament. **Verse 14** "Let" the waters bring forth. **Verse 20** "Let" the earth bring forth. **Verse 24** Then, when all the lesser acts of creation were complete and ready for the habitation of man, there came the majestic proclamation, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." **Verse 26** Amid all the stupendous movings in creation there came at last the creation of man, for whom all these things had been prepared. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." **Gen. 2:7** Thus in the very heart of the miracle of creation we find the Creator breathing into inanimate clay the breath of life, and man become a "living soul." The first man Adam was made a living soul, **1 Cor. 15:45**, a "zoe psuche", pronounced as sooka; zoe in that Adam possessed the life of God and psuche showing that he was also possessor of animal or human life and mortality. The great gulf that is forever fixed between man and beast is that, though both possess "psuche", or animal life, man alone was given "zoe" - that is, the life of God. Thus was man made a zoe psuche, or a living soul.

When the Lord breathed upon Adam, the breath he breathed was the spirit of life. That living breath came forth from God and was the life of God. That breath was the Spirit of God, for that is what is here meant by breath. Four thousand years later Jesus Christ, the last Adam, told the story of a marvelous birth to the wondering Nicodemus. **John 3:1-12**. He said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but

canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Here the Holy Spirit is likened to wind or the breath of God. When God in the beginning breathed on that inanimate clay, it lived - oh marvelous wonder - and it lived the life that came forth from the Father, the zoe psuche. Every work of God in every act of creation is accomplished and done by the moving of His Spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." **John 6:63.** He it is who convicts the sinner of sin and righteousness and judgment. John 16:7-8. He it is who guides the saint into all truth. **Verse 13** He it is who moves upon the sinner to bring him to the foot of the cross, and it is that selfsame Spirit of God that brings about an entirely new birth and a new creation within the heart of every repentant sinner.

The first man Adam was given the power to reproduce his own kind in the corruptible realm. He was made a living soul, but the last man Adam, Jesus Christ, was not merely a living soul. He was a life giving Spirit. 1 Cor. 15:45 To Him was given the power to produce after the incorruptible and the eternal. For that reason the beloved Peter gave us the imperishable truth that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." **1 Pet. 1:23**

It may not be deemed wise for man to draw too many parallels between the natural birth and the spiritual birth, yet it remains forever true that "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." **Rom. 1:20** Forgive me if I err, but is it not true that when Adam knew his wife Eve, he planted within her womb a corruptible seed, which brought forth after its kind in the two corruptible persons, Cain and Abel? But is it not also true that, when the blessed Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin, He placed the eternal Christ seed in her womb that brought forth the incorruptible Christ, the Son of the living God? There are many mysteries about this wonder, this marvel of God, which are far beyond the understanding of this puny mind of mine, and I shall not be so foolish as to try to pry into them or even explain them. Sufficient be it to know that the angel Gabriel, who appeared to Mary, comforted her fretting heart with the sublime words of reassurance, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." **Luke 1:35** It was the seed of God that was planted in Mary's womb and therefore no other kind could possibly be brought forth. So it is said, "Therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Because the seed was the seed of God, the child was the Son of God. It cannot possibly be otherwise. Let every scoffer scoff, but thus it was by an established decree, the unalterable law of God. He alone can make laws that can never be broken. Man may do his best to pervert God's laws, but by man they can never be broken.

The Lord had said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And die he did. Before the transgression and before Eve was separated from him, Adam could have brought forth after his kind a glorious, incorruptible man like unto himself, for Adam was the son of God. Luke 1:38 But, when he entered into the transgression, he lost that power and his status was greatly lowered; and from that time he was able to reproduce only after his fallen kind. He could reproduce a man after that "psuche," the natural and soulish, but no longer could he reproduce after that other life, the "zoe," which is the life of God.

Dispensations had come and gone before our Lord Jesus Christ explained to the enquiring Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." **John 3:3** The realm of the kingdom of God is the realm from which the first Adam had fallen, and all Adam's kindred were born into the kingdom below it, dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1, with eyes and mind unable to see eternal realities. Thus have all men been born into man's fallen kingdom and man's fallen estate. If we are ever to reach the realm of the kingdom of God, then that which was lost in Adam must now be regained and made alive in Christ. Man must be reborn. He must be born from above. He must be born again. Then only will he regain that kingdom of life from which he fell.

Is the word of God untrue when it tells the saint of a heavenly citizenship? Was Jesus not true when He told men that the kingdom of God was within them? No! He was not wrong, but spoke forth, immutable words of truth and soberness. Peter taught us that by being born again we are not born of corruptible seed as we were in Adam, but of incorruptible seed by the word of God, Christ our Lord, which liveth and abideth forever. Oh what a marvelous teaching! What a sublime, indisputable fact! What an experience is ours that through godly

sorrow and repentance of sins and the cleansing of the precious blood of Christ the incorruptible seed of Christ, the last Adam, is planted in you and me and we are born again of incorruptible seed! Not that we may bring forth in the same manner as did Mary, but that the Christ seed in us may bring forth all that Adam lost in the beginning and much more, that Christ may be fully formed and mature in us after the image of Him who created Him. This process will not cease in the believer until death has been so completely swallowed up in victory that we shall say as Paul that we are no longer the old "I", but Christ, who liveth in us. Paul, having seen the truth of this unspeakable wonder, uttered this mystery that no man can understand but by the Spirit of God. Therefore let us not fail to ask the Spirit to teach us the hidden depths of its meaning. He said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." **Gal. 2:20** Not I, but Christ! The miracle of the new birth has brought such transformation that what may now be seen is not the former man in the image of Adam, but through the miracle of the new birth he has matured in the image of Christ. When the regeneration is complete, it will be not I, but Christ. Incredible, you say? Yes, so it would seem to every natural mind; but it is not incredible nor is it impossible. It is living truth from the living heart of the Eternal. Unbelievable, shall we say? Yes! To the natural mind it is, but to the faith of Christ it is not unbelievable, but an experienced truth now working in all who believe.

Through the dreary years of every century since Christ was raised from the dead, the blessed Holy Spirit has been planting within the heart of believing men and women the incorruptible Christ seed and, wonder of wonders, yet true to God's eternal purpose, that incorruptible seed has been bringing forth after its kind. It cannot be any other way, dear friend. Kind must bring forth after its kind. This is an irreversible law. This is the law of the Lord.

The only person who can enter the kingdom of God is the person who has been born twice. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom. 1 Cor. 15:50 But now that which is born of the Holy Spirit is spirit. The spirit of man dead in trespasses and sins is reborn into a spiritual kingdom, the kingdom from which it fell in the transgression long ago. We are born again. This supreme miracle, concealed in the heart of God, was reserved to be revealed in the latter days. Eph. 3:5 Men were not born again until Jesus rose from the dead and sent the Holy Spirit into the world, John 7:39, but after the resurrection and Pentecost the Spirit was not merely with or among men. The Spirit of life came to dwell within them.

The implication of such a marvelous event as the new birth is staggering to the imagination, and it is small wonder that Peter said that even the angels desire to look into it. But the implication it holds, not only for those who receive Him now, but for the entire creation in the ages to come, is beyond comprehension or even imagination. Jesus Christ, the lonely man of Galilee, God's first manifested Son, who challenged death, restored the maimed, healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils and had power over elements and men, was but one man in the image of God, but what glory will it be when the whole vast family of sons is manifested and arises to do the works that Jesus did and still greater works than He because He went to the Father to send the Spirit that the holy Christ seed might be planted in every believing heart? Even the thought of such glory and honor brings us deep and incredible awe. Such things are too high for the natural mind to receive. It leaves us dumbfounded, staggering in awe, contemplation and wonder. It is far too great a prospect for even the most spiritual of men, but by faith we see it and believe. The blessed, eternal implications of such a rebirth as that which Christ taught to Nicodemus are beyond anything we can ask or think or imagine. Surely these are the unspeakable things unlawful for a man to utter.

It was of this realm beyond the natural that Peter spoke when he said we are born of incorruptible seed. But someone will surely ask, "If we are born of incorruptible seed, what then is the need of our seeking glory, honor, immortality, eternal life? Why has the word of God given so many instructions to teach us how to live, such as these?" "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." **Heb. 12:1-2** Or, "why does it say, 'Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.'?" **2 Pet. 1:5-7** The answer is that by these means the seed of incorruption is cultivated. Those who know aught about farming or gardening will surely know that, though the seed they plant may be excellent and good, it will fail to bring forth much fruit if it is left to lie desolate and unattended to choke among the noxious weeds. In the revealing parable of the sower and the seed, Mark 4:1-12, we read of a sower who

sowed the good seed of the word everywhere. Verse 14 Unfortunately some fell on the hard surface of the road and was carried off by the fowls of the air. Some fell among stones and, because there was no depth of earth and nothing to sustain it, it withered and died. Other seeds fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up and choked it, so that it became unfruitful. And other seed fell on good ground and brought forth some thirty fold, some sixty and some one hundred fold. But, if that otherwise good ground had been left lying full of weeds and stones, the good seed would have been choked out and consequently would have been unfruitful. Verse 19 There was nothing wrong with the seed the man sowed. It was the word of God. The problem lay entirely with the ground in which it was sowed. Let us go one step farther than this and say that the biggest problem was not so much in the ground as in the way the ground was prepared for the seed and then maintained afterward. The stones were left in the ground; the weeds were not destroyed; the watering was not done; and all this neglect contributed to the seed's withering, dying out and bringing forth nothing to perfection.

The good seed, we are told, is the word of God. It is very good seed, for it is the germ of spiritual life. It is the incorruptible seed. When the word instructs us to lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us, Heb. 12:1, it is telling how we must cultivate and keep the earth which we are that the incorruptible seed may vigorously grow to maturity and not wither away to unfruitfulness through our gross neglect. We have surely read these instructions: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." **Eph. 4:31-32** Could we imagine that even the seed of incorruption could possibly come to perfection and maturity in the life of a man who is bitter, wrathful, angry, clamorous, and evil speaking? Or would you say it will mature better in the person who is kind, tenderhearted, forgiving and full of the love and Spirit of God? I need not tell you, for you already know.

We have certainly read these words of inspiration: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now (that is, since you have been born again), ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man (the old Adamic man and nature) with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." **Col. 3:5-10** We ask again in which garden would the seed of incorruption grow the better - in the man who indulges in angry outbursts, manifests wrath, bears malice and envy, uses obscene and blasphemous language, indulges in filthy communication with smutty yarns and dirty talk in his mouth, and who thinks nothing of prevarication, lying and other deception, or do you think the incorruptible seed would mature better in the man who, having first believed, has put off the old man and the old nature with his corrupt deeds and has thoroughly put on the new man, which is Christ, who is in the image of Him who created us all? I need no answer, for you, my brother or sister, already have the answer in yourselves.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." **Gal. 5:16** It is indeed the incorruptible seed that brings forth incorruption in the end, but the teachings concerning these carnal attitudes of which we have been reading are divine instructions as to how we are to tend this garden of God that the incorruptible seed will not be choked out by the weeds of corruption, the stones of sin, or be carried away by those evil fowls of unbelief that have their roost in the Babylon system ready like vultures to carry away the seed of the word of God lest it find root and flourish. The world today is full of unbelievers and scoffers who carry away the seed of the word of God lest it spring up into life aionian.

Should any man say I am preaching works and not grace, let me remind him that these quotations are largely from the writings of the apostle Paul, who above all others was especially called of God to introduce the fullness of the gospel of grace. He it was who said of himself, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words.)..." **Eph. 3:2-3** Never allow yourself to be deceived into loose and corrupt living by hiding like a coward behind the word grace. Hear what grace teaches. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." **Titus 2:11-12** It is the grace of God that brings salvation, and

salvation implies that we are saved from sin. Whatever, therefore, any man may say, the truth remains that, if you have not been delivered from sin, then you have partaken neither of the grace of God nor of the salvation which true grace implies and brings. We cannot gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. Matt. 7:16 Long ago the great Isaiah wrote, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." **Isa. 55:13**

Let it be thoroughly known and understood by every man and woman who names the name of Christ that, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, and, behold, all things have become new." We are new creatures because we are new creations. It stands, therefore, that, if any man claims to have believed on Christ and he is not an entirely new man in all manner of life and godliness, and if he does not show the signs of genuine conversion in all he is and does, then that man has never repented of his sin nor partaken of the true grace of God. If he had, Christ would have delivered him from his sin, for the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses from all sin. 1 John 1:7 That is a far greater statement than it at first sounds. The English word all means: 1, the entire substance or extent of; 2, the entire substance of without exception; 3, the greatest possible; 4, any whatever; 5, every manner, sort or kind. Thus we see that the little word all is a very all inclusive, all embracing word. We must never walk up to God and tell him that the blood of His Son cannot cleanse us from all our sin. I have heard people say, "I can't quit smoking." Well, the Lord did not ask you to quit. He said the blood of Jesus would cleanse you from it, and I know for certain that the only reason you have not been cleansed from this filthy, defiling habit is because you do not want to be cleansed. In your heart you secretly hide this defiling evil that is killing people with cancers and many other diseases by the hundreds of thousands and will eventually kill you, too. Yield it up to the cleansing blood. Do not hide it secretly as Achan hid the garment of Babylon in his tent. Bring it forth for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. I get sick and tired of hearing people talk about sonship with a cigarette in their hand, especially when the word of God has plainly told us to "put away all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word (Christ), which is able to save your souls". **Jas. 1:21** Let go of the world, carnality, greed, lusts and sin and bring them to the precious fountain of blood.

It gives me no joy to find it necessary to say these things, but to my utter grief I find that there are many thousands of people today who are drifting along on a false premise, a false faith and a ship full of holes. The shabbiness and shallowness of modern day conversions - "just a card signed or handshake" without godly sorrow or repentance - has brought to our door all manner of ill-formed spiritual births. It is happening in the spirit as it is happening in the flesh. Many mothers are bringing forth ill-formed children with irreparable physical defects from their birth because they insist on defiling the temple of God with smoke, liquor, drugs and all manner of abuse. The same is true in the spiritual realm, for many once "begotten of God" have failed to keep their garden. The good seed is the word of God, the living Christ, who liveth and abideth forever, but if that living, Christ embryo is not nourished by our seeking glory, honor, immortality and eternal life instead of the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the carnal mind, then it will not come to true spiritual birth. We live in a horrible hour when every hoddody, Tom Noddy thinks he has a right to say he is born again.

For many years I wondered why it was that John said, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." **1 John 3:9** Then in **John 5:18** he says, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." So I asked the Lord regarding this and I saw immediately that there is a difference between that which is begotten and that which is born. That which is born of man was begotten nine months before it was born, and, if the mother did not keep herself during that nine months of gestation, the child might be sickly or weak, or it might perish and die even before it is born. The period of gestation is perhaps the most important time in the child's life.

All these things have their parallel in the spirit, teaching the same thing in the spirit as they do in the natural. "The invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that we are without excuse." If a man, therefore, who professes to believe on Christ, possesses only a head knowledge and a faith not born of God, he will not be transformed; or should his salvation at first seem bright, as was the seed sown among stones, having no root, it will wither away in the gestation period. And if, after having believed, he allows the thorns of carnality and corruption to prevail in the field of his experience, they will choke out the word (Christ) and it will become

unfruitful. The cultivation of our spiritual lives as guided by the word of God is an extremely necessary thing. Without this keeping of ourselves and watching unto prayer, the receiving and applying of the living word to our heart, the putting on of Christ and the putting off of corruption, we will discover at last that the precious seed of incorruption which was sown at first has departed from us and is bringing no fruit unto perfection or life everlasting. We have often wondered why it was that so many converts, having begun well, afterward returned to the weak and beggarly elements to which they desire to remain in bondage. Before long these people have nothing of God - not even an empty profession - but it has happened to them according to the true proverb, "The dog is returned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." **2 Pet. 2:22.**

Lest my own weakness and humanity should stand in the way to hinder understanding or stand in the path of any, I say the truth that all I want is to bring the power of the everlasting word of God to bear upon all our lives that we may be able without let or hindrance and with all diligence to seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life. Let the word of God be a fountain of cleansing in your life that we may be one and all conformed to the image of Christ. Let us be cleansed by the washing of water by the word, and the word quickened by the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Above we spoke of the word all. How far reaching it is in its meaning! Let us now consider such words and phrases as if, diligence, drawing near, looking to yourselves, watching, the washing of the word, enduring and standing. Please read this with diligence and prayer that the Holy Spirit may apply their truth as a cleansing fuller's soap to purify us all and wash us clean from the abominable corruption and lukewarmness of this dreadful Laodicean age.

Long ago in Old Testament times the Lord said to Israel, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." **Isa. 1:19-20** Then Peter, after exhorting the saints to add to their faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, said this: "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:8-11** Twice in these verses Peter warns us all that, though these promises are ours, they will be fulfilled only if these things be in us and if we do them. There is no room here for slackness or weakness or any kind of shoddy carelessness in our lives. These mighty promises of an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord are entirely dependent on the if's, and if we lack these virtues of which He speaks, we are blind and cannot see afar of.

Paul has added this tremendous statement, which, as you will notice, definitely concerns the realm of which we have been speaking, the realms of corruption and incorruption. He warns us and exhorts us in these words: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Rom. 8:13** The person who lives for the five senses of the physical body - for taste, feeling, seeing, hearing and smelling - is living very much in the animal realm. All these senses are the elements of the universe. They are first principles just as the alphabet is elemental to reading. My book, Two Realms, Volume 25 of Treasures of Truth, will take any seeker into the secrets of the realm of the flesh. Many people talk about the flesh, but few, very very few, either know what it is or care to identify it. Again Paul says, "For if yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." **Gal. 1:10** The church is full of men and women pleasers. Never was there a day when the saying, "Like priest, like people," was more true than today. Yet again Paul says, "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." **Gal. 2:18** And yet again he wrote, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." **Gal. 6:9** Again to the Romans he wrote, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Rom. 8:13**

I suppose there are many other such exhortations in the Bible, but these will serve to show us that so much depends on the ifs and if nots we do or do not these important things that serve so definitely to cultivate the earth, which we ourselves are and into which the good seed of incorruption has been cast. "O earth, earth,

earth! Hear the word of the Lord." **Jer. 22:29** "Hear, O earth, and all that herein is: and let the Lord God witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple." **Micah 1:2**

CHAPTER FIVE THE PREPARATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

The manifestation of the sons of God is the hope of all creation. Our sonship was purposed in the heart of the Father in heaven long before the earth began or ever man was placed upon it. When our Father in heaven first proclaimed, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness", His intention was to bring man into the image of Himself that the man He would make would be in every respect a true son of God. Oh how great the prospect was and how marvelous the plan! It was not sufficient that the Father should have one begotten Son in His image, but it was His intention that His beloved and only begotten Son should be the firstborn of many thousands of younger sons, who would be begotten by the miracle of the new birth, or, as Weymouth has so well said, that Jesus might be the oldest, the firstborn, in a vast family of sons to be born in ages to come. Again Paul wrote in Hebrews, "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." Our Lord Jesus Christ is the captain, the firstborn, and we the younger sons of the Christ body.

Such high and mighty purpose is certainly beyond the comprehension of the natural man or the natural mind. The truth and fullness of the wonder of it all only begins to seep into our reborn spirits when the Spirit of revelation gives us a peep behind the scenes into the glorious and wonderful fullness of the heavenly scheme. Such a revelation into the hidden glories was given when our Elder Brother was baptized and the almighty voice from on high proclaimed the words of adoption, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Man was later honored by a second visit into the celestial secrets when three of our younger brothers climbed the exceeding high mountain with their firstborn brother and saw face to face what both He and His brother sons of God would become in the wonderful kingdom age, which in our day is at our very doors.

They saw Him not as the lonely man of Galilee, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. If they hid their faces from Him on that transfiguration day, it was not because He was without form or comeliness, with no beauty that they should desire Him. It was because His face did shine as the sun and His garment was white as the light. Before honor there must be humility, and that is why our wonderful Christ took the seven steps down that Paul described in **Phil. 2:5-11**. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." By these seven steps of humility He descended to the realm of the lowest sinner to make His grave with the wicked. If there is no cross, there is no crown. Therefore, after His utmost humility, even the death of the cross, it is written: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at (or in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

As the transfiguration was a preview of the kingdom when Christ with His entire body of sons will appear in honor and glory, it was right that the three disciples should see Him clothed in glory with face that outshone the sun and garments that were actually light itself, even the light which the Father is. But, wonderful as this is, it still was not the completeness of Christ as He will appear in His kingdom, as we shall presently see.

For the past two thousand years the elect sons of God have been passing through their time of humiliation. Their faces have been marred by their tribulation, so much so that we would have cause to wonder if they were sons of God at all. The elect have always been led to walk in burning wildernesses and among dreadful thorns, but, passing through their valley of death, they have felt no evil, for God has been with them. His rod and His staff have been their one comfort. In their affliction He has prepared a table before them in the presence of their enemies. He has anointed their heads with oil, the oil which is the Holy Spirit, the anointing of sonship, kingship and rulership.

Our beloved elder Brother has been a father to the fatherless, a husband to the widow, a strength to the weary servant and a comforter to the martyr, who, like Jesus our Lord, gave his life and his all for the God he loved and for whom he willingly died. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends, but the love of God is displayed in that, while we were yet enemies, Christ, our brother, died for us. Oh how I love Him! And now I shall affirm that greater love can no man show than that he should lay down his own life in the service of Christ who died for us and for the Father who so loved the world that He went to the extent of giving His only Son for us.

The virtuous man, though he die before his time, shall rest.
Length of days is not what makes age honorable,
nor number of years the true measure of life;
understanding, this is man's grey hairs,
untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
He has sought to please God, so God has loved him;
as he was living among sinners, he has been taken up.
He has been carried off so that evil may not warp his
understanding or treachery seduce his soul;
for the fascination of evil throws good things in the shade,
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart.
Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life;
his soul being pleasing to the Lord,
He has taken him quickly from the wickedness around him.
Yet people look on, uncomprehending;
it does not enter their heads
that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord,
and protection His holy ones.

The virtuous man who dies condemns the godless who survive,
and youth's untimely end the protracted age of the wicked.
These people see the wise man's ending
without understanding what the Lord has in store for him
or why He has taken him to safety;
they look on and sneer,
but the Lord will laugh at them.
Soon they will be corpses without honor,
objects of scorn among the dead forever.
The Lord will dash them down headlong, dumb.
He will tear them from their foundations,
they will be utterly laid waste,
anguish will be theirs, and their memory shall perish.
They will come trembling to the reckoning of their sins,
and their crimes, confronting them, will accuse them.
Then the virtuous man stands up boldly
to face those who have oppressed him,
those who thought so little of his sufferings.
And they, at the sight of him, will shake with coward's fear,
amazed he should be saved so unexpectedly.
Stricken with remorse, each will say to the other,
say with a groan and in distress of spirit:
"This is the man we used to laugh at once,
a butt for our sarcasm, fools that we were!
His life we regarded as madness,
his ending as without honor.
How has he come to be counted as one of the sons of God?
How does he come to be assigned a place among the saints'?
Clearly we have strayed from the way of truth;

the light of justice has not shone for us,
the sun never rose on us.
We have left no path of lawlessness or ruin unexplored,
we have crossed deserts where there was no track,
but the way of the Lord is one we have never known.
Arrogance, what advantage has this brought us?
Wealth and boasting, what have these conferred on us?
All those things have passed like a shadow
passed like a fleeting rumor.
Like a ship that cuts through heaving waves —
leaving no trace to show where it has passed,
no wake from its keel in the waves.
Or like a bird flying through the air —
leaving no proof of its passing;
it whips the light air with the stroke of its piniona,
tears it apart in its whirring rush,
drives its way onward with sweeping wing,
and afterwards no sign is seen of its passage.
Or like an arrow shot at a mark,
the pierced air closing so quickly on itself,
there is no knowing which way the arrow has passed.
So with us: scarcely born we have ceased to be;
of virtue have we not a trace to show;
we have spent ourselves on wickedness instead.
But the virtuous live for ever,
their recompense lies with the Lord,
the Most High takes care of them.
So they shall receive the royal crown of splendor,
the diadem of beauty from the hand of the Lord;
for He will shelter them with His right hand
and shield them with His arm."

(Wisdom of Solomon).

The cross that He gave may be heavy,
But it ne'er outweighs His grace;
The storms that I feared may surround me,
But they ne'er exclude His face.

Our blessed elder Brother once sent a message to the suffering saints of Smyrna, saying, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." **Rev. 2:9-10** Never think it strange, dear saint, concerning the things that you must suffer or "concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." **1 Pet. 4:12-13** Please notice the mention of glory in **verse 13**, and again in **verse 14** "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified."

There need be no question in the mind of any saint who would seek for glory and honor that the way to such glory and honor lies directly across the path of suffering - suffering in whatsoever form it may come. Let us not be so stupid as to imagine that the glory and honor given to Christ at His transfiguration came without the trial of faith through the fires of suffering, and let us not be so childish as to imagine it can possibly come to us without trial, without tribulation, without testing, but by lying on beds of ease and prosperity without proving and

without fire. It just does not happen. It cannot be. The path of the just may certainly be as a shining light that leads to the full light of day - it is, and that light is Christ - but be advised of this; it leads through the slough of despond, past the city of destruction, up the mountain of difficulty, over the sea of tribulation, through the den of lions, through fires of temptation, often stumbling in the valley of doubt and fear, to leave us sometimes wondering why we ever started on the journey at all. But the light, praise God, though it always leads through the valley of the shadow of death, will at last lead us, not only to the light, but it will make us one with the light.

The light of His love shineth brighter
As it leads through paths of woe;
The toil of my work groweth lighter
As I stoop to raise the low.

I suppose in all the world there is never a mountain but there is a valley, perhaps both before it and after it. These valleys were made to be descended and these mountains were made to climb. In times of great test and trial, saint of God, always remember the words of the disciples of Jesus. After the "many" of His disciples had left to walk no more with Him because of the truth He spoke, our Lord said to the twelve that remained, "Will ye also go away?" And they replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Ah, how true that is! "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

For the second time in our lives my wife and I had suffered the sadness of being betrayed and excommunicated by brethren we had long loved and trusted. It was October 1st, 1960, while we were driving between Duluth and Milwaukee, deeply feeling the sorrow of the things that had happened, that the Lord spoke these beautiful words of love and comfort into my wife's heart. They proved a blessing to us and I quote them here in the hope they will be a strength to you also.

Help me, dear Lord, my cross to bear,
Of pride, and sin, and self beware.
Help me, dear Lord, Thy death to share.
Help me, O Lord, I pray!

Help me, dear Lord, to hear Thy voice;
Make of Thy will and way my choice
And in Thy truth and life rejoice,
Help me, O Lord, I pray!

Help me, dear Lord, to know Thy will,
Walk in the way of truth until
I stand transformed in Thy holy hill.
Help me, O Lord, I pray!

Help me, dear Lord, Thy plan to see;
Ever at one with Thy purpose be,
Partaking each day and hour of Thee.
Help me, O Lord, I pray!
Give me this day my daily bread
That I may live, as Thou hast said,
Risen with Thee from out the dead.
Help me, O Lord, I pray!

Rhoda I. Hawtin.

My heart greatly rejoices today in the knowledge that no one will ever attain the glory and honor of adoption until he has walked with Christ through the temptations, the disapproval, the rejections, the Gethsemanes, the judgment halls to the cross itself, where he can tell his own heart, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I

live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Let your heart consider what I now say. "They that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful. **Rev. 17:14** It is not enough that we were predestined. Not enough that we were called. Nor is it sufficient that we were chosen. There is one virtue above all others that is of absolute necessity. We must be counted faithful and that by the Lord God Himself, the judge of all. Are you chosen? Were you chosen in Him before the foundation of the world? Oh how wonderful that is! Then, because He chose you, never choose your own way in anything. Choose His way. Let your whole life be led by the light of Him who said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." I think it was the poet and song writer, Herbert Buffum, who penned these beautiful words to the blessed ones who are chosen of Him to sonship.

"Why can't I be like other people, Lord," so oft I cry.
"I see the careless multitude go laughing, passing by.
"Why must I bear this burden, till it seems that I must die?"
"Then the answer comes, "Have I not chosen you?"

"Why can't I rest without this fearful tugging at my heart?
Why must I always feel the pain of other sufferers smart?
Why is it that where'er I go the load will not depart?"
Then the answer comes, "Have I not chosen you?"

I cried, "O Lord, why am I made a laughing stock to foes?
Why can't I lightly turn aside from other people's woes?
Why is it that from year to year I bear the worldly
blows?" Then the answer comes, "Have I not chosen you?"

And someday when I'm crowned within that home beyond the sky,
I'll ask, "Why am I honored thus?" while endless ages fly.
He'll smile and answer sweetly with the love light in His eye,
"My child, it is because I've chosen you."

"Have I not chosen you? Have I not chosen you?"
O bless His name for ever, He'll surely see us through.
I'll walk with Him by faith until His face I view,
Because I hear Him whisper, "Have I not chosen you?"

How wonderful the path of the chosen really is! How blessed beyond belief to know that He walks by our side from morning till evening and, though we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And someday, when sinks the golden sun beneath the rosy-tinted west, our blessed Lord will say, "Well done", and we shall enter into rest.

CHAPTER SIX ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN

Perhaps we, like Peter, would love to build a tabernacle to Christ and bask for the ages in the glory and honor and the marvels of the mount of transfiguration, but, dearly beloved brethren, even this manifestation of glory and honor is not the end. Our elder Brother, who on that blessed day received the glory of transfiguration and the honor bestowed upon Him by His Father's announcement, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased", knew that there was yet a greater glory to follow. That glory would come on a wonderful day two thousand years in the future when the glory and honor given to Him at His transfiguration would be experienced, not by Him alone, but by His whole body of elect and chosen sons, who by patient continuance in well doing and through identification with Him in His cross would be manifested together with Him. He, together with His many brethren, will receive the glory of transfiguration and the honor of sonship. Oh what a triumphant day!

Except for the revelation of the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:9-27, the bride of Christ, no more wonderful vision was ever given than that seen by John when he on the Lord's day beheld the heavenly glories that await the sons of God in that blessed hour of triumph, described so vividly in Rev. 1:9-18. Before we continue with this thought, I would like to point out one or two outstanding things which show clearly the infinite relationship between Christ, the firstborn Son, the first manifested Son, and that other glorious company of sons who come into His image and likeness and are the members of His body.

John, the beloved disciple, had been with Jesus in the mount of transfiguration. He had seen the surpassing wonder of things, which were to come. Like the others he, too, had fallen down afraid, dumbfounded by the glory that was manifest, as he saw the face of Christ shining as the sun and heard the voice of God from glory saying, "This is My beloved Son." Sixty or sixty-five years had gone by since that wonder-filled day and now for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ this same John was exiled on the lonely island of Patmos. I do not think there was any place on earth that was lonely for John. He knew far too well how to fellowship with Christ in the Spirit to ever feel lonely, for the further he was from the earth the nearer he was to Him, and that is what he loved. Well John knew the Son of God and the sound of His voice was indelible in his ear. He had heard Him preach the Sermon on the Mount, had watched His gentle hand calm the fevered brow, raise the dead, and cast out the demons with His word. His wondering eyes had beheld Him on the mount of transfiguration; he had talked with Him after the resurrection; he had watched with awe as He rose from the earth and ascended into heaven. Yet he was not prepared for the excellent glory of the revelation that awaited him that distant day on Patmos, for the glory he was then to see was unlike any he had ever beheld before. In times past he had seen Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the first born from the dead, the manifested Son, the Son of Mary, the Son of the living God, but now he was to see the Christ in all His glorious completeness, Jesus Christ the Head with all that vast family of sons, every one in His exact image and likeness. The mercy drops of God were falling upon him that day as the glory of the Lord encompassed him as a cloud and from out the glory he heard a voice speaking. How well he knew that beloved voice, for oft its accents had fallen on his willing ear; and yet it was completely different, for he had known the voice of the lonely Galilean, Jesus Christ, the Head of the sons, but now that voice, though unmistakable, was not altogether identical. Now instead of one voice it thundered forth as the sound of many waters, many people, many sons; yet as many waters lose their identity in one ocean, so the voices of these many manifested sons lose their identity in the glory of Himself, that in all things He might have the preeminence.

It was natural that John should turn around to look for the one who spoke, and looking he saw Christ, the Son of the living God; but was it He? Was it the Christ of long ago? John declared it was "one like the Son of man". Very, very like Him. The exact image of Him. There He stood at the end of the age in all His completeness as if to say, "Here am I and the children which God has given Me," **Heb. 2:13**, Christ, the first Son, and all the younger sons, now perfected in His image, standing with Him, and in Him one glorious and perfect bridegroom. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet, His glorious feet, like brass as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice was as the sound of many waters. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. And when John saw Him, he fell at His feet as dead. Oh, the glory of the message that came forth from the lips of Christ as He took John by the hand to raise Him up! "Fear not. I am the first and the last." John had seen Him before and had known Him as the first, but never had he seen the resplendent end of the matter, Christ as He is at last. There before him stood the One who was dead and was now alive forevermore, the One with the keys of both death and hell. When the blessed Christ rose from the dead two thousand years ago, He led forth from hell a host of captives, but now at the end of the time He stands, holding the keys that unlock the gates of both hell and death. No wonder He once said, "On this rock I build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The gates of hell cannot prevail against Him who holds the keys.

Marvelous are the promises of God made to those members of the body of Christ, which are the feet. Indeed, it is positively true and abundantly evident that the final crushing blow that will destroy everything belonging to the kingdom of Satan will be accomplished by the feet members of the body of Christ, the sons of God who will be manifested at the end of the age.

It was in the sad evening of the same day that man fell that first promise to the feet members of Christ was made. God had come to the garden to talk to the children He loved only to find them hiding from Him among the trees He had made. They had sewn fig leaves together to hide their nakedness, for the glory of God that had covered them at the first was gone and they were desperately afraid. And God said, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me gave me of the tree and I did eat. And the Lord said unto the woman, What hast thou done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat. And the Lord said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." **Gen. 3:11-15** Here the first promise of the coming of Christ, the seed of the woman, is made, but it is a promise, not only of the coming of Christ, who is the head, but also of the coming of those sons in His image and in His likeness who are the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, that complete Christ whom John saw and described as "one like the Son of man", **Rev. 1:13**, whose feet were like fine brass (for judgment) as if they had burned in a furnace. These are not idle words. They are words of transcending truth and revelation. The promise to Eve was that the seed of the woman should finally and irrevocably crush the head of the serpent under His heel, or under His feet. We can find greater confirmation of this elsewhere. In **Heb. 2:8** Paul said, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet." Paul must be referring to the same thing when he said in **Rom. 16:20**, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." David also, speaking by the Spirit, said, "Thou hast put all things under His feet." It is always a fatal mistake for any man, regardless of who he is, to imagine that the revelation he has is complete. That mistake will lead him into endless difficulty and make him bigoted in his ideas and so establish his ways that God can never give him any greater light. We should always remember that the revelation of the Lord is as the path of the just that shineth more and more until the day is full. Revelation grows from the frail, flickering light of dawn to the glory and fullness of the noonday sun. Oh so often people send me books and tracts on moldy old subjects that had their day several hundred years ago. They are still striving to prove things that need no proof. They are strumming harps that have no strings. They are like the Jews, hanging on to the law of Moses after the Holy Ghost was outpoured and Paul had come with his marvelous gospel of the grace of God. But even while I write, the shadows are lengthening on the day of the gospel of grace. The day of Paul's gospel is drawing to a rapid close and the glorious new day of the kingdom is at hand. Let us not try to revive the age of grace with its flickering lights, its spiritual gifts, and all its imperfections, but let us follow the increasing light into the perfect day where everything in part is done away. If you want to stay there, my brother, by all means stay, but don't ask me to stay with you, for the Holy Spirit is urging me within to stand with His feet on Mt. Zion and proclaim the glorious kingdom of eternal peace. Farewell to the age of imperfections. Farewell to things that are in part. Farewell to seeing through a glass darkly and good morning to that which is perfect; good morning to that which is complete; good morning to seeing face to face.

When God revealed to Adam and Eve that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, I'm sure they saw the truth only in embryo form. They saw the woman as Eve and the seed as Seth. Would we dare say they were wrong in so seeing the revelation? No! A thousand times no! They were perfectly right in what they saw, but they saw very little. They could not look through the vista of the years and see through the line of their son Seth that the Christ of God in all His sinless purity would be born of a virgin mother, begotten of God, the seed of the Holy Ghost; and Joseph and Mary, rejoicing in the birth of the Christ-child, the only begotten Son of God, could not look down the corridors of the years to the culmination of the age of grace and see that the seed which fell into the ground and died had brought forth a whole harvest of begotten sons in His own image and in His exact likeness. They could not hear the words of revelation flowing from the anointed lips of Paul as he proclaimed, "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **Rom. 8:29**. Or as Weymouth translates it, "that He might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers."

In my spirit I hear the weeping voice of Jeremiah come ringing down the centuries, saying to us at the end of this age, "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter." **Lam. 4:2**. But the full glory of the revelation was left for John to see, and, when he saw it, he fell down as dead at the feet of that seed of the woman, that glorious Christ, that complete Christ, the head, the body, the hands and the feet — the seed of the woman that was promised to Eve long

ago now ready to fulfill all that was promised in destroying forever from the face of the universe every work of the serpent. It was left for the beloved John to witness the final phase of the complete birth of that Son who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Thus in Rev. 12 we read that he saw a spiritual virgin bringing forth a man child — not a male child, as some say, but a wonder never before known, a child that is a fully developed man at birth. Even Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man because He was born of a human mother though He was the Son of God. But this child is born of a spiritual woman and so is born a man child. This is the Son who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This is the final company of the sons of God, the feet members of the body of Christ, who are to rule all nations with a rod of iron and finally put their heel on Satan's head to destroy his power.

For many years it has been clear to me that the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 31 is a picture of the body of Christ as it has been for centuries — dry, scattered, sinewless, fleshless and breathless. Ezekiel could not tell whether it was possible for it to live. But, when the prophesying began, there came a tremendous shaking and strange things began to happen. Bone came to bone; sinews and skin and flesh began to appear; but the final glorious conclusion came when the Lord commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind, which means the Spirit. When he prophesied, wonderful things happened. Breath came into that dead carcass and, most wonderful of all, it stood upon its feet, an exceeding great army.

The days of the preparation of the bridegroom are almost complete. The feet are coming forth from the womb of the virgin. Then the preparation of the sons of God will be accomplished. The feet are ready for the washing that they might be cleansed from the last particles of the dust of the earth and have their part in Him. "What I do thou knowest not now," Jesus said to Peter, "but thou shalt know hereafter." Hallelujah! The glory of the truth is left for us, the feet, to know and I know for a surety that Christ is cleansing His feet from every trace of the world and its systems.

The story of the final coming forth of the sons of God is revealed in the twelfth chapter of Revelation in these words: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up onto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they (the sons of God) should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." **Rev. 12:1-6.**

We are in the closing hours of the dispensation of grace. The certain hope of the kingdom of God lies before us. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, together with every living thing that moves, draw near to the moment of triumph. The whole creation, that has groaned in travail and pain throughout the night of every dispensation, is soon to hear the joyous song of the kingdom morning, where justice and equity will spread like a mantle over the tired world, for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters fill the seas.

Almost two millenniums ago God manifested His first Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the firstborn and the head of all the sons of God prepared of God throughout the ages, and, when all those sons are complete, they will form one body, a sonship body in the exact image and likeness of that first Son, who is Himself the image of the Father.

There are many things to learn from types and antitypes, for by them truth is taught with more force than any spoken word. In the plan of God two distinct systems were to rule in power over the entire earth. The first was Babylon, the image of which was portrayed by the prophet Daniel. Dan. 2:31-35 The second is to be the kingdom of Christ, the Lord and Ruler of which was seen by the apostle John at Patmos. Rev. 1:10-18 See also Dan. 2:44 If we consider the image of Babylon with its head of gold, its breasts and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet part iron and part clay, we will learn this: The image of Babylon is one image, all the various parts of the image contributing together to make one image of the dread forms of

Babylonish rule that would prevail over the entire earth. With this in mind we may readily see that, when John beheld the revelation of the fullness of the Christ, Rev. 1:10-18, he saw that the head, the hair, the eyes, the hands, and the feet, though all particular parts, were but one body. This was the revelation of the fullness of the sonship company, the in Christ company, of which He is the head and the firstborn. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of the image of Babylon. Dan. 2:38 Christ is the Head of the sons. Rom. 8:29 The feet of the image of Babylon were ready to fall apart in dust, but the feet of Christ, like unto brass eternally enduring, burned as in a furnace of fire. Just as the image of Babylon, representing all dominions and empires, was one image, so this image of Christ with its many members is but one body. As many soldiers are one army, so many sons make one body, and that body is the fullness of Christ. When Paul exhorted the Ephesians to come to the stature of the fullness of Christ, Eph. 4:13, he was speaking of the fullness John saw in Rev. 1:13-15 This is the perfect man among the candlesticks (churches) in His image. We may further say that, could we look more closely, we would certainly see that every nerve and every fiber, every muscle and sinew of that mighty one like unto the Son of man, was itself a manifested son of God, each the image of the other and all the image of Jesus Christ, the Head of all the sons of God.

The sons of God who are coming to maturity at the end of the age are the feet of Him. Isa. 52:7; 60:13-14. The clay feet of the image of Babylon are about to be smitten and crumble to dust. Dan. 2:34, 35. With them will crumble the whole system of Babylon with its millenniums of confusion. But the feet of Christ are not of clay, but as brass (judgment) burning in a furnace of fire; for judgment shall be given to the saints of the Most High and they shall reign unto the ages of the ages. Dan. 7:26-27

Deep from the depths of my spirit conies an inconsolable longing for the purification of the saints of the Most High. Too long have these sons wasted their living with harlot churches. It is time to come out from among them and return to the Father. It is time for the washing of feet - not in ceremony, but in reality. This is the hour when we are to know what only Jesus knew when He said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me." **John 13:6-8** This is the fulfillment of that type so richly manifested when the woman washed His feet with tears of repentance and love and anointed them with the symbolic oil of the Holy Spirit of God. Luke 7:3, 38 We are those feet of Christ whom He is now washing, John 13:4-5, that we might be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Eph. 6:14-15 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" **Isa. 52:7** Rom. 10:15 Long ago Jesus showed them His hands and His side, and then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord; but the hour is at hand when He will show unto all the world His blessed feet, for it is they who will publish to all the world the glad news, "thy God reigneth."

There are many today whose feet are defiled, for they are far too interested in the affairs of this passing age, though they protest otherwise. I am convinced that no man who has any love left in him for this present evil age will ever attain to that glorious feet company of the sons of God, for those who are with Him are not only called, but chosen and faithful as well. Rev. 17:14 He whose feet are as brass in a furnace of fire is portraying in parable expressive beyond words that those who are to judge the nations of the earth must certainly themselves be first judged by fire, for the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, and all that is wood, hay, and stubble shall be destroyed. 1 Cor. 3:12-16

Let us, then, now judge ourselves and thus cleanse ourselves of all that is wood and hay and stubble, for these things vividly portray the passing and not the permanent. Let all who are double-minded purify their hearts. Let us make a clean break with the harlot systems of earth. Let us recognize every denomination, every sect, and every religious system as being part and parcel of the Babylon system that is soon to crumble, bringing destruction, not only to itself, but to all who are found in her. Rev. 18:28

All who are members of Christ must suffer the pains of crucifixion. The Head was pierced with thorns; the hands were pierced with nails; the side was pierced with a spear. So also must the feet be pierced, for He who proudly displayed His hands and His side shall presently display with equal pride His wounded feet. He from whom all men fled that He might suffer alone amid the millions who swarmed around will also have us to share the cross of walking alone and misunderstood amid the millions of this crooked and perverse age. The hour of preparation of the feet company is at hand. It is the preparation of the final company of God's sons. Is it too much that we should be asked to abandon the trifles in which other men are so engrossed? "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet and is clean every whit."

CHAPTER SEVEN A GARDEN ENCLOSED

In the beautiful genesis of our ages our gracious heavenly Father, having formed man in His own likeness, took the man He had formed and placed him in a garden eastward in Eden. We love at times to think upon that place of magnificent beauty with its four untainted rivers of pure, sparkling water flowing out to bring life to the new creation. The name of the first was Pison that compassed the whole land of Havilah (possibly Arabia). The name of the second was Gihon, which compassed the whole land of Ethiopia. The third was Hiddekel, which went out toward Assyria; and the fourth was the mighty Euphrates. Gen. 2:10-15 Man in the image of God was placed in this vast garden to dress it and rule it in the love and peace of God.

It will not be our purpose here to comment on the extent of the garden nor concerning those fragrant forests that perfumed the breeze, both pleasant to the sight and life-giving for food, Gen. 2:9, nor of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, nor of the tree of life, ever green and vibrant, in the midst of the garden. Neither tongues of men nor angels would be sufficient to tell the story of its heavenly beauty and describe the life-giving fruitfulness of its trees or how the tree of life in the midst of the garden offered life everlasting to any who would partake of it. In that beautiful land the rivers wandered o'er sands of gold. Radiant pearls gleamed forth from the coral strands where the burning rays of the rubies shine and the diamonds light up the secret mine; where feathery palm trees rise and dates grow ripe under its sunny skies. We can only imagine the effusion of fragrant forests that perfumed its every breeze. In that land of wonder every creature was a friend to every other. The bear was gentle, the lion was tame, the wolf lay down with the lamb and Adam was the lord and ruler in God's name and all creatures loved and willingly served at his word. My frail ability is too feeble to describe the unruffled tranquility of peace, but we have the blessed assurance that its river of peace will reappear a few days further down the road when the glory of Christ's kingdom will spread its fadeless Eden over all the face of the earth. There the last Adam, in God's image, will rule in a heavenly harmony where every bloom is fadeless and "storms with their blasts never frown."

Wonderful as that garden must have been, it becomes evident that Eden in all its magnificence was not the end our Father had in view. It was His intention that man himself was to become the garden of the Lord, a living garden, a garden in which reborn men in the image of God would become trees of life whose fragrance in the kingdom of God would fill the whole earth with the perfumed breeze of life and incorruption, and in the fullness of times restore the entire creation, visible and invisible, to the immortal image of Him who created all things for His glory. I hesitate not to declare to all mankind and all creation that it is God's will and intention that everything in earth, and everything in the heavens, and all things in the entire universe are to be restored, from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies and from the tiny planet on which we now dwell to the farthest star and the mightiest galaxy. All things, absolutely all things, were created both by Him and for Him, and all exist and are held together and in their place by His infinite power. "From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends." Glory to Him for evermore! Amen!

The wise king Solomon, through the wisdom and insight given to him, saw deeper into the mysteries of God than most have been permitted to see when he made the statement, "[a garden enclosed is my beloved.](#)" **Song of Sol. 4:12.**

As the great pendulum of the ages has relentlessly ticked away the centuries and millenniums one second at a time, our heavenly Father; with infinite care has been preparing His fruitful garden. It has been ever increasing in fragrance, in glory, and in extent as the centuries have passed by. Well might we believe that it appeared as its first seed in the radiant life of the Son of God, that life-giving Spirit who appeared among men two thousand years ago. Year by year its glory has been increasing as day after endless day the great Gardener on high has reaped from among mankind an enormous harvest. While the world passes on unheeding, He has been preparing individual lives among mankind in His own image and likeness. They have brought forth fruit unto eternal life, sending their enlightening rays to illumine the earth and their heavenly perfume to call men home to the love of God.

You are the garden of the Lord, my brothers and sisters, and wisely it has been left to you to keep your garden. To you it has been given to bring forth fruit for His honor and glory, and none other can do it for you. Yours it is to cultivate and till. You must watch over it and destroy its noxious weeds. You must hedge it round about lest

the little foxes spoil its vines. Let it not be said of you, "These three years have I come seeking fruit on this tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?" Dig about it, brethren, and dung it that it may bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

Long ago the troubled Jeremiah in the anguish of his spirit poured forth this plaintive plea: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." **Jer. 22:29** I am sure the prophet was not merely calling upon the inanimate earth to hear his words, but rather he was speaking to that special creation the great Elohim had brought forth on the day when He took the dust of the earth in His almighty fingers and, having formed the form of man, breathed upon it and that earth, touched by the breath of God, became a living soul in His image and likeness. This divine act of creation is beyond the natural mind to comprehend. Consequently unbelieving man discards this miracle of creation as something unworthy of man's proud mind, but there is no need to understand before we can believe. In the depths of my spirit I not only believe it, but perceive that which the natural mind cannot perceive.

It was some four millenniums after the Lord had breathed upon that piece of clay to bring forth the animate from the inanimate that God wrought another miracle. The Holy Spirit of life, who long before had moved upon the face of the waters in the genesis of the eon, now moved upon a pure virgin maiden and from the earth which she was brought forth Jesus the Christ and Son of God, He who was and is and is to come. Wrapped up in that tiny baby was the One of whom Paul wrote, saying, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." **Rom. 11:36** Or, as Goodspeed translates it, "From him everything comes, through Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends." Once again the earth had heard the voice of the Lord and had brought forth a Son who was to become the head of a vast body of sons of God, who through the new birth would come into His image. Jesus Christ was the firstborn of many brethren. **Rom. 8:29**

Once again God is speaking to His earth to say, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son... and whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29-30** "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The same Holy Spirit who breathed life into the first Adam and breathed upon the earth which was Mary, the virgin, now is breathing upon the earth which we are to bring forth sons of God in the image of Christ, who is the Head of the body, the oldest and firstborn and the first manifested Son of the entire Christ body. "As He is, so are we..." wrote the beloved John, **1 John 4:17**, and I know it is so. "O earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord" and the glory He proclaims for you. Oh that I had the voice of a trumpet that could awaken the dead to hear these wonderful, all inclusive words, "O earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord," that mankind might know what the almighty Father has in store for an earth so torn with bloodshed and strife, so bruised with iniquity, and so chastised, that it might know peace.

I am aware that the message is unpopular, but it is true that many centuries ago the Most High set in motion a predetermined purpose which was to affect the whole universe in eons to come. In the twelfth chapter of Genesis He called a man by the name of Abram, saying unto him, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." **Gen. 12:3** Once again my heart cries aloud, "O earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord." From the seed of Abraham through his grandson Israel came Jesus, the Christ. Unto Israel pertains the adoption or sonship, **Rom. 9:1-5**, and through the ministry of the sons of God (the adoption) the bride is prepared. This is the evident meaning of the story told in **Rev. 12:1-6** "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven: and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." O earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord.

The whole earthly pilgrimage of Abraham must have been buoyed and uplifted as he saw God's promise unfolding and his spiritual eye caught a glimpse of the whole glorious plan. From his own earth body, now as good as dead, there would arise a people as numerous as the stars, and from his seed would come Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Matt. 1:1; but he saw much farther than this. He saw an elect people arising according to the promise given him, of whom it was said, "Whom he did foreknow, He did predestinate: and whom He did predestinate, them He called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." **Rom. 8:29-30** These He will bring to receive the glory of transfiguration and the honor of sonship and adoption just as Jesus received when He appeared unto Him there. O earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord!

Abraham saw still further than this, for it is written: "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." **Heb. 11:10** There is only one city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, and that city is the celestial New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:19-20 Of that city it is written: "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." **Gal. 4:26** So glorious was the sight of that holy city and so real was it to Abraham's spirit that, though a great man of wealth, he despised it all, dwelling rather in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob that, unhampered by the things of earth, he might press forward to that city. What indescribable joy it must have been to him to see inscribed upon its twelve pearly gates the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel and to know that through those twelve wide open gates in eons to come would pass the millions, yea, billions of all the families of earth to quench their thirst at the river of water of life that was seen flowing out of the throne of the Most High, Rev. 22:1-2, and to feast upon the tree of life that bare the twelve manner of fruits and the leaves of the tree that were for the healing of the nations. O hallelujah! Hallelujah to the Lamb! Hallelujah to the Lord God Almighty, the Author and Finisher of such a purpose! O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord!

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was of jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them, which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they, which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, pure as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Rev. 21:9 to 22:7

We will speak of one thing more, for my ransomed, joyful spirit goes far beyond even these blessed things. The very earth of which we have spoken such glorious things is only the genesis, the beginning, of God's massive plan for the restoration of the entire universe. Let the scientists and astronomers talk as they will about other inhabited planets, there are none; but from mother earth and its redeemed will go forth the message of reconciliation to all the void and rock strewn wastes of all the universe. Well do we know those blessed words of grace and purpose indelibly inscribed for all to see, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:18-20 "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. 1:20 Was it not on earth that the reconciliation was made? Oh unbelieving man, did not the apostle say all things! Can anyone anywhere say in two words anything more all inclusive than all things! Yea, the power and scope of the cross of Christ went much further than any man has ever imagined, because on that bloody cross our glorious Head and elder Brother reconciled the universe to Himself. O earth, earth earth! hear the word of the Lord.

Hear still further what He says, for not only did our beloved Brother reconcile all things that day, but he has given to us, His younger brothers, the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5:18 And this is the joyous word that ministry bears: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Verse 19 Oh how few preachers even tell this wonderful message and how few refrain from imputing trespasses to the people! To every penitent soul our Lord doth say, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." John 8:11

So it shall be in eons yet unborn that from this earth where the pain of reconciliation was suffered by our Brother, Jesus, we younger sons of God will bring the message to angels and to men, to principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of the world, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight." Col. 1:20-22 And why should the great Author and Finisher of our faith impute trespasses to any who believe on Christ, since all trespasses were imputed unto Him? O earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord! Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! Repent of your sin, your unbelief and your pride, and begin to tell the wonderful, wonderful story of reconciliation as it really is.

I make no apologies for truth. God is truth and in Him is no darkness or lie. Oh what a plan He had in His heart when long ago He formed a man from the clay that He had picked up from the earth and breathed upon, and from the potency of that breath Adam became a living soul!

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love as Thou dost love
And do as Thou wouldst do.
Breathe on me, breath of God;
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee that perfect life
Of Thine eternity.

The miracle of what God has already done ravishes my heart. I am enthralled beyond measure at the prospect of what He has prepared for them that love Him and believe Him. Those indescribable glimpses beyond the

veil help us to comprehend at least in part what it was of which Paul spoke when he said, "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: but of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." **2 Cor. 12:1-5** How ever can we help but glory in the prospect of such radiantly marvelous things?

"Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return" was evidently not spoken to those who believe, for of them it is written, "This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." **1 Cor. 15:53-54** This clay has been born again, born from above. It has been breathed upon by the breath of God. It has become a "zoe psuche," a living soul. It does not just possess a soul. It is a soul and it is a spirit. It has become the garden of the Lord, and we ourselves are our own gardeners that we may bring forth fruit unto perfection. Let other Christians waste their God-given time following the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the natural mind, but let it not be so with you or me; for, if we live after the flesh, we shall die, but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. Rom. 8:13 Having begun in the Spirit, we can never be made perfect through the flesh. If such a thing were possible, then we might well have never left the flesh realm, but now our lives, being lived by the power of Christ that worketh in us, have become the garden of the Lord that we may bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." **Gal. 5:19-21** These are noxious weeds that grow readily and flourish in the garden of those who desire to live after the flesh. These abominable things are thrown before the eyes of the public every day on the T.V. screen, upon which Christians, alas, alas, feast their eyes - eyes that should be sanctified. "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge; but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness." **Prov. 15:14** You may mislead yourself, thinking you are getting away with it and not being affected by it, but the terrible truth is that he that soweth to the flesh shall reap only corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life aionian. It is always true that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

These noxious weeds of the flesh are they, which must be destroyed from our garden. They must be uprooted. They must be reduced to ashes. If we plow them under, they will grow again. We were born of incorruptible seed when we believed, but I am inclined to think that, if our life is producing corruption, then it must be that we were not born of the incorruptible. When men tell me they are born again, and I hear them use profanity, see them drink booze, smoke cigarettes and indulge in other works of the flesh mentioned above, then I must admit that I do not believe them. Can we with the same tongue bless God and curse men? Can blessing and cursing come from the same mouth? Does a fountain send forth from the same place both sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain yield both salt water and fresh. If we find ourselves in this kind of spiritual contradiction, we would be well advised - very well advised indeed - to heed the words of the apostle Paul when he said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" **2 Cor. 13:5** It would be far better for people who have these noxious weeds in the garden of their spirit to either destroy them now or examine themselves and admit that they are not in the faith at all.

In an excellent article on Cultural Terrorism John Hal-ford has written: "In the last five years, the American entertainment industry - which has never been saintly - has taken a particularly nasty turn.

"Instead of being merely suggestive, films and pop songs - with a few exceptions - now openly wallow in themes such as rape, drug abuse, satanism and perverted sex. No subject is off limits. Nothing is too outrageous, revolting or disgusting for a lyric or a screenplay, and half of all movies now produced in the U.S.A. are for a "mature audience." The greatest tragedy is that most of this appalling material is aimed to

appeal to the young. The damage that has been done - and is being done - to the morals of a whole generation is incalculable.

"But it doesn't just affect the United States. American media provide the most persuasive cultural influences the world has ever seen. This flood of violence, pornography and perversion is seeping into nearly every country on earth. It is playing havoc with the sometimes, fragile cultures of the developing countries. Educators and intellectuals have criticized this invasion, calling it "cultural colonialism." Well, maybe. Sometimes it seems more like "cultural terrorism!"

"A terrorist who hijacks an airplane or plants a bomb in a crowded airport lounge apparently doesn't care who gets hurt, as long as he achieves his aim. That innocent people are blown to pieces or maimed for life is not his concern. Is the cultural terrorist any different? His aim is to make money. His weapons are anything that makes him money - a movie, a video tape or a new song. And he is apparently little concerned how violent, how perverted, how degenerate, how much his material appeals to the very lowest of emotions, or how much it twists and pollutes fresh young minds and further warps those already in trouble. If it makes money, it achieves the cultural terrorists aim and he will use it.

"Thankfully, not all producers, songwriters and artists have become cultural terrorists.

"But developing nations are often helpless in the face of cultural terrorism. They need the contact, even at the risk of exposing themselves to a contagious subculture that threatens their societies as surely as it is subverting the younger generation of 'advanced' countries.

"How can these great nations, which have so much good to offer, allow themselves to be represented so badly? We may place elaborate safeguards at airports to separate would-be hijackers from their weapons. But cultural terrorists are free to distribute their soul-destroying weapons without fear of prosecution!

"If ever a people were asking for it, it is the United States and Britain, when far too many of their actors and actresses portray fornication, murder and rape across the screens of the world, and their entertainers scream in song obscenities from countless millions of radios and cassette players. They are compounding the national sins of a people who are already in very deep trouble with God." End of quote.

These words are all too frighteningly true, but they show the kind of stuff, the kind of filth, now being foisted upon the world, designed to turn mankind down pathways that lead to inevitable destruction. No Christian need be told that radio, television, video, corrupt reading, rock and roll and every modern contraption now used to spew filth and corruption are designed by Satan himself, who, knowing that he has but a short time, Rev. 12:12, is going all out to destroy as many souls as he possibly can. The authorities utter lies when with smug audacity they tell the world that violent scenes displayed before the eyes of children do not cause violent behavior. Whom do these emissaries of the devil think they are hoodwinking when they act as the mouthpiece of the arch deceiver by propagating such abominable prevarications? Many a child has confessed that the crime he committed he saw first on T.V.

Some of the best lessons I have learned in life were statements simply overheard and not addressed to me at all. I once heard an elderly lady remark to her brother, "You can't rub up against dirt without getting dirty." That was almost sixty years ago, but its truth found lodging in my heart for a lifetime. The apostle Paul may have been more refined in his speech when he said, "**Evil communications corrupt good manners," 1 Cor. 15:33**, but how true it is! Time and again the words of the Greek poet come to mind:

Vice is a creature of such fearful mien
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with his face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Beloved brethren, the garden you are keeping is the garden of the Lord. It is the garden of the redeemed spirit. It is a garden enclosed. We are to keep it hedged about and fenced in that all evil speaking and thinking and

every lust of the flesh and desire of the carnal mind will be kept out. I am not trying to say that one should shut himself away like a monk in a monastery. Such thought should never enter the mind of a saint. Our blessed Lord and Christ mingled freely with the throngs of people to whom He ministered. He was seen among drinkers, thieves, harlots and all the rest, but never once did He allow them to defile Him. He was not among them to partake of their evil. He was there only to tell them of God's goodness and that His mission was to seek and to save the lost. Which one among us would want to be found feasting our eyes on some corrupt thing should the Son of God appear in our presence? Did not our Lord tell us of the man who once had walked with God, but said, "My Lord delayeth His coming," then began to eat and drink with the drunken? **Matt. 24:49** He warned us that such a servant would see the Lord come in a moment when he was not looking for Him, and in an hour when he was not aware.

It is unnecessary for me to spend much time warning of the evils around us. Close the gate of your beautiful garden and spend your time in communion with our Lord and Christ, for "a garden enclosed is my beloved."

"The fascination of evil throws good things into the shade,
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts the simple heart."
"Soon it is not enough for them that their knowledge of
God should be at fault;
in the great struggle to which ignorance condemns their lives
they next give such massive ills the name of peace.
With their child-murdering initiations, their secret mysteries,
their orgies with outlandish ceremonies,
they no longer retain any purity in their lives or their marriages,
one treacherously murdering the next or doing him injury
by adultery. Everywhere a welter of blood and murder, theft and fraud,
corruption, treachery, riots, perjury, disturbance of decent people,
forgetfulness of favors, pollution of souls, sins against nature,
disorder in marriage, adultery, debauchery.
For the worship of unnamed idols is the beginning, cause,
and end of every evil. Either that, or they rave in ecstasy, or utter false oracles."

Wisdom of Solomon

Solomon here speaks of the fascination of evil. What is there about evil that holds such a fascination for people! I frankly confess that I do not know, but we do know that it has a strange devilish appeal to almost everyone. Can we explain what it is in a child that makes him always want to try the very thing his mother told him not to do? It was the same strange fascination with evil that deceived Eve and made her partake of that which she inwardly knew would produce her death. Examine with care the passage quoted above from the Wisdom of Solomon, and we must all admit that each and every one of the evils mentioned there are rampant in our day and right in the society in which we live.

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

There are many works of the flesh because the flesh manifests itself in so many ways, ways that are almost limitless. Paul, however, in Galatians 5:19-21 names seventeen works of the flesh that to a degree include all others, even the incredible list given in **Rom. 1:28-32**. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like. ..." Then the apostle adds the amazing words, "of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

It should be remembered that these seventeen works or manifestations of the flesh are not the works of the devil. They are the works of the flesh, your flesh and mine. When Christians find these evils being manifested in their lives, they should not readily blame the devil for them. Indeed, Satan may take advantage of their presence in men and women, but they are not the works of the devil. They are the works of the flesh. It is important for us to know this fact. The scripture is very plain in its teaching that the flesh, our flesh, "lusteth

against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that we cannot do the things that we would." **Gal. 5:17** The whole seventh chapter of Romans describes this dilemma. Then again the apostle teaches, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Gal. 5:16 A life being lived in harmony with God is without doubt the secret of a life lived in perfect freedom from the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the natural mind.

Because preachers have been preaching about the flesh for centuries, but none seem able to identify it, I strongly recommend that you prayerfully study my book *Two Realms* (readily available upon request). Once the seeker after a life in the Spirit is able to identify his enemy, the flesh, and the manner in which it operates, for the first time in his life he is in a position to reckon himself dead to it. But he will not be able to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts until he is able to identify it. He will beat the air like a blind man in a pillow fight. I must point out here that absolutely every spiritual thing a Christian learns he must learn by a revelation from the Spirit of God. Revelation is given to us when the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, takes the things of God and shows them unto us. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He will receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." **John 16:14** We may talk about sin all we like, but sin never becomes sinful until the blessed Holy Spirit reprove us of it.

Our complete dependence upon the work of the Holy Spirit is clearly brought out by our Saviour in the following words, every word of which deserves hours of meditation and prayer and comparison with other such statements in the word of God: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." **John 16:7-15**

Let every Christian learn to involve his entire life in communion with the Holy Spirit. He is our teacher in this age. He has been sent by Christ, not merely to be with us, as our blessed Lord Himself was with us, but to be in us, John 14:17, and to abide with us forever. John 14:16 He is the anointing that abideth in us. Of Him the apostle John wrote these wonderfully inspiring words: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledges the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. (That is, the anointing.) If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise He hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." **1 John 2:20-28**

I have made the necessary discovery that the entire church system is rampant with divisions and torn to pieces with factions. This sad situation exists because preachers teach the traditions of their denominations and sects. These are the man made traditions of the elders just as was the case with the scribes and Pharisees in the days of Jesus. Jesus said, "Ye make the word of God of none effect by your traditions." **Matt. 15:6** But I have also made another discovery. It is this: Wherever men and women are depending upon the Holy Spirit to instruct them, they are all coming to the same conclusions and believing the same things. One of my great joys during the years I have been writing and sending literature all over the world has been that people, upon reading the truth I have written, have in turn written back to me to say that the things they read in my writings were the very things about which the Holy Spirit had been speaking to them before my writing came. This is a continual joy to me because it shows that the blessed Holy Spirit is in truth the great universal instructor, and wherever His anointing abides in the hearts of the saints, He diligently teaches them the same things; and

these things taught by Him are truth and no lie, for no lie is of the truth. It should not then be an amazement to any one of us to hear Him say, "Ye have no need that any man teach you; but the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth."

It is true that God has set in the church teachers, but there are two things about those teachers that must be made very clear. Firstly, the Lord never raises up more than a handful of them in any generation. The idea that teachers, apostles and pastors are to be found in every little local gathering, no matter how carnal it may be, is utter falsehood and stupidity. The Lord never intended any such thing. How many statesmen of the caliber of Abraham Lincoln do we find in the world at one time? How many statesmen of the caliber of George Washington? Or King David? I know of no nation today where such selfless men can be found. How many composers are there in the world today of the caliber of Beethoven or Mozart? How many mathematicians like Einstein do we find at one time? How many true inventors like Thomas Edison? I remember hearing the great humorist, Red Skelton, when asked how many true comedians there were in the world at one time, answer "Never more than half a dozen." If these things be so in the natural realm, what makes Christians imagine that God-sent ministries which "God hath set" in His body are a dime a dozen and as numerous as the steeple houses that stand on a multitude of street corners? How many evangelists of the caliber of John Wesley or George Whitefield or D. L. Moody are there in the world today? Please do not try to tell me that the great T.V. kingdom builders and money graspers are evangelists, because they are not. How many true prophets are there in the world of the caliber of Isaiah or Elijah? I know not of any.

It is the same with the ministry of a teacher. There are never more than a very minute few in the universal church at one time. Paul said it all when he said, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." **1 Cor. 4:15** Even the apostle James, who was himself a great teacher, made the statement, "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren." **James 3:1** Revised Standard Version. Let us then remember that God, all wise and almighty, has put one great teacher in His universal body, and that one great teacher is the anointing that abideth, the Holy Spirit sent forth from the Father to abide in us forever.

It will not be our purpose here to describe further these noxious weeds of the flesh that flourish in so many spiritual gardens, choking out all spiritual growth and the fruit of the Spirit and drowning men in destruction and perdition with their hurtful lusts. **1 Tim. 6:9** Any Christian will find a most profitable study by taking his Concordance to study out where such words as adultery, fornication, uncleanness and all the other abominations of the flesh occur. In your investigations you will find such texts as this: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" **James 4:4** You will find passages showing that Christians are committing spiritual fornication with the Babylon church system. Is it any wonder, then, that those who commit spiritual adultery with the world and who hide their lights beneath the bushel of sects and denominations, thus committing spiritual fornication with the harlot system, find themselves to be sadly lacking in all spiritual understanding? Can we marvel that the apostle Paul proclaimed this most necessary message, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts?" Can we not see more clearly why the Lord through John commanded His saints with the voice of angels, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins"? **Rev. 14:8-9; Rev. 18:1-5** Her chief sin is spiritual fornication. Does not the Spirit say, "All nations have committed fornication with her"! **Rev. 17:1-5; 18:3** Why then do Christians imagine that it is their God-given duty to assemble with her"? Are such people not like unto those who assemble in the house of the harlot? Are they not as Jeremiah said, "When I fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses"? "Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body"! **1 Cor. 6:16** Not one spirit, my friends, but one flesh. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." **2 Cor. 6:17**

There is no possibility of exhausting scripture truth. Scripture is as inexhaustible as God Himself. There is no end to His wisdom nor His understanding. Who has known the thoughts of the Lord that he should advise Him? "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever." **Rom. 34-36**

By way of conclusion concerning the works of the flesh, so vividly named and described in Gal. 5:19-21, let us settle it in our minds that these works of the flesh are not, as some suppose, the works of the devil. They are the works of your flesh and mine. Certainly Satan can and will whenever possible take advantage of them and stir them up within, but none of these are the works of Satan. They are the works of the flesh. It seems that almost everyone blames all temptation to the work of the devil, but the great teacher apostle, James, did not say so. He stated emphatically, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." **James 1:14-15** This, I think, is an important matter, for if we identify the source of our problem, we can find the cure. The medical world insists that, if the cause of an illness can be found, it can be cured. They have proved that smoking causes cancer, so the cure for this kind of cancer is simply do not smoke. It is amazing, if not disgusting, to see the frantic efforts now being made to find a cure for AIDS. Countless millions, and possibly billions, are being spent to find a cure for that loathsome disease. There is no cure, for that disease is the judgment of God against one of the great abominations of the flesh. It is the fulfillment of the scripture, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four, footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor of their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." **Rom. 1:21-28** The cure is to obey God's command and never commit such obnoxious, lewd, lustful, indecent lasciviousness.

We must conclude, then, that these seventeen evils, clearly identified in Gal. 5, are not the works of the devil. They are the works of the flesh. And now I shall explain a startling but vitally important truth. The only cure for these works of the flesh is death. We can all readily see that dead men are never affected by any of these evils, these works of the flesh. The dead man does not commit adultery, fornication, or any uncleanness. He has no lasciviousness (wanton, lustful desires). He is not an idolater, does not practice witchcraft, does not hate; and in him there is no variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresy. Nor are there any envyings, murder, drunkenness or revelling. No work of the flesh is manifest in him because he is dead. But some will ask, "Must I die to be rid of the works of the flesh?" The answer is yes and that most emphatically. But your death will not mean the grave. Your death will be to become identified with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. If that is done, as Paul taught it must be done, then you will find yourself as completely free of all works of the flesh as was Jesus in His death and resurrection.

"But how," we ask, "is such a wonderful death to the lusts of the flesh accomplished?" It is accomplished by reckoning. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." **Rom. 6:11** Reckon yourselves dead to sin by identifying yourself with Christ in His death, for you and all the world died in Him on His cross. Reckon yourself alive unto God by identifying yourself with Him in His resurrection from the dead, for you and all the world rose with Him when He rose from the dead. This not only should, but does, deliver the saint from all the works of his flesh, if that saint has through faith reckoned himself dead to sin and alive with Christ by identification with His resurrection. This is the true meaning of water baptism, but it is not taught that way. If we were to see the truth of water baptism as we should, we would rise from the water incorruptible.

See how vividly these thoughts are brought out by Phil-lips' translation of **Rom. 6:1-14** "Now what is our response to be? Shall we sin to our heart's content and see how far we can exploit the grace of God? What a ghastly thought! We, who have died to sin - how could we live in sin a moment longer? Have you forgotten that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were, by that very action, sharing His death? We were dead and buried with Him in baptism, so that just as He was raised from the dead by that splendid revelation of the Father's power so we too might rise to life on a new plane altogether. If we have, as it were, shared His death, let us rise and live our new lives with Him! Let us never forget that our old selves died with Him on the cross

that the tyranny of sin over us might be broken - for a dead man can safely be said to be immune from the power of sin. And if we were dead men with Him, we can believe that we shall also be men newly alive with Him. We can be sure that the risen Christ never dies again - death's power to touch Him is finished. He died, because of sin once: He lives for God forever. In the same way look upon yourselves as dead to the appeal and power of sin, but alive and sensitive to the call of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Do not, then, allow sin to establish any power over your mortal bodies in making you give way to your lusts. Nor hand over your organs to be, as it were, weapons of evil for the devil's purposes. But, like men rescued from certain death, put yourselves in God's hands as weapons of good for His own purposes. For sin is not meant to be your master - you are no longer living under the law, but under grace." (J. B. Phillips Translation)

I exhort every reader to seek the face of Christ and make earnest request that the things I have written here may be revealed to you by His Spirit. No person by the use of his natural mind can possibly grasp the truth of reckoning ourselves as identified with Christ in His death and resurrection apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for he will receive of Mine and show it (reveal it) unto you."

Dearly beloved brethren, there are men and women, especially in the Charismatic move, who are bringing the people of God into lifelong bondage and disappointment by what they imagine to be the ministry of deliverance. These people, so terribly unlearned in the truth, are continually leading gullible people to believe that they are possessed of evil spirits, demons of all manner of things. They have devils of adultery, fornication, uncleanness and all the rest, with a lot of imaginary things thrown in. They lay their hands on people and try to cast these demons out of them. In the first place these works of the flesh are not the devil's work. They are the works of the flesh. In the second place we are not delivered from them by having someone suddenly lay hands on us for that purpose. We are delivered from them only by our reckoning ourselves to be dead with Christ and raised again, dead unto sin and alive unto God. This reckoning is reality. It is not imagination.

The marvelous reality of it is seen in the famous words and testimony of Paul when he wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Gal. 2:20** This is reckoning in the truest sense. Isn't that a marvelous testimony? Paul did not attain such a glorious experience - death to sin and alive with Christ - by having some person with a yen for prominence and the spectacular lay hands on him and cast devils out of him, nor did he receive such an experience by travailing in prayer at an altar. He came to that knowledge when he saw by faith that God placed all men in Christ; therefore, when Christ died, Paul died. When Christ died, I died. When Christ died, you died. For this reason therefore he says, "Wherefore reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin." It is not sin that is dead; it is you, it is I, it is Paul. But sin can have no more dominion because I am dead; I am crucified because He was crucified. But, oh happy thought, Christ did not and does not leave us in the grave when we reckon ourselves dead with Him; for, after reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, Rom. 6:11, we next become participants of His resurrection here and now, and we reckon ourselves alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that is, through identifying ourselves with Jesus Christ our Lord.

The next time some lust of the flesh raises its ugly head to tempt you, tell that lust and tell yourself, "There is nobody home I am dead, and Christ lives here." You have died with Christ to every work of the flesh and, furthermore, you have risen again; but you have not risen on the death side of the tomb as you entered it, but on the resurrection side where He arose. You are a new man, an entirely new woman, a new creation in Christ Jesus our Lord. You are Christ's, and the Spirit of Christ, not the works of the flesh, dwells in you. Oh how marvelous is this deliverance!

In closing this thought, I wish to warn all God's people that it is indeed a very dangerous thing to permit men and women to indiscriminately lay hands on you. It may be, for ought you know, that they themselves are sinners. It may be that some of these have evil spirits in them. I have known men who imagined they had a "deliverance ministry" who themselves were revealed to be homosexuals. If such a person as that should lay hands on you, he may well impart his unclean spirit to you so that, instead of your being delivered, you become like him. Never allow this kind of thing. The apostle Paul definitely stated, "Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men's sins." **1 Tim. 5:22**. Lay hands suddenly on no man because in doing so you

know not who or what the man is. Why try to impart some spiritual thing to someone who is not living for God? When he says, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins," the meaning is this: If people with some spiritual uncleanness are permitted to lay hands on you, you may become partaker of their sins. The laying on of hands is not a plaything. I know of no record in the scripture where either Jesus or the apostles ever laid hands on a possessed person. The demon was cast out by their word. Furthermore, they were not guessing. They had proper discernment about such things. All these evils are in the Babylon system today. The best and happiest thing you can do is come out from among them and be separate, that you be not partaker of her sins. You will be amazed at the freedom you will find when you "come out" and walk with Christ in the light which He Himself is to every man.

Wherefore let us reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. For further instruction on reckoning, please read Volume 25, Chapter 1.

CHAPTER EIGHT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT AND THE TREE OF LIFE

"The fruit of the Spirit is
Love, joy, peace,
Longsuffering, goodness, gentleness,
Faith, meekness, temperance." **Gal. 5:22,23.**

I have placed them in the above order because love, joy and peace are the fruit of the Holy Spirit being manifested in the personal experience of the believer that his life as a believer may be lived in love toward God with joy and peace that passes understanding. Longsuffering, goodness and gentleness are the fruit of the Spirit flowing forth from the believer to bless a needy world and reaching forth their kindly hands to sinners, to saints, and to God in goodness and gentleness to all mankind in longsuffering before God and man. Faith, meekness and temperance are the fruit of the Holy Spirit, being manifested in all faithfulness, meekness and temperance before the Father in heaven. We are all aware that there can be no set lines as to where or toward whom these precious fruits are manifested. Meekness and faithfulness can be lived and manifested before our fellowmen as well as before God, saint or sinner. Faithfulness, meekness and temperance flow forth from the Spirit of God and are the fruit of His indwelling presence.

"The part cannot contain the whole", but should there be one part anywhere that does contain the whole, it is the first named fruit — love. Could there be joy, peace, longsuffering or any other that does not spring from the indwelling love of Christ, it would be naught but sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. It could not be genuine. "Ye are of God, little children," said John, the apostle of love. 1 John 4:4. And again, "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." **1 John 5:1.** Love is of God. We cannot manifest love, which we do not have. If we have the love of God in us, then that love of God will manifest itself without any struggle on our part. "A wrathful man stirreth up strife." **Prov. 15:18.** That is because by his very nature he is a wrathful man. Of an envious person it is written, "Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" **Prov. 27:4.** An envious man will never be satisfied until he has brought the object of his envy to ruin. King Saul's envy of David is a perfect example of this.

A faithful man is faithful in all things because he is a faithful man. If we are truly saved and have the love of God in us, then it is written, "He that loveth Him that begat loveth also him that is begotten of Him." It is evident that an apple tree bears apples simply because it is an apple tree and apples grow on that tree because that is what the tree is. Try as we may to gather some other fruit from it, we will not succeed. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit. In any investigation we make concerning the fruit of the Spirit, let us always remember that it is the fruit of the Spirit, not some substitute thing that man brings forth from his corrupt self. Either we have this blessed fruit abiding in us by the Holy Spirit or we do not.

When penitent sinners come to Christ with "godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation" and are cleansed by the blood of Christ, the Spirit enters into them to make them new creatures. No man can be born of the Spirit unless and until the Holy Spirit dwells in him. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." **Rom. 8:9.** That statement should settle the question in our minds forever. Because the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, it becomes the duty of the believer to cultivate the garden of his own spiritual life. He must

make sure by watchfulness that none of these noxious weeds of the flesh are permitted to grow or increase in his life to choke out the fruit of the Holy Spirit. As we read the scripture, we find probably hundreds of statements that show that God's people may rid the garden of their Christian experience of the noxious weeds of the flesh. "Flee fornication." "Let him that stole steal no more." "Lay aside every weight." "Put off anger, wrath, blasphemy." "Put on the whole armor of God." "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." The word of God contains dozens of such wonderful instructions and we should use them all. The thorough committing of our old selves to the cross and our identification with Christ in His cross leaves no room for the noxious weeds of the flesh in our spiritual garden. The cross and the Spirit will surely produce the fruit of the Spirit. Water your garden with prayer that the Spirit might descend as rain upon it, and you will discover that the fruit of God's Spirit is growing and maturing in your life.

I ask you now to be prepared for some hard spiritual thinking. When I was a young man, one of my teachers said, "Learn to think in the Spirit." Brethren, this is a practice of great importance. By this means we can come to understand spiritual truth. It is certain that the natural mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. How, then, will we ever come to this knowledge except it be by revelation? When the Holy Spirit stops you with a scripture, do not be quick to ask someone else what that scripture teaches. Ask the Holy Spirit what it means. Enquire of Him, for He is the author of it. It may be weeks or even months before He reveals its truth, but keep thinking about it and He will faithfully give you an understanding of it.

In preparing this chapter concerning the fruit of the Spirit, I found the writing of it very difficult and unfruitful. I felt within that the Holy Spirit desired that we should know something beyond the customary description of what love is, what joy is, peace, longsuffering and the others. So I earnestly sought the Lord to know His mind about the matter. About 3:00 A.M. this morning, as I waited before Him, He put in my heart the truth I now bring.

The garden eastward in Eden was the Lord's garden. In it He placed the man He had made to dress it and to keep it. Trees of every variety grew in that hallowed, perfumed Eden paradise. Every tree and plant that was good for food and every flowering shrub that was glorious for beauty flourished in its fertile haven of peace. It was a place of extreme grandeur. Animals and birds lived in harmony and fearless tranquility together and of man they had do dread nor fear, for he was their lord and friend.

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the bird for mirth;
You are nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

In the midst of the garden two trees were evident above all others - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which Eve saw was good for food, and the tree that excelled all others for beauty and fruitfulness, the tree of life. There in all its magnificence it flourished, offering its ever blooming, ever bountiful fruit of eternal life to any who would partake of it, but no one, it would seem, reached out an eager hand to partake of it until after the transgression had cast its evil shadow of death and confusion upon them. Then did the Lord in kindness place a guardian angel with a flaming sword to keep the way to the tree of life lest man in his sin should reach out his willful hand to partake of its life and thus, without cleansing of the blood, live on in his vileness forever. What a tragedy that would have been!

"Death is an enemy," saith the scripture, **1 Cor. 15:26**, and indeed it is a desolating enemy. But have you ever considered what a sad and pitiable place the world would be if in our present fallen state man could not die? We see the crippled in their distress and despair. What would it be if they could not die? We see the agonized sufferer groaning on his bed of pain. What would it be if he could not pass away and leave his broken frame to await a better resurrection? We see tottering men and women worn out with age and, like Jacob, weary of their life. What would it be if they could not die? How sad it is to visit a hospital where old men and women, who long to go to their rest, are being kept in their misery by the pretence of a doctor who imagines he is preserving life] Were it not for our enemy, death, the world would be full of helpless, groaning people, suffering an interminable hell. Because man in the beginning partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord

in wisdom barred his way to the tree of life lest in his state of living death he might groan on forever in his sorrow.

When Jesus came to redeem us, He came to deliver man from his sin and to open wide the gate to the tree of life where man, cleansed by redeeming blood, could receive eternal life and become a new creature in Christ. Paul preached that Christ died for all, and, in that He died for all, then all must have been dead. But our wonderful Lord remained not in the tomb. He arose, and, had He not risen, we would be yet without hope. 1 Cor. 15:16-17 But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of all them that slept. **Verse 20** "I give unto them eternal life," said Jesus, "and they shall never perish." **John 10:28** In all eternity there will never be another fall. Neither shall there be any more death. The last enemy to be destroyed is death - all death, the first death and the second death too. There shall be no more strife nor war. There shall be no more sighing and no more pain, for the former things are passed away.

The tree of life that flourished in Eden's fragrant garden was a literal tree in a literal garden to the best of our understanding. But "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (or spirit). **1 Cor. 15:46** That beautiful tree of life was a forecast of another tree of life to come, who came that we might have life more abundant. That garden of God called Eden was a type of another garden of God that was to come. Adam, who was made a living soul, was a type of another Adam that was to come who would be a life giving spirit.

I may not be completely accurate, but I am of the opinion that the soul-thrilling events of the last eleven chapters of the Gospel of John all took place within days, if not hours, before our Lord's crucifixion—the sermon concerning the good shepherd of chapter 10; the teaching and demonstration of the resurrection in chapter 11. Finally we are told in chapter 12 that it was six days before the Passover that Jesus came to Bethany where the actual raising of Lazarus, described so vividly in chapter 11, took place. The foot washing and its meaning in chapter 13; the words of comfort and the promise of the Holy Spirit in chapter 14; the marvelous sermon on the vine and the branches of chapter 15; the great detail concerning the coming of the blessed Holy Spirit in chapter 16; the fervent prayer after sermon, given in chapter 17; the arrest and betrayal of chapter 18; the crucifixion and entombment of chapter 19; the glorious news of the resurrection of chapter 20; and the meetings with His disciples of chapter 21 - all these sayings and events assure us that He was telling them, just before He left them, the things most important for them to know.

Oh, I would to God that all who name the name of Christ would learn to literally live in those last eleven chapters of John! What teaching Jesus gave them there! What promises He left, what assurance in the words He spoke! How sad I am to find that, for all the glorious fruit of His garden, the preachers are starving the people to death for want of spiritual food with their wretched canned sermons and their appeals for money to build temples of wood and stone, every one of which will be thrown down and trodden under foot when the Lord comes to unveil that heavenly temple which is His body! Turn from these vanities, beloved saint, and close in with Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of your faith. "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." Learn His ways and you will love Him, and if any man love God, the same (man) is known of Him.

In the fifteenth chapter of John our Lord begins to unfold a new revelation of the tree of life, a tree that bringeth forth much fruit. Give an attentive ear to these words our Saviour uttered. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth (or pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples." **John 15:1-8**

This enlightening passage, unfolding as it does such life-giving truth, is without doubt the unveiling of the new tree of life. Here our Lord portrays Himself as the vine, and from that vital trunk is springing forth fruit bearing

branches. Those branches, beloved, according to the word of Christ, are you and I. It is not the trunk of the vine tree (the expression vine tree is found in Ezek. 15:2) that bears the fruit. It is the branches. And, saith He, "Ye are the branches." The fruit you bear is spiritual fruit, the fruit of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance. Wondrous fruit is this that, when it shall be manifest in all the world through those living branches, the sons of God, in the age now at our doors, will make all the world an Eden like to heaven above. Imagine, if you can, a world governed by a people full of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance!

I am sure that there are many more fruits than those named here. Peter extends the list by repeating some of which Paul spoke and adding more when He said, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love)." Oh what a list of virtuous fruit to satisfy the hunger of a groaning creation! Peter here adds to the fruit of the tree of life virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness and brotherly kindness. This is the manner of fruit that at this hour in which we live is beginning to flourish upon that tree of life, which is nothing less than the precious body of Christ, the mystical church, the true ecclesia of God. "I am the vine tree and ye are the branches," said Jesus, and this the tree of life for the ages to come.

Many times I have mentioned that every spiritual truth has more than one interpretation. Truth rises from one glory to a greater glory, each glory ascending above the one preceding it. So it is with the tree of life; for this tree of life, with which we are at this moment so vitally involved, is to stand in the midst of God's garden, which will eventually include the whole of His creation and the entire universe. We shall not then meditate upon its importance in any fictitious or sentimental manner. From the garden of your own heart, from the Christ within your own heart, there is springing forth a branch which you yourself are. Upon this branch is borne those nine manner of fruits. The natural mind will never understand it, but the Holy Spirit, who knows all things and reveals the secrets of God to the spiritual mind, will unfold it to you, if you have a longing to understand; for "when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will receive of Mine and show it unto you."

With the above truth gaining access and blooming in our hearts, let us now step beyond our present age to the end of the new age which is at hand, the age of the kingdom of God. In this present age of grace the great Architect of the universe is preparing the tree of life with its diverse manner of fruits. This tree of life is in truth the body of Jesus Christ, composed of many sons, many brothers, among whom our wonderful elder brother, our Lord and Christ, is the firstborn, the oldest and the Head of the vast family of brothers, as Paul so beautifully stated: "That He might be the firstborn of many brethren." **Rom. 8:29** And again, "Behold, I and the sons which God hath given Me." **Heb. 2:13** This great family of sons, every one a house not made with hands in which the Lord dwells, the house of which Jesus spoke, saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions," every son a mansion, every son a habitation for God through the Spirit, together form the temple of the Lord; for thus saith the Lord, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:19-22**

Meditate day and night on these expressions of truth: My Father's house, John 14; many mansions; the household of God, Eph. 2:19; the chief corner stone, Eph. 2:20; (the corner stone here, I suggest, means the capstone as the capstone of a pyramid. Christ is the head stone. He is the Head. He is the headstone of the corner. Psa. 118:52. Only a pyramid has five corners and a headstone). Then notice the phrase a Holy temple, Eph. 2:21, and an habitation of God. Eph. 2:22 Dear brethren, receive with reverence and holiness such engrafted words of truth. Our Father in heaven would have His maturing sons to see that these towering statements of immense importance are spoken to them.

My brethren, we do not belong to this age; therefore let us cast off all bondage to it. Let us discard the silly doctrines of men and evil traditions inherited from the dark ages. Let us come out from among the inhabitants of Babylon that we may receive of God and become His sons and daughters. The glory of this hope hastens my step. It quickens my pulse. It speeds my writing. It urges me to partake completely of Him, to crown Him my Lord and Head forever. In Christ I plainly see that this Prince of peace is not only the Head, but my wonderful

brother as well - the oldest in a vast family, of which family God is Father. Hallelujah! What a plan! What a glorious purpose! What a tree of life! What luscious fruit adorns its countless branches! "Glory and blessing and honor be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"

"You are a building which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are being built up together to become a fixed abode for God through the Spirit." **Eph. 2:20-22** Weymouth We thank Thee, Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Open our eyes still further, Thou Spirit of the living God, that in the majesty of Thy revelation we may better strip off the flesh and all the works thereof that every noxious weed of the flesh may be rooted out and the fruit of the Spirit appear and the world may partake of Thy holy tree of life.

The sun is setting rapidly upon this tired old age in which we have lived so long, and even as it sets, the dawn with lithesome steps advances, stretching out her merciful fingers to draw aside the curtains of this six thousand years of night and open before our happy faces the gates of a new age, even the blessed Sabbath of the millennial rest of the Lord. We labor to enter into rest, and, when we have entered His rest, we shall find that His labor is rest.

These things shall be. A loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
Not to spill human blood, but to dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation hand in hand
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

There shall be no more sin, no shame,
And wrath and wrong shall fettered be;
For men shall be at one with
God In bonds of firm necessity.

The long awaited kingdom of God is at hand, the kingdom in which the heavens reign over the earth, the kingdom in which the saints shall reign with Christ, the day when the body of Christ is the governing temple of the Lord. All throughout that blessed kingdom, one thousand years of heavenly peace, our delighted eyes will behold another beautiful body forming more glorious than all before it. It is the body of the bride, the heavenly Jerusalem. Millenniums ago the Lord opened the side of Adam and from his riven side He formed a woman - a literal, natural, but glorious woman. On Calvary's cross the Lord again opened the side of an Adam, the last man Adam. 1 Cor. 15:45 From His riven side there flowed forth the cleansing blood and the water of life. John 19:34. And a fountain was opened for all sin and uncleanness that Christ might truly say, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" **John 7:37-39** From that riven side all who believe are given power to become the sons of God. All who have been cleansed by the blood that flowed are God's children and all who drink of the water of His life, from their bellies shall flow, not wells, not fountains, but rivers of the water of life to nations yet unborn.

Oh how we marvel at the ever, progressing purpose and ever increasing manifestation of the Lord! From the Father's only begotten Son there comes forth a vast family of sons. Today our Lord is not the Father of an only begotten Son, but the Father of many brethren, all of whom are born into His family by the Holy Spirit. But what

shall we say more, for I clearly see that, in the kingdom age to come, through the ministry of this man child there is to be brought forth a heavenly woman, a bride, an innumerable company. This is the meaning of the vision John saw in the Revelation of the woman in the wilderness, who in her travail brought forth a son, the sons of God, a man child who was caught up unto God even as we are now being caught up, and the woman, not as yet prepared as a bride, fled into the wilderness; and they, that is, the sons caught up, fed her there and prepared her as a bride, even as we now are being prepared as a bridegroom. Please read the revealing story, Rev. 12:1-6, the truth of which is so wisely hidden from unbelieving eyes, yet so beautifully manifest to those who ask.

I have been both amazed and enlightened by those delightful apiarists who have given us the almost incredible information that honey bees, when needing a queen bee, feed the maturing larva queen's food and by the queen's food they feed her a queen bee is produced. The same is true of the worker bees and the drones. They all become what they are fed. Do you not think that this same principle applies to a Christian? We become what we are fed, or shall we say, what we feed upon. Thus the saying is true, "As many as received Him (who is the living bread), to them gave He power to become the sons of God." It is a very great mystery, but it is amazingly true. When therefore the woman of the wilderness, who brought forth the man child, fled into the wilderness, a wilderness such as we also have been through, they, that is, the sons of God, fed her there, and it is this same woman who brought forth the man child who becomes the bride of Christ. This solves the great mystery spoken by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:12, for as we today are being fed the food of sons, the wilderness woman will be fed the food of the bride. "For as the woman is of the man, (Adam), even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." **1 Cor. 11:12** Today the woman is bringing forth the man child. Thus the man is of the woman. Next the man child feeds the woman and brings forth the bride. Thus the woman is of the man. Adam was first formed, then Eve, and she was the bride of Adam. So also it is with the bride of Christ, who is to be fed by the sons of God, the fullness of the last Adam.

What a day of days it must have been for the beloved John, who had already seen so much beyond what other men had seen, when at the end of what appears to be the kingdom age, the angel of the Lord came to him, saying, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." **Rev. 21:9-12** We will not quote the entire beautiful passage here, but every reader should spend much time feasting his soul on the magnificence there displayed. The importance of the bride in relation to the whole plan of God cannot possibly be overestimated. She is the city of the Lord, the heavenly Jerusalem. It is not until her fullness is complete and she is joined in marriage to the Christ body of sons that the mystery of God is complete. Adam and Eve in the beginning were one person before they were separated to become male and female. In the fullness of times, the eighth day of new beginnings, the Christ and the bride will be one new Adam the fullness, the completeness of Him who filleth all in all.

It is not until the bride and groom have been united (I thought to say re-united) that the majesty and power of the restoration of all things begins in all its marvelous fullness. Only then do we read that the nations all nations that have never known the true God bring their glory and honor in and enter in through the gates of the city to partake of the tree of life and the water of life, Rev. 21:22 to 22:5, a program that will progress and never cease until all the groaning creation of all ages has been delivered.

Having beheld these wonders in spirit, let us investigate further the truth concerning the tree of life, not as it stood in Eden's lovely garden at the beginning. No, not even as it was promised when our Lord said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and spoke of the fruit borne by every son of God who abides in Him; nor even as that tree which is the body of Christ, whose branches flourish and produce the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance. Glorious as all this is, its magnificence rises with the revelation of those things God hath prepared for all who love Him. Thus it is that the beloved John continued his revelation as the angel showed him concerning the New Jerusalem bride. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of

fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." **Rev. 22:1-4**

The apostle Paul named nine manner of fruits developing and growing from the Holy Spirit in the believer, but when John saw this tree, which is Christ in all His completeness, the bridegroom and the bride united as the last Adam, he saw it bearing twelve manner of fruits and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations - all nations from all ages, every kindred, every tongue and every people.

Only with the mind of the Spirit may we imagine such a world, yea, such a universe, where from the very throne of the Most High Himself flows a river of living water to bring the life of God to all who partake of it; and I know that that all in truth means all. There will be no exception, for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord as they bow to drink of its waters of eternal life. Only with the mind of the Holy Spirit can one even begin to imagine what the world will then be when in the supernal fullness of times all the world rests in tranquility and peace beneath the holy and benign government of Him whose very name is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace; and of His government and peace there shall be no end.

As we look upon the sad earth today, it is plain for any eye to see that, flowing from the corrupt mind of every government on earth, taught in schools and propagated on every hand, we find the evil fruit of death manifesting itself in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like. Everywhere on every continent mankind is being overwhelmed by its evil until the earth is filled with violence and the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are only evil continually.

In the midst of all these abominations, these works of the flesh flowing as a river of filth from the corrupt heart of man, the Father in heaven has been preparing His tree of life. Sooner, far sooner than we think or imagine - I trust before the end of this century, which will end the sixth day of man's labor - we shall see that kingdom of God established in which only righteousness is known and a world governed by the twelve manner of fruits of the tree of life, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance, and to these I make bold to add these three: wisdom, understanding and the fear of the Lord.

The kingdom of God will be a glorious kingdom, a kingdom which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man." Yet beyond it lies a far greater age, the age called the fullness of times, whereof our brother Paul faithfully stated, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in Him." **Eph. 1:9-10**. More forceful still is the translation by Weymouth. "And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him."

In that age of the ages, the fullness of times, the same tree of life, lifted to a still higher order - dare we believe to immortality and eternal life - first the world and then the universe will be brought under the order of orders, the tree of life that bears the twelve manner of fruits, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. At present I do not know what those leaves represent, but I do know that there will be no more curse, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. Rev. 21:4 Soon, oh soon, will the new tree of life, more glorious far than any words of men or angels could describe, bloom on both sides of the river of life, Rev. 21:2, in that heaven blest land of the New Jerusalem bride of Christ.

In closing the revelation of these wonders, let us bow our blood-washed hearts, our pure minds and our adoring spirits to this benediction:

"I always beseech the God of our Lord Jesus Christ - the Father most glorious - to give you a spirit of wisdom and of insight into mysteries through knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened so that you may know what is the hope which His call to you inspires, what the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power in us believers as seen in the working of His infinite might when He displayed it in Christ by raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavenly realms, high above all other government and authority and power and dominion, and every title of sovereignty used either in this age or in the age to come. God has put all things under His feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." **Eph. 1:17-23** Weymouth

This is the glory, the honor, the immortality and eternal life for which we earnestly look and seek. Amen and Amen.

CHAPTER NINE CONCLUSION

As time rushes on with ever increasing speed and we see the few remaining years of the twentieth century slipping away as sands in the hourglass of a dying millennium, there has come within the hearts of millions the knowledge that not only is a century or a millennium passing away but the Lord is drawing the shades of night on an entire dispensation as well. We are now seeing as never before in this dispensation the awesome fulfillment of the words of our Lord Jesus, the prophets and the apostles. Their prophetic utterances are coming to pass on every hand, warning mankind that all things to be fulfilled before the kingdom of God should come have now been fulfilled, and only those things remain that would urge the saints to prepare themselves for the appearing of the great Emancipator, Deliverer and Saviour - our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prophetic mysteries spoken by the prophets are unfolding before our eyes. The parallel of the days of Noah, of which Jesus faithfully warned, is seen in every nation, on every street corner and in countless millions of homes. Of those days of wickedness before the flood we read in the word of truth that, "God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." **Gen. 6:5** And again, "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." **Gen. 6:11-13**

May I here point out the root cause of much of today's evil? Have you noticed with concern the statement at the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis? Consider it with care, for these words without doubt set the stage for much of the evil that was to follow. Adam, we are told, was the son of God. Luke 3:38 He was of the God family and so also were his descendants. Thus we are told that, "the sons of God (the Adamites) saw the daughters of men that they were fair (often extremely beautiful); and they took them wives of all which they chose." **Gen. 6:2** The result of this evil union, this flagrantly defiant transgression of the commandment of God, was that there were "giants in the earth", which became mighty men and men of renown. This fourth verse is followed immediately by the words, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth." These abhorrent and flagrant transgressions of God's command that kind should produce or be after his kind is everywhere manifest in the earth today as nations hasten to defile themselves and God's command by "going after strange flesh." The present result of this great transgression is exactly the same as it was then. The earth is filled with violence and the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are only evil continually.

Any young man or young woman, whether white or black, yellow or brown, who may be considering such a transgression of the commandment of God should turn from his evil thought in repentance, lest he find himself in defiance of His creator and be destroyed as these giants of old also were. The mingling of the seed of God with the seed of men is just as damaging to one race as it is to the other, because it is a transgression of the written instruction of God; but let both rather be preserved according to the unalterable will of the Lord. My point, however, is that all these evils are with us as Jesus said they would be, and there are few that be saved.

We need not here, I am sure, enlarge upon the vileness of Sodom, of which our Lord declared, "As it was in the days of Lot (in Sodom)"; so should it be when the Son of man comes. The evil of sodomy, punishable in God's law by death, now spreads its specter of filth over every land. Sodomy, instead of being pictured for the gross evil that it is, is now touted as "a way of life," but God's word shows it to be a way of death, spawning depraved minds and loathsome diseases among mankind to bring upon the world swift and terrible destruction. Reading the words of Paul in his second epistle to Timothy, Chapter 3, we see nothing whatever of the rampant sin portrayed there not evident in these last days of the age.

This book, Glory, Honor, Immortality and Eternal Life, is written for the eyes and hearts of those who seek such unspeakable glory. It is for those who, like Enoch and Noah, seek God and His immutable promises while yet dwelling in the midst of a corrupt, hell-bent people who seek all that is inglorious, all that is corrupt, and that which is mortal and pertains to death rather than eternal life. I have emphasized particularly glory and honor realizing, as we should, that these two priceless promises are close at hand and for our immediate future. Little is written here of immortality and eternal life, knowing that these most excellent glories may be reserved for that blessed age, the fullness of times. For the present at least immortality is the possession of our Elder Brother, the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, "who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." **1 Tim. 6:16**

Within these pages I have spoken freely of the garden of the Lord, which we, the saints of the Lord, surely are, and of the tree of life, which we, the true body of Christ are becoming, the tree from which all creation will find immortality and eternal life at last. I earnestly exhort every reader to read and re-read these Treasures of Truth, because each time you read them you will discover new truth unseen and unnoticed in your first reading. Many people have testified to the truth of this statement. We give glory to God alone for His Spirit of inspiration.

Let us then read and let us earnestly and selflessly seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life, "in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." **2 Cor. 6:4-10**

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